

# CONNECT.



ABILITY  
CONNECTION  
COLORADO™

Serving People with Disabilities™

As the season of gratitude approaches, Ability Connection Colorado would like to say **THANK YOU**.  
**TOGETHER, WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SO MUCH!**

## EDUCATION

### Creating a Brighter Future for Colorado Children

Western Summit Constructors, Inc. has been working with Creative Options for Early Childhood Education for the last ten years. Judy Ham presented Western Summit with an award for their ongoing contributions, including employee giving, in-kind donations, and its "Adopt a Family Program" for the holidays. Western Summit even built a ramp for the Jamaica site, thus enabling children of all abilities to access the facilities. This year, the Jamaica Early Childhood Education Center now serves a total of 130 Aurora families, and is one of four Creative Options education sites.

Thanks to our valued partners, Ability Connection Colorado will break ground on the 5th early childhood education site located in the Fitzsimmons redevelopment area. This center will serve one of the most economically distressed metro communities in Colorado. Naming opportunities will be available in early 2016.

## Letter from Judy Ham, CEO/President

Thank you. It's a word we do not use often enough to express gratitude for the support you provide to Ability Connection Colorado.

For 70 years, we have been focused on providing innovative and exceptional services to reach as many individuals and families as we can, helping to educate, employ, and support those with developmental and intellectual disabilities. As we enter the season of gratitude, I am reminded – and thankful – that each of you helps ensure we can meet this mission.



Recently, I was looking through a notebook entitled "Twenty Years of Achievement – 1946 to 1965," created by a volunteer many years ago. Included in this physical history is the first recorded donation in 1947 from the Kiwanis Club of Denver in the amount of \$750.00 to establish a loan library to "aid parents in their search for more knowledge concerning Cerebral Palsy." The pages are typed and yellowing, but the message and the memories are clear. It was a true grassroots community of volunteers, families, and donors, who built what is now Ability Connection Colorado – and this legacy continues today. In fact, just recently the Kiwanis Club donated a gift to Ability Connection Colorado.

This year's successes and achievements remind me of how we have remained true to the vision of the nine women who met in 1946 to form a Mother's Club. They "dared to dream of a better life for their disabled children." Over the past 70 years, we have worked to carry on this founding vision. As an organization, we have matured and now impact tens of thousands of lives each year to realize our vision to: "live in a community that includes, accepts, and celebrates all abilities and contributions through our innovative and comprehensive programs."

# Creating Pathways to Employment

**EXPECT.  
EMPLOY.  
EMPOWER.**

Recognizing Colorado's need to end the cycle of poverty particularly for Colorado's most vulnerable, at-risk populations and those with disabilities, Ability Connection Colorado will expand its employment services in 2016. We currently serve teens and adults, but so many more are in need of our services. Thanks to the generous support of Wine in the Pines patrons, we were able to open 376 new cases, and 373 already have jobs.

The Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration recently recognized one of Ability Connection Colorado's employment clients highlighting skills development and employment training.

## Letter from Judy Ham (continued)

I am humbled by the support of partners like you throughout Colorado. One of our newest 2015 partners, Kaiser Permanente, gifted \$10,000 for Wine in the Pines, which is our signature gala benefiting the Employment Works program. Some of our community partners have been with us for many, many years such as the Bill Barrett Corporation, 1st Bank, TCBY, Enercom, and of course, our Platinum Sponsor, Circle K. While these are just a few of our supporters, all those who give so generously – from \$25 per month to \$25,000 per year – have helped us reach more than 40,000 Coloradans.

As part of our sincere thanks, I want to highlight a few successes from the past year that speak to the impact of donors and supporters like you. I hope these stories inspire you, as they have me for more than 20 years. It has been an honor and a privilege to work with families, individuals, and our incredibly generous and supportive sponsors and community partners.

Rest assured that as stewards of your generous support, ACCO ensures .89 cents of every dollar directly funds programs. Every dollar matters and helps us serve more than 40,000 Coloradans each year. We have an annual wait list of approximately 850 Coloradans in need, which tells me that the services we provide are of quality and essential – and there is more to do.

On behalf of the board of directors and the entire organization, thank you for your partnership and support over the past year. Together, we have accomplished so much.

Sincerely,



Judy Ham

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Djimon and family with his new iPad at a recent Ability Connection Colorado Citywide Meeting with presenter Lisa Franklin (right). As many as twenty iPads are given away to children and young people each year and are made possible through contributions from Colorado Circle K stores.

## A little change can make a lot of sense.

Circle K makes canisters available at cash registers throughout Colorado, allowing customers to donate their change to support the programs and services of Ability Connection Colorado (ACCO). Thanks to Circle K customers like you, spare dollars and cents have made the difference in the lives of more than 40,000 Colorado families and children. Whether you give .25 cents, \$1.00 or \$5.00, you help ACCO provide programs and services for families in need.

ACCO's partnership with its platinum sponsor, Circle K, is invaluable and enables us to do so much more as we serve Colorado communities. At least twice a year, thanks to the generous canister donations, ACCO is able to provide iPads to children living with a disability. As a result of receiving an iPad, these children gain access to technology and innovation allowing them to improve their quality of life. From a myriad therapeutic applications to assisting in communication and education, the iPads serve as game changers for these Colorado families.

One such iPad recipient is Djimon – and technology has revealed Djimon's adaptability. It took him maybe half a day to figure out how he could manipulate a video game controller with his chin and nose. He uses an iPad to check his Facebook page and play video games, navigating the screen with the touch of his nose or chin, and zooms in by parting

his lips on the touchscreen. His mother, Venus, now admits: "I never say, 'He can't ...'"

Read more about the most recent iPad giveaways.

**Thanks to Circle K and its customers** for their commitment to ACCO and the 40,000 Coloradans who benefit from their generosity. Together, we can do so much more!



**Your Change  
Changes Lives!**



Look for Ability Connection Colorado  
canisters at participating Circle K Stores

# PLEASE GIVE TO ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO ON OR BEFORE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

If you are not familiar with this exciting event, Colorado Gives Day is an annual statewide movement to celebrate and increase philanthropy in Colorado, and is sponsored by FirstBank and Community First Foundation. Many of you already support Ability Connection Colorado throughout the year and we are so grateful. Look for ACCO reminders in your inbox and mailbox. You can also schedule your donation now!



## ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO

For 70 years, ACCO programs enable individuals and families with disabilities to lead full and productive lives. Building on the legacy established in 1946, ACCO provides inclusive education, pathways to employment, and support, including guardianship and conservatorship services. More than 40,000 Coloradans with disabilities and their families last year benefitted from ACCO services.

Learn more about Ability Connection Colorado.

- Early Childhood Education including Developmental and Health Screenings
- Parent and Family Support Groups and Education
- Quality Guardianship and Conservatorship Services and Arrangements for Adults
- Employment Services
- Mental Health Awareness

Together...  
We CAN DO  
so much  
more!

Change a life by giving your time, talent or treasure to ACCO. Help ACCO reach more Coloradans in need.  
[abilityconnectioncolorado.org](http://abilityconnectioncolorado.org) [info@abilityconnectioncolorado.org](mailto:info@abilityconnectioncolorado.org) 303.691.9339.



*Wishing you all a joyous Holiday Season.*



FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT

**ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO**