



SERVING CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PRESS CONTACT: Rebecca Haussling**

**EMAIL: [RHaussling@AbilityFirst.org](mailto:RHaussling@AbilityFirst.org)**

**TEL: 626-639-1745**

**ABILITYFIRST EXCEEDS FUNDRAISING GOALS WITH MORE THAN \$270,000 IN FUNDS RAISED  
AND 450 GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE 44<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FALL**

**PASADENA – (October 22, 2018)** AbilityFirst raised a record breaking \$270,000 at its annual Festival of Fall last Sunday, October 14, 2018. Plus this year's event had more attendees than ever before and introduced a new segment, "*Lights Camera...AbilityFirst*" featuring students from College to Career, an individualized educational program where students are supported in an academic or career-focused setting with the goal of transitioning to a job in the community.

Students entertained guests with a short performance highlighting AbilityFirst's various programs including after-school enrichment, adult community integration, supported employment and a fully accessible overnight camp, Camp Paivika.

"Contributions from this year's Festival of Fall will positively impact AbilityFirst participants' lives. The money raised will be used for programs to help participants build independent living and social skills and gain confidence, while helping participants develop skills that are important for them to achieve their personal goals," shared AbilityFirst CEO Lori Gangemi. "We could not do this important work without the help from our donors, corporate partners, volunteers and the generosity from so many supporters in the community."

Festival of Fall featured dozens of delicious food and wine vendors including Sushi Roku, Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, Gale's, Bristol Farms and Blaze Pizza, with AsomBroso Fine Tequila, New Belgium Brewing Company, Loring Winery and San Antonio Winery.

Highlights from the live auction were a 2-night stay in a New York City luxury hotel plus two pairs of the best seats in the house for "Frozen" live on Broadway, a 7-night stay in luxurious accommodations in Mexico and an adorable puppy named, "Marshmallow" from Hand in Paw Rescue. The event was emceed by veteran journalist and co-anchor of CBS2 "This Morning," Jeff Michael.

Honorees included Assemblymember Chris Holden, longtime AbilityFirst supporters Lena Longo and the Longo family along with the Los Angeles Chargers. Welcome remarks by Co-Chairs Steve Brockmeyer and actress, Jane Kaczmarek rounded out the evening's festivities.

###

### **About AbilityFirst**

AbilityFirst provides a variety of programs that have a common mission: to help people with disabilities realize their full potential throughout their lives. As we celebrate more than 90 years of service, we are focusing our efforts on programs that are proven to have the greatest impact on a person's success: basic life skills enhancement through our children's and adult programs; higher education and employment readiness; and, independent living and social and recreational programming. AbilityFirst looks beyond disabilities, focuses on the capabilities of each individual and breaks through any preconceived limitations, opening up a world of possibilities. Preparation, socialization, communication, education – all leading to helping people achieve their personal best. More at [www.AbilityFirst.org](http://www.AbilityFirst.org)