



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ABILITYFIRST ANNOUNCES JULIE TUGEND AS INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



(Pasadena, CA – November 13, 2023) AbilityFirst announces today Julie Tugend has joined the team as interim Chief Executive Officer. Julie replaces Lori Gangemi, who recently left the organization after nearly 20 years, for a new opportunity. In her role, Julie will guide the organization through its leadership transition, working closely with the Board of Directors and the executive leadership team until a new CEO has been appointed.

“I am thrilled to join AbilityFirst,” says Julie, “an organization that is well-respected in the community because of the tremendous difference it makes in the lives of so many children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.”

Julie is an accomplished management consultant and executive coach with over 30 years’ experience working in philanthropy, government, and the nonprofit sector. Her expertise includes organizational development, board governance, team building, staff development, conflict resolution, public policy, and writing/editing.

Julie has supported leadership transitions in various organizations including the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, California Association of Mental Health Authorities, and Vista del Mar Family Services.

Prior to starting her consulting practice, Julie served as Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for the California Endowment, where she oversaw day-to-day operations of the \$3.5 billion foundation.

About AbilityFirst

AbilityFirst offers programs designed to strengthen and cultivate skills that give individuals the necessary tools to successfully navigate each transition in life. This includes building social connections and independence, college coaching, employment preparation, training and experience along with fun and engaging activities to empower children and adults with developmental disabilities to achieve their personal best. To learn more visit www.abilityfirst.org.

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