



ABILITIES FIRST
ENRICHING THE LIVES OF CHILDREN
& ADULTS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Abilities First School Playground Campaign Receives
Recreation Equipment Donation from Wappingers Ladies Auxiliary**

LaGrange, N.Y. (June 21, 2016) – The Wappingers Ladies Auxiliary – Hearts that Help recently made a donation in support of the Abilities First School’s Future Steps Playground Campaign. The Abilities First School which opened in December in LaGrange, N.Y. was without basketball hoops until the group’s generous gift was made.

Suzanne Mariconti and WLA President Lynette Macina were recently welcomed with hugs and Thank Yous from the appreciative students. They had the opportunity to tour the school and see the students playing basketball with the adjustable height backboards and hoops. Many of the over 100 students at the Abilities First School have physical disabilities and are in wheelchairs or other adaptive equipment.

“Abilities First appreciates the interest and outreach extended to our students by the Wappinger’s Ladies Auxiliary. The interest in assuring the gym equipment was adaptable for all students to enjoy was greatly appreciated,” said Abilities First Chief Advancement Officer Melissa McCoy.

The new hoops have added a significant element to the adaptive physical education program as well as “A lot of fun,” commented student Nicholas Diaz.

This month, the Abilities First School kicks off its Future Steps Playground Campaign, to build a fully accessible playground and supply adaptive recreational equipment for its students. The community is asked to consider personal, business or grant opportunities in support of the \$200,000 fundraising goal. For more information or to make a donation go to <http://gvgb.co/futuresteps> or contact Melissa McCoy at 845-485-9803 x 223 or melissamccoy@abilitiesfirstny.org.

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About Abilities First School

The Abilities First School has over 100 students, ages 5-21 years old, from 22 school districts throughout Dutchess, Orange, Greene, Putnam and Ulster Counties. The Abilities First School,

located in LaGrange, N.Y., includes 9 classrooms equipped with instructional technology, adaptive physical education space, and clinical space for therapies. Additional classrooms are hosted within the Red Hook School District.

The Abilities First School has been providing educational and therapeutic services for over 50 years to students that have one or more of the following disabilities and are, therefore, unable to attend public school: cerebral palsy; ADHD; seizure disorders; autism spectrum disorders; developmental delays; hearing, vision or sensory impairments; genetic, neurological, chromosomal, or progressive disorders; and behavioral intervention requirements. Additionally, some of the students require nursing services to monitor their daily needs.

About Abilities First

Founded in 1962, Abilities First is a not-for-profit organization serving the needs of the community, as well as 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, residential and habilitation services. It presently serves over 1,200 children and adults throughout 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.

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PHOTOS



Abilities First School students, Nicholas Diaz and Lizzie Delameter, playing basketball with the hoops donated by the Wappingers Ladies Auxiliary – Hearts that Help.

File: Abilities First School Students.jpg

Photo credit: Abilities First

Abilities First staff and students with representatives of the Wappingers Ladies Auxiliary under the donated basketball hoops.

(Pictured left to right): Gina Puterio, Teacher Assistant; Lizzie Delameter, Student; Suzanne Mariconti, Wappingers Ladies Auxiliary; Lynette Macina, Wappingers Ladies Auxiliary President; Nicholas Diaz, Student; Robin Rivera, Adapted Physical Education Teacher

File: Abilities First School and Wappingers Ladies Auxiliary.jpg

Photo credit: Abilities First