

2022
Annual
Report





DEDICATED TO INCLUSION

Abilities First promotes inclusive opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. We support individual choices that allow people to live, learn, work, play and be productive in meaningful ways in our community. Our programs include support coordination for all ages, training and employment services, creative arts classes and retail operations.



EXCLUSION



SEGREGATION



INTEGRATION



INCLUSION

10 YEAR TARGET

- Everyone has opportunities to experience acceptance as a community member.
 - People with and without developmental disabilities live, love, learn, work and play side by side.
 - People are supported for success.
- All people have opportunities for meaningful relationships and experiences.
- People recognize that inclusion benefits everyone involved by bringing together different abilities and perspectives to make a greater whole.

A Look into 2022



As I look over the 2022 Annual Report, I cannot help but feel excited about the progress we have made toward full inclusion in our community. Abilities First is dedicated to ensuring individuals with developmental disabilities experience full inclusion where they live, love, learn, work and play. Inclusion benefits everyone in our society.

We have come so far over the years, from total segregation to inclusion in our schools, businesses, and homes. But we are far from done. I am looking forward to the day when diversity is honored, and full inclusion is the way of life. In the meantime, we will continue to focus on education, training, and accessibility. We ask that you join us and make our world a better place for all!

I am especially grateful to our Board of Directors. Their guidance, knowledge, and expertise are a huge asset to our agency and to our community.

Please take a minute to review the 2022 Annual Report and read about the amazing success stories and the hard work of our incredible employees.

Sincerely,
Jan Kraft, Executive Director

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Abilities First Board Members 2022

The Board of Directors of Abilities First is comprised of nine community members who are appointed by the Greene County Commission to serve as Board Members to administer and oversee agency activities.

The Board of Directors and Executive Committee meet regularly. All meeting dates, times, and agendas are posted at abilitiesfirst.net and are open to the public.



Dr. Kyle John
Chair



Alexis Brown, MA
Vice-Chair



Crystal Reynolds Roberts
Treasurer



Austin Williamson
Past Chair



Martha Crise
Board Member



Marty Diebold
Board Member



Laura Curtis
Board Member



JoAn Johnson
Board Member



Bradley Weaver
Board Member

Grant Funding

Grant funding is provided to local non-profit agencies and direct support services for vocational services, early intervention, residential services, independent living assistance, employment and transportation. These funds are provided by a property tax levy and administered by the Abilities First Board of Directors.

Funding was provided for the following agencies during 2022:

- A Sporting Chance
- AF Programs
- Art Inspired Academy
- Artisan Elements
- Community Education
- Inspired Boutique
- Respite
- TRIP
- Public Education
- ARC of the Ozarks
- Champion Athletes
- Developmental Center of the Ozarks
- MSU Foundation
- Nova Center of the Ozarks
- OACAC
- DMH/Partnership for Hope Waiver
- SWI Industrial Solutions
- Springfield Workshop Transit Company

Thanks to the citizens of Greene County, over 55 million dollars has been allocated for services for people with developmental disabilities in our community for the past 43 years.

"The encouragement and insights helped us stay on course with our monthly, and over-arching, goals."



*"Their love for what they
do is evident."*



Abilities First Programs

FIRST STEPS

First Steps provides early intervention for families with children from birth to age three with developmental disabilities and delays.

THE NEXT STEP

The Next Step provides targeted case management for people with developmental disabilities age three and over.

ART INSPIRED ACADEMY

Art Inspired Academy provides an inclusive experience for individuals to develop vocational skills while participating in the creative arts, including theatre, music, movement and visual arts.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Abilities First Employment Services is designed to meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities who want to work and the needs of local employers to have a reliable workforce.



Inspired Boutique is an upscale resale shop featuring name-brand women's clothing, jewelry, collectibles, household items, and furniture.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Community Education provides educational opportunities to promote full inclusion. This team works to break down barriers to support the growth of inclusive cultures in businesses, non-profits, and academic institutions.



Artisan Elements creates and sells innovative hand-cast custom wall tiles, table tops, commercial and residential outdoor benches and larger planters/firepits from recycled paper or glass, concrete and commercial additives.

First Steps

First Steps is designed to improve a family's ability to enhance their child's development and learning and to increase the child's participation in family and community life.

