AbilityFirst Announces New Board Chair

Local resident David Saeta has been elected as the new board chair at AbilityFirst, the Pasadena-based nonprofit organization has announced.

Saeta, executive vice president with IDS Real Estate Group, takes over the position formerly held by Wendy Lees.

AbilityFirst's new executive committee includes Saeta as chair, Kathryn Sanders Platnick as vice chair, Randy Repp as treasurer, Will Craig as secretary and Willan Johnson as member-at-large. The board's other directors are Steve Brockmeyer, Joseph Brandfield, Mike Dokmanovich, Richard R. Frank, Lauren Hoen, John Kelly, Joanne Kim, Anna Lawler, Wendy Lees, Dr. Francisco Navarro, Mary Spaldon, Louis Tenen, Harlan Thompson and Patricia Vork.

Saeta is a third-generation South Pasadena resident who studied human biology at Stanford University and went on to receive his MBA at UCLA. He is a former South Pasadena mayor, councilmember and planning commissioner, "an avid golfer and is passionate about volleyball," according to an AbilityFirst spokesperson. He began his professional career as a national director for the NCAA Volunteers for Youth program and has spent the last 30 years with IDS Real Estate Group.

"My support for AbilityFirst started when I organized a high school all-star volleyball match that included a public service experience for the athletes. The all-stars conducted a skills clinic for the AbilityFirst participants and it touched my heart to see these two groups working together," Saeta said. "Today I am excited to continue to support AbilityFirst CEO Lori Gangemi and the entire team, supporting individuals with developmental disabilities."

AbilityFirst provides a variety of programs that help people with disabilities realize their full potential throughout their lives. As the organization celebrates more than 96 years of service, it is focusing its efforts on programs that "have proven to have the greatest impact on a person's success: basic life-skills enhancement through our children's and adult programs; higher education and employment readiness; and independent living and social and recreational programming," a spokesperson said. "AbilityFirst looks beyond disabilities, focuses on the capabilities of each individual and breaks through any preconceived limitations, opening up a world of possibilities.

To learn more, visit abilityfirst.org.

Committee Campaigns for Library Special Tax

A committee to campaign for the renewal of the Library Special Tax has kicked off its efforts by opening an account at Priority One Credit Union in South Pasadena.

The tax, which is expected to appear for renewal on the Nov. 8 general election ballot, provides funding for about 20% of the South Pasadena Public Library's budget.

Committee members include co-chair Ed Donnelly, Treasurer Margaret Lee and former Mayor Robert Joe, with President/CEO Charles Wiggerton Jr. (second, from right) of Priority One Credit Union.

People are talking

My husband and I just worked with Kevin to both sell our home and purchase our dream home in South Pasadena and I couldn’t have dreamed of a better experience. Knowing that I was a small business owner (making it harder to qualify for a mortgage), Kevin introduced us to a lending team that made the mortgage process seamless. Kevin held our hands through the grueling process of buying a home in a very competitive market and served as our advocate during the escrow process and beyond. He even paired us with a real estate team who worked in our cross-town market and stayed in contact with them while we prepared our previous home for sale. Kevin exceeded expectations every step of the way. We can’t recommend Kevin enough!

Cristina L. and Matt L. – South Pasadena