



**EMPOWER**

**Jeff Paterson**  
Chief Executive Officer



Jeff Paterson joined [Empower](#), the nonprofit organization formerly known as Niagara Cerebral Palsy, in November 2014. He launched the Empower brand in 2015 and has expanded programs and services for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and for the greater Niagara community. With a \$14 million budget and 300 employees, Empower is one of Western New York's 60 largest nonprofit organizations.

On Jeff's watch, Empower's reputation index among key constituencies shot up by 98% in two years, and the organization is gaining recognition as an agency on the move. The agency is transforming its job training and day programs, integrating children without disabilities into its special education preschool program, expanding in-home and community-based supports for people with disabilities, launching services for new populations, rightsizing unsustainable programs, modernizing operations, and preparing for the I/DD system's transition to managed care. In 2015, Jeff received the [Buffalo Business First 612' C-Level Executive Award](#), an honor that recognizes Western New York's most effective business leaders.

Previously, Paterson served for 12 years in senior management with the [Health Association of Niagara County Inc.](#), where he played a central role in establishing [Complete Senior Care](#), a multimillion dollar program that enables frail elders to remain living in their own homes. As executive director of [Community Music School of Buffalo](#) from 2012 to 2014, he established a music therapy practice and expanded community partnerships.

Paterson's roots are in the business world; he began his career as an account executive in two different Buffalo-area marketing communication agencies, where he assisted clients ranging from [Rite Aid Corporation](#) and [BlueCross BlueShield of Western New York](#) to [Catholic Charities of Buffalo](#) and the [Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo](#), among many others. Paterson is a past president and board member of the [Public Relations Society of America Buffalo Niagara Chapter](#). He has received the organization's Distinguished Service Award, Outstanding Practitioner Award and Rising Star Award, along with 70 Excalibur Awards recognizing outstanding public relations programs and projects – including four platinum "best of show" awards. Jeff taught as a part-time faculty member in the [Communication Department of SUNY Buffalo State](#) from 2004 to 2015, where he helped many students to establish successful careers. He received the SUNY Buffalo State Communication Department Professional Achievement Award in 2015.

Jeff is proud of his reputation as a leader who gets things done. He is the first layperson to chair the board of [Our Lady of Victory Homes of Charity](#), part of "Father Baker's." He serves on the board of the [Developmental Disabilities Alliance of Western New York](#) and chairs its Government Affairs Committee; he is also a board member and executive committee member of the [Person Centered Services Care Coordination Organization](#), and serves on the [Niagara County Subcommittee for People with Developmental Disabilities](#), as well as [Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center's Care Coordination Task Force](#). He serves on the boards of the [Western New York Integrated Care Collaborative](#) and the [Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus](#). He is a past board chair of the [Niagara Falls Housing Authority](#) and a past board member of [Community Missions of the Niagara Frontier](#) and the [Niagara Police Athletic League](#). He served for more than 10 years as a board member of the [Niagara Falls Urban Renewal Agency](#) and the [NFC Development Corporation](#), the lending arm of the [City of Niagara Falls](#); he was a member and vice chair of the [Niagara Falls Human Rights Commission](#) and a member of two mayoral transition teams.

Jeff's faith animates his life. He is a pastoral musician in his home parish of [St. John de LaSalle](#) in Niagara Falls, where he is involved in the annual [Catholic Charities Appeal](#) and works as volunteer coordinator for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. He is a past member of the [Buffalo Diocesan Liturgical Commission](#) and has been involved in lay leadership roles with the [Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities](#) and the [Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Divine Child](#), both based in Williamsville. He was a founding faculty member in [Niagara University's](#) certificate program in applied urban ministry. In 2017, he received the Rev. Martin Blake, CM, Award from [Our Lady of Angels Association](#) and [Vincentian Charities](#) for his work on behalf of people who are marginalized.

Paterson is a *summa cum laude* graduate of [Canisius College](#) in Buffalo, where he earned a bachelor's degree in communication studies. He earned a master's degree in pastoral ministry from [Christ the King Seminary](#) in Buffalo. He lives in Niagara Falls with his wife, Michele, and their son, William.