



MEDIA ALERT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Senator Larkin Grants \$30,000 to Abilities First School in New Windsor

(New Windsor, NY, August 6, 2018) – Abilities First announces a \$30,000 grant has been awarded by Senator William Larkin for smart board technology in classrooms at the Abilities First School, currently under construction at 59 Windsor Highway in New Windsor, NY. The new Abilities First School, which opened its doors in a temporary location in September 2017 is presently completing construction on a state-of-the-art facility, to open in September 2018, and will serve up to 40 students with disabilities, age 5-21, from throughout the Hudson Valley.

Smart technology plays a vital role in the growth and preparedness of each student, for true independent living and competitive employment. The opportunity for individuals who are visually impaired to hear a lesson's sounds and those hearing impaired to see the presentation takes learning beyond traditional methods. Seventy-five percent of students in Abilities First schools do not use spoken word as their formal means of communication. Technology helps to bridge the gap, enhance learning, and even-the-playing field with their peers.

"Both Abilities First and Senator Larkin recognize the need to be ahead of the curve by providing students with disabilities the much-needed resources to maximize their readiness to compete in the challenging world. Abilities First is extremely grateful for the grant and support from Senator Larkin in preparing our expansion into Orange County. Working together, we assure the potential of our students with the technology needed to succeed in the workforce and in life," said Melissa McCoy, Chief Advancement Officer for Abilities First.

"This funding will allow Abilities First to expand their educational services and bring the latest technology to their students. They do exceptional work and I'm honored to be able to assist them in helping their students achieve a strong education," said Senator Bill Larkin.

After over thirty years located in Poughkeepsie, the Abilities First School opened its doors in a new state-of-the-art location in LaGrange in December 2015 and its first Orange County location in September 2017. The two locations serve over 132 students with instructional technology, adaptive physical education space, a fully outfitted sensory gym and clinical space for therapies. Additional programs are held within the Red Hook Central School District. Students from over twenty-three school districts from a seven county region attend the schools. Preschool services for age 3-5 years are currently located in Wappinger Falls, Poughkeepsie and Hyde Park, with an expansion planned into Orange County in 2018.

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.

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 1,500 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).

For more information, visit www.AbilitiesFirstNY.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AbilitiesFirstInc and [@AbilitiesF](https://twitter.com/AbilitiesF) on Twitter.