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**AbilityFirst Announces Gift of $12 Million from AS&F Foundation**

*The funding will help to establish an endowment for Camp Paivika*

**(PASADENA, CA)** *July 31, 2017* - AbilityFirst announces today a $12million gift from the AS&F Foundation to create an endowment for Camp Paivika, a fully accessible camp in the San Bernardino mountains providing overnight summer programming for individuals with disabilities.

The gift was announced in front of more than 300 attendees including campers, counselors and staff, alumni and supporters this past weekend at Camp Paivika’s 70th Anniversary event. AS&F Foundation trustees Carol and John Llewellyn were on hand to present the check to AbilityFirst CEO Lori Gangemi and camp director, Kelly Kunsek. Gangemi shares, “We are absolutely overjoyed with this gift from the AS&F Foundation. The endowment will help to provide a resource for sustainability for Camp Paivika so we can continue to help hundreds of individuals each year to make new friends, try new activities and become more independent, all while enjoying a traditional camp experience.”

Camp Paivika was established in 1947 as one of the first fully-accessible camps in the nation. It has helped tens of thousands of children and adults with disabilities enjoy traditional camp activities that are creatively adapted to enable fun and encourage participation from all the campers. For 70 years, Camp Paivika has been guided by the principle, “can” and not, “can’t” and the staff makes sure that no one is ever left out. Families and caregivers of campers also enjoy the opportunity to have respite from the rigors and challenges of providing around the clock care.

 “Camp Paivika is a special place - not just for campers but for all who are touched by their shared experiences here at camp,” said AS&F Foundation Trustee Carol Llewellyn. “Magic happens at Camp Paivika and we believe this gift will help to ensure that magic continues for many years to come.”

The Camp Paivika Endowment will be used primarily for the upkeep, care, maintenance and replacement, including any capital projects and operations at Camp.

Photo caption: Camp Director, Kelly Kunsek, AS&F Foundation Trustee John Llewellyn, AbilityFirst CEO Lori Gangemi, AS&F Foundation Trustee, Carol Llewellyn, campers Josh and Sara Souder.

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**About AS&F Foundation**

Hubert Eaton founded the AS&F Foundation in 1951 as the Forest Lawn Foundation, dedicated to "God and Humanity." Eaton is credited as the founder of Forest Lawn Memorial-Park. In 2012, the Foundation's name was changed to AS&F Foundation to emphasize the independence from the non-profit Forest Lawn Memorial-Parks & Mortuaries. The AS&F Foundation’s principal sources of funding have been from a tithing policy of the American Security & Fidelity Corporation and Eaton’s estate. In early 2017, the trustees approved a plan to sunset the AS&F Foundation by distributing all assets in transformative grants. The Foundation has awarded millions of dollars in grants to support transformational camping experiences for disadvantaged youth in Los Angeles County.

**About AbilityFirst**

For more than 90 years AbilityFirst has been providing programs and services throughout Greater Los Angeles for children and adults with disabilities. AbilityFirst provides a variety of programs designed to help people with disabilities achieve their personal best through their lives. This is accomplished through targeted programming to help an individual successfully transition from childhood to adult life, providing employment preparation and training, building social connections and fostering independence while offering both our participants and their caregivers an opportunity to recharge through our recreational activities, including a fully accessible summer camp, Camp Paivika. More at www.abilityfirst.org

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