2018 Achievements

Executive Letter

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Abilities United, we are honored to share the results of our successful 2018. We are proud to lead this essential community organization that you made possible by giving your time, talent, and resources. Our sincere thanks to each of you - our thousands of donators, volunteers, partners, participants, staff members, and long-time friends - for your commitment to the mission of our agency. Your support has enabled our team of dedicated staff and volunteers to provide improved and expanded educational, social, therapeutic, and vocational services to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Today, our staff, volunteers, and donors work together to provide the services that would make our founding families proud. We continue the tradition of advocacy, inclusion, and independence to ensure our participants have the same rights, choices, and opportunities that all citizens enjoy.

Highlights of 2018 include:

- New Kaiser Permanente partnership for early intervention therapy referrals
- Increased business partnerships to 260 compared to 245 in 2017
- 53 new job placements brings us to a total of 500 people hired since 2003 ranging from entry level to professional positions and at new employers including Bon Appetit at Google.

As we prepare for 2019, we look forward to our continued work with you to fulfill our mission and reach our shared vision of a community where people of all abilities learn, live, work, and play together.

All the best to you in 2019!

Jennifer Wagstaff-Hinton  
Board President

Charlie Weidanz  
Chief Executive Officer

OUR MISSION
Abilities United advances advocacy, inclusion, and independence for people with developmental disabilities.

OUR VISION
Abilities United sees a world where people of all abilities learn, live, work, and play together.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Continuum of Service  
Financial Health  
Brand Awareness  
Future Development

THANK YOU!
Abilities United Board of Directors

With acknowledgement and deepest gratitude to the members of the Board of Directors for their outstanding generosity and tireless commitment to further the advocacy, inclusion, and independence of children and adults with developmental disabilities.

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Thank you to outgoing members:
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Rachel Segars
Susan Vaswani

“Abilities United provides an extraordinary level of support and encouragement to its clients – an agency that really believes in inclusiveness and makes it work. My daughter, Anna, has a life thanks to Abilities United staff.”

Frank Berry
Abilities United board member, donor, and parent of a participant

Constellations of Services for a Lifetime

Children & Families
Early Intervention
Therapy
Milestones Preschool

Adults & Families
Day Activities
Community Connections
Employment Services
Independent Living Skills
Integrated Living
Tailored Day

All Ages & Abilities
Socialization
Respite
Aquatics
Art
Computer Education
Your Generosity in Action

Hannah Fong

Hannah is 5 years old and attended the Abilities United Milestones Preschool. While at Milestones, her mother, Cindy, discovered the Inclusive Social Skills group at Stanford, an Abilities United partner. An added bonus was that the team of therapists included an Abilities United Occupational Therapist, someone both Hannah and her mother already knew.

Hannah was in the group for 3 months, once per week for a total of 12 sessions, and graduated in January 2018. There were 10 children, 5-6 years old with and without autism. Cindy states, “The peer-to-peer model worked very well because the children without autism were great role models and my daughter followed them rather easily. They were very responsive. Normally, the social groups are only for children with autism so they don’t have someone to model. I like how this inclusive group worked out.”

“Before this social skills group, she had no response to the other children, she would just mumble and not make eye contact. Today, I see my daughter is better than before and more responsive to other children. Recently I’ve observed Hannah having spontaneous back and forth exchanges with certain peers. Now she greets them loudly, clearly, and with confidence. She wants to have play dates and engages with the other kids. She doesn’t want to be left out and she runs around with the other girls.”

“A unique and very important part of the Social Skills Group was the parent training. We were taught what the children were learning so that we could arrange our own play dates at home and practice the skills our child needed to develop. I learned how to run a play date and how to get her to interact with the peers. Now I know how to set up the play date and make it fun and engaging. Today I feel equipped to help my daughter throughout her life.”

Elmer W.

As a child, Elmer developed an interest in architecture. He watched his grandfather at his architecture work. He pursued that early fascination and recently graduated from San Jose State University with a bachelor’s Degree in Studio Practice, with a Minor in Architecture and he continued to work in the university’s 3D printer studio. However, Elmer was unsure how to navigate his career path or what next steps to take. Until he was referred to Abilities United.

With guidance from his Job Developer, Elmer explored his primary interest, low-income housing and community improvement. He wanted to find a job or internship in the area to get some professional experience. They worked together to identify firms that were aligned with his goals and aspirations, including his plans to apply to a Graduate Architecture Program. The Job Developer reached out to an Abilities United architectural partner located in Palo Alto, and they agreed to meet with Elmer so he could learn more about working in the architectural field.

At the end of the meeting Elmer asked them for advice on pursuing internships. They gave him tips on how to contact other firms and also told him that they had opportunities that would work for him. Elmer followed up with his letter of inquiry along with his portfolio and resume. They responded with an offer of a six-month internship, which he accepted.

Four months later, their staff stated, “Elmer is a very hard working and an impressive intern. We appreciate his focus, willingness to take on new projects, and his ability to quickly pick up new skills.”

Elmer is very appreciative of this internship job, “The most important part is I that now have my foot in the door and that should make it easier to get a job. Working in this field is probably a big reason why I just got accepted into the Master’s program in the San Francisco architectural school California College of the Arts.

He further states; “If I didn’t get to work with Abilities United I think I would be sitting at home all week doing nothing or working at a really dull job. It was really good working with Abilities United and I appreciate everything they did for me.”
We Salute Our Volunteers

Gabi Dedek

A lifelong participant at Abilities United, Gabi started out in the Early Intervention program at just two months old. Her family heard about the program through a neighbor whose child was also in Abilities United Early Intervention.

The day after she was born, while she and her mother were still in the hospital, Gabi’s father met with the head of the program. Once enrolled, Gabi learned to crawl, walk, talk, eat, and so much more. What she learned at the program, her family replicated at home, so she could continue her therapy and learning.

Gabi’s mother stated, “The fact that Abilities United was there for us made a big, big difference in our lives. It was essential to our survival. I have no idea what we would have done without the Early Intervention program.”

After graduating from the program, they enrolled Gabi in the Palo Alto school district where she attended elementary, middle, and high school. She also attended community college at Ohlone, Foothill, and Taft College.

Today, Gabi gives back to Abilities United where she volunteers full time in the Milestones Preschool and the Adult Activities programs. In her spare time, she also volunteers at the Mitchell Park Library and the Palo Alto Children’s Library. Her aspiration is to become a preschool or kindergarten teacher because of her love of children. Gabi also is an artist with the Abilities United Art Program where her original works are exhibited and sold.

Like her bright, bold, effusive artwork, Gabi is full of energy stating, “I want to spend the rest of my life at Abilities United! I love my life and work.”

We Salute Our Donors

Elizabeth Wolf

Elizabeth Wolf and her husband, Hans, have been long-time community donors having formed their Hans and Elizabeth Wolf Foundation in 1966 to deepen and broaden their commitment to community service. She is deeply passionate about inclusive services for underserved children.

A donor to Abilities United since 1999, Elizabeth joined the Board of Directors in 2005. Always enthusiastic and cheerful, she continues to introduce her acquaintances and other community members to Abilities United through tours and fundraising events.

As a board member, Elizabeth was an engaged, active, and influential member who looked not just for the well-being of the organization but also that of the participants, donors, staff, volunteers and the community. She kept the “big picture” in mind and considered various angles of each discussion to ensure that decisions were sound, well thought out, and aligned with the mission.

After completing her two terms on the board, she accepted a new challenge as the volunteer co-chair of the Abilities United Campaign Cabinet. In this leadership role, Elizabeth focused on and was successful in raising funds needed to expand and enhance Abilities United services to further increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in our community.

Though Elizabeth did not come with major gift fundraising experience, she was eager to learn. In a very short time, she demonstrated her leadership not only through her solid wisdom, but also in her ability to approach community members and persuade others to fund the Abilities United vision and plans for an inclusive, barrier-free society.

Elizabeth is a person who walks the talk, supporting causes with her time and funds. She is endlessly supportive of the participants and staff of Abilities United as she understands the nature of working in the human services field.

“I believe that giving of one’s self is perhaps the greatest gift. I continue as an Abilities United volunteer because, as a former teacher and a parent, I have the education skills needed to help children and their families who don’t have the resources needed to maximize their potential. As a volunteer and former board member, I utilize my community network to generate donations to help fund this amazing agency. Abilities United is a very important part of this community because of course there is nothing else like it around.”

We Salute Our Volunteers

Gabi Dedek

“I want to spend the rest of my life at Abilities United! I love my life and work.”

