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AbilityFirst 2015 Stroll & Roll Raises \$575,000 To-Date for Programs Benefiting People With Disabilities

Los Angeles, CA – April 24, 2015 – The AbilityFirst 2015 Stroll & Roll fundraiser, held on the legendary Universal Studios backlot, raised \$575,000 to date to help provide quality programs and services to children and adults with physical and developmental disabilities. The annual event was presented by Comerica Bank.



“On behalf of all of us at AbilityFirst, I’d like to thank everyone that came out to join us at our Stroll & Roll fundraising event this year,” said Lori Gangemi, President and CEO of AbilityFirst “We could not have done this without our great sponsors, families, friends and each individual that contributed. Thank you for your help in continuing our mission in helping children and adults with physical and developmental disabilities realize their full potential. The money raised will support important and successful programs at our

various locations in the Greater Los Angeles area, as well as Camp Paivika in the San Bernardino National Forest.”

Approximately 1,800 people of all ages and more than 36 corporate sponsors participated in the organization’s largest fundraiser of the year. The overall target is to raise \$750,000 and with an outstanding matching challenge grant from the AS&F Foundation \$75,000. All contributions are now being matched dollar for dollar up to a maximum of \$75,000. With this extra support AbilityFirst anticipates reaching their overall goal of \$750,000 soon.

Participants ran, walked, rolled, and strolled through the iconic behind-the-scenes backlot, which has 30 sound stages and over 30 backlot locations. They viewed the numerous movie sets, met Universal Studios’ many celebrity characters, shopped at the AbilityFirst expo, relaxed in the expo’s beer garden, and spent the day among friends.

Whit Johnson and Daniella Guzman, co-anchors of NBC4’s “Today in LA” morning news team, welcomed the participants and sent them on their way around the backlot. Among the strollers and rollers were Crystal Egger and Holly Hannula, also from NBC4’s “Today in LA” morning news team, and AbilityFirst honorary chairpersons Jaclyn Smith and Lee Meriwether. Lee Meriwether is a former Miss America, the original “Today Girl” on NBC’s Today Show, and an actress who has starred and appeared in numerous TV shows and on the stage. Jaclyn Smith is an actress and businesswoman. She is best known as Kelly Garrett in the television series Charlie’s Angels.

NBC4 was the media sponsor and other sponsors included Nextera Energy, Platinum Equity First Solar, Jordana Cosmetics, NRG Energy, Quetico LLC, Skechers USA, Sun Power, Celestica, Chubb Group, Commerce Casino, DIRECTV, Long Beach Center Guild, SC Fuels, Tesoro, America Chung Nam, Brentwood Originals, CBB Bank, CFO Edge, OneBeacon Insurance Group,

Performance Team, Sheppard Mullin, The Word & Brown Companies, J. Yang and Family Foundation, and YS Garment.

About AbilityFirst

Established in 1926 [AbilityFirst](#), formerly Crippled Children’s Society of Southern California, provides programs and services to help children and adults with disabilities reach their full potential. Through 25 [locations](#) across Southern California, they offer a broad range of employment, recreational and socialization [programs](#) as well as accessible residential housing complexes and an accessible camp, [Camp Paivika](#), for both children and adults.

PHOTO CAPTION: NBC4 “Today in LA” morning news team - **L to R:** Daniella Guzman, Whit Johnson, Holly Hannula, Crystal Egger