

Inclusion Matters!



ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO

FY 2018 Annual Report to the Community

ABILITY CONNECTION COLORADO

Inclusion Has Always Mattered!

Bravery in the face of adversity is a quality that everyone, at any age, and of all abilities can achieve. The founding mothers of Cerebral Palsy of Colorado (now Ability Connection Colorado) were shining examples of this notion and taught us many lessons in strength and courage, when they vowed to create an organization, which would give the opportunity of an inclusive education for their children living with disabilities in 1946. We now look back and see that these mothers taught us many lessons in bravery and showed us that there has never been a time or place when inclusion didn't matter. We know these amazing women were educating the community and removing barriers to inclusion long before the rights of individuals with disabilities were even considered!

During the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, citizens and leaders fought for freedom and equality for all, but it wasn't until 1990, when the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibited discrimination based on disabilities. Today, at Ability Connection Colorado (ACCO), we see the future, and the future is ability. We know our work is never complete.

Disability affects approximate 56.7 million (nearly 1 in 5 people) living in our communities throughout the



United States. (US Census 2010) That is a staggering number, when you think about how many people you know and interact with during a day, a week, a year and a lifetime. At ACCO we believe that every individual deserves high quality education, meaningful employment and social support programs regardless of demographics, socioeconomic situations, or physical, mental, visible and/or invisible disabilities.

“When economists describe the conditions under which countries prosper, one of the factors they stress is “human capital,” which is another way of saying that the future depends on young people’s access to high-quality health and education services. Health and education are the twin engines of economic growth.
– Melinda Gates

Are we optimistic about the future...? Absolutely Yes! Why? Because...

We are educating! We are building blocks for a better quality of life for at-risk children and families and a wide diversification of people living with disabilities, special needs, developmental delays and a variety of other life challenges, and we see what a difference this makes every single day. We continue to promote acceptance and inclusive education, to provide strategies for success and strive to give hope to each generation of young children and their families in need, regardless of ability or economic status. We believe in the endless possibilities of their future potential.

We are employing! We climb that mountain every day for each adult and young adult that rightfully demands meaningful employment, greater economic self-sufficiency and an opportunity to use their skills, because we know this is essential for all individuals to gain more active participation and fulfillment in community life.

We are supporting! We quickly make critical connections. We educate doctors, parents, and our community, while providing a safety net of support for family members and caregivers in Colorado. These individuals tirelessly advocate, become public activists of inclusion and spend countless hours and sleepless nights on behalf their beloved families.

Last fiscal year, Ability Connection Colorado was privileged to provide direct and indirect, inclusive services for 45,662 Coloradans through Creative Options for Early Childhood Education, Statewide Family Support Services and Employment Works, with only 162 employees and many volunteers!

Thank you for your continued support. You embrace our vision of living in a community that includes, accepts, and celebrates the abilities and contributions of ALL individuals!

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Building Blocks for a Lifetime of Success!

Our fifth Creative Options for Early Childhood Education Center is now open in Aurora! At all five (5) locations, our goal is to continue to provide fully inclusive early education and services to some of Colorado’s most vulnerable infants, toddlers, preschool children and their families.

Creative Options is part of a federal Head Start program, which promotes family support and school readiness of children from birth to age five from low-income families through enhancing their knowledge of academics, health, social emotional, overall development, and family engagement. At Creative Options, we facilitate individual growth and development of every child and serve the entire family by providing professionals specializing in bilingual education, special education, school readiness, family coaching, mental health, occupational and physical therapy services and speech language pathologists/assistants in a safe, healthy environment.

Notable Numbers:

- 692** Total number of parents served, including prenatal, throughout the year.
- 431** Number of unique families that attended parent meetings.
- 97%** Percentage of parents who were satisfied with their overall experience at Creative Options.
- 153** Number of fathers/father figures and their families who participated in male focused events.
- 391** Number of families that developed Family Partnership Agreements and created life goals. Of those families, 93% of them made progress on their goals.
- 359** Number of families participated in family literacy events, demonstrating the importance of reading at school and at home.

