



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ABILITYFIRST 44TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FALL, "LIGHTS...CAMERA...ABILITYFIRST!" ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14 at 5PM TO BENEFIT INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Annual fundraiser will feature dozens of epicurean tastings

PASADENA – (August 27, 2018) Now in its 44th year, the AbilityFirst Festival of Fall is an evening event showcasing some of Pasadena’s best food and drink culture. The event offers guests the chance to sample the cuisines from some of the most popular restaurants in the greater Pasadena community including Blaze Pizza, Bristol Farms, Gale’s Restaurant, Roy’s Restaurant, Ruth’s Chris Steakhouse, Sushi Roku plus libations from AsomBroso Fine Tequilas, New Belgium Brewing Co, San Antonio Winery and Loring Winery.

This year Festival of Fall brings a new and exciting segment to the event, “*Lights... Camera...AbilityFirst!*” a red carpet and paparazzi experience with AbilityFirst College to Career students and theatre students delighting guests with a brief performance highlighting programs to help people realize their full potential throughout their lives.

AbilityFirst will also honor longtime supporters, Lena Longo and the Longo family with the Vision Award. “AbilityFirst is thrilled to honor Lena and the Longo family at this year’s event,” said AbilityFirst CEO Lori Gangemi. “We have been fortunate to know the Longo family for more than three decades and this award is in recognition of their unwavering commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities in our community.”

The Los Angeles Chargers will be recognized with the AbilityFirst Community Service Award, for their dedication and generosity in helping children and adults with disabilities.

The annual fundraiser will return to the historic Laurabelle A. Robinson estate in Pasadena, on the grounds of its award-winning gardens overlooking the Arroyo Seco.

The event benefits AbilityFirst programs and services helping individuals with disabilities achieve their personal best including after-school enrichment, community-integration, job coaching and development and Camp Paivika, a fully-accessible overnight camp in the San Bernardino forest. Since 1926, AbilityFirst has provided a variety of programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities, to build social connections, gain valuable life skills and learn independent living.

The 2018 Festival of Fall Steering Committee is co-chaired by Steve Brockmeyer and Jane Kaczmarek and led by community leaders Nella Abelson, Kris Bacani, Mark Fedde, Joseph Longo, Paige R. Parrish and Greg Wood.

Top sponsors include AEG, Banc of California, Bolton & Company, East West Bank, Longo Toyota Lexus, Roscoe Moss Company, John and Jennifer Kelly, Andy and Julian Rooke, Union Pacific, Wells Fargo, Wescom Credit Union, Western Asset, along with Beverly Hills Rotary Club, HomeStreet Bank, Nella Abelson and Diane Danis, The Longo family, Universal Studio's Hollywood Discover a Star Foundation and Wendy Lees and Tom Boyle. Media partnerships include CBS2, Outlook Newspapers and Pasadena Now.

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About AbilityFirst

AbilityFirst pioneered some of the first community services in California for children with disabilities. Highlights from our 92 year history include: setting a model standard in accessibility with the design and construction of one of the first fully accessible camps in the nation; opening one of the first vocational training programs in the country for adults with disabilities; being a forerunner in supported employment, helping adults with developmental disabilities succeed in competitive community jobs; and leading a statewide effort to sponsor and secure passage of Senate Bill 309 which ensures that young adults with developmental disabilities can attend after school programs throughout high school. At AbilityFirst, we look beyond disabilities, focus on capabilities and expand possibilities. For more information, visit us online at AbilityFirst.org