

AbilityFirst







Dear AbilityFirst Friends,

Since I joined AbilityFirst last year, I've been touched by the many ways we support individuals with disabilities and their families. We focus on capabilities and possibilities while challenging the stigmas and barriers that impede some individuals from achieving their full potential. For many, the personalized support we provide is life-changing.

In that spirit, the theme of this year's report is: "Access, Advocacy & Action," reflecting AbilityFirst's commitment to:

- providing access to opportunities for personal growth and discovery
- advocating for individuals with disabilities and teaching them how to self-advocate
- taking action to improve lives.

The stories on pages 8-11 highlight the transformative power of AbilityFirst's programs, which are tailored to an individual's needs. You'll learn about some of our participants, who are thriving with the support of AbilityFirst staff and person-centered programs.

You'll also find inspiring stories of a corporate partner, Claremont-based Sanctuary Coffee, and AbilityFirst board member Malcolm Coronel, who describes a lifelong connection to individuals with disabilities.

AbilityFirst was built almost 100 years ago on the ethos of possibility. That resonates with all of us today, including our generous donors, board members, foundations, and corporate partners.

We are grateful for your continued support and look forward to connecting with many of you at AbilityFirst events throughout the year.

Sincerely.

Sergio Rizzo-Fontanesi, Ph.D., LCSW

AbilityFirst President and CEO

Executive Leadership

Sergio Rizzo-Fontanesi, Ph.D., LCSW President and Chief Executive Officer

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Courtney Jurado Chief Development Officer

Michuan Fleming Chief People Officer

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AbilityFirst supports individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their families, by focusing on capabilities and expanding possibilities.

We create a welcoming environment where participants feel they belong and are valued. Each person is supported to achieve their personal best, from childhood through adulthood.

Our programs provide social connection, confidence-building experiences, employment training and coaching, and engaging activities that offer families an opportunity to refresh and recharge.

We ensure equitable access to our services, regardless of income level, race/ethnicity or language.

LOCATIONS

ADMINISTRATION

AbilityFirst
789 N. Fair Oaks Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91103
Tel: 626-396-1010
info@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: Administration,
PossAbility Adult Day Program,
Employment Services

PROGRAM CENTERS

Claremont Center
480 S. Indian Hill Blvd.
Claremont, CA 91711
Tel: 909-621-4727
afclaremont@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: After School
Program, Employment Services,
PossAbility Adult Community
Integration Program
Facility License: #191501798

East Los Angeles Center

154 N. Gage Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90063
Tel: 323-268-8178
afeastla@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: ExploreAbility
Adult Day Program
Facility License: #198603651

Inglewood -Joan & Harry A. Mier Center

8090 Crenshaw Blvd.
Inglewood, CA 90305
Tel: 323-753-3101
afinglewood@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: ExploreAbility
Adult Day Program, Adult After Care
Program, Community Aquatics
Facility License: #191601509

Long Beach Center

3770 E. Willow St.
Long Beach, CA 90815
Tel: 562-426-6161
aflongbeach@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: ExploreAbility
Adult Day Program, After School
Program, Community Aquatics,
Employment Services
Facility Licenses: #191600097,

Pasadena -Lawrence L. Frank Center

#191600444

201 S. Kinneloa Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91107
Tel: 626-449-5661
afpasadena@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: ExploreAbility
Adult Day Program, After School
Program, College to Career Program
Facility Licenses: #191223376,
#198602059



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Claremont - Employment Services

480 S. Indian Hill Blvd.
Claremont, CA 91711
Tel: 909-621-4727
employmentservices@abilityfirst.org

Long Beach - Employment Services

3770 E. Willow St. Long Beach, CA 90815 Tel: 562-426-6161 employmentservices@abilityfirst.org Pasadena -Employment Services

789 N. Fair Oaks Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91103
Tel: 626-396-1010
employmentservices@abilityfirst.org

POSSABILITY LOS ANGELES PossAbility Adult Community
Integration Office

3751 S. Hill St., Suite 217 Los Angeles, CA 90007 employmentservices@abilityfirst.org

PossAbility Pasadena is located at AbilityFirst's administrative office in Pasadena (see address on page 2).

