



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

PRESS RELEASE

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ABILITIES FIRST HOSTS ANNUAL SHOWCASE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OF ALL AGES

Poughkeepsie, N.Y. (February 11, 2020) – More than 40 vendors providing support for individuals with disabilities and special needs of all ages will be in attendance at ABILITIES FIRST: A Showcase of Resources for Enrichment and Inclusion. The Showcase will be held on Saturday, March 14, 2020 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Poughkeepsie Galleria Mall in Poughkeepsie, New York. Children with special needs and their families can attend the Showcase in a sensory-sensitive environment from 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. before the mall opens. Admission to the Showcase is free and open to the public. Abilities First is spearheading the event to bring together resources to enrich the lives of children and adults with any disability whether it be developmental, intellectual, physical, or other.

This year's event will once again feature Hudson Valley Parent Magazine's My Abilities are SUPER Cover Kid Search. The 2020 Abilities First Ambassador, William Eugene Van Ornum, Jr., will serve as the Grand Marshal of the event.

A new and highly anticipated vendor and presenter is MOVIA Robotics, Inc. MOVIA is a collaborative robotics company that develops and builds software and systems that help people and robots work together. MOVIA customizes education and learning readiness skills curriculum delivery systems to be carried out by their family of friendly robots, which work with children and adults with disabilities. For example, MOVIA's research-based activities have shown that children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have improved social interactions with the robots and carry that success into their everyday lives. In addition, the robots teach skills that foster inclusion between students with ASD and typically developing students. MOVIA will have a robotics presentation at the Showcase at 1:15 p.m.

The Showcase schedule of events includes:

9:30 AM: Early opening in a sensory-sensitive environment

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM: Showcase opens with 30+ vendors, giveaways, and more

10:00 AM:

Sensory yoga for kids (near Center Court)

Cover Kid Contest photoshoot for Hudson Valley Parent's "My Abilities are Super" Contest (near Target)

Sensory-friendly movies courtesy of Regal's "My Way Matinee": Onward & Sonic The Hedgehog

12:00 PM: Welcoming remarks by Abilities First President and CEO Dr. Jeffery Fox, Grand Marshal William Eugene Van Ornum, Jr. (2020 Abilities First Ambassador of the Year), and additional representatives (Center Court)



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12:30 PM: Abilities First School flash mob (Center Court)

1:00 PM: Ms. Wheelchair and Junior Miss Wheelchair of New York

1:15 PM: Robotics demonstration by MOVIA Robotics, Inc. (www.moviarobotics.com)

1:45 PM: Sports demonstration by Ali Adaptive Sports and Fitness
(www.aliadaptive.com)

The Showcase event is hosted by the Poughkeepsie Galleria Mall with support provided by MOVIA Robotics, Dutchess County Government, THINK DIFFERENTLY, and media sponsors, iHeart Media and Hudson Valley Parent.

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About Abilities First

Founded in 1962, Abilities First is a nonprofit organization serving the needs of those with developmental disabilities from pre-school through adulthood. With more than 650 dedicated employees committed to providing educational, vocational, residential, habilitation and family support services, Abilities First gives individuals with disabilities and their families the support to attain independence, self-determination, integration and acceptance by others. In serving over 1,400 children and adults throughout the Hudson Valley region of New York State, Abilities First holds a long-term commitment to creating a cohesive culture of compassion, empowerment and respect for these individuals through education, exploration and experience. Abilities First is accredited for person-centered care by the Council on Quality and Leadership. For more information, visit www.AbilitiesFirstNY.org or on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/AbilitiesFirstInc.