



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

## MEDIA ALERT

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*For more information, contact:*

Kristina Mukherjee  
Manager, Corporate Communications  
Abilities First, Inc.  
(845) 485-9803 x215  
[kristinamukherjee@abilitiesfirstny.org](mailto:kristinamukherjee@abilitiesfirstny.org)

Elizabeth Faison  
School Principal  
Abilities First School  
(845) 452-0774 x514  
[elizabethfaison@abilitiesfirstny.org](mailto:elizabethfaison@abilitiesfirstny.org)

## **Abilities First School Annual Prom a Success Thanks to Poughkeepsie Elks Lodge #275**

**Poughkeepsie, N.Y. (May 24, 2017)** – The Abilities First School hosted its fourth annual prom for its students with intellectual and developmental disabilities on Friday, May 19, 2017. While a rite of passage for many high school upperclassman, what makes this prom different from others is the strong support from family and community involvement. Students, ages 15 – 21, along with their families and fellow alumni were invited to attend the annual school event.

This prom was a success due to the generous support of the Hudson Valley community. Along with the Elks, former staff, community volunteers and the School's Prom Committee have all come together to make the Prom special for the students. The school districts helped provide transportation to and from school to Prom. Some students were able to choose gowns and suits to wear for the special event that were donated by Elks members along with donations from the Junior League of Poughkeepsie's "Cinderella's Closet" Prom Dress Drive. A local event planner even donated her services by decorating the venue.

Due to a \$2,000 grant from the Elks National Foundation's Community Investments Program, the contribution to the prom from the Poughkeepsie Elks Lodge #275 has been able to grow. The Elks' contributions were able to provide the venue, decoration, food, photo booth, a DJ, and more.

Poughkeepsie Elks Lodge #275 Secretary Raymond Strohm said, "The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks is strongly committed to our communities. This Abilities First Prom is part of our Community Investments Program. The national organization spends millions of dollars each year to address specific needs of our communities. We are proud to be supporting the Abilities First Prom for a fourth year in a row. Elks. Care, Elks Share."

###

PHOTOS

Staff and students along with members of the Poughkeepsie Elks Lodge #275 at the Abilities First School Prom on May 19<sup>th</sup>.



### **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).

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](http://www.AbilitiesFirstNY.org) or on Facebook at [www.Facebook.com/AbilitiesFirstInc](https://www.facebook.com/AbilitiesFirstInc) and [@AbilitiesF](https://twitter.com/AbilitiesF) on Twitter.