CAMP PAIVIKA

Mailing Address:
PO Box 3367
Crestline, CA 92325
Camp Address:
600 Playground Dr.
Crestline, CA 92322
Tel: 909-338-1102
camppaivika@abilityfirst.org
On-site Services: Overnight Summer
and Winter/Spring Camp Experiences,
Mom's Retreat, Facility Rentals

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Social Recreation programs encompass a variety of interests while offering a fun atmosphere for adults. Activities include parties and dances, going out to dinner and a show, gardening, swimming, and the ever-popular Club 626 at the Lawrence L. Frank Center in Pasadena.

ExploreAbility is an adult day and community integration program. It helps adults explore and identify what is important to them, develop the skills necessary to achieve their goals, and be involved in the community through volunteering and community activities.

PossAbility is intended for adults who want to enhance their skills and independence and be active members of the community. Individuals in the program are empowered to set and pursue personal goals with an emphasis on employment readiness and increased community connections, including volunteering.

Employment Services

provide adults with disabilities the individualized support they need to find and retain employment in competitive job markets in their communities, including job



placement, job coaching, paid internships, and work experience programs for youth. By partnering with local businesses, we ensure that job development aligns with the specific needs of employers while leveraging the strengths and interests of individuals.

The **Community Aquatics** program offers warm-water exercise classes that are ideal for promoting joint flexibility, range of motion, and muscle tone. Group

and private swim lessons, as well as open swim times for the entire community, are also offered.

College to Career is a community-based program for students who want to go to college and gain the skills, training, and education to achieve their academic and career goals. The multi-year program begins with a self-discovery and community exploration component to help students identify and develop a plan to achieve their goals. It continues with a community college education program, along with services and support to help students succeed. Upon completion of the academic component, in the final stage of the program individuals may transition to community jobs, internships, or volunteer programs as they begin their career journey.

After school and summer programs provide a nurturing environment for school-age youth. Our well-trained and caring staff provide opportunities for experiences that encourage socialization, exploration, and making choices. Participants enjoy an enriching program that also provides personal care (including feeding, changing, transferring, etc.) while supporting personal growth and discovery.











Located in the beautiful San Bernardino National Forest, **Camp Paivika** offers summer programs for children and adults with disabilities. These programs provide a traditional camp experience with a high level of support

and an emphasis on personal discovery. One of the first fully accessible camps in the United States, Camp Paivika has helped thousands of children and adults with disabilities make friends, try new activities, and become more

confident and independent. As campers enjoy their Camp Paivika experience, families and caregivers can take a break from caregiving, knowing that their loved ones are safe, well-supported, and having fun.

2024 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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1,586 Individuals served
+8% from previous year

103 New participants

261 Campers at Camp Paivika

PROGRAM GROWTH

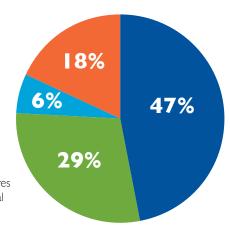
+30% ExploreAbility & PossAbility

+19% Camp Paivika

% change from 2023

Participant Disabilities

- Autism
- Intellectual Disability
- Epilepsy/5th Category*/Other
- Cerebral Palsy
 - * 5th Category is any developmental disability (other than Intellectual Disability, Autism, Epilepsy, or Cerebral Palsy) that is similar or closely related to intellectual disability, or which requires treatment similar to that required for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Down's Syndrome is included in this category.



Participant Age Range

32% YOUNG ADULTS 18-24 **40%** ADULTS 25-39

SENIORS 65+
| 6%
ADULTS 40-64

1%

CHILDREN 5-17



PossAbility Team Named "Volunteer Team of the Year"

For the second year in a row, PossAbility Los Angeles was named "Volunteer Team of the Year" by Meals on Wheels West. This recognition is a tribute to the team's reliability, dedication, and uplifting spirit. Serving Los Angeles County's coastal communities, Meals on Wheels West depends on its volunteers, and the PossAbility Los Angeles Team exceeded every expectation. *Congratulations, team!*

2024 EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

AbilityFirst FOOD \$457,074

STROLLEROLL

607 \$457,074

451 \$251,456

FESTIVAL

142 \$86,375

FOR AbilityFirst FOOD STROLL FOOD

Thank you to our Event Committee Members!

