



AbilityFirst College to Career Program Launches at Pasadena City College

First-of-its-Kind Program in Pasadena Area Will Coach Students through Their Higher Education Experience to Employment Opportunities in the Field of Their Choice

(PASADENA – August 22, 2016) AbilityFirst, which is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year, today announced the launch of their new College to Career program for people with disabilities. Currently, the program will exclusively include students at Pasadena City College with plans to expand to other campuses in the future. Young adults with developmental disabilities who demonstrate the desire and potential to succeed in a post-secondary educational environment will be provided support in order to accomplish their educational and future career goals.

“The AbilityFirst College to Career program is the first program of its kind in the Pasadena area for people with disabilities that promotes independence, self-advocacy and an opportunity to attend college with an end-goal to graduate with a degree or vocational certificate and gain competitive employment,” said AbilityFirst Chief Program Officer Keri Castaneda. “Our AbilityFirst coaches help each student successfully navigate the college experience - from choosing a major, to registration, class attendance, and effective study plans, right through to graduation and employment. We’re thrilled to be partnering with Pasadena City College and the Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center for the implementation of this program and I can’t wait to witness all the future successes of our students.”



Inaugural AbilityFirst College to Career program cohort in front of the Pasadena City College reflecting pools. Pictures left to right are: Nicolas Coca, Jackson Sukys, Lashante Curry, Eduardo Guzman, Heidi Garcia, German "Ricky" Becerra. Photo: Nolan Scott for AbilityFirst.

Throughout the program, AbilityFirst Educational Coaches will empower participants to identify personal and educational goals; create a plan to achieve those goals; enroll in appropriate classes to meet educational and vocational goals; and, access college and community resources in order to reach their personal best.

“At Pasadena City College, our students come first and these supplemental services offered by AbilityFirst are critical for many of our students,” said Dr. Ketmani Kouanchao, Associate Dean of Special Services, Pasadena City College. “AbilityFirst brings in years of applied experience and expertise in the field that will strengthen and support our students academically as well as on a day-to-day basis.”

[More pictures and high resolution version of the attached photo are available by contacting communications@abilityfirst.org](mailto:communications@abilityfirst.org) or calling 626.396.1010. Sheri A. Lunn, Sr. Director of Communications & Marketing.

About AbilityFirst

[AbilityFirst](http://AbilityFirst.org) provides a variety of programs designed to help people with disabilities achieve their personal best throughout their lives. We do this by: creating targeted programming to help an individual successfully transition from childhood to adult life; providing employment preparation, training, and experience; building social connections and independence; and, offering both our participants and their caregivers an opportunity to refresh and recharge through our recreational activities.