



THE NEWSLETTER OF ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO™

Fall, 2018

Our vision is to live in a community that includes, accepts and celebrates the abilities and contributions of all individuals.

EDUCATION

FIVE Reasons Why Early Childhood Education Is So Important

1. 90% of a child's brain capacity is developed by age 6, long before many children ever walk through a kindergarten door.
2. Early Childhood Education Programs serve as essential building blocks for a lifetime of success, yet access to high quality programs is limited with only a small fraction of eligible low-income children able to attend. Our program is cost free for Head Start qualifiers.
3. Children exposed to high quality early education are at a lower risk of dropping out of school or being placed in special education, and are less likely to be involved in criminal activity.
4. Last year, we served 534 children and their families at all four Creative Options Centers. Nearly 4,000 children in the city of Aurora are eligible for Head Start and are not receiving Head Start/Early Childhood Education services.
5. ACCO's Creative Options Program levels the playing field for some of Colorado's most vulnerable children and their families.



Please note: Taxpayers that make a qualifying monetary contribution to promote child care in Colorado may claim an income tax credit of 50% of the total qualifying contribution. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.

Teddy's Story ~ Overcoming Challenges



Teddy had a heart defect that required multiple surgeries to correct, and he spent the majority of his infancy in the hospital. While in the hospital, he received a G-tube for feeding and medication. Unfortunately, during one of his surgeries, his vocal cords were damaged and doctors were unsure if he would ever be able to speak. In addition to the uncertainty surrounding his speech, one of the biggest concerns that his family had upon entry into Creative Options was how Teddy would learn to self-regulate stress. While in the hospital, he experienced difficulty learning these skills, due to the fact that he had to maintain a heart rate in a consistently normal range.

We knew Teddy had a tough road ahead: however, his loving family and the determined team at Creative

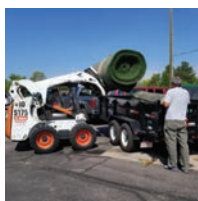
Options were able to set measurable goals. The staff was able to maintain his heart rate by comforting and reassuring him that he was safe. Eventually, he began to use a few words and was initiating play with his peers and familiar adults. Throughout the rest of his school year, he was able to build skills that matched his peers. The in-house staff was able to spend the time needed with Teddy to get him on the right path forward. During this time, he also received a variety of life changing services for speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, mental health and nursing services.

With the support of his family and the staff at Creative Options, Teddy was able to receive child care, school preparation and much needed services early on in his life. We are thrilled to say that Teddy was able to build a solid foundation for a lifetime of success, and was SPEAKING ALL THE TIME! ~Name has been changed.

Early Education ~ What's Happening



Back to School. The school year is well underway at Creative Options and the teachers and children are looking forward to a fantastic year! Toddlers are currently highly focused on social emotional development and well-being with topics that include positive relationships, healthy emotions, routines and exploring the classroom.



Ironton Playground Project. We are so grateful to the Kiwanis Club of South Denver, Shepherd of the Hills Christian School and Con n' Co Construction, who have helped to give the Ironton playground some beautiful new turf! We cannot thank you enough for your time and generous donations!



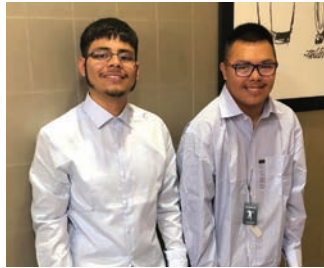
EMPLOYMENT



Did You Know...

- Hidden or invisible disabilities are disabilities that are not immediately apparent. Individuals who live with these disabilities can face certain challenges in the workplace and in their communities including misunderstandings, false perceptions, and judgments.
- Individuals with disabilities are among the most under-employed populations in the US.
- For individuals with disabilities, employment means greater economic self-sufficiency and more active participation in community life.
- 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 individuals living in poverty.
- Employment is good for Coloradans with disabilities and good for employers. 92% of consumers reflect favorably on businesses known to hire people with disabilities, with 87% preferring to do business with these companies.

Employment Works Builds Confidence



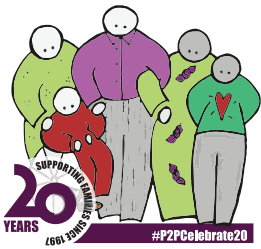
The Ready to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP) is proud to announce the completion of the summer phase of its six week intensive pilot Extension Program supported by the RHMS-Mill Levy Program. RAMP worked with a specific set of 10 foster care youth to condense one year's worth of programming into a six week pilot with youth receiving much of the same support and curriculum as the yearlong program. The sessions included job skills, resume building, transition support services, hands-on career exploration opportunities, internship exploration, job search support and soft skills training. Youth also worked on leadership, peer support, community resource mapping and many other important transitional skills. At the end of the pilot, each youth received a new chrome book, laptop portfolio and a shopping excursion with their own personal shopper and stylist at Macy's department store, who outfitted them to support their employment and internship opportunities.



