



# Abilities

of Northwest Jersey Inc.

*An Affiliate of Allies*

Unlocking Potential • Empowering Success

*Individualized employment and support services for persons with different abilities.*



*Annual Report*  
2017-2018



## Mission

Abilities is dedicated to improving the employability and quality of life for people with different abilities by providing training and individualized services.

## Vision

An inclusive community where individuals with different abilities are given the opportunity to reach their fullest potential in life.

## Values

**Communication-** Keeping the lines open for a brighter future. **Compassion-** Understanding the sensitive needs of each individual. **Fun-** Stopping to smell the roses along the way. **Integrity-** Saying and doing what we mean. **Respect-** Treating each individual with a high regard. **Safety-** Promoting a healthy environment. **Teamwork-** Working together toward our common vision.

## Who We Are

Abilities is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) agency providing a full array of community integrated employment, day, community and home based services for individuals with different abilities.

We take great pride in our innovative services and community employment opportunities which we provide to ALL who are seeking supports to achieve their goals.

Abilities is a person-centered, forward thinking organization, consistently creating new opportunities for success. Individuals are supported in their community while acquiring new skills and experiences.





## Message from the Chief Executive Officer

2018 has been a year of “Expanding PossAbilities” in more ways than one! This year our inaugural music education program exploded as the very first Abilities song was written, the program curriculum developed and instruments, including pianos, were donated by our generous families and community partners. From this new program, the Abilities Choir was formed, with countless hours of training to provide the community with beautiful music. It is so moving to watch the talents of those we serve emerge during music classes and choir performances.

One of our greatest initiatives came to fruition in 2018 with the opening of our newly renovated and expanded site in Pohatcong, NJ. This 21,000 square foot building houses our PossAbilities Thrift Boutique and Branching Out Food Pantry on the upper level, offering training opportunities to those we serve, as well as resources for our community. The lower level expands individualized services, including state of the art sensory rooms to support the growing needs of those with autism and intensive behavioral challenges. At our grand opening in September, we kicked off our PossAbilities Campaign, a five-year fundraising campaign with a goal of raising \$1.75M to not only defray the costs of this project, but more importantly, to support our expansion of employment and individualized services for those in need.

As you read through this annual report, I hope you are inspired to join our PossAbilities Campaign with a contribution at any level, as every dollar has a positive impact on the individuals we serve. Together, let's continue to *Expand PossAbilities* for many years to come!

Cynthia B. Wildermuth  
Chief Executive Officer



## Milestone Moments

**January** PossAbilities Campaign established; Health and Wellness program expanded

**February** First Campaign donation received; Music Education program launched

**March** Vending new DVRS services, Pre-Employment Transition Services; Shamrock Shindig honoring Teresa and Ed March and Special Recognition, Carissa Cirotti and Family

**April** Phillipsburg building project complete; Phillipsburg program moves and opens its' doors at 1224 South Main Street; Lowe's Heroes donates kitchen flooring and cabinetry

**May** Hosted the Warren County Disability Resource Fair

**June** Abilities Choir first community performance at Panther Valley Golf and Country Club

**July** Expanding PossAbilities – soft opening of PossAbilities Thrift Boutique and training site at 1224 South Main Street, Phillipsburg

**August** First piano donation to the Music Education program

**September** PossAbilities Thrift Boutique and Phillipsburg Program Grand Opening Celebration featuring Abilities Choir; PBS tour and filming of PossAbilities

**October** Abilities 21st annual Tricky Tray reaches record level of support; DSP Wage Coalition successful in securing increase for Fiscal Year 2019

**November** Abilities Supported Employment program, Employment Pathways, expands services into Hunterdon County; first "Paint It Forward" event

**December** PossAbilities Thrift Boutique expansion in Flemington; CreateAbilities arts program launched; Rossi 9th Annual Festival of Trees Fundraiser featuring Abilities Choir



**“ It takes a very special person to do what you all do. The clients at Abilities are treated with respect and dignity. There are no disabilities here, only Abilities. The understanding, patience, tolerance and compassion that you all exhibit is so appreciated by a mom that thinks there isn't a more important job out there than what you do. Thank you all. ”**



## Finding Home at Work

Within his short time working with Abilities' Employment Pathways program, Peyton found his home at PSI - Paper Strategies Inc. of Washington. Peyton has worked at PSI for just over a year now, where he has effortlessly packaged up to 5 million business cards without making a single mistake. Peyton's incredible attention to detail and time oriented skills have made him a connoisseur of the packaging field.

"As a business owner, it's amazing to have someone like Peyton working here. We love having him here and he is truly the perfect man for the job" says David Leary, owner of PSI. When he's not packaging, however, Peyton utilizes the popcorn machine in the building where he loves to make popcorn for his fellow associates. "Peyton truly feels like family here and we will always be grateful to Abilities for introducing him to a great team where he is loved and challenged" says Peyton's parents.

*Congratulations Peyton, we're so proud of you!*

**“ We thank you for being courteous and respectful and for going the extra mile for our son to find a job. We are just so grateful to Employment Pathways. We appreciate you. ”**



## Employment Pathways *Outcomes and Success*

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- Celebrated 25 new community employment placements
- Provided supports to 84 employees in the community
- Average hourly starting wage was \$8.89 {ranging from \$8.44 to \$12.75 an hour}
- Weekly hours worked ranged from 10 to 37
- