



## EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES...

**Empowering** children and adults with disabilities by providing programs that **support** and **cultivate** the skills they need to **successfully navigate** each transition in their lives.

As AbilityFirst reflects on the year behind us, we will continue our focus on programs that are proven to have the greatest impact on a person's success.

Our person-centered programs are grounded in individual choice, autonomy and community participation. They empower individuals with autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and other intellectual/developmental disabilities to discover what is important to them, and to develop the skills that are important for them to achieve their goals.

AbilityFirst programs empower children and adults to continue to:

- Identify and explore their interests and goals
- Effectively communicate their needs and wants
- Interact in a variety of new activities and environments
- Live healthy and active lifestyles

Some of these activities include:

- Socialization, exploration, and choice
- Learning new technology and computer skills
- Fostering independence and self-discovery
- Exploring the local community and volunteering
- Exercise and other physical activities

Join us in our commitment by making your year end donation today at [abilityfirst.org/donate](http://abilityfirst.org/donate)

### Happy Holidays from AbilityFirst!

789 North Fair Oaks Ave. Pasadena, CA 91103 | Tel: 626.396.1010 | Fax: 626.396.1021 | [info@abilityfirst.org](mailto:info@abilityfirst.org)

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](http://www.abilityfirst.org)



### Expanding possibilities for Winnie in Afterschool

Winnie has blossomed from a shy, quiet 6-year-old girl to become a gregarious, karaoke-singing teenager! **She is the center's "in-house cheerleader", encouraging her friends to succeed.** Winnie has learned to express her opinions and needs, and tells jokes and stories with self-confidence and poise.

### Expanding possibilities for Jesse in College to Career

College is a lot more complicated than high school – more classes, more people, more work, more time management issues, to name just a few. Jesse, a student in the College to Career program, has found that **an educational coach gives him the support and confidence he needs to deal with the challenges that come up along the way.** Jesse is a communications major at Pasadena City College.



### Expanding possibilities for Maria in PossAbility

Maria has discovered her inner artist through the AbilityFirst PossAbility program. Some of her creations were presented and sold at the recent PossAbility Art Gala, which benefited the artists and AbilityFirst. Maria says, **"I like doing art and selling my work. It makes me feel happy to see others buy my art and have a piece of it. I'm ready to make more art."**

### Expanding possibilities for Ivan in Supported Employment

Ivan recently obtained a new job at Superior Grocers. He has been working with a job coach in the AbilityFirst supported employment program as he completes his employer's training program and becomes familiar with the duties and routines of the position. **Ivan shares, "I like it...I am happy...I like working here."**



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# Leaders in Charity

## ABILITYFIRST

**Lori Gangemi**  
CEO



Lori Gangemi has been CEO of AbilityFirst since 2004 and has spearheaded its growth from a \$12 million to \$20 million organization.

She leads a staff of 270 employees across L.A. County who provide a variety of programs designed to help more than 1,700 children and adults with developmental disabilities achieve their personal best.

In 2020, AbilityFirst merged with FVO Solutions resulting in expanded programs. The organization also launched three new community-based programs between 2017 and 2020: College to Career, ExploreAbility and PossAbility.

Gangemi earned her bachelor's degree in communications from Washington State University and has a 35-year track record of success in the nonprofit arena.

For more than a decade, Gangemi has been active in Vistage, a CEO peer advisory group. She is also a longtime member of the Organization of Women Executives and the Los Angeles Coalition of Service Providers, a collaboration among organizations serving individuals with disabilities in L.A. County.



## ADVENTIST HEALTH GLENDALE FOUNDATION

**Elizabeth LaBorde**  
President of Philanthropy



In June 2021, Elizabeth LaBorde joined the Adventist Health Glendale Foundation as president of philanthropy.

In this role, LaBorde leads initiatives to enhance critical healthcare services for the community, including the successful completion of a \$2.65 million campaign for The Sam and Grace Carvajal Comprehensive Breast Center to ensure Adventist Health Glendale's 116-year history of healing and service to its communities can continue and expand.



## ARMORY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

**Leslie A. Ito**  
Executive Director



Leslie A. Ito is executive director of the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena.

Prior to this position, she was president and CEO of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, program director for Arts and Health at the California Community Foundation, and director of Grant Programs at the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

Earlier in her career, Ito served as executive director of Visual Communications and as program associate in the Media, Arts Culture Division at the Ford Foundation in New York. She currently serves as a community trustee for the Durfee Foundation.

A native of Pasadena and a Yonsei, fourth-generation Japanese American, Ito attended Stanford University Graduate School of Business' Executive Program for Nonprofit Leaders. She received a master's in Asian American Studies from UCLA and a bachelor's in American Studies from Mount Holyoke College. Ito and her partner, Steven Wong, have two teens and a timid Doberman.



## CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY PASADENA

**Patricia Ostiller**  
Executive Director



Patricia Ostiller serves as Executive Director of Cancer Support Community Pasadena. She joined the organization in 2015 as its Development Director and assumed her current position in February 2020.

She is passionate about serving those in the San Gabriel who are facing a cancer diagnosis. "We live in a shared community and it's important to take care of those who are ill. If everyone took care of their little corner of the world, imagine where we'd be. CSCP is my corner."

Patricia is committed to fostering a community of inclusion at CSCP where people of all races, ethnicities, and income levels can find free programs and services as they move forward with a cancer

diagnosis.

Born and raised in Indiana, Patricia holds a law degree from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles and earned a bachelor's degree at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

A resident of Altadena, she has been married to Steve Ostiller for 37 years, and they have two adult children, Nick and Kimberly.

