

AdaptAbility

2021 Annual Report

Looking beyond disabilities

Focusing on capabilities

Expanding possibilities





Mission

AbilityFirst provides programs and services to help children and adults with disabilities realize their **full potential** throughout their lives.



Values

Trust - Belonging - Personal Best

AbilityFirst stands for and alongside people with developmental disabilities and their families. We create a welcoming environment where everyone feels they **belong** and are **valued**. Our first consideration is always for the **well-being** of our participants and – through the mutual trust that we share – each person is **supported** to achieve his or her personal best.

Organizational Strategy

AbilityFirst will ensure access to our programs by **focusing on the needs of individuals who face barriers to service**. In particular, we will assess the barriers for those who are low income, come from diverse cultures, and speak languages other than English and seek to provide solutions to those barriers.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

WE the team at AbilityFirst, will continue to support a **person-centered approach**, that showcases and values diversity, equity, and inclusion and creates a **true sense of acceptance**.

What does this mean?

- Devote our resources to providing the best services to those who are referred to us and will actively seek out those who have experienced barriers to receiving our services.

Why is this important?

- We care deeply about doing the right thing and we believe that our mission will be better served with new and different ways of thinking and that our programs will reach more under-served communities.

How we approach this?

- We embrace and lead change that breaks down barriers to accessing resources at AbilityFirst and in the broader community.

We view these guiding principles as symbiotic to the work for which we are known and will further propel us to new and different ways of thinking and executing our work.



AdaptAbility

Dear Friends,

For 95 years, AbilityFirst has **adapted** to societal changes and empowered people with disabilities to recognize their **abilities** and achieve their personal best. We have never wavered in our commitment to our vision of a society that values each individual and provides the opportunity for all people to lead full and productive lives. This was true in 1926 when we reached out to help children affected by the polio epidemic. And it was true in 2021 as we supported people with developmental disabilities and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our services continue to expand and **adapt** to meet the needs of the time. 2021 brought challenges, and together, AbilityFirst **adapted** and accomplished a lot. Most notably, I am proud that we ended the year safely delivering services in person. Connecting face to face, even with wearing masks, has such a positive impact for the individuals we support. AbilityFirst and participants (and families) **adapted** and accomplished a lot.

Please also take a moment to read about the impact of AbilityFirst programs in 2021 (page 7) and our Organizational Strategy which reaffirms and strengthens our focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Strategy is guiding our implementation of new programs and initiatives to remove barriers to service as we reach out to under-served communities who need us.

Despite the pandemic, we completed our *Building Independence Celebrating Community Capital Campaign* (pages 10-11), raising a total of \$6,075,000. Renovations to the Lawrence L. Frank Center in Pasadena are already complete and we broke ground on the much-needed upgrades to the Long Beach Center. Thank you to the Capital Campaign committee, led by co-chairs Richard Frank and Gloria Deukmejian, the entire committee, and our Board of Directors.

There is much more work to be done and I know AbilityFirst is up to the challenge, with donors' help. Thank you for your support as we continue to **adapt** and chart an ever-changing course for people with developmental disabilities and their families.



Lori Gangemi
Chief Executive Officer



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Ways to Give / Change a life, make your gift today!

Through the **generous support** of **individual donors, volunteers** and **community leaders**, our ongoing fundraising efforts have made it possible for AbilityFirst to **touch the lives** of approximately **1,500 individuals and their families** each year. This generosity has been the foundation by which AbilityFirst has made a **positive impact** on so many people with disabilities in the greater Los Angeles area.

DONATE ONLINE

YOU can help make a difference by making your tax deductible donation today to AbilityFirst. Donate at www.abilityfirst.org/donate

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TEXT AbilityFirst to 44321

DONATE A GIFT OF STOCK

We accept gifts of stock and appreciated securities.

