



Annual Report | 2019

Embracing Change

Looking **beyond disabilities** | Focusing on **capabilities** | Expanding **possibilities**



 **AbilityFirst™**
SERVING CHILDREN AND
ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

Mission

AbilityFirst provides programs and services to help children and adults with disabilities **realize their full potential** throughout their lives.



Values

Trust | Belonging | Personal Best

Vision

At AbilityFirst, our vision is of a society that **values each individual** and provides the opportunity for all people to lead full and productive lives.



Embracing Change

Dear friends,

Over the last year AbilityFirst was at the forefront of positive changes in our community. Two years ago, we committed that by 2020, all of our programs would be person-centered and provide our participants with the fullest access possible to their communities. As part of that commitment, AbilityFirst now offers a vibrant array of person-centered, interest-based programs in the community.

In 2019, we grew our **College to Career** program for students attending Pasadena City College and **ExploreAbility**, a community integration program that has a site-based component, and launched **PossAbility**. PossAbility is an entirely community-based program where adults are empowered to set and pursue personal goals with an emphasis on employment readiness and increased community connections. All of these programs offer participants strong support from well-trained, caring AbilityFirst staff.

I know you'll enjoy reading about Elder Cervantes working at Skyspace (pg 5) and checking in on Mike Marquiz, who is currently working at The Shredders (pg 6).

2019 was also a milestone year for our **'Rainbows for AbilityFirst'** Luncheon and Fashion Show in Long Beach. As we look forward to the future of this beloved annual fundraiser and celebrate its record-breaking year, we are featuring a profile on the Long Beach Center Guild (pg 7). For more than 40 years, these dedicated women have been united with a common goal of raising awareness and much needed funds for the programs and services at our Long Beach Center.

Change is nothing new here at AbilityFirst. Our founders were cutting edge advocates for disability rights back in 1926. Since then, AbilityFirst pioneered some of the very first community services in California for children and adults. 2019 was no exception with new programmatic initiatives that promote our commitment to look beyond disabilities, focus on capabilities and expand possibilities for all people with disabilities.

Thank you for being part of our journey.



Lori Gangemi
Chief Executive Officer



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Ways to Give



Change a Life, Make Your Gift Today!

For more than 94 years, AbilityFirst has helped children and adults with disabilities realize their full potential. To do this we rely on the generous support of individual donors, volunteers and community leaders to support **our mission of looking beyond disabilities, focusing on capabilities and expanding possibilities.**

Ongoing fundraising has made it possible for AbilityFirst to touch the lives of more than 2,000 individuals and their families each year. This generosity has been the foundation by which AbilityFirst has made a positive impact on so many people with disabilities in the greater Los Angeles area.

DONATE ONLINE

YOU can help make a difference by making your tax deductible donation today to AbilityFirst.
www.abilityfirst.org/donate

TEXT TO GIVE

TEXT AbilityFirst to 44321 .

DONATE A GIFT OF STOCK

We accept gifts of stock and appreciated securities.

MATCHING GIFT

Many employers sponsor generous matching gift programs that match your charitable contribution!

PLANNED GIVING

All donors who make a planned gift to AbilityFirst will be immediately recognized by our Legacy Society. Contact Chief Development Officer Christopher Kealey for more information at **donate@abilityfirst.org** or **626-243-4844**

GIFTS IN TRIBUTE OR MEMORIAL

Acknowledge a special occasion or honor a loved one with a memorial gift to AbilityFirst, and we will send a note to the person being honored.

DONATE A VEHICLE

AbilityFirst partners with CARS to help you turn a vehicle you no longer need into a gift to support our mission. Learn more by visiting:
<http://www.careasy.org/nonprofit/abilityfirst>

MAKE A GIFT BY MAIL

Please make checks payable to AbilityFirst and mail to:
**AbilityFirst, 1300 East Green Street,
Pasadena, CA 91106**

For more information on how you can support the programs and services of AbilityFirst, please contact:

***Development Department 626-243-4845 or
donate@abilityfirst.org***

Success Story

Elder Cervantes



Even the sky's no limit for Elder

After almost five years participating in various AbilityFirst programs, Elder Cervantes knew he was ready for a new challenge. With that in mind, he joined the Supported Employment program in August 2019.

Elder had some challenges, but with his strong work ethic and determination was able to overcome them with support from his case manager, Jackie.

Yet most importantly, Elder displayed that he's a great worker with a good attitude. To combat his issues, his case manager, Jackie, concentrated on establishing a routine. They worked on interview and behavioral skills regularly, going over the same items he was struggling with until he felt comfortable with them. To improve phone etiquette, Jackie or the floor supervisor would call him randomly to practice how he conducted himself on the call and collected the information he needed.

Once Elder and Jackie felt more comfortable with his skillset, it was time to begin the job search in earnest.