As Missouri's Early Intervention Program, First Steps serves families with young children ages birth to three, who have special needs or developmental delays. First Steps helps children acquire important developmental skills, such as crawling, playing, talking and eating. Services are provided to support the family in order to meet their child's developmental needs. Abilities First has operated the First Steps SPOE since 2006 through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Our 13 county region has seven Early Intervention teams. Teams are made up of at least one Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, Special Instructor, and Service Coordinator. All teams have more than one person representing their specialty. Teams meet to support one another by sharing ideas, strategies, and family updates to further support families and children served.

2021 FIRST STEPS

- Average children served in 2022 with an IFSP monthly is 837
 - DESE's July 1st of 2022 count of children with an IFSP was 905 in Region 8 which includes children receiving services due to Summer Third B-day. 421 of those were in Greene County on July 1st, 2022.
- Annual referral total is 1597
- SC Average Monthly Caseload is 51
- Average monthly child count (referral/ongoing) is 990
- Average monthly referrals is 132
- Average monthly Percentage of 0-3 Population served is 3.57%



“ First Steps has been a tremendous support in our journey with our son's Autism and getting the early intervention he needs. He started with physical therapy when he was one because he had weak core muscle tone and was a late crawler and walker. This therapy quickly got him caught up, and he was walking before we knew it! As time passed, we began to notice that our son had delays in many other areas compared to peers his age. Fortunately, we were already aware of the First Steps Program and the support that was available to us. We eventually saw the need for Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy and Special Instruction. During the process of gaining new therapies, we began to realize that that our son was very likely on the Autism Spectrum. Our family was encouraged and supported so much in our journey to finding support for Autism -from diagnosis to additional therapies and programs once he exits the First Steps Program. His team of therapists have worked so hard and truly brought our little boy SO far. He loves his therapy days and always gets excited when he sees them. His therapists go above and beyond to make sure his needs are met, that we feel supported and informed, and they are all so knowledgeable in their practices. Our First Steps therapy team has truly become like family over the course of the time he has spent with them. We are so grateful for everything they have done to support and encourage our family throughout this whole process, and we wish our time with them didn't have to end. ”

— Amber McIntosh



“ I knew something wasn't right when our baby reached the 18-month mark and was still unable to independently walk. Our pediatrician did all of the necessary testing, which was negative, then referred us to First Steps. First Steps Coordinator, Samantha, called us within 24 hours to arrange our first visit. Being a medical professional myself, I knew how great this was to receive such expedited service! We were quickly referred to physical therapy, and orthotics were recommended. The progress that was made after the orthotics were placed was exponential.

The entire team at First Steps is truly the Dream Team. We will forever be thankful for all of their services. ”

- Doug, Tarrah, and Frankie Divine (pictured)

PARENT QUOTES

“ Our First Steps Special Instructor changed our entire family's life with her knowledge and passion for teaching. We will miss her dearly, but we are so excited to see what preschool is all about. ”

“ Love our Special Instructor! We had lots of concerns with our son and not once did she make us feel like failures. She helped our son grow so much in the last year! Thank you for all you do. ”

“ Wonderful Program! Helped my son so much – went from regressing to no words to talking all the time!! Very please with our Service Coordinator and Speech therapy providers. They are fantastic. ”

“ Our service providers were fantastic with my daughter and myself. She was able to soar in many areas that needed assistance and I believe that was because of the great support she had through First Steps. I greatly appreciated therapy services that I got to receive, it truly was a great assistance to me, so I can be the best mom I can be. ”

“ Our Experience with First Steps was more than we ever thought possible. Everything and Everyone was amazing! Our son would not be doing so well if we would not have had this service. So Grateful! ”



“ First steps has been a wonderful experience for our family. I was concerned after our pediatrician suggested therapy for his speech and late physical development. By the end of the program, he is meeting all his milestones and keeps up just fine with his older siblings. There has never been a moment that I wasn't 100 percent confident in how they handled my child. They are dedicated to what they do and are a blessing to the entire family.

Thank you guys again for everything you've done! ”

- Chantel



The Next Step

The Next Step provides targeted case management for eligible residents of Greene County with developmental disabilities age three and over through an inter-governmental agreement with the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH).

Support coordinators work to develop a person-centered plan that identifies the supports needed to assist people with developmental disabilities to live the life they choose. Support coordinators provide individualized assistance in planning a full and meaningful life for people with developmental disabilities. In addition, support coordinators assist people with advocacy, resources, services and community connections.

Abilities First has provided targeted case management since 2004.