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Many employers sponsor generous matching gift programs that match your charitable contribution! Find out if your employer has a matching gift program at www.abilityfirst.org/donate

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All donors who make a planned gift to AbilityFirst will be immediately recognized by our Legacy Society. Contact Lauren Rayner, Chief Development Officer at lrayner@abilityfirst.org or **626-243-4844**.

GIFTS IN TRIBUTE OR MEMORIAL

Acknowledge a special occasion or honor a loved one with a gift to AbilityFirst, and we will send a note to the person being honored or his or her family.

DONATE A VEHICLE

AbilityFirst partners with CARS to help you turn a vehicle you no longer need into a gift to support our mission. Learn more by visiting: www.careasy.org/nonprofit/abilityfirst

MAKE A GIFT BY MAIL

Please make checks payable to AbilityFirst and mail to: **AbilityFirst, 789 North Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena, CA 91103**

For more information on how you can support the programs and services of AbilityFirst, please contact: Development Department at 626-396-1010 or development@abilityfirst.org



College to Career / Van takes his design career to the next level

There are two kinds of people in the world: Those who see a challenge and cave, and those who become even more **determined to forge ahead**. Van is among the latter!

In 2013, Van started with the AbilityFirst Supported Employment program and transitioned to the College to Career program in 2018. This new step in his journey found Van focusing on self-discovery, community exploration and the development of a personal goal plan. Goal planning segued into a decision to study at Pasadena City College (PCC) with an ultimate goal of finding a path of study that would lead to identifying his career or securing more job prospects.

Halfway through the process, Van faced a problem. His chosen major at PCC was being phased out, with no alternative offered. Instead of feeling defeated, Van got busy. With the help of his AbilityFirst coach, Van began looking into other colleges that might offer the focus that interested him. He succeeded in finding what he was looking for and made the transfer to a new college. In the process, Van discovered a sense of resilience within himself.

The next leg of his journey upon completion of his courses came to fruition in 2021, when he decided to go back to the Supported Employment program.



Supported Employment helps participants find a job based on the individual's particular interests and capabilities. Van's job coaches guided him in researching possible open positions, creating cover letters and resumes and supported him with mock interviews.

When Van was first at College to Career, he had discovered a passion for screen printing and attended classes where he honed his new interest. So when he transitioned to Supported Employment, Van worked with an AbilityFirst job developer to pursue and land a job based on the screen printing skills he had developed through College to Career.

Van is now employed full time with ArtSolute Media Group (artsolutemediagroup.com), a company that makes exhibits for vendors around the world. His work doing prepress is a crucial aspect of the printing process. He takes the designs, measures them and tests them to be sure they look good before sending them off to be printed. Van continues to work with his AbilityFirst job coach throughout his career journey.

Van has successfully found his niche working at a job that needs his talents and doing graphics design work, that he loves!

“I’m looking forward to the next leg of my journey!”

—Van, AbilityFirst College to Career Participant



Adding Up Our Impact / Over 1,500 individuals served in 2021



Despite the **challenges** of year two of the pandemic, our programs and services **impacted individuals** and their families at AbilityFirst, in many **positive** and **measurable** ways.

- Decreasing feelings of isolation
- Maintaining skills
- Connecting family to needed resources
- Helping participants and family get vaccinated



ALTERNATIVE SERVICES TO ADDRESS PANDEMIC CONCERNS

- Virtual
- In person – alternate location
- In person – our centers
- Hybrid



EMPLOYMENT

- 86 individuals with new jobs
- \$100,000 in wages to Production Aides in Manufacturing



RETURNING IN PERSON

- 44,000 hours of in-person service for 320 people in day
- 3,600 volunteer hours by PossAbility program participants in community-based organizations.



CAMP PAIVIKA

- Camp @ Home
700 virtual activities for over 100 campers

Adapting in 2021

AbilityFirst programs for children, youth and adults are **person-centered** and tailored to individual interests and needs. In 2021 we returned to in-person and onsite services, while continuing to provide supported employment services, and **alternative program opportunities** implemented during the pandemic for individuals who prefer the online or more individualized community activities. This has made our programs even more person-centered while providing additional opportunities for **individual choice** and **participation**.