Preparing Children for Kindergarten

SUBJECT AREA	K-BOUND		ALL CHILDREN	
	FALL '17	SPRING '18	FALL '17	SPRING '18
Social Emotional	40%	96%	51%	97%
Physical-Gross Motor	68%	96%	70%	98%
Physical- Fine Motor	67%	98%	75%	98%
Language	42%	92%	49%	94%
Cognitive	46%	96%	53%	98%
Literacy	30%	92%	42%	94%
Mathematics	18%	72%	35%	82%



Early Childhood Education Programs: 453 Served

Navigating Challenges - A Father’s Story

*David came to Creative Options at a time of extremely busy enrollments for the year, as a dedicated father requesting information to register his daughter. As the Creative Options team began to explain the requirements to qualify for full-time enrollment, due to the stress of his situation, David was unable to hold back his tears. He shared that in pursuit of a better life for his family, all six family members (two grandparents, two parents and two children), had recently arrived in the USA only a few months ago from Ethiopia, and that it had been extremely difficult for them to obtain resources and help. They did not have medical insurance and did not know where to take their daughter for her physical or to catch her up on her vaccines.

Our team understood that David was feeling a great weight on his shoulders, and his Family Coach was able to provide resources where his daughter could get a medical examination, as well as the vaccinations that she needed. David was able to finish with his daughter’s enrollment, pending her physical and dental reports. Over the next few weeks, David, diligently met with his Family Coach several times and was able to complete his daughter’s required medical attention. Currently, David’s precious little girl has entered school, and it has been a pleasure to greet him and see a smile on his face. *Name has been changed.



EMPLOYMENT

A Diverse Workforce Strengthens the Community

When the Employment Works program of ACCO partners with businesses, those businesses access a talented and diverse workforce of qualified employees, who can drive innovation and strengthen their business. Did you know that when asked, one third of the public, strongly agreed with the following statement, "Companies that hire those with disabilities are companies that you would prefer to give your business to"? (Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation 2006) In addition, employed individuals are far more likely to feel empowered and confident, gain greater independence and reduce their risk of living in poverty. Whether it is a young adult struggling and in need of a mentor to help guide them through employment processes, or someone living with a debilitating disability, in need of navigating Social Security Income or going back to work, at Employment Works, individuals are supported to gain the power of self-sufficiency and develop life skills toward fulfillment and success.

Notable Numbers:

2,434

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

1,295

Individuals received intensive case management support

208

Number of individuals who were reached by the Job Development/Job Placement Program and received information and referral services based on immediate need and job readiness.

35

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

114

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

90%

Percentage of RAMP youth who completed Individualized Mentoring Plans.

32

Number of youth who received WIPA services through the ASPIRE Program

80+

Number of business partnerships formed or retained via presentations, tours, and related activities.

635

Number of hours contributed by 9 RAMP volunteers and interns

Employment Works Programs: 2,815 Served

Nora's Story

*Nora, is a student who happens to have an intellectual developmental disability, and was new to the Reading to Achieve Mentoring Program (RAMP). Nora came happy and eager to learn. Despite a three hour bus commute, she always arrived on time and participated in every lesson with a positive attitude. Toward the end of the program, medical appointments prevented her from joining the Tuesday group sessions, but Nora was determined to meet with a RAMP Coordinator for one-on-one sessions to complete all activities and the RAMP curriculum. When Nora participated in the "Macy's Shopping Spree" through RAMP, she was able to get a full interview outfit, including shoes. After the Spree, Nora said that "I have never had a pair of shoes without holes." We are extremely proud to have such an incredible and determined young woman as a part of RAMP, and we look forward to continue working with her as she pursues her goal of finding employment at her local recreation center working with kids. *Name has been changed.





STATEWIDE SUPPORT

Families and Caregivers are Making a Difference

Unique families deserve unique services and support, and at each of the five (5) Statewide Programs of ACCO, we know that every individual and family requires something different. This parent driven network provides invaluable one-on-one guidance, while helping parents, guardians and advocates care for marginalized individuals with physical/mental support systems, resources, kindness and compassion. Colorado parents and families struggling with parenting and other life challenges are given hope and are provided with experienced direction. They also receive assistance and advocacy training to help them navigate the often overwhelming, complex community systems related to education, health care, employment and community living.

Notable Numbers

PARENT TO PARENT OF COLORADO

92

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

11,285

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

2,478

Number of individuals that were care recipients of Faith in Action and the 30 volunteers that contributed 25,769 Volunteer Hours to the Program.

INFANTILE SCIOLIOSIS OUTREACH PROGRAM

4,405

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).

3,005

Number of families along with 8,000 professionals that were directly advised or informed of Dr. Mehta's Growth Guidance Casting through ISOP.

GUARDIANSHIP ALLIANCE OF COLORADO

122

Number of clients served by volunteer guardian and client managers transitioned out of the Colorado Mental Health Institute into placement more suitable for their overall and day-to-day needs and lives through the Guardianship Alliance of Colorado program.