A YEAR OF GROWTH

2022 was a year of growth and many changes. The Next Step hired 20 Support Coordinators over the past year; with a current total of 61 Support Coordinators in Targeted Case Management. It was a year of slowly pulling away from COVID-19 restrictions, and our Support Coordinators were back to completing in-person visits, and were able to hold in-person group meetings. The Next Step has diligently worked through changes and new expectations from the Department of Mental Health, and they continue to strive for excellence and ensuring that the individuals supported are living their best life.

The Next Step continues to analyze data from our ongoing community needs assessment to ensure that there are opportunities and resources available to the individuals we support. In 2022, The Next Step has been able to provide an increased number of these opportunities in the areas of transportation and technology support.

The Community Support Specialist team continues to provide valuable support to individuals and their families, helping them to navigate benefits and community resources.

2022 REVIEW

- 2587 individuals services in Greene County in 2022
- 78 individuals received services with a Partnership for Hope Waiver in Greene County
- 325 individuals supported who do not qualify for Medicaid
- A Satisfaction survey was sent out to all individuals supported by The Next Step, the overall results of that survey showed an overall average score of 98%. The highest scoring category was in the area of "My Support Coordinator is Sincere and Respectful" with an overall average score of 99%.





Logan received bus training from the SWI bus training program and now independently goes to and from work!



In 2022, Brent advocated for himself and restored his right to vote. He voted for the first time in November's election!



ADAM LAFAUCE STORY

From a very young age, Adam loved car washes. He used to build them out of Legos and pretend that he was running his cars through it. This picture is Adam with the Vice President and Regional Manager at his current job at a car wash, presenting him an award for being one of their top salespeople in the whole company!

He reports that he felt “speechless.” He has worked at this job right at 1 year and has taken on new responsibilities of his own volition because he wanted to learn more about the company. He has a YouTube channel where he goes through car washes and reviews their features and quality for the price.

Art Inspired Academy

Art Inspired Academy (AIA) provides individuals of all ages, with and without disabilities, the opportunities to participate in a variety of creative arts classes, including music therapy, theatre, drawing, painting, movement, baking, and many more. Students have a chance to interact with their peers while improving fine and gross motor skill development. In March of 2022, AIA returned to in person classes! The Pandemic also broadened our classes into online platforms and virtual classes and hybrid models continued during the 2022 year.

During 2022, many community relationships developed. These include:

- Children's Acting Class in partnership with the Dream Center.
- In-person classes returning to the Boys and Girls Club.
- Sign and Movement Classes at EnCompass Academy
- Art Classes held at Acompañarte Culture Center
- Partnership with the Community Education Team to develop the Check in Cash out Class. These classes provide a new way to look at what employment can become.

These additions allowed AIA to host over 500 students and 600 hours of classes during 2022.



SHIANA BRELL'S STORY

Shiana Brell has taken many classes in a variety of locations. Vicki, Shiana's mother, and Shiana shared with us her story: "Art Inspired is such an important program for our daughter Shiana. She has been diagnosed with Autism, behavioral disorders, plus a long list of other issues. We struggled to find activities for Shiana to do with other special needs kids until we found Art Inspired Academy. This program has been a true blessing for our family.

The classes Shiana goes to are so beneficial for her. She has met friends, which is great for her socially. The staff at Art Inspired are so kind and loving. Jamie McGranahan is the instructor in most of Shiana's classes. She is so encouraging and patient. Exercising isn't Shiana's favorite thing to do, but Ms. Jamie makes it fun! Her bubbly personality keeps the kids engaged and she can get them to participate. This can be a difficult task at times!

Shiana enjoys baking class with Ms. Bailey. She likes making desserts and seeing her friends on zoom. This is a great class to be able to do from home. Shiana has done a few art classes with Mr. Richard on zoom. I'm glad this class is also available from home. Shiana's attention span is very short, so if we need to take a break we can and then we can go back to our art project.

Shiana struggles with her speech, so we are very glad Sign Language class is available to her. She has low muscle tone in her hands, so Ms. Brandy and Ms. Jamie modify signs that are easier for her to do.

Shiana is 19 so she is no longer in school. I'm so glad this program is available to her so she can still spend time with friends, exercise, work on life skills, and learn more sign language. We are so honored to be part of such a wonderful program."



Dreamland Gala" This was a dream of an AIA fan, and a Friends of AF board member, Sean Scarborough. With the help of our "MOM SQUAD" we celebrated a Gala and Christmas Tree Auction to benefit the students of AIA. Over \$30,000 was raised during the event for Friends of Abilities first! We hope you will join us December 2, 2023!