College to Career provides support for students attending college. **Emily** was inspired by the online programming in 2021 to try new things, including improv and dance, which helped her emerge from her shell! She's taken modern dance, hip hop, and jazz dance classes, which she plans to continue. No longer reluctant to speak up, **Emily** says, "I realized when you get to know people, it's fun!"



Crown House and Sierra Rose are both located in Pasadena, and are a "family-style" adult residential facility, and a residential home for seniors, that allow residents to lead a semi-independent life while having a supportive, empowering, and safe home environment amongst their peers and case managers. We provide access to broader community settings and events and partner with our participants to build an independent and inclusive life. Some residents volunteer or have jobs in the community, others go to school, and some are participants in our Employment Services Program.



ExploreAbility is an adult day and community integration program designed to help adults explore and identify what is important to them, to develop the skills necessary to achieve their goals through volunteering and community activities. **Keenan** began attending the ExploreAbility program at the **AbilityFirst Joan and Harry A. Mier Center** in Inglewood in the Summer of 2017. In 2021 he loved being on Zoom and seeing all of his peers but he was anxious to get back to on-site programming.



Manufacturing specializes in a wide range of materials and component parts from wood, aluminum, plastic, metal, corrugated and more. AbilityFirst assembles final goods, sub-assemblies and product displays. **Michael** has been working in the AbilityFirst manufacturing program for more than 15 years. He loves his job and his enthusiastic personality is encouraging to his fellow employees.



PossAbility is a community-based program for adults who want to enhance their skills and independence, and to participate in their communities. When participant **Gonzalo** gets to volunteer at the LA Regional Food Bank, he is very happy that he is there to help others and give back to his community! One of **Gonzalo's** goals is to work on his interviewing skills, so that he can begin his job search process.



Supported Employment bridges the gap between employers who are looking for reliable, productive workers, and people with barriers to employment who are eager to work. **Adrian** started with AbilityFirst DiscoverAbility Program in July 2020 and was hired at Walmart in December. AbilityFirst Job Developers helped **Adrian** create his resume and apply for the job at Walmart online and **Adrian's** Job Coach has been supporting him at work with his job responsibilities.

Adapting in 2021



Claremont Center provided diverse programming opportunities that inspired socialization and helped participants overcome some of the isolation and feelings of anxiety that resulted from the disruption of their daily routines prior to the pandemic. **Citlaly** has enjoyed the online art classes. She is inspired by, “..the scenery around her and she likes to recreate images.”



East Los Angeles Center's longtime participant **Anthony** has been attending it's after school program for 12 years where he participates in daily activities like arts and crafts and basketball. **Anthony** is a competitor and wants to be a winner! That's why he loves participating in the annual Stroll & Roll with his extended family. His favorite part of the day is crossing the finish line.



Glendale Center participant Anika has been attending the AbilityFirst after school program for nearly eight years! When she first started the program, she was very shy and soft spoken. **Anika** has come a long way! Today she's very independent, always willing to assist her peers and staff. Her goal is to one day work for AbilityFirst. She enjoys listening to music and being a leader during activities. Her goal is to one day work for AbilityFirst!



Lawrence L. Frank Center in Pasadena participant **Tamia** has been attending the program for six years and loves music and dance and has participated in several dance performances at the center, loves to make (and eat!) macaroni and cheese and her favorite pastime is hanging out with her friends.



Long Beach Center offered a 2021 summer program that was entirely community-based, with 7 to 8 groups of participants and staff exploring their neighborhoods each day. Online programming tailored to individual interests and needs included yoga, arts and crafts and music. Since 2017, **Resa** has been attending the center and loves participating in the art classes and activities where she enjoys seeing her friends.



Camp Paivika continued with its **Camp Paivika @ Home** programming in 2021, designed to provide live virtual programming for children and adults with various disabilities.