162

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

EMPOWER COLORADO

40

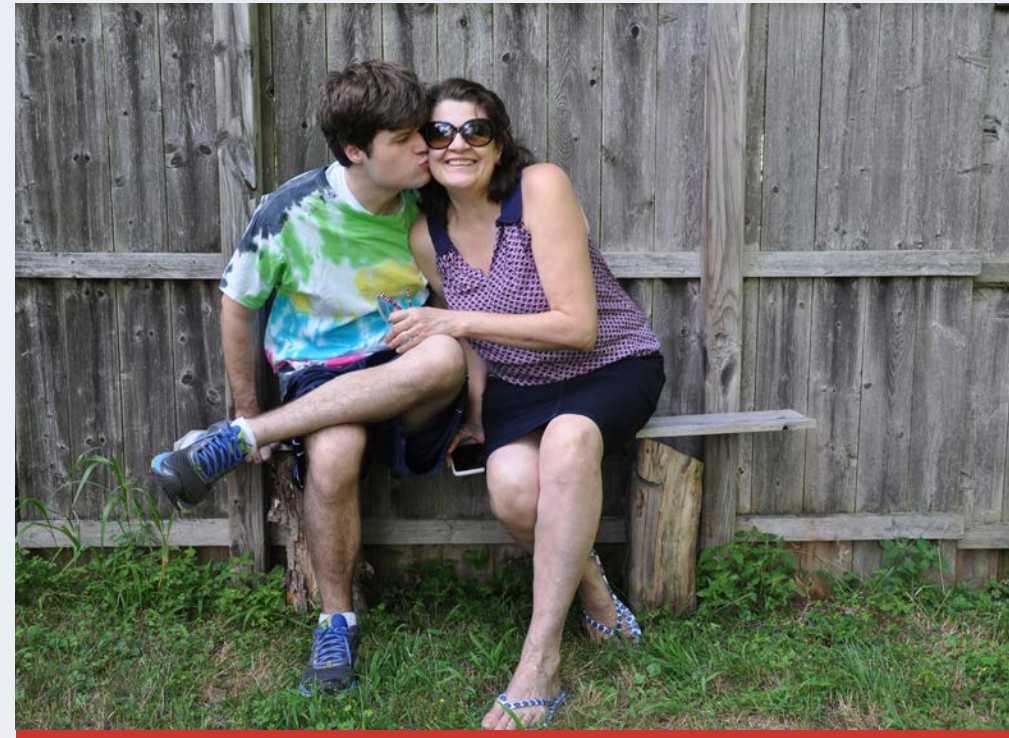
Number of Support Group Members who were served and learned about mental health through the EMPOWER Colorado Program

987

Number of Family Members who were helped with mental health challenges through the EMPOWER Colorado Program.

Statewide Family Support Programs: 43,394 Served

Parent to Parent of Colorado Testimonial



This is the best resource that I have found for helping navigate the special needs world. I am very grateful for all of the parents who share their knowledge, opinions, references, and more.

~ A Grateful Parent

Infantile Scoliosis Outreach Program Testimonial



I just wanted to say how thankful I am for this group. When our son was diagnosed with Infantile Scoliosis I was completely lost and terrified. I had to fight and push for answers for our sweet boy. Hearing your stories has helped our family in so many ways. You've even inspired me to keep my own blog so that one day my courageous lil guy can look back and know how strong he is.

~ A Grateful Parent

SPECIAL EVENTS

ACCO's Special Events Were a Huge Success In FY 2018

12th Annual Straight Shot Sporting Clay Event Held August 11 & 12, 2017



2017 was the 12th 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 \$76,496. **Clay Shoot 2019 is coming up on August 9th & 10th.**

34th Annual Wine in the Pines Held October 20 & 21, 2017 (Jazz Theme)



This two-day extravaganza turned 35 years old! On Friday evening, attendees enjoyed the Winemaker's Dinner, a seated experience with multiple courses and wine pairings at the fabulous 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 listening to the smooth Jazz theme. Wine in the Pines benefits the Employment Works Program and RAMP through the Kelly

Smith Employment Center. The event grossed \$166,660. **Wine in the Pines 2019 will be October 18th & 19th.**

24th Annual Great Balls of Fire Billiards Challenge Held February 10, 2018



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 2018 marked our 24th year! Billiards grossed \$91,312. **Billiards 2019 was held on Saturday, February 9th.**

35th Annual Colorado Concours d'Elegance & Exotic Sports Car Show Held June 10, 2018



Cars, cars, cars! 2018 was the 35th year that over 450 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 \$116,142. **Colorado Concours 2019 is coming up on Sunday, June 9th.**

In total, ACCO Special Events for FYE2018 were attended by over 14,000 people and grossed \$450,610! Additionally, 242 event volunteers contributed 1,521 volunteer hours!