Stroll & Roll

Luther W. Beegle
Joseph Brumfield
Anita Chan
Vivian Cheung
Malcolm Coronel
Ashkan Entesari
Ryan Fridborg
Jack Jeong
Willan (Will) Johnson
Elisabeth Seitz

Food & Wine Festival

Anita Lawler and Mary Spellman, Co-Chairs Devon Anderson Luther W. Beegle Candis Bowles Steve Brockmeyer John Nilson Julietta Perez Elisabeth Seitz Harlan Thompson Melissa Wu

Rainbows for AbilityFirst

Joan Alderson
Dorla Fair
Arlene Fillius
Julie Taboada
Caroline Hansen
Roxanne Korzeniowski
Patricia Leue
Terri Nikoletich
Mary Pat Sabol
Linda Silver
Jean Stone

Hit the Green for AbilityFirst

Brittany Janssen Neal Janssen Colin Mayuga Lauren Randolph

On the following pages, you'll meet some of the people who have benefited from AbilityFirst programs and learn about opportunities to further AbilityFirst's mission as a volunteer or corporate partner.

ADULT PROGRAMS

Humming Along: Eve's story



Eve's challenges once seemed insurmountable. Her parents first enrolled Eve in AbilityFirst children's programs, seeking help for her self-injurious behaviors, mood regulation, and daily living skills. At the Lawrence L. Frank Center in Pasadena, Eve often struggled in large settings and during transitions.

At age 24, Eve moved to the PossAbility program for adults, initially participating two days a week. While she felt overwhelmed by the change, she found joy when venturing into the community, especially enjoying public transportation. Her peers welcomed her involvement, and while she didn't communicate verbally, she expressed herself powerfully through visual cues and physical gestures. When upset, she might cry, but with timely breaks and consistent support, she learned to control her emotions and reengage.

Over time, Eve's comfort in the program grew as she built meaningful connections with staff and peers. Now attending five days a week, Eve expresses her likes and dislikes by humming, adjusting her tone to convey her feelings. As her confidence has grown, her self-injurious behavior has stopped, marking significant progress. The AbilityFirst staff remains dedicated to nurturing Eve's social skills and expanding her interests as she continues to thrive and advocate for herself.

"...Eve expresses her likes and dislikes by humming, adjusting her tone to convey her feelings."







CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Vanessa Speaks Out

"When her mom suggested daily trips to a water park one summer.

Vanessa chose to spend her days with AbilityFirst instead."



When Vanessa joined the Claremont after school program eight years ago, she found it difficult to connect with others. Despite her friendly spirit, Vanessa was mostly nonverbal and she felt isolated.

AbilityFirst's caring staff recognized Vanessa's potential. With consistent encouragement, they gave Vanessa the time she needed to find her words. Seeing how much she loved singing and dancing, staff members helped Vanessa connect with peers through fun activities and community outings. When her mom suggested daily trips to a water park one summer, Vanessa elected to spend her days with AbilityFirst instead. It was a clear sign of the deep bonds fostered by AbilityFirst programs. "I feel like I belong here," explains Vanessa.

Over time, Vanessa's transformation has been remarkable. Her self-esteem has grown and she participates more actively in the program. Today, she is a confident teen who speaks up for herself and others. With programs that are responsive to an individual's needs, AbilityFirst has helped Vanessa grow from nonverbal child to expressive young adult, nurturing her true potential.



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Nolan's Story: Growth with Guidance





Since childhood, Nolan faced challenges with his processing speed and severe anxiety, which made everyday interactions daunting. Simple tasks became obstacles, and Nolan was often silent and tense in public.

In 2023, he joined AbilityFirst's Employment Services program through an internship at City of Hope. With support, Nolan steadily embraced each new challenge. His AbilityFirst job coach, Martin, provided diagrams, consistent prompts, and space for Nolan to learn his routine. This internship marked significant progress in Nolan's journey toward independence.

A year later, with the help of AbilityFirst, the City of Glendora hired Nolan as a Recreational Aid. His role there has showcased his ability to perform and grow at work, as well as the positive impact of his support team. Regular check-ins by AbilityFirst case manager Magally Lopez and encouragement from his Glendora colleagues further reinforce his progress.

Nolan's personal growth illustrates how tailored guidance from AbilityFirst can transform lives. Each milestone Nolan reaches underscores our belief that every individual, no matter the challenges they face, deserves a chance to succeed.

Employment Services in 2024

360 Received job readiness, training, and placement services

56 Found jobs

"Nolan's personal growth illustrates how tailored guidance from AbilityFirst can transform lives."

CAMP PAIVIKA

Jackson's "Ace of Spades" Summer at Camp





"Seeing their son so celebrated and confident was a moment they will never forget."

Jackson had been counting down the days until Camp Paivika. After missing 2023 sign-ups, he and his family were determined not to let it happen again. When 2024 registration opened, his mom and younger brother sat at their computers, clicking as fast as they could to secure his spot.

Camp Paivika did not disappoint. Jackson dove headfirst into activities, from arts and crafts to splashing in the pool. His most unforgettable experience came during the talent show. Armed with a bass guitar and microphone, he performed Motörhead's "Ace of Spades" for a cheering crowd. The video of his standing ovation left his family in tears. Seeing their son so celebrated and confident was a moment they will never forget.

Beyond the fun, camp gave Jackson something even more meaningful: a sense of purpose. Distributing

snacks to cabins and using staff radios to communicate made him feel like he truly belonged. By the end of the session, Jackson wasn't just a camper, he was part of the Camp Paivika family. Jackson is already reminding his mom not to miss the 2025 sign-ups. His only request? A softer mattress next year!

For Jackson's family, Camp Paivika is a place where he can practice independence and experience pure joy. For his parents, it was a precious moment of respite, knowing their son was cared for and thriving.

With the support of AbilityFirst's donors, children like Jackson get the chance to shine and build confidence, long after summer ends.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Malcolm's Heart for Service

Long before he joined AbilityFirst's Board of Directors, Malcolm Coronel felt a connection to individuals with disabilities. As a child, his school integrated students with disabilities into everyday activities, fostering empathy and understanding. Malcolm learned sign language and Braille, which helped him connect with classmates who navigated the world with a disability. This left a lasting impression and shaped his commitment to inclusion.

Years later, after rededicating his life to his faith, Malcolm felt a calling to serve individuals with disabilities. Upon discovering AbilityFirst, he immediately connected with our mission and values. The pandemic initially prevented in-person volunteering, but Malcolm's virtual participation and fundraising did not go unnoticed, and he was invited to join the Board of Directors.

Malcolm has since gained a deeper appreciation for the complexities of running a nonprofit. Together with his wife Brittany and their two children, he enjoys participating in AbilityFirst fundraising events to spread awareness. They view service as a family tradition, one they hope to pass on to future generations. Malcolm recently visited AbilityFirst's Inglewood center, where he met participant Malachi. "His warmth and joy reminded me of the power of presence, slowing down, and appreciating life's simple moments," recalls Malcolm.

With his strategic mind and servant's heart, Malcolm helps shape a brighter future for AbilityFirst and the communities it serves.



"...Malcolm learned sign language and Braille, which helped him connect with classmates who navigated the world with a disability."



CORPORATE PARTNERS

Sanctuary Coffee: A Force for Good



"By supporting Sanctuary Coffee, customers help AbilityFirst and other nonprofits, doing good to the last drop."

AbilityFirst coffee blend:



Steven Gerali, the visionary behind Claremont's Sanctuary Coffee, has created a coffee shop that's a force for good. Sanctuary Coffee donates 100% of its profits equally to community partners like AbilityFirst. Steven's community focus was cultivated during his years as a university professor who mentored students through pivotal moments in their lives. His connection to service runs even deeper: His sister has Down syndrome, inspiring him to create a space that supports marginalized groups in the community.

Sanctuary Coffee was designed to offer its patrons connection, warmth, and a sense of belonging. This model serves as an inspiration for other businesses looking to prioritize people over profit. To amplify

their impact, Steven and his team develop coffee blends that are named for their nonprofit partners. For each bag of coffee sold, they donate an additional \$1 to the nonprofit, generating financial support and awareness for their work.