Activities are created to increase independence and confidence and to maximize opportunities for social interaction and connecting with friends. **Debbie** loves Camp @ Home because it is year-round and she participates in many of her favorite activities such as writing short stories and writing poems, but her favorite activity is the Talent Show!

Building Independence Celebrating Community

AbilityFirst's *Building Independence, Celebrating Community* Capital Campaign raised more than \$6 million and **funded extensive renovations** to the **Lawrence L. Frank Center** in Pasadena, and the **Long Beach Center**.

The renovations to the Lawrence L. Frank Center included a fully-accessible teaching kitchen where individuals with disabilities can gain valuable cooking, safety and life skills, enhanced office space for the College to Career program plus two updated and expanded outdoor areas.

The Long Beach Center broke ground in January 2021 with a goal of completion in June 2022.



Lawrence L. Frank Center teaching kitchen

Thank you to all our Capital Campaign Committee members

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**Capital Campaign Pledge made in 2021*

This annual report covers the fiscal year January 2021-December 2021. Gifts received after December 31, 2021 will be acknowledged in the next annual report. We have made every effort to ensure that the information included is accurate. If an error has been made please accept our apology and contact: Lauren Rayner, Chief Development Officer lrayner@abilityfirst.org or 626-243-4844

Thank you to our Foundations and Corporate Partners

AbilityFirst acknowledges **with gratitude** the financial support received from its Corporate and Foundation partners from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. Corporate and Foundation support is critical to our ability to continue to offer **high-quality, meaningful programs** in the community and at our centers for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

GUARDIAN

(\$250,000 and Above)

The Rose Hills Foundation

BENEFACTOR

(\$100,000 – \$249,999)

L and D Longo Family Foundation



Raymond and Barbara Alpert Foundation

PARTNER

(\$50,000 – \$99,999)

Alpert & Alpert Foundation



H.N. and Frances C. Berger Foundation



Jack and Cherie Raidy Family Foundation

AbilityFirst Legacy Society

The Legacy Society recognizes those visionary and caring individuals who have included AbilityFirst in their estate plans. Their **commitment** and **dedication** are shining examples of **generosity** that will help AbilityFirst continue its efforts to help children and adults with developmental disabilities realize their full potential! By becoming a member of the AbilityFirst Legacy Society, you can **celebrate today** the **transformations** you will help to make **possible in the future**.

Joan & Tom Alderson

Mary Alice and Bob Braly

Raymond G. De Peters

Joetta Di Bella

Dr. David E. Billet

Blanka and Jim Douglass

Fariester Family

Barbara Feiga

Maria French, Ph.D.

Lori Gangemi

Gary and Jackey Gray

James A. Hall

Herbert L. Harger

Verona Ingram

Molly Isenberg

Marilouise E. Jackson

Grady Jennings

Mr. and Mrs. Earl F. Johnson

John and Jennifer Kelly

Brian V. Kist

Jeffrey A. LaBarre

Harold Leavens

John Limbeck

Nell D. Michael

Bob and Judy Moore

Michael G. Morris

Roni E. Perlut

Paul M. Propp

Reid Robinett Family Trust

Michael R. Riley

Michael Reid

Donna Rogahn

Charles A. Rohe

Morris Saul

Norman Seastedt

Carol and Greg Teskey

Frances Tomich

Lois M. Zelsdorf



Joan Alderson has been involved with the AbilityFirst Long Beach Center Guild since 2016 after a friend asked her to join the Rainbows for AbilityFirst committee and she was delighted to become part of the volunteer group.

AbilityFirst's mission is close to Joan's heart, she has two grandsons who are with special needs and although they don't have a similar program where her grandkids live, she felt compelled to help AbilityFirst programs in Long Beach, close to her home. Joan spent her career working in the nonprofit world and she understands how important volunteers are to AbilityFirst programs and services!

“Volunteering is very fulfilling for me and I am honored to give back to my community.”

