



MEDIA ALERT

December 10, 2015

For more information, contact:

Kristina Muhkerjee, Integrated Communications Specialist

Abilities First, Inc.

845-485-9803 x 215

kristinamuhkerjee@abilitiesfirstny.org

www.abilitiesfirstny.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Abilities First Establishes Workforce Readiness Program for Students with Developmental Disabilities Through Major Gift from the KeyBank Foundation

Poughkeepsie, N.Y. (December 10, 2015) – Abilities First has announced the development of a Workforce Readiness Program for its students with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Over xxx students, ages 14 – 21, will have the opportunity to learn basic job skills due to a three-year major gift from the KeyBank Foundation as part of the Abilities First School - Future Steps Education Campaign.

The KeyBank Foundation, a nonprofit charitable organization founded in 1969 and funded by KeyCorp., mission is provide students with opportunities to prepare for fulfilling careers through access to high quality education and support for their academic success as well as equip adults with the necessary skills, education and capabilities to meet current and future local employment demands.

[KeyBank Quote]

Funding for the Workforce Readiness Program will enable increased support of educational programming and resources to assure the Abilities First School students strengthen their capacity to thrive in the workforce and in life. For those with intellectual or developmental disabilities, there exist additional challenges in meeting the expectations of everyday life, and continuing to develop as one grows into adulthood and toward independence. As with all children, education, physical development, and real life experience plays a critical role in their ability to thrive as students, with a goal toward thriving in the workforce. The Workforce Readiness Program will provide students the capacity to flourish in the workforce and in life.

As the Federal Government continues to increase the expectations and requirements of adults with special needs to be integrated into community living and the local workforce, it has become increasingly important for students in the Abilities First School to be well prepared to do so.

Funding will also provide lead sponsorship for the 2015, or 2016 Abilities First Educational Series, focused on “Transitioning”. The free community event is open to the public and provides valuable information to parents and caregivers in supporting students now and as they transition into an independent and thriving work life.

[Jeff Quote]

For more information on how you can support the Abilities First School, please contact Melissa McCoy at 845.485.9803 x223 or email melissamccoy@abilitiesfirstny.org.

###

About the Abilities First School

The Abilities First School, a NY State 853 school, has operated in Poughkeepsie for the past 35 years. The School and its satellite site at Red Hook Elementary, Middle and High School serves 102 students in 12 classrooms including students from 21 school districts throughout Orange, Ulster, Dutchess, Putnam, and Columbia counties with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

About Abilities First, Inc.

Founded in 1962, Abilities First is a not-for-profit organization serving the needs of those with developmental disabilities from pre-school through adulthood. Abilities First has had a long-term commitment of providing a cohesive culture of compassion, empowerment and respect for people with a variety of disabilities through educational, vocational and habilitation services. It presently serves over 1,500 children and adults with disabilities in the Hudson Valley region of New York State. AF is accredited for the person-centered care by the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) and given the honor of participating in a coalition of leaders in the field through New York Integrated Network and Coordinated Behavioral Health Services (CBHS).

Abilities First’s mission is to provide people with disabilities and their families support to attain independence, self-determination, integration and acceptance by others through education, exploration and experience.

For more information, visit www.AbilitiesFirstNY.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AbilitiesFirstInc and [@AbilitiesF](https://twitter.com/AbilitiesF) on Twitter.