In addition, Sanctuary Coffee provides employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. By fostering an inclusive, supportive work environment, the Sanctuary team empowers individuals with disabilities to gain valuable skills and independence. And by supporting Sanctuary Coffee, customers help AbilityFirst and other nonprofits, doing good to the last drop.

FINANCIALS

2024 FINANCIALS

January I - December 31, unaudited

REVENUE & SUPPORT	\$ in thousands
Program Revenue	
Community Centers	\$8,414
Business Services	252
Housing Services	229
Camping Services	371
Employment Services	1,746
Fund Development	
General	1,619
Restricted Donations	381
Legacies, Bequests & Trusts	1,121
Other Revenue	
Facility & Other Revenue	462
Manufacturing Sales	224
Investment Income/(Loss)	7,312
Change in Value - Trusts	222
Gain/(Loss) on Sale of Asset	-47
DDS Liability Forgiveness	700
TOTAL REVENUE/SUPPORT	\$23,007
OPERATING EXPENSES	
Program Services	\$15,551
Support Services	
Management & General	3,389
Fund Development	997
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$19,937
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$3,070

ABILITYFIRST LEGACY SOCIETY

The Legacy Society recognizes the visionary and caring individuals who have included AbilityFirst in their estate plans. By becoming a member of the Legacy Society, you can celebrate today the transformations you will help make possible in the future.

Joan and Tom Alderson

Mary Alice and Bob Braly

Raymond G. De Peters

Joetta Di Bella

Dr. David E. Billet

Blanka and Jim Douglass

Fariester Family

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Michael Reid

Donna Rogahn

Charles A. Rohe

Morris Saul

Norman Seastedt

Carol and Greg Teskey

Frances Tomich

Lois M. Zelsdorf

"Since I joined the Guild 8 years ago, I've seen the progress of many of the participants in the AbilityFirst program. The fact is that they become the best they can be by concentrating on their abilities rather than their disabilities, and that's a concept I truly believe in. I'm proud to play a part in that legacy."

- Joan Alderson, Ability First Guild and Legacy Society member

2024 DONORS

Thank you to our 2024 Donors

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PARTNER

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SATISFACTION SURVEY



2024 Satisfaction Survey

AbilityFirst conducts annual satisfaction surveys that are in alignment with the The National Core Indicators (NCI) survey. NCI is a nationally recognized quality improvement initiative that measures outcomes for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) receiving public services. For our participants, we use a variety of survey methods including online surveys, in-person interviews with use of verbal and non-verbal cues, or picture boards. For parents and caregivers, we use online surveys in English and Spanish.

Adult Participants

Do you like coming to your program?



Do you get to make choices about your day/activities?

After School Program Participants



Do you have fun at your program?



Have you made a friend at AbilityFirst?

Families of AbilityFirst Participants



How supported is your loved one in their AbilityFirst Program? *Stated they feel supported to very supported



Have services and supports made a positive difference in your family member's life?

Employment Services – Client Survey



I like the work I do



How would you rate the quality of services you receive? *Rated good to excellent

Camp Paivika



Camper satisfaction rate *Rated good to excellent



Families who feel that having a camper attend camp has made a positive difference in their lives.

"My son feels included and part of his community." - Family member of a participant

SUPPORT





How to Support AbilityFirst



Donate

Make a tax-deductible gift, donate stock, give via a Donor Advised Fund, add AbilityFirst to your planned giving, or donate a vehicle.



Volunteer

Join 100+ volunteers in year-round opportunities throughout Greater Los Angeles and summertime opportunities at Camp Paivika.



Advocate

Stay informed about our latest news, upcoming events and action alerts.





Follow Us





Follow AbilityFirstLA on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube and AbilityFirst on LinkedIn.

For more information, contact development@abilityfirst.org or 626-243-4844.





Learn more about AbilityFirst programs



- Programs for children, teens and adults
- Support for students who want to go to college
- Internships, employment readiness, job placement, and on-the-job coaching
- Community aquatics
- Summer camp

Join the AbilityFirst team



AbilityFirst is hiring for both summer and year-around positions.

AbilityFirst

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