– **Joan Alderson**, Legacy Society member

For more information on Planned Giving or how to become a member of the Legacy Society, please contact Lauren Rayner, Chief Development Officer at lrayner@abilityfirst.org or 626-243-4844

2021 Event Committees and Sponsors

Stroll & Roll

2021 COMMITTEE

Mike Dokmanovich, Chair
Victoria Cua
Ryan Fridborg
Shauna Mattis

2021 SPONSORS

Presenting

Comerica

Platinum

Platinum Equity

Gold

Quetico

Silver

J. Yang & Family Foundation

Los Angeles Chargers

Pacific Sourcing

Bronze

America Chung Nam, Inc.

Bolton

Brentwood Originals

CBB Bank

Crimson IT

Del Real Foods

Homestreet Bank

Kaiser Permanente

O'Melveny & Myers

Richwell Group Inc

Umpqua Bank

Trendnet, Inc

YMI Jeanswear Inc.

Food & Wine Festival

2021 COMMITTEE

Steve Brockmeyer, Chair
Devon Anderson
Pat McKiernan
John Nilson
Don Nollar
Tom Polenzani
Mary Spellman
Heather Young

2021 SPONSORS

Presenting

CHUBB

Bistro

Union Bank

Cafe

Beverly Hill Rotary

CBB Bank

Chef

Bank of America

Envision Consulting

NFP Retirement

Sierra Auto

Hilda Solis

Harlan Thompson

Umpqua Bank

Rainbows for AbilityFirst

2021 WAYS AND MEANS

Mary Alice Braly
Arlene Fillius
Pat Leue
Caroline Hansen
Susan Short
Linda Silver
Julie Taboada

2021 SPONSORS

Pot of Gold

Chad and Terri Nikoletich
Port of Long Beach

4 Leaf Clover

James & Pamela Auman
Gloria M. Deukmejian
EPSON America Inc.
Farmers & Merchants Bank
Chris & Larry Lauthere
Ellen Mathis
Deloris Mayuga
Judy McNulty Black
Patsy R. Sampson Trust
Lynn Shrum
Linda Silver
Julie Taboada

Lucky Charm

Dorla Fair
Jean Screen
Marlene Temple

Prism

Arlene Fillius
Jorene Hankla
Rolf Janssen
Mary Barton Mayes
Ray Nottingham
Patrick O'Donnell, Assemblymember
Maria Elizabeth Randolph
Suely Saro, Councilwoman District 6
Fran White
Sharon Young



We are **deeply grateful** for the **support** from AbilityFirst Event Committees, who **volunteer their time and resources** for major, annual events. All while having **fun and raising critical funds** for programs and services that enrich the lives of children and adults with disabilities, and their families.



Long Beach Guild of AbilityFirst celebrates children and adults with developmental disabilities with its annual Rainbows for AbilityFirst Luncheon.



The AbilityFirst Food & Wine Festival features gourmet food, craft cocktails, wine and beer tastings while you relax and mingle with friends – all while supporting AbilityFirst programs for people with disabilities.



The AbilityFirst Stroll & Roll is a yearly fundraiser involving nearly 1,500 participants and their families, dozens of corporate sponsors and teams, and community supporters who come together to walk or stroll & roll while supporting our mission.

AbilityFirst Financials

2021 Unaudited Financial Statements (\$ in thousands)

REVENUE AND SUPPORT	January 1 - December 31, 2021	
Program Revenue		
Community Centers/Community Programs	\$6,803	
Business and Employment Services	\$1,517	
Housing Services	\$524	
Camping Services	\$64	
Fund Development		
General	\$1,608	
Restricted Donations	\$1,449	
Legacies and Bequests	\$1,093	
Other Revenue		
Facility & Other Revenue	\$781	
Manufacturing Sales	\$225	
Investment Income	\$9,711	
Change in Value - Trusts	\$560	
Gain on Sale of Asset	\$4	
Government Grant	\$1,509	
TOTAL REVENUE/SUPPORT	\$25,848	
OPERATING EXPENSE		
Program Services	\$11,909	76%
Support Services		
Management & General	\$2,632	17%
Fund Development	\$1,030	7%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$15,571	100%
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$10,277	

AbilityFirst Locations

AbilityFirst person-centered programs are grounded in **individual choice, autonomy, and community participation**. They empower individuals to discover what is important to them in their lives, and to develop the skills that are important for them to achieve their goals.

ADMINISTRATION

789 North Fair Oaks Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91103
Tel: 626.396.1010 / Fax: 626.396.1021
info@abilityfirst.org

CAMP PAIVIKA

Mailing Address:
PO Box 3367
Crestline, CA 92325
Camp Address:
600 Playground Dr.
Crestline, CA 92322
Tel: 909.338.1102 / Fax: 909.338.2502
camppaivika@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *Overnight Summer Camp, Overnight Winter/Spring Camp Experiences, Mom's Retreat, Facility Rentals*



AbilityFirst (established in 1926 as the Crippled Children's Society) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit (Federal Tax ID #95-1690983) that provides programs and services to help children and adults with disabilities reach their full potential. To learn more, visit www.abilityfirst.org

AFTER SCHOOL/ ADULT DAY PROGRAMS

CLAREMONT CENTER
480 S. Indian Hill
Claremont, CA 91711
Tel: 909.621.4727 / Fax: 909.624.8388
afclaremont@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *After School Program, Aquatics*

EAST LOS ANGELES CENTER
154 N. Gage Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90063
Tel: 323.268.8178 / Fax: 323.268.2359
afeastla@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *After School Program*

GLENDALE CENTER
Pacific Avenue Education Center
440 West Lomita Ave.
Glendale CA 91205
Tel: 818.548.4677 / Fax: 818.548.9587
malcantar@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *After School Program*

JOAN & HARRY A. MIER CENTER
8090 Crenshaw Blvd.
Inglewood, CA 90305
Tel: 323.753.3101 / Fax: 323.753.5472
afinglewood@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *Afterschool program, ExploreAbility, Aquatics*

LAWRENCE L. FRANK CENTER
201 S. Kinneloa Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91107
Tel: 626.449.5661 / Fax: 626.449.1519
afpasadena@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *College to Career, After School Program, ExploreAbility*

LONG BEACH CENTER
3770 E. Willow St.
Long Beach, CA 90815
Tel: 562.426.6161 / Fax: 562.426.6148
aflongbeach@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *Adult Day Program, After School Program, Aquatics*

COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

**EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
LONG BEACH**
4811 Airport Plaza Dr., 2nd Floor
Long Beach, CA 90815
Tel: 562.570.3667 / Fax: 562.570.3670
employmentservices@abilityfirst.org

MANUFACTURING

789 North Fair Oaks Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91103
Tel: 626-396-1010

POSSABILITY PASADENA
789 North Fair Oaks Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91103
Tel 626-396-1010
employmentservices@abilityfirst.org

POSSABILITY LOS ANGELES
3756 Santa Rosalia Dr, Suite 601
Los Angeles, CA 90008
Tel: 213-748-7309
employmentservices@abilityfirst.org