WINTER DREAMLAND GALA

To finish our busy year, in December 2022, AIA hosted the first ever "Winter



Employment Services

Abilities First Employment Services (AFES) has been offering employment services since 2017 and developed a contract with Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide Employment Services and Supported Services in 2018. AFES supports individuals in identifying and obtaining competitive community employment that matches their preferences, skills, and abilities. Our goal is for each individual is to assist them in finding long term, successful employment with a business of their choice. Our focus is on building relationships and meeting the employment needs of both the person seeking employment and the employer.

2022 has been a challenging year as we returned to in-person services instead of virtual. One of the biggest barriers has been the fact that businesses haven't returned to full service and in-person contacts. We aver-

aged 19 employer contacts each year. Even with all the challenges, we saw a 34% increase in referrals, and 50% of those seeking employment found their dream job and remained employed through the year.

“ Love y'all over all! I think this is a great program, and we are happy to be able to participate. ”

We redesigned our Employment Specialist's role with a goal of increasing consistency and more in-depth understanding of each individuals' strengths, preferences, skills and abilities. In previous years, services were provided by different positions, but in 2022 the Employment Specialist began providing all aspects of our employment service including assessment, individual planning, job development, placement, and on the job

supports. We feel this emphasis will improve workplace inclusion and relationship between individuals and their employers. Another major emphasis is identifying and developing co-workers, supervisor, and training staff who are the natural support for anyone working in the business whether they have a disability or not.

In December, satisfaction surveys were sent to Individuals, employers, and community stakeholders. This analysis provided insight not only into areas that we have been doing very well, but also areas where we can improve. Thirty-one percent (31%) of the individuals responded with 80% satisfaction. Employers who responded expressed 100% satisfaction with AFES supports and services, and 45% of the stakeholders responded to our survey with a 98% satisfaction result.

“ All of my interactions with the Employment Specialist have been fantastic and I am grateful for his clear communication! ”

2023 GOALS/OUTLOOK:

- Increase Referrals
- Increase the number of individuals hired in community business, at competitive wages.
- Increase the number of individuals who are successfully employed.
- Decrease the length of time between assessment and employment.
- Expand community contacts and business.
- Continue full implementation of redesigned Employment Specialists responsibilities.



Artisan Elements

Artisan Elements (AE) creates and sells innovative hand-cast custom wall tiles, tabletops, commercial and residential outdoor benches, large planters, and firepits from recycled paper or glass, concrete and commercial additives. The gallery and manufacturing facility provide inclusive employment opportunities, and continues to work to build business relationships and create jobs in the local economy.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS:

There were many projects in 2022. AE supplied C. Street with an additional six sidewalk planters bringing the total displayed along C. Street to twelve. These are produced and delivered by Artisan Elements and then painted by local artists hired by the C. Street CID (Community Improvement District). In addition, Artisan Elements worked with the Downtown Springfield CID to design and produce custom Chess table sets that will be installed in Jubilee Park South in the Spring of 2023. These were created by utilizing our new 3D printer for customized mold parts and casting them in our Polished ArtisanStone™ mix.

With the end of the pandemic, public events started getting back into swing during the 2022 season. Artisan Elements participated (with a market booth) in the Lawn and Garden Show marking five years of participation at this event, and for the first time ever, we participated at the Pickwick Street Fair.

As always, we worked with Abilities First Public Awareness to create two more awards for honorees at the 2022 Silver Strands Celebration. Artisan Ele-



ments continued to offer custom soy candles at Inspired Boutique and available for public order. In addition, we finished the production on the Silverleaf Project in 2021, and saw the final installation pictures in early 2022. This project featured custom walls utilizing our RipRap tiles in the common area. We also cast and installed the Phase III of the Abilities First project to continue to showcase our wall tiles.

tiles, which will be rolling out in finished form in 2023. We also added a new Fire Pit size (26" outside dimension) with a custom stand to our patio line. Our Modern Benches also received a redesign to be more durable and offer a full smooth top.

Finally, we have been perfecting the use of our new 3D printer for developing more unique 3D wall



Community Education



Community Education provides educational opportunities to promote full inclusion in the community. . This team works to break down barriers to support the growth of fully inclusive cultures and practices in businesses, nonprofits, government entities and academic institutions. In 2022, Community Education provided consultation and customized learning experiences to approximately 1,700 people in Greene County.