They began by searching for internships. Eventually, Elder learned there was a job fair and expressed interest in attending. He went with Jackie and met representatives from Skyspace LA, an open-air observation deck with 360-degree views of Los Angeles and numerous unique activities.

After the job fair, Elder was offered a position as a dishwasher at Skyspace—and another position as a part-time worker for ABM Maintenance. Already both have been impressed with his work. Skyspace has even offered Elder the opportunity to take a new position as a Tour Ambassador five days a week, which he happily accepted. Right now, he's working both jobs and loving it, all thanks to his hard work and preparation with AbilityFirst.



“Elder enjoys having the chance to work in different positions at Skyspace and his managers have boasted about his strong work ethic. He is always determined to complete his job responsibilities and loves watching the public enjoy the attraction.”

— Jackie, Case Manager

Success Story

Michael Marquiz



Michael: Proof that practice makes perfect

Armed with great communication skills and a fantastic work ethic, Michael Marquiz was ready to look for a job!

To help Mike find the right position, he joined the AbilityFirst Supported Employment program and he starting working with his job developer, Rosa.

Throughout the process, Michael and Rosa worked on developing job skills, identifying what type of position would fit his skillset and personality best, and prepared for interviews. As Michael struggled with retention and memory issues, Rosa realized hands-on training would be the best way to help him progress.

During training and interview prep, they focused on task repetition: practicing eye contact and voice projection, focusing on relevant topics, and giving concise answers to questions.

“I’m thankful AbilityFirst helped me get the best job I’ve ever had! I enjoy going to work every day!”

– Michael Marquiz

While searching for positions that Michael may be interested in, they came across The Shredders, a company that not only was a business partner for AbilityFirst, but they also handled full-service product and document destruction and happened to have a position available for maintenance and shredding assistance. So Michael applied and after the second interview, he was hired!

But the story doesn’t end there: to help him succeed, Michael and Rosa continued with the winning strategy that had helped Michael get his new job. Repetition, repetition, repetition.

When Michael had trouble remembering how to open the shredding bins with a key at his new job, he and Rosa practiced the repetitive motion of unlocking the bins which has helped him to learn how to open them without assistance.



Let's hear it for Long Beach!

The Long Beach Center Guild's annual "Rainbows for AbilityFirst" Fashion Show and Luncheon—held at the Grand Event Center on October 19—raised \$104,000, the highest fundraising number in the event's 41 year history. The Guild attribute the event's spectacular success to a number of factors. Topping the list is teamwork.

Long Beach Center Guild President Linda Silver credits, "our amazing Ways and Means Chairs, Julie Taboada and Mary Alice Braly" with spearheading the effort, which included silent and live auctions, guest speakers, ABC7 reporter Veronica Miracle performing emcee duties, and Long Beach Chamber of Commerce CEO Randy Gordon serving as auctioneer.

"We learn with each passing year what auction items are most popular," shares Caroline Hansen, "we focus on the accomplishments of AbilityFirst and what the Long Beach Center and its staff do for the community. We always have a speaker—usually a parent or family member—who speaks from the heart about their experiences. This year's guest speaker was Bri Nikoletich, sister of adult participant Katie Nikoletich."

Proceeds from the event help to fund outings in the community, special events, and playground equipment for the center.

"The Long Beach Center Guild was started in 1978 by a group of doctors' wives looking for a local nonprofit to support," says Caroline Hansen. "They selected AbilityFirst and started raising funds from the very beginning and we have become more involved in the center's activities over the years."

That involvement has strengthened the bond between the Center and the Guild—and it's what keeps members coming back each year. "It brings joy to my heart to see how the AbilityFirst participants enjoy their days at the Center," shares Caroline Hansen "And it brightens my day to see their beautiful smiles."

With more than 600 nonprofits in Long Beach competing for the same donor dollar, fundraising is an ongoing challenge. Recruiting new active members is another priority for the Guild. "Especially younger, more active members. With an organization that was founded over 40 years ago, and with some of the original members still on board, the average age tends to be older," shares Silver. "We are trying to interest younger people in the organization, and we're scheduling some of our meetings in the evening instead, to accommodate our members who work during the day."

Encouraging existing members to get more involved in the daily life of the Center is another goal. It's only through participation in the Rainbows for AbilityFirst and visiting the Long Beach Center that one can really appreciate what is being accomplished every day. To join the Long Beach Guild, or learn more email April Stover at astover@abilityfirst.org

"We focus on the accomplishments of AbilityFirst and what the Long Beach Center and its staff do for the community."