35th Annual Wine in the Pines - Friday and Saturday, October 19 & 20, 2018

Come join us as Elvis comes to Wine in the Pines! This year, Wine in the Pines will celebrate its 35th anniversary in Keystone, Colorado. This premier event brings together world-class wines, live music, with the incredible edibles and chocolate desserts from Keystone's premier chefs and restaurants.

Founded by Mike and Margaret Smith (Dillon, CO) in honor of their daughter, Kelly, who was born with Cerebral Palsy, Wine in the Pines has helped raise hundreds of thousands of dollars over the years to help fund ACCO's Employment Works Program. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit WinelnThePines.org



Parent to Parent of Colorado Celebrates 20 Years!

Parenting our sons & daughters with a disability or special health care need can be complex, challenging, delightful and, at times, overwhelming! Parent to Parent of Colorado (P2P-CO) is a network of families across Colorado who understand! We connect families to each other and to the resources they need. We offer encouragement to each other on the journey of parenting by providing emotional and informational support. Below are just a few of the testimonials lauded by P2P families:

- “ WOW! This group is amazing, thank you everyone for responding to my inquiries! I have some homework to do ahead of our road trip clearly... I look forward to following up again soon; thank you for the incredible welcome and support already! ~Kelly, mom who is moving to Denver with her teenage son
- “ Mountains of gratitude to you all and all the “pioneers” that have paved the way for us to follow... it’s heavy work but so much easier, due to you all. Congratulations on 20 years! ~Anonymous
- “ This is the best resource that I have found for helping navigate the special needs world. I am very grateful for all the parents, who share their knowledge, opinions, references, etc. ~Georgia
- “ Thank you for making connections for us parents, who can become isolated in our care giving world! ~Anonymous
- “ Thanks for all you do! I love getting the emails. Being a parent of children with special needs can be isolating. The online community has helped me to not feel so alone. ~Anonymous



SUPPORT

Supporting The Journey and Changing Lives

The five Statewide Programs of ACCO are invaluable support systems for helping parents, guardians and advocates care for their loved ones.

These vital programs include:

EMPOWER Colorado

Faith in Action

Guardianship Alliance of Colorado

Infantile Scoliosis Outreach Program

Parent to Parent of Colorado

These critically important programs provide the support and resources needed to navigate sometimes confusing at-home, school, healthcare and community systems.

To learn more about how these programs serve Colorado communities and beyond, please visit **AbilityConnectionColorado.org**

More exciting ways to be involved



Help us support Creative Options Five

We are thrilled to be opening our fifth Creative Options Center in Aurora this Fall! Creative Options Five will be located in an area of significant need and dramatic risk for children in the state of Colorado. A majority of the children and families living in this area are in poverty or at-risk of falling into poverty. This school will serve these children, regardless of ability or economic circumstances. For more information on how you can be a part of this amazing project, visit AbilityConnectionColorado.org and click on the **Helping Hands banner**.



Enter to win a 2019 Porsche Cayman GTS or \$75,000

Picture yourself in a brand-new Porsche Cayman GTS sports car or win \$75,000 when you participate in this exiting drawing benefiting the programs and services of Ability Connection Colorado. The 365-hp Cayman GTS is fun to drive on the street or track providing one of the purest driving experiences available. Porsche quotes a top speed of 180 mph and a 0 to 60 in 3.9 seconds. For more information, visit AbilityConnectionColorado.org and click on the **Porsche banner**.

ABILITY
CONNECTION
COLORADO
801 Yosemite Street
Denver, CO 80230

PLEASE GIVE TO ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO ON OR BEFORE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4

Join the Ability Connection Colorado Donor family today and help Educate, Empower and Include everyone to create a safe, healthy and vibrant community.

Colorado Gives Day is Tuesday, December 4, 2018.

Colorado Gives Day is an annual statewide movement and is an amazing way to "give where you live".



Beginning November 1, 2018, you can schedule donations for Colorado Gives Day.

At ACCO, we have not finished building toward **EDUCATION, EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION** for individuals of every age. You could help a child be ready for school and move out of poverty through early education. You could save a youth with a disability from being isolated and destined to a limited future. Through the path to employment, dreams could be fulfilled. And you could save the life of a baby with Progressive Infantile Scoliosis through a non-invasive treatment. There are so many ways to make a difference in someone's life at ACCO! To see all of the possible impacts and make a donation, visit our ACCO giving page.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ACCO ensures that .89 cents on every dollar directly supports Coloradans.
- Colorado Gives Day guarantees that every dollar raised in Colorado, stays in Colorado.
- You can avoid the rush! Register early and schedule a donation today!
- There are MANY WAYS to have an IMPACT. You have a CHOICE where your donation dollars will be spent.