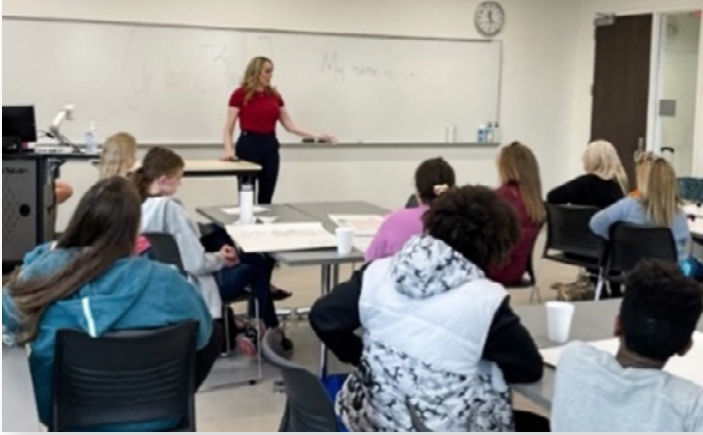
Community Education works with the City of Springfield to host the Check In, Cash Out Career and Personal Development series through Art Inspired Academy: A Program of Abilities First. These classes focus on new, creative ways to

look at employment from a team perspective. There is an emphasis on the possibilities that are available in the community to explore, volunteer, learn and grow. In addition, a partnership was developed with the GO CAPS Program for the series. Students with and without disabilities participated side by side learning together.

Abilities First provides funding for the Stop the Violence Conference and Community Education acts to support the project management in partnership with Missouri State University Criminology Department (an additional funder), the Family Justice Center, Harmony House, The Greene County Prosecuting Attor-

ney's Office, The Springfield Police Department, The Greene County Sheriff's Department, Mercy, and Cox Hospitals.

Community Education continues to support the development and evolution of the Good Life Group. The Springfield Good Life Group began several years ago and was the first Good Life Group in the state of Missouri. This group is dedicated to modeling full inclusion in the community and moving toward independence. Since the Springfield group's inception, GLGs have been popping up statewide with the support of UMKC Institute for Human Development.



In 2022, officers' positions were built and elected, a community mixer was held in partnership with CC Links highlighting inclusive businesses, a town hall meeting was supported and facilitated to acquire feedback of the Missouri Quality Outcomes, partnering with OTC's (Ozarks Technical College) Politically Active Group occurred regarding disability related topics and initiatives that intersect with voting practices in Greene County, assistance was provided to the People First of Springfield group to design a new flyer, the group hosted a professional development for the Junior League of Springfield, participated in the Empower the Disability Summit 2022, the Disability Rights Legislative Day and the list goes on.

Community Education serves to provide education to the Leadership Springfield Access Classes in the area of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion specific to the inclusion of people with disabilities, provided education to Missouri State University's Psychology Department students, facilitated and participated in employment related events, served as a resource to many think tank groups locally and statewide and supplied self-advocacy education for the Leadership Retreat Recruits from all over the nation for the BEAR Power Program at Missouri State.

With the help of dedicated employees across all programs, Abilities First was able to provide support for many back-to-school events, resource fairs, and at the new Springfield Public Schools events "SPS U". Work was done in all Greene County schools in a variety of ways to grow relationships, extend support to grow inclusive practices and opportunities and look toward goals for the future, specifically targeting the area of transition to employment. In addition, Abilities First partnered with Springfield Public Schools to provide a virtual employment event for students and families over zoom.

Community Education has provided development and learning support for utilization of the Charting the LifeCourse Framework philosophy out of the University of Kansas City Institute for Human Development. The partnering with UMKC began over 9 years ago and Abilities First is proud to be an early adopter. Community Education utilizes this lens of practice to guide it's work toward full inclusion. This specific training is a universally designed learning approach to support self-determination throughout the Individualized Educational Plan process.

Community Education has worked closely with the Springfield Police Department to look at areas to grow more

inclusive practices and provide a more intuitive approach and support officers to have what they need to promote safety and wellbeing for the entire community. Programming is being built to meet the SPD's needs and additional community experts in Autism and Dementia are being linked in to provide training in their identified competencies. All SPD Officers will receive training including new hires. This will be implemented live to leadership and filmed professionally by the SPD. Additional details to come in 2023.

