



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

PRESS RELEASE

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ILLUSIONIST CHRIS DARE & SOULSYSTEM TO HEADLINE ABILITIES FIRST 2019 SIGNATURE EVENT

POUGHKEEPSIE GALLERIA AND CRAIG IRWIN TO BE HONORED

Wappingers Falls, N.Y. (October 7, 2019) – Abilities First, Inc., a nonprofit organization serving the needs of individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, will celebrate their mission with music and magic at the 2019 Signature Event on Friday, October 18th, at Changepoint Theatre in Poughkeepsie, New York.

A Newburgh native, illusionist Chris Dare will perform his exclusive Hudson Valley stage show titled “REMARKABLE”, created especially for this charity event. Based on three key pillars of identity, belief and perception, Dare hopes to open viewers’ eyes to the power within by combining magic, suggestion, psychology and showmanship.

Soulsystem Orchestras, led by former Skid Row drummer Rob Affuso, returns with its 12-piece band providing their signature style of “elegantly hip” and high-energy covers of today’s and yesterday’s top hits.

The Signature Event will be held from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., with tickets on sale now to the public at \$250 each. Attendees will partake in interactive activities, indulge in signature cocktails and a progressive dining experience, dance to music by Soulsystem Orchestras and enjoy Chris Dare’s REMARKABLE stage show, with a Meet N’ Greet option to end the evening. Tickets to see just Chris Dare’s REMARKABLE stage show from 9:15 p.m. to 10:15 p.m. are available for \$50, or \$75 for VIP Passes which include a Meet N’ Greet opportunity with the illusionist and Soulsystem Orchestras.

The Poughkeepsie Galleria, a Pyramid Management Group company, will receive the 2019 Commitment to Community Award. Having hosted ABILITIES FIRST: A Showcase of Resources for Enrichment & Inclusion, an event providing individuals with disabilities and their caregivers resources and information, the Poughkeepsie Galleria has demonstrated their commitment to serving the needs of their community.

“Poughkeepsie Galleria is honored to receive the Commitment to Community Award from Abilities First at their upcoming Signature Event,” said Jessica Pecchia, Marketing Director for the Poughkeepsie Galleria. “We have had the pleasure of hosting the Showcase of Resources



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for Enrichment and Inclusion over the past few years and it is one of our favorite events. Abilities First is a champion for individuals of all abilities and we are privileged to continue to partner with them and help promote the wonderful work they do.”

The 2019 Volunteer of the Year Award will be awarded to Craig Irwin, a Financial Advisor with Merrill Lynch - The Irwin Burlingame Group. Volunteers are crucial to the success of Abilities First and Irwin’s leadership on the Abilities First Board of Directors, Foundation for Abilities First NY Board of Directors and the Golf Classic Committee has directly impacted the exponential growth of the organization since 2014.

“I choose to support Abilities First because I truly believe in their mission in helping those with disabilities reach their greatest potential. I am honored to be this year’s Volunteer of the Year Award recipient,” said Craig Irwin. “I believe it is every person’s responsibility to be committed to a cause they are passionate about.”

The 2019 Abilities First Signature Committee, comprised of volunteers, has been instrumental in securing sponsorships and donations from the community. The committee is led by one of last year’s honorees, Johann Huleatt of Rifton Equipment. Sponsors of the Signature Event include Rose & Kiernan, Inc., Rifton Equipment, General Traffic Equipment Corporation, Stenger, Roberts, Davis & Diamond, LLP, Real Property Abstract & Title Services, LLC with additional support from Page Management Group, RBT CPAs, LLP, Ulster Savings Bank, and iHeart Media of the Hudson Valley. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Proceeds will benefit the programs and services of Abilities First.

To inquire about tickets or sponsorship opportunities, contact 845.485.9803 ext. 9394 or info@abilitiesfirstny.org. For more information about the event, visit <http://www.abilitiesfirstny.org/signature>.

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Photo (af-2019-chris-dare-remarkable): Illusionist Chris Dare to perform his stage show **REMARKABLE** at the 2019 Signature Event to benefit Abilities First.



Photo (af-2019-craig-irwin-honoree): Craig Irwin of Merrill Lynch – The Irwin Burlingame Group will be recognized as the 2019 Abilities First Volunteer of the Year.

About Abilities First

Founded in 1962, Abilities First is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving the needs of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities from preschool through adulthood. More than 650 dedicated and passionate employees are committed to providing a cohesive culture of compassion, empowerment and respect for people with a variety of disabilities through early intervention, educational, vocational, residential, and habilitation services. It presently serves over 1,400 children and adults with disabilities in the Hudson Valley region of New York State. AF is accredited for 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 or on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/AbilitiesFirstInc.