Get Involved in Event Sponsorship

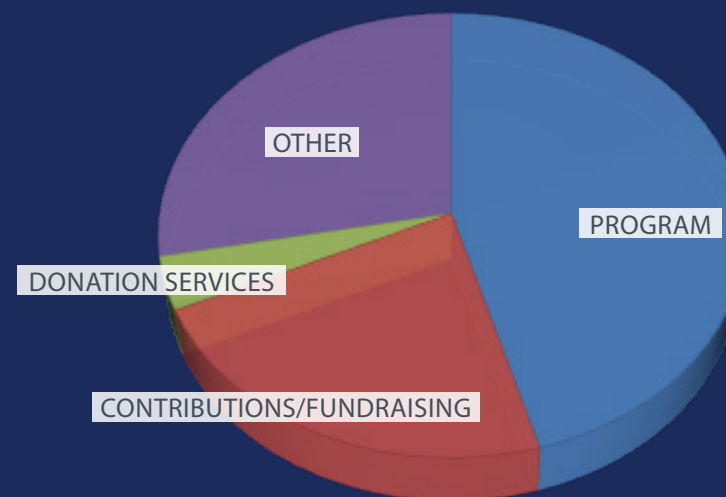
If you are interested in learning more about sponsoring one of Ability Connection Colorado's four annual special events, please contact Terri Armstrong, Development Director, at tarmstrong@abilityconnectioncolorado.org. Thank you.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Dear Friends and Family of Ability Connection Colorado:

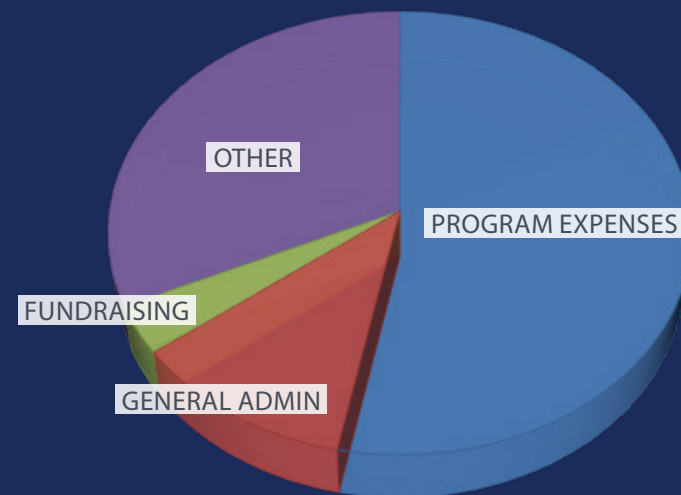
We thank you for helping us to provide critical services to over 45,000 individuals last year. As many of us are aware, in most recent years, our state's population has exploded, and the need for high quality early childhood education, employment and family support services has grown immensely. ACCO has been diligently working to meet the needs of our communities, while continuing to expand our reach. You have been vital in helping us continue our mission with gifts of time, money, social support, encouragement, laughter, love and patience. Last year, 1,188 ACCO volunteers contributed 38,003 volunteer hours. 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	5,257,179
Contributions/Fundraising	2,591,244
Donation Services	444,614
Other	3,237,364
Total Revenue	11,530,401



Expenses

Program Expenses	5,722,829
General Admin	1,183,635
Fundraising	331,125
Other	3,352,254
Total Expenses	10,589,843

*Included is 1,244,570 in depreciation expenses

Board of Directors

Officers

Kathy Higgins, Chair of the Board
President, EHS Management Solutions, Inc.

Penfield Tate, Vice Chairman
Attorney, Kutak Rock, LLP

Brian Fisher, Vice Chairman
Conesco Storage Systems, Inc.

Laurie Barnes, Treasurer
Leader, Total Rewards, CO Governor's Office of IT

Pamela L. Weinstein, Secretary
Community Board Member

Board Members

Russell Scott Bisbee, Parts Specialist
John Elway Cadillac

Colleen Forst, President and Owner
TCBY Denver

Lisa Matter MA, IMH-E, Infant Family Specialist,
Manager, Childcare Quality Initiatives, CO Office of
Early Childhood

Joni Cleckley, Board Representative
PFCC Representative

Honorary Board Members

Mike Smith
Owner Dillon Ridge Liquors

Margaret Smith
Parent Auxiliary

Thomas P. O'Rourke
Retired-Community Volunteer

Past Chair

James Reuter, Past Chairman of the Board
CEO First Bank Data

President and CEO

Judith I. Ham, President and CEO
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™