— Caroline Hansen, Long Beach Center Guild



AbilityFirst Legacy Society Members

The Legacy Society recognizes those visionary and caring individuals who have included AbilityFirst in their estate plans. Their commitment and dedication are shining examples of generosity that will help AbilityFirst continue its efforts to help children and adults with developmental disabilities realize their full potential! By becoming a member of the AbilityFirst Legacy Society, you can **celebrate today the transformations you will help to make possible in the future.**

Anonymous

Mary Alice and Bob Braly

Dean Carr

Josh Chan

Raymond De Peters

Joetta Di Bella

Blanka and Jim Douglass

Robert Elftman

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For more information on Planned Giving or how to become a member of the Legacy Society, please contact our Development Officer Christopher Kealey at donate@abilityfirst.org or 626-243-4844

Donors Making a Change

Our donors support and generosity helps to sustain and ensure the future of AbilityFirst. Donations from individuals and foundations listed here help AbilityFirst participants to look beyond disabilities, focus on capabilities and expand possibilities!

GUARDIAN \$250,000 AND ABOVE

Estate of Selma E. Andrews
Estate of Albert Fuller Crooks
Estate of I.J. Nast

BENEFACITOR \$100,000 AND ABOVE

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* Multi-year Pledge

** Gift in Kind

This annual report covers the fiscal year January 2019 - December 2019. Gifts received after December 31, 2019 will be acknowledged in the next annual report. We have made every effort to ensure that the information included is accurate. If an error has been made please accept our apology and contact Chief Development Officer Christopher Kealey at 626-396-1010

2019 Unaudited Financial Statements (\$ in thousands)

REVENUE AND SUPPORT		January 1 - December 31, 2019	
Program Revenue	Amount		%
Community Centers	\$5,513		20%
Business Services	\$1,919		7%
Housing Services	\$637		2%
Camping Services	\$572		2%
Supported Employment	\$1,996		7%
Fund Development			
General	\$2,467		9%
Restricted Donations	\$1,083		4%
Legacies and Bequests	\$1,665		6%
Other Revenue			
Facility & Other Revenue	\$458		2%
Investment Income	\$10,574		39%
Change in Value - Trusts	576		2%
Gain on Sale of Asset	(\$38)		-0%
TOTAL REVENUE/SUPPORT	\$27,422		100%
OPERATING EXPENSE			
Program Services	\$13,604		77%
Support Services			
Management & General	\$2,908		17%
Fund Development	\$1,076		6%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$17,588		100%
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$9,834		

Locations

AbilityFirst person-centered programs are grounded in **individual choice, autonomy, and community participation**. They empower individuals to discover what is important to them in their lives, and to develop the skills that are important for them to achieve their goals.

HEADQUARTERS

1300 East Green St.
Pasadena, CA 91106
Tel: 626.396.1010
Fax: 626.396.1021
info@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services:
College to Career Program

CAMP PAIVIKA

Mailing Address:
PO Box 3367
Crestline, CA 92325
Camp Address:
600 Playground Dr.
Crestline, CA 92322
Tel: 909.338.1102
Fax: 909.338.2502
camppaivika@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: Overnight Summer
Camp, Overnight Winter/Spring
Camp Experiences, Mom's Retreat,
Facility Rentals

CLAREMONT CENTER

480 S. Indian Hill
Claremont, CA 91711
Tel: 909.621.4727
Fax: 909.624.8388
afclaremont@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: After School Program,
Aquatics program

EAST LOS ANGELES CENTER

154 N. Gage Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90063
Tel: 323.268.8178
Fax: 323.268.2359
afeastla@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: After School Program

GLENDALE CENTER

440 West Lomita Ave.
Glendale, CA 91205
Tel: 818.548.4677
Fax: 818.548.9587
malcantar@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: After School Program

JOAN & HARRY A. MIER CENTER

8090 Crenshaw Blvd.
Inglewood, CA 90305
Tel: 323.753.3101
Fax: 323.753.5472
afinglewood@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: Adult Day Program, After
School Program, Community Integration
Program, Aquatics

LAWRENCE L. FRANK CENTER

201 S. Kinneloa Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91107
Tel: 626.449.5661
Fax: 626.449.1519
afpasadena@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: After School Program

LONG BEACH CENTER

3770 E. Willow Street
Long Beach, CA 90815
Tel: 562.426.6161
Fax: 562.426.6148
aflongbeach@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: Adult Day Program,
After School Program, Aquatics

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES LONG BEACH

3447 Atlantic Ave., 3rd Floor
Long Beach, CA 90807
Tel: 562.570.3667
Fax: 562.570.3670
employmentservices@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: Employment Services

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PASADENA

789 N Fair Oaks Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91103
Tel: 626.768.7192
employmentservices@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: Employment Services

CROWN HOUSE

3055 E. Del Mar Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91107
Tel: 626.440.9090
Fax: 626.440.0535
housing@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: Residential Housing

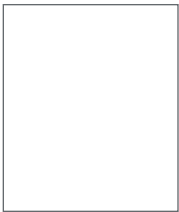
SIERRA ROSE

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AbilityFirst (established in 1926 as the Crippled Children's Society) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit (Federal Tax ID #95-1690983) that provides programs and services to help children and adults with disabilities reach their full potential. To learn more, visit www.abilityfirst.org





1300 East Green St.
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