

AbilityFirst Celebrates Merger With Ribbon-Cutting

With 95 years of experience and more than 50 years in Pasadena, AbilityFirst (formerly known as the Crippled Children's Society) celebrated its merger with FVO Solutions, Inc. (formerly known as Foothill Vocational Opportunities) at a ribbon-cutting event recently at AbilityFirst's Fair Oaks location in Pasadena.

By joining forces, AbilityFirst and FVO Solutions are uniquely positioned to deliver critical and transformational support services to an expanded population of more than 2,000 people with developmental disabilities and their families throughout Los Angeles County.

"This merger has allowed us to expand each of our unique services while ensuring that people with disabilities and their families have a wider access to a variety of programs that can help to transform their lives. It has been a truly remarkable experience so far and we look forward to what the future holds for our united organizations," said AbilityFirst CEO Lori Gangemi.

The ribbon-cutting celebration took place at the same location of the AbilityFirst Manufacturing, Supported Employment and PossAbility programs. This program was made possible by the merger because it combined FVO Solutions' enterprising manufacturing services with AbilityFirst's innovative, person-centered employment and community-based programs.

Prior to the ribbon cutting, Gangemi welcomed guests and

proclamations were presented by U.S. Rep. Judy Chu and Pasadena City Councilman John J. Kennedy. Certificates of recognition were presented by field representatives from the offices of state Sen. Anthony Portantino, Assemblymember Chris Holden and Mayor Victor Gordo. AbilityFirst's leadership, board of directors, the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce and donors were in attendance. After the ribbon cutting, guests were given private tours of the manufacturing floor.

The combined organization is led by Gangemi and remains headquartered on Green Street in Pasadena.

"AbilityFirst looks beyond disabilities, focuses on capabilities and expands possibilities," a spokesperson said.

To learn more about AbilityFirst, visit abilityfirst.org.



Photos courtesy AbilityFirst

Pictured are AbilityFirst board members Steve Brockmeyer, David Saeta, Congresswoman Judy Chu, AbilityFirst board chair Wendy Lees, CEO Lori Gangemi, Richard R. Frank, Mary Spellman, Lauren Hom and Willan Johnson.



Ann Hickambottom, a field representative for Assemblymember Chris Holden; AbilityFirst Board Chair Wendy Lees; Congresswoman Judy Chu; AbilityFirst CEO Lori Gangemi; Vannia de la Cuba, a field representative for Pasadena Mayor Victor Gordo; Dominick Correy, field representative for state Sen. Anthony Portantino; Pasadena Councilmember John J. Kennedy and Susana Porras, city of Pasadena district liaison

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