RESIDENTIAL HOMES

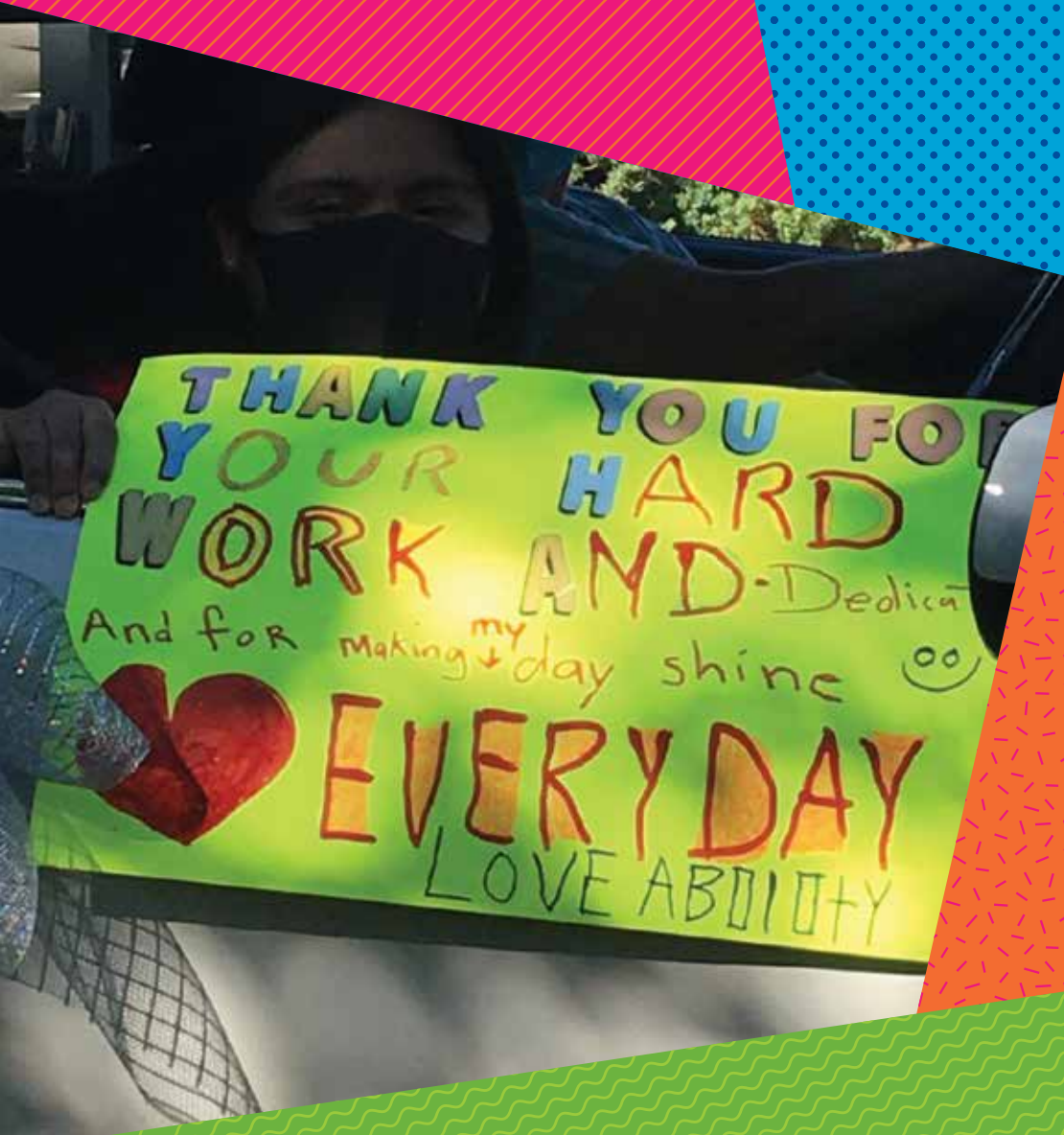
CROWN HOUSE
3055 E. Del Mar Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91107
Tel: 626.440.9090 / Fax: 626.440.0535
housing@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *Residential Housing
Facility License # 19220419*

SIERRA ROSE
3053 1/2 E. Del Mar Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91107
Tel: 626.578.0120
housing@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: *Residential Housing
Facility License # 197603944*



SERVING CHILDREN AND
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

789 North Fair Oaks Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91103



THANK YOU FOR
YOUR HARD
WORK AND DEDICATION
And for making my day shine ☺
EVERYDAY
LOVE ABILITY



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twitter.com/AbilityFirstLA



linkedin.com/company/abilityfirst