The Building Blocks project has been developed, implemented, and housed within Community Education. This work is an additional response to the Abilities First unmet needs survey. Building Blocks works to fill in the gaps for people who have indicated that they are interested in employment, but do not know where to start. This program has been developed utilizing the Charting the LifeCourse Framework goal attainment tool, and participants are connected to opportunities such as the Check In, Cash Out series, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Volunteer Opportunities, Benefit Analysis, etc. Participants are supported through check-ins and support experience less barriers to live the life they chose and find success regardless of where they are on the journey to their good life.

Inspired Boutique

Inspired Boutique is an upscale resale shop featuring name-brand women's clothing, jewelry, accessories, shoes and home décor located at 2810 E. Battlefield Road in the Half-A-Hill Shopping Center in Springfield.

Inspired Boutique creates opportunities for community awareness and provides inclusive job opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. By engaging customers, the boutique builds strong relationships and creates name recognition as well as opportunities for additional inclusive job experiences in the community.

In 2022, Inspired Boutique had a 56% increase in sales over the previous year and record sales despite a continued world-wide pandemic. The increase in sales allowed us to reach a larger group of people and promote the importance of inclusion, especially in business, throughout our area. More importantly, customers learned the mission of the boutique, and donated and shopped more knowing that proceeds benefit people with developmental disabilities.



Friends of Abilities First

Friends of Abilities first is a non-profit organization 501(c)(3) that assists with the needs and expenses of people with developmental disabilities in Greene County. The funds raised are used to support people with developmental disabilities and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live, learn, work, play, and be productive in meaningful ways in our community.

In 2022, we celebrated our Silver Strand Celebration honoree, Phillip Wright, Lead Pastor at The Venues, in appreciation for his outreach efforts and relentless pursuit of inclusion. Silver Strands Celebration honors citizens who have made a positive impact on our community for people with developmental disabilities. Phillip was the fifth honoree for Silver Strands. This event is held annually at Hickory Hills Country Club.



Our newest fundraiser, Winter Dreamland, was held December 2022 at the Oasis Hotel and Convention Center. This event was a holiday tree extravaganza which included a dinner, silent auction, and tree raffle. Proceeds for this event provided scholarships for students attending Art Inspired Academy, a program of Abilities First.



The third annual Sporting Clays Shoot was held at the Ozarks Shooters Complex in August 2022. Sportsman traveled from all over the Ozarks to attend this fun sporting clay event. Fees from the shoot include entry, lunch, free t-shirt and prizes for top places.

2022 was another successful year for our online fundraiser, Giving Tuesday. Giving Tuesday is an annual day of giving for non-profits the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, and donors donated both on Facebook and through Square for a total of \$460.



Friends of Abilities First helped once again with the 5th Nick Hostler Memorial Pickleball Tournament in September of 2022. In appreciation for our nonprofit and helping with their event, the Hostler Foundation generously donated \$20,000 to FoAF.



For the month of September 2022, Old Time Pottery held their Grand Opening, and Friends of Abilities First was chosen as their charity. In October, Old Time Pottery and their customers donated 25 bins of household items to Friends of Abilities First as part of their “Big Hearted Bins” campaign. There were 820 items donated totaling \$4,283! We are grateful to Old Time Pottery for choosing us as their community partner and recipient of such an amazing donation.



Hold Fast Brewery held a fundraiser in October and offered to donate profits from Abbi's Ale to Friends of Abilities First. We appreciate their donation and the visibility they gave Friends of Abilities First in our community.

We are extremely thankful to everyone who gives to our non-profit throughout the year. Thanks to you, people are warm, fed, had clothes to wear, and toys at the holidays.

2022 FOAF BOARD MEMBERS

Mary Kay Hostler, President

Jessy Glair

Tom Jensen, Vice-President

Cathie Hampton

Crystal Reynolds Roberts, Treasurer

Craig Kelsay

Laura Curtis, Past President

Ellie Widmer

Martha Crise





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417-886-0404 | abilitiesfirst.net

MISSION
Turning Abilities Into Opportunities

VISION
People with developmental disabilities live the life they choose.

VALUES
Selfless Respectful Service
One Team, One Mission
Inspire Others
Be Resourceful, Never Give Up
Seek Knowledge
and Embrace Change



Abilities First has held an accreditation from CARF (Commission on Accreditation on Rehabilitation Facilities) since 2012, and is currently accredited for:

- Community Employment Services – Employment Supports • Community Employment Services: Job Development
- Community Integration • Services Coordination

CARF is an independent, non-profit accrediting body whose mission is to promote the quality, value, and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the persons served.