

August 2008

Dear AbilityFirst Friends:

We proudly reflect on the goals that were accomplished in 2007-2008, the third year of our *2005-2010 Strategic Plan*. We invite you to review the four strategic directions that will continue to help AbilityFirst better serve individuals with disabilities, and guide our organization over the next two years and beyond. The strategic directions are: Modernize Services; Professionalize Delivery of Services; Build Organizational Capabilities; and Increase Financial Strength.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of AbilityFirst, we thank you, our loyal contributors and participants, for supporting the AbilityFirst mission, vision and strategic direction. Without your kindness, generosity and commitment we would not have achieved such significant and meaningful progress this year. We look forward to your continued involvement in our success.



Angela Reddock
Chair, Board of Directors



Lori Gangemi
President and CEO

MODERNIZE SERVICES

Develop and provide progressive and effective services that address recognized needs of individuals with disabilities in collaboration with referring agencies and funders.

Focusing on individualized and integrated services, AbilityFirst job developers placed 35 additional individuals in community employment this past year. Eight of these individuals successfully transitioned from AbilityFirst Work Centers. We added Ready Pac to our strong list of companies who hire individuals with disabilities through AbilityFirst, including CVS, Ralphs, McDonalds, Knott's Berry Farm and Albertsons.

Our community centers increased their inclusion programs and activities. At the Claremont Center, the Swim Buddy Program brings children with and without disabilities together for aquatics instruction. The cheerleading squad from the Lawrence L. Frank Center attended the Universal Cheer Association camp at UCLA where they learned new routines and practiced alongside mainstream cheerleading squads from around the United States. The squad also makes special appearances in the community including parades and sporting events. Kideract teens from the East Los Angeles Rotary Club regularly travel with children from our East Los Angeles Center to fun and interesting destinations including trips to the beach for cleanup activities and Dodger Stadium to catch a ballgame. Staff at our centers say that their program participants enthusiastically anticipate these inclusion activities out in the community and that many new friendships have been formed.

Residents of Crown House are becoming more independent, increasing their community involvement. This year each resident identified several independent living skills that they wanted to develop. Ranging from cooking and personal finance to attending local fitness classes and riding public transportation, residents now establish goals on an ongoing basis that lead them toward independence, helping them reach their full potential.

PROFESSIONALIZE DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Deliver and measure outcomes by building knowledge, skills and systems.

All AbilityFirst employees participated in the College of Direct Support, an internet-based college for direct support professionals who provide programs and services to individuals with disabilities. Covering a range of topics such as safety, health and individual rights, 235 staff completed an average of 13 lessons each.

AbilityFirst continues to build stronger relationships with Regional Centers. AbilityFirst staff received training on maximizing electronic technology to report outcomes and success stories to Regional Centers. Center directors also regularly attended Regional Center meetings and trainings, and several centers hosted Regional Center meetings at our facilities.

BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES

Achieve appropriate balance between headquarters and program sites, provide training, define clear lines of authority and responsibilities, and implement best practices across sites.

This year employees were asked to participate in an Employee Opinion Survey. Ninety-seven percent of employees indicated that they are proud to work at AbilityFirst. Staff also indicated that they feel adequately supported by departments within the organization, especially in the key areas of communications, facilities and information technology. Overall, the survey reveals that our sites and headquarters are working closer and better together to keep AbilityFirst strong and evolving.

A new computer system was implemented at all our community and work centers to create one comprehensive database in which to input and maintain data about our programs, to include program outcomes. The system delivers an organizational structure for important information that will allow us to serve our participants better.

INCREASE FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Safeguard financial position and ensure continuing funds for our mission and future programs.

A Spending Policy was developed and approved by our Board of Directors for the prudent use of our invested assets, making five percent of invested assets available each year for operations and for capital expenditures.

The ongoing financial commitment that our donors provide to AbilityFirst ensures our heritage and guarantees a continued bright future for children and adults with disabilities. Our Los Angeles Marathon team raised over \$250,000, supported by a grant from the Forest Lawn Foundation and sponsorship from Comerica Bank. Forty-five new members joined the AbilityFirst Giving Society of annual major donors (\$1,000+). We launched our Capital Campaign with 100% giving from our Board of Directors and 21 donors to date at the \$10,000 level and above.

The accomplishments within our four strategic directions demonstrate our commitment to modernizing our services by strengthening our infrastructure and increasing our financial strength as an agency. Moving into Year Four, we are encouraged by our successes in the last three years and confident that we will continue to effectively execute and appropriately modify our Strategic Plan. We are guided by, and faithful to, our vision of providing the highest quality programs and services to children and adults with disabilities. We welcome your suggestions and questions, and thank you for your ongoing support.