

Inclusion Matters!



ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO

FY 2017 Annual Report to the Community

ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO

We Dare To Dream, Because Inclusion Matters!

Imagine a world where each individual is valued, respected and honored for their unique abilities. At Ability Connection Colorado (ACCO), we see how connections improve lives. Studies have demonstrated that the impact social inclusion has on an individual with a disability can mean the difference between a life of purpose and possibilities or a life of isolation. This is critical, when disability affects approximate 56.7 million,

nearly 1 in 5 people living in our communities throughout the United States (US Census 2010). Whatever the disability, at Ability Connection Colorado, we see abilities. Society's understanding of what disability looks like has changed since 1946, when institutionalization was the only option for a select group of individuals, and no services were provided for others living with disabilities. At

Ability Connection Colorado, education is the string that binds our critical services and our commitment to the community. For over 70 years, Ability Connection Colorado has weaved education into the language of Coloradans by way of spreading knowledge that disabilities can be visible, invisible, from birth or acquired. Everyone knows someone impacted by a disability. Statistics show that all disability

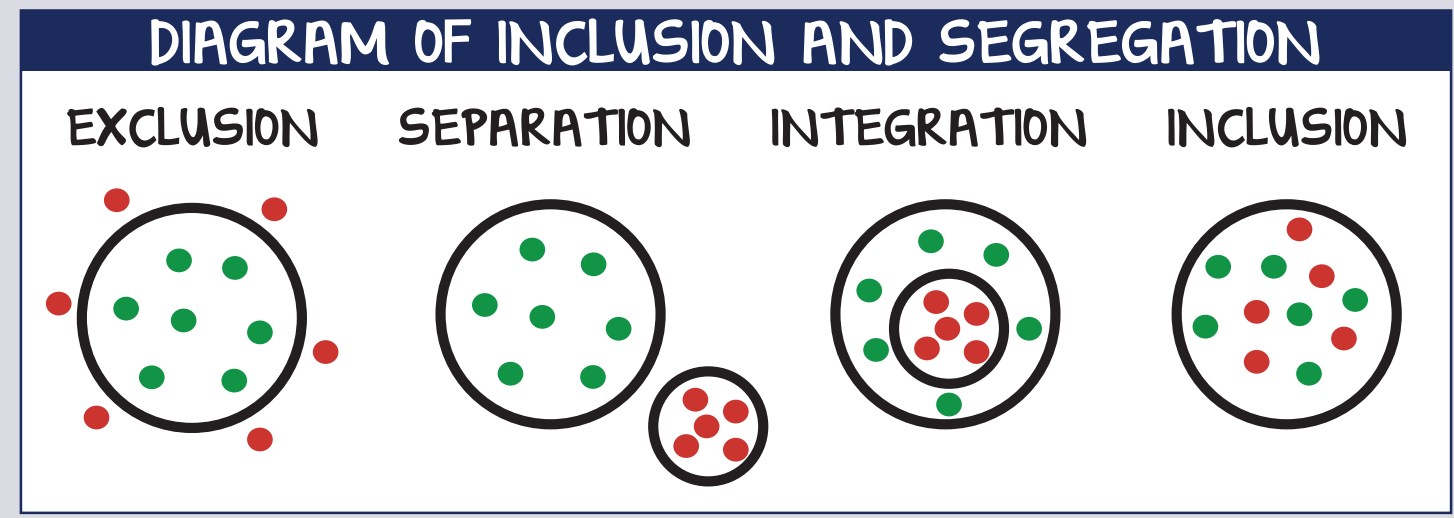
types, such as hearing, vision, cognitive, or ambulatory increase with age (Institute on Disability / UCED 2016). Chances are that you or someone close to you may have or acquire a disability during your lifetime. Knowing this, we continue to educate and promote acceptance and inclusion by bringing knowledge and hope on a journey for a better quality of life for a wide diversification of people with living with disabilities, special needs, developmental delays and a variety of other life challenges. We continuously strive to remove barriers to inclusion through our critical services and support systems. We work every day to support individuals through our high quality programs and services, which

offer assistance and change attitudes about individuals seeking our assistance in an effort to help them reach their full potential. It is a labor of love! We also imagine a world where no child fears for his/her safety at school. We dare to dream of a world where every child at an early age is mentally and physically equipped with the tools to successfully engage in school and society, and children are supported by their family and community, so they feel safe and free to learn. From prenatal family services to programs for individuals of every age, we focus on education, and intervention and prevention strategies to ensure that all individuals have an opportunity for a high-

quality life and are inclusive members of their communities. Last fiscal year, Ability Connection Colorado was privileged to provide direct and indirect, inclusive services for 46,981 Coloradans through Creative Options for Early Childhood Education, Statewide Family Support Services and Employment Works, with only 153 employees and many volunteers! Thank you for your continued support of Ability Connection Colorado. You embrace our vision of living in a community that includes, accepts, and celebrates the abilities and contributions of all individuals. Together we will Educate, Empower and Include!



“The true essence of inclusion is based on the premise that all individuals with disabilities have a right to be included in naturally occurring settings and activities with their neighborhood peers, siblings, and friends” —Dr Elizabeth Erwin



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Quality Early Childhood Education Changes Lives

Quality Early Childhood Education Changes Lives: The mind of an inquisitive young child is something very special. At all of our four (4) Creative Options for Early Childhood Education Centers, we facilitate individual development and family support to promote the growth and development of infants, toddlers and preschool children of every ability. We are thrilled to be opening our fifth Center in Aurora in 2018!

At Creative Options, we serve the entire family by providing professionals specializing in bilingual education, special education consulting, school readiness and family counseling, mental health, occupational therapy services and speech language pathologists/assistants.

Notable Numbers:

- 692** Total number of parents served, including prenatal, throughout the year.
- 100%** Percentage of families reported their children had an ongoing source of medical care.
- 100%** Percentage of families reported their children had continuous, accessible dental care.
- 96%** Percentage of children were immunized; 3% have not received all immunizations; 1% exempted by the state.
- 6** Number of expectant mothers with 5 high risk pregnancies received prenatal education, support and resource referrals.
- 421** Number of unique families that attended parent meetings.
- 36** Number of parents attending 6 hours during the Spring Parenting Series.
- 211** Number of fathers/father figures and their families who participated in male focused events.
- 60%** Percentage of of parents who reported an increased understanding about giving their child options during challenging behaviors.
- 390** Number of families that developed Family Partnership Agreements and created life goals. Of those families, 347 or 89% of them made progress on their goals.
- 179** Number of families who attended Back to School night and received Health/Safety Packets.
- 342** Number of families participated in family literacy events, demonstrating the importance of reading at school and at home.
- 1,749** Number of hours spent by parents and children reading together.

Early Childhood Education Programs: 534 Served

Finding Creative Ways to Serve the Entire Family

At Creative Options, we encourage all parents to be advocates for their children. This year, one of our Head Start children was diagnosed with a bilateral hearing loss and received hearing aids. His mother became proactive and learned how to monitor his aids and check them before school each day. Also, fearing that her child would not feel accepted by the other children, she requested that the Creative Options audiologist talk with the class to explain what hearing aids do and how they help. With her child's permission, the audiologist spoke with the class, and, later that day, a little girl in the class asked the boy with hearing aids if she could have some too! Chances are great that this boy will succeed, because he has a parent who advocates for him and is not afraid to ask for support.



EMPLOYMENT

When We All Work, Employment Works for Everyone

Through the EMPLOYMENT WORKS program of ACCO, individuals are able to gain the power of self-sufficiency. This program is focused on the development of life skills that enable individuals to join the workforce. Individuals, who are employed or focused on setting and reaching goals, are far more likely to feel empowered and confident. Gaining greater independence helps reduce the risk of an individual living in poverty. This program is good for Coloradans with disabilities and good for employers, as it contributes to a decrease in Colorado's unemployment rate and gives employers a diverse workforce that strengthens the community.

Notable Numbers:

2,760

Number of individuals served through the Social Security WIPA/BOND Program and within that Program

1,392

Individuals received intensive case management support

203

Number of individuals who were reached by the Ticket to Work/Fee for Service – Job Development/Job Placement Program and received information and referral services based on immediate need and job readiness.

65

Number of individuals employed and had a Ticket to Work status.

66

Number of youth enrolled in the Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP) program.

100%

Percentage of RAMP youth completed Individualized Mentoring Plans.

44

Number of youth who received WIPA services through the ASPIRE Program

Carmen's Story

*Carmen is 30 years old. She is paraplegic and on Social Security Disability Insurance. Carmen received a letter from Social Security stating that she was being terminated from the program and was in overpayment of nearly \$35,000. Carmen was not able to understand why this had happened and needed information about her entitlements. Our ACCO Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) was able to determine that she had legitimate income exclusions, including a vehicle modified with assistance from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to get to and from work, which cost around \$100,000 and a service dog that is with her at all times. Our ACCO Community Coordinator helped her submit a claim which included documents, such as pay stubs, proof of costs of her vehicle, work mileage, the cost of service animal expenses like food, grooming and veterinarian expenses. With these exclusions and subsidies, her ACCO Coordinator was able to file an appeal documenting a reduction of Carmen's countable income to the point where no overpayment of benefits occurred. We are happy to say that Carmen's appeal was approved favorably.

