

JUNE 2021

NEWSLETTER

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AF's Own Brings Mythology, Magic & Personal Motivation to NY Alliance Art Show



Art and magic are classic forms of self-expression, and Kyle L. - a magician and a craftsman - enthusiastically embraces both. The Abilities First supportive staff recently helped Kyle enter the NY Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation Art Show, where the 26-year-old was able to demonstrate his passion for magic, mythology, and so much more.

Kyle's showcase featured his homemade Wizard Workshop, which includes spells, charms, and more. His

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overall theme, healing and empowerment, was inspired by the healing benefits he found in magic during COVID-19. He hopes he is able to continue sharing his craft and his love for magic and mythology with others to inspire them.

[Read the full story of Kyle's time at the Art Show and all of his wizardly wisdom HERE...](#)

Mission of Abilities First

New AF Preschool Offers New Community Opportunities



"The Abilities First Preschool is important to me and my child, Jelani, because it has provided her with the opportunity to grow academically, emotionally, and socially. It provides her with the tools that she needs to be a happy child who is able to learn in an environment that is conducive to her needs. I can't thank the entire staff enough for what they have done for/with Jelani. [The Abilities First Preschool] provides me with a sense of relief, support, guidance, and feeling of extended family!"

Janea Hill, parent of Jelani Hill, in remarks shared at the ribbon cutting ceremony on May 20, 2021 at the new Abilities First Preschool in New Windsor, N.Y.

[Read more about the ribbon cutting ceremony and the impact of Abilities First's new Preschool HERE...](#)

**Welcome
LEGOLAND
New York!**



Community Support

**Karen Roskin:
A Vibrant Life, A Legacy of
Friendship
(1966 - 2021)**

Abilities First is excited to welcome LEGOLAND New York to our corner of the state. LEGOLAND New York is a company that embraces inclusion in all facets of its operations. As LEGOLAND New York continues its efforts to fully open the park, AF will continue discussions with its leadership to formalize a mutually beneficial community partnership that takes into consideration supportive employment, students, families, schools, and more. Learn more about LEGOLAND New York at www.legoland.com/new-york.

Stay tuned for updates!

THANK YOU TO OUR MISSION SPONSOR



For more information on **SEEING YOUR BUSINESS LISTED HERE** as a sponsor, contact Melissa McCoy by emailing melissamccoy@abilitiesfirstny.org or by calling 845-485-9803 ext. 1223.



A member of the Residential Services community for over 20 years, Karen Roskin leaves behind a legacy of friendship and memories. She was known by her family and friends for her hard work, positive perspective, and vigor for life. Karen was always thinking of others, whether that was by spending her hard-earned money on gifts for her family and ice cream for her nephews, or spending time with her friends and peers on vacations or at Residential/Day Hab parties and picnics.

Abilities First is pleased to have helped enrich Karen's life and support her independence, but Karen enriched all of our lives just as much. Those who knew her have so many fond memories.

At Abilities First, she will be remembered - first and foremost - for always living her life to the fullest.

[Read about Karen's legacy from those who knew her best HERE...](#)

Leadership Spotlight

Community Members Entrusted to the AF Board of Directors

Gary Cassiello, CPA, ABV, CFF

Partner, Judelson, Giordano & Siegel, CPA, P.C.

AFI Board of Directors Vice Chairman Gary Cassiello, CPA, ABV, CFF, first learned about Abilities First several years ago via a member of the AFI Board of Directors.

Gary, who quickly became interested in the agency's breadth of services to the community and the quality of the people



who make up AFI, joined the Board of Directors in 2015. In addition to serving as vice chair, Gary also serves on the Audit, Finance, and Executive committees, and is an active supporter of Abilities First's fundraising and education initiatives.

As a resident of New Windsor, N.Y., Gary is pleased to see the continued growth of Abilities First services into Orange County. He and his firm, Judelson, Giordano & Siegel, CPA, P.C., are regular participants and supporters of the agency's fundraising and educational initiatives. Gary graduated from Fordham University magna cum laude, and is a past president of the Hudson Valley Chapter of the New York State Society of CPAs.

Thank you, Gary, for your exceptional leadership and support to the mission.

Chris Gilbert

Strategic Planning Coordinator, Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.

Chris Gilbert, a resident of Poughkeepsie, N.Y., came to Abilities First in 2018 after being recommended for volunteer leadership by Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp. (Central Hudson). He began in positions on various fundraising event committees before being elected to the AFI Board of Directors in 2020, on which he presently serves.

Since the very beginning of his involvement with Abilities First, Chris has demonstrated great interest and commitment to the many roles he plays in our organization. He has engaged Central Hudson to participate in various activities, and launched highly successful personal fundraising campaigns to benefit the mission of Abilities First.

"Hearing the stories and meeting the children and adults who our services support motivates me to get the word out to my network and surrounding communities about the great work being done at Abilities First," Chris said.

We thank Chris for his long-term volunteer leadership and exceptional success in fundraising on behalf of those supported by Abilities First.



Board Members Recommit To Continued & Expanded Leadership



The AFI Board would like to thank David Melby, senior vice president at Rose & Kiernan, Inc., for his exceptional commitment and leadership to the mission of Abilities First. David has served in many officer positions on the Abilities First Board of Directors, including past president. He has been instrumental in leading the organization through varying times and bringing it to its present position as a strong nonprofit in the community. As David finishes his term on the AFI Board, we welcome his continued interest in supporting this organization as he joins the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Abilities First NY (FAFNY).



William Van Ornum's involvement with Abilities First is a story of transition and development. He first became involved with Abilities First with his son, William, Jr., who attends AF programs and was the former AFI Ambassador. More recently, William's involvement became more hands-on as he joined the Board of the Foundation for Abilities First NY in 2019. He will now transition to the AFI Board and utilize his professional experience to help direct the operational needs of the agency. William is a Professor Emeritus of Marist College.



Renee Giordano MacDonald not only serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Foundation for Abilities First NY, she will now also serve as the FAFNY Liaison on the Abilities First Board of Directors. Thank you for enhancing the communication and interests of each board's work to the other!

Staff Spotlight

Donovan Ashe: From Program Coordinator to Director of Residential Services



Thank you to AF Director of Residential Services Donovan Ashe for stepping up to the plate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic by helping to drive initiatives designed to protect the health and safety of all those in the Abilities First residential programs.

Donovan has been with Abilities First for 19 years. He started out as a program coordinator, but his hard work and dedication over the years has netted several well-earned promotions.

Donovan has always provided tremendous support and care for the individuals with whom he works on a daily basis, and his commitment and compassion has earned the gratitude of Abilities First, the individuals in our residential programs, and their families and loved ones!

[Read more about Donovan Ashe's dedication to those supported by our Residential Services HERE...](#)

ABILITIES FIRST GOLF & TENNIS CLASSIC



JULY 26, 2021

We are looking ahead to a great day of golf and tennis at one of the country's oldest private clubs and to reconnecting with community and business leaders while making a lasting impact to the Abilities First mission. From the moment they arrive, golfers, tennis players, and sponsors will enjoy an outing that is clearly a one-of-a-kind experience. Enjoy an array of course specialties including food and beverage samplings, cigars, silent auction, and more.

NEW THIS YEAR: Our Classic is getting even more exciting with the addition of tennis!



THE POWELTON CLUB
Established 1882

Powelton Club, Newburgh, NY

Our 2021 Golf & Tennis Classic is filling up FAST! Our sponsorship packages are almost sold out; reserve your participation with a sponsorship TODAY!

LEARN MORE

Secure your participation with branding benefits via a sponsorship today!

melissamccoy@abilitiesfirstny.org | 845-485-9803 ext. 1223.

Non-sponsorship foursomes and individual golfer spots now open!





[Check out more photos from Abilities First's 2020 Golf Classic HERE..](#)

THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 GOLF & TENNIS CLASSIC COMMITTEE



Pete Setaro | Co-Chair
Clark Patterson Lee, LLC



Mark Copans | Co-Chair
Personalize It

- Anthony Morando, Esq.** | Cuddy & Feder, LLP
- Chris Gilbert** | Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.
- DeForest Howland** | William A Smith & Son, Inc.
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- Joshua Mackey** | Mackey Butts & Wise, LLP
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- Patrick Rose** | A & R Security
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- Michael Garofalo** | Judelson, Giordano & Siegel, CPA PC
- Brian Powers** | Mid-Hudson Construction Management
- Maddalena Egbert** | thinkWealth, LLC
- Anna-Marie Dolgov** | Community Member
- Kim Hunt Lee** | McCabe & Mack, LLP
- Renee Bulla** | Focus Media





SHOUT-OUT TO OUR GOLF & TENNIS CLASSIC SPONSORS (as of 6/17)



McCabe & Mack, LLP | Tennis Ace Sponsor, Golf Cart Sponsor



Mobile Life Support Services, Inc. | Eagle Sponsor



Marvin and Company | Eagle Sponsor



RBT CPAs | Tennis Rally Sponsor



Mackey, Butts & Wise, LLP | Power Card Sponsor



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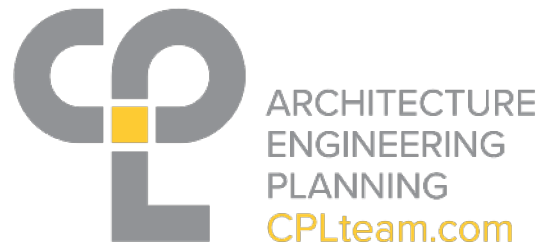
MVP Health Care



thinkWealth, LLC | Power Foursome



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Clark Patterson Lee, LLC | Power Foursome



Renu Medispa | Tennis Rally Sponsor



M&T Bank | Power Foursome



Healey Brothers | Hole in One Sponsor



Royal Carting

RESOURCES

Check out these helpful resources for individuals with disabilities & their loved ones!



LIFEPlan CCO NY is a partnership of community-based agencies with a long history of serving people with I/DD and providing advocacy, recreational, educational, and vocational services. Its goal is to connect people with the complete spectrum of services they need to live full, meaningful lives.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Are you looking for affordable income-based housing in our community? The Mews at Hopewell Junction, located conveniently near Route 82, has immediate occupancy available for two-bedroom apartments (please note that income limits have been revised as of June 2021).

[LEARN MORE](#)



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Please take a moment to complete a QUICK 6-question survey.



TAKE SURVEY

Contribute



Support the Foundation for Abilities First NY

To make an online gift to the mission of Abilities First, go to <https://www.abilitiesfirstny.org/make-an-impact/donate/>. For additional information about gifts, sponsorships, events, volunteering, or hosting a fundraiser, contact Melissa McCoy at melissamccoy@abilitiesfirstny.org or 845-485-9803 ext. 1223.



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



FOUNDATION
FOR ABILITIES FIRST NY

Philanthropic leadership to enrich the mission of Abilities First

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