Gabi Dedek

We Salute Our Donors

Elizabeth Wolf

“As a volunteer and former board member, I utilize my community network to generate donations to help fund this amazing agency.”

Elizabeth Wolf

former Abilities United board member, donor, and volunteer
Donors and Volunteers
Make Events a Success!

Dedicated donors, participants, staff, and volunteers ensure the success of our major community fundraising events: the 26th Annual Authors Luncheon and the 40th Anniversary Aquathon. Together, these popular events raised nearly $398,222 for the continuation and expansion of essential and inclusive program services for children and adults with developmental disabilities!

26th Annual Authors Luncheon

The 26th annual Authors Luncheon was held on November 4th at the Crowne Plaza Cabana Hotel in Palo Alto. We raised over $330,000 thanks to the support of more than 500 guests, sponsors, donors, and volunteers.

The proceeds benefit the comprehensive, lifetime of services Abilities United provides to thousands of children and adults with developmental disabilities, and their families.

40th Anniversary Aquathon

The 40th annual Aquathon was held on September 17 at the Hoover Pool in Redwood City. We raised over $65,000 thanks to the support of hundreds of swimmers, sponsors, donors, and volunteers.

We applaud our Aquathon honorary swimmer Anne Berry a participant in the Abilities United Adult Day Activities and Community Connections services.

Thank you for making these events such a tremendous success, year after year, decade after decade!

Abilities United Caring Circle
Legacy Society

On behalf of the children, adults, and families whom we serve, we express our deepest appreciation to our legacy donors. We honor their compassion, dedication, and outstanding generosity. Thank you for including Abilities United in your gift plans through a bequest, life income gift, or other gift planning arrangement.

The list below acknowledges bequest expectancies and other various forms of planned charitable gifts of which we have been notified through June 30, 2017. If you have named Abilities United as a beneficiary in a bequest or other planned gift and your name does not appear on this list, please let us know. Your willingness to be acknowledged will inspire others to follow your example.

Please contact Fund Development, Abilities United, at 650-494-0550 or at info@abilitiesunited.org if you have questions.

Thank you!

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Ways to Give to Abilities United

Cash Gift
A cash contribution is fully tax-deductible as provided by law. You may make a gift by mailing a check payable to Abilities United or online by visiting www.AbilitiesUnited.org.

Pledges
Making a pledge commitment allows you to pay it off over a specified period of time.

Matching Gifts
Many employers will match or double their employees’ contributions. Contact your employer’s Human Resource Department for information.

Securities
Making a gift of appreciated securities (stocks, bonds or mutual funds) allows you to take a charitable income-tax deduction based on its full fair-market value and avoid capital-gains tax that you would have paid if you had sold the securities directly.

Real Estate
Gifts of property benefit the donor in several ways.

Life Insurance
A gift of life insurance can provide a substantial tax deduction. You can either name Abilities United as the irrevocable beneficiary of an existing policy or purchase a new policy on behalf of Abilities United.

Donor Advised Fund (DAF)
DAFs connect your giving interests to our service needs. They provide an easy, low-cost, flexible way of giving that supports the ongoing services that we provide for children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

Financial and/or Estate Planning
After you have taken care of your family, please consider making a bequest or other planned gift to support Abilities United that best suits your objectives. Planned gifts ensure that your giving intentions will continue beyond your lifetime.

"...everyone has an ability, everyone has something to offer...
Matt Dolan, General Manager, Homewood Suites Palo Alto Abilities United employment partner and donor

Please contact Fund Development, Abilities United, at 650-494-0550 or at info@abilitiesunited.org if you have questions.
We gratefully acknowledge those who have made donations in our fiscal year 2018.

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- Martha Damman
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TheatreWorks Silicon Valley
Linaea Wickstrom and Peter Manosca
Russell Williams and Rowan Fairgrove

Please note:
We deeply regret any unintentional oversight or mispelling of any name or other error.
Please contact Fund Development, at 650-494-0550 or at info@abilitiesunited.org if we need to correct our records.
Thanks to our business partners

Fiscal Year 2018 Financials

Revenue Sources

- Donated Revenue: 31%
- Government Revenue: 54%
- Program Services Fees: 14%
- Other: 2%

Use of Revenue

- Management Support: 69%
- Program Services: 20%
- Fundraising: 11%

Financial statements contained in this report are based on a final audit report prepared by Robert Lee and Associates, LLP, which is available upon request.