*Name has been changed.



Carmen's story is not unique, this is what EMPLOYMENT WORKS does. Employment is more than work; it is being able to live independently and self-sufficiently. Employment also helps us to feel valuable, it builds confidence, and it builds community.

Employment Works Programs: 3,126 Served



STATEWIDE SUPPORT

It's About Providing the Tools Necessary to Help Families Thrive

There is an understanding between parents who share similar experiences that cannot be put into words. The five (5) Statewide Programs of ACCO are invaluable support systems for helping parents, guardians and advocates care for the individuals that they love. Not only do the Statewide Programs provide support and resources needed to navigate a sometimes confusing at-home, school and healthcare systems, but these vital programs are spreading technical medical knowledge and saving lives across the world! diverse workforce that strengthens the community.

Notable Numbers (In no particular order):

PARENT TO PARENT OF COLORADO P2P Celebrated its 20th Anniversary in May, 2017!

89 Number of Parent Matches arranged through Parent to Parent of Colorado.

11,633 Number of Individuals connected to Parent to Parent that were provided Information & Referral services by phone, email, list serve & internet (available in English and Spanish).

FAITH IN ACTION

2,620 Number of individuals that were care recipients of Faith in Action and the 40 volunteers that contributed 35,950 Volunteer Hours to the Program.

INFANTILE SCOLIOSIS OUTREACH PROGRAM

3,300 Number of children that are currently being treated with Dr. Min Mehta's Growth Guidance Casting worldwide thanks to the Infantile Scoliosis Outreach Program (ISOP).

2,550 Number of families along with 650 professionals that were directly advised or informed of Dr. Mehta's Growth Guidance Casting through ISOP.

GUARDIANSHIP ALLIANCE OF COLORADO

84 Number of clients that were served by client managers through the Guardianship Alliance of Colorado.

192 Number of individuals who attended Petition Assistance classes through the Guardianship Alliance of CO.

56 Number of clients served by volunteer guardian and client managers who transitioned out of the Colorado Mental Health Institute into a placement more suitable for their day-to-day needs.

EMPOWER COLORADO

22 Number of Support Group Members who were served and learned about mental health through the EMPOWER Colorado Program

1,274 Number of Family Members served through EMPOWER Colorado.

106 Number of Home Visits/Coffees/Hospital/Court Visits which were attended by EMPOWER Colorado staff.

Statewide Family Support Programs: 43,321 Served

A Parent's Story

My son was 15 months old when he was diagnosed with infantile scoliosis. There was a lack of information as to what it was, and what was ahead of us. It was scary! Even the doctors spoke only of surgery. I finally came across ISOP's website with a great sigh of relief. ISOP connected me with others across the globe that had experienced Mehta casting, and their children were cured. This gave us hope. After my son wore a series of Mehta casts, he was transferred to a brace and is holding at 10 degrees (considered a mild curve). ~A grateful Father



SPECIAL EVENTS

ACCO's Special Events Were a Huge Success In FY 2017

11th Annual Straight Shot Sporting Clay Event Held August 12 & 13, 2016



2016 was the 11th Anniversary of this unique fundraiser – this event is one of the largest of its kind in the state! Friday consisted of over 120 corporate and individual amateur shooters teaming up for the competition. The shoot was followed by cocktails, cigars and Halliburton's scrumptious BBQ. Saturday was an officially sanctioned NSCA Individual Shoot. The Clay Shoot benefits the area of most need amongst the programs and services of Ability Connection Colorado, and grossed \$62,156. **Clay Shoot 2018 is coming up on August 10th & 11th.**

33rd Annual Wine in the Pines Held October 21 & 22, 2016



A two-day extravaganza that turned 33 years old! On Friday evening, attendees enjoyed the Winemaker's Dinner, a seated experience with multiple courses and wine pairings at Keystone Ranch. The International Wine and Gourmet Food Tasting was Saturday night at the Keystone Conference Center, and offered over 500 wines and the best food that Keystone restaurants offer. The crowd had a wonderful time dressing and dancing to the exciting 70's Disco theme. Wine in the Pines benefits the Employment Works Program and

RAMP through the Kelly Smith Employment Center. The event grossed \$144,751. **Wine in the Pines 2018 will be October 19th & 20th.**

23rd Annual Great Balls of Fire Billiards Challenge Held February 11, 2017



Amateur players made up of Colorado firefighters, sport celebrities, business employees, families and friends, teamed up for a friendly competition at the pool tables. It was fun and fajitas for all! Eighty-eight cents of every dollar raised went directly into the Kyle E. Fisher Memorial Fund at Creative Options Centers for Early Childhood Education, and 2017 marked our 23rd year! Billiards grossed \$92,405. **Billiards 2019 is scheduled for Saturday, February 9th.**

34th Annual Colorado Concours d'Elegance & Exotic Sports Car Show Held June 11, 2017



Cars, cars, cars! 2017 was the 34th year that over 400 of the most exceptional cars gathered in one spot for individuals and families to enjoy. Vendors, food trucks and fun for everyone! Concours benefits inclusive early childhood education at Creative Options and grossed \$149,746. **Concours 2018 is coming up on Sunday, June 10th.**

In total, ACCO Special Events for FYE2017 were attended by over 14,000 people and grossed \$449,057!

Get Involved in Event Sponsorship

If you are interested in learning more about sponsoring one of Ability Connection Colorado's four annual special events, please contact Terri Armstrong, Development Director, at tarmstrong@abilityconnectioncolorado.org. Thank you.

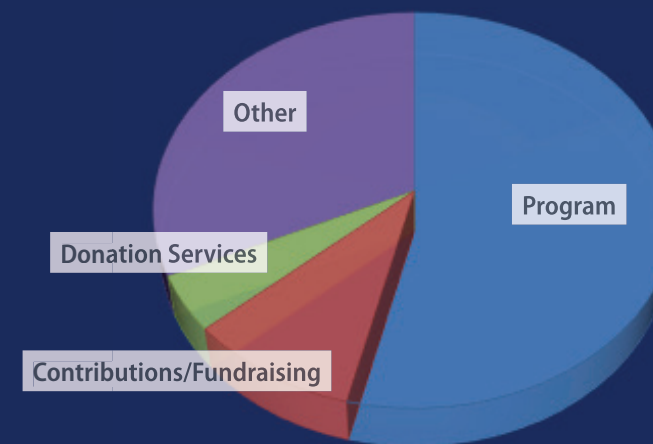
FINANCIAL INFORMATION



Dear Friends and Family of Ability Connection Colorado:

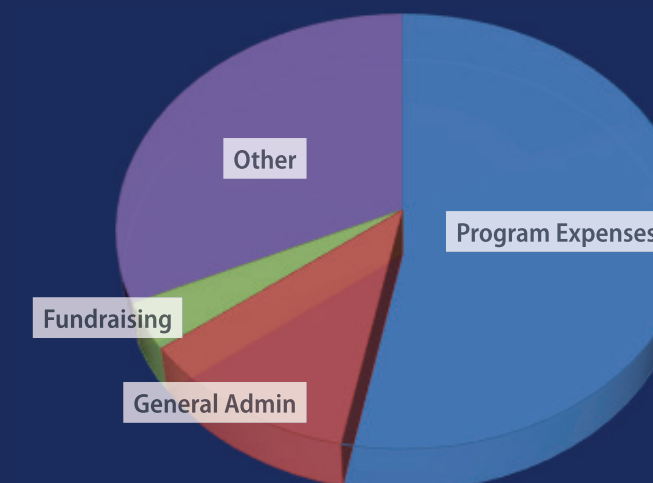
In FY 2017, Ability Connection Colorado celebrated 70 years of service to individuals and families across Colorado. Because of you, ACCO was able to provide critical services to over 46,000 individuals last year. You have gifted time, money, social support, encouragement, laughter, love and patience. And we are truly grateful for your ongoing commitment to our vision of inclusive Education, Employment and Family Support Services.

Thank you for making a difference!



Revenues

Program	5,126,811
Contributions/Fundraising	927,338
Donation Services	437,528
Other	3,035,837
Total Revenue	9,527,514



Expenses

Program Expenses	5,574,605
General Admin	1,209,830
Fundraising	367,373
Other	3,340,073
Total Expenses	10,491,881

*Included is 1,356,743 in depreciation expenses

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Ability Connection Colorado, Inc.

OUR VISION:

To live in a community that includes, accepts, and celebrates the abilities and contributions of all individuals.

OUR MISSION:

To support Coloradans through innovative and comprehensive early childhood education, employment, and family support programs.

INCLUSION:

The action or state of including or of being included within a group. At ACCO, we recognize the inherent worth and value of each person and the resulting empowerment and dignity that comes from their inclusion in life, education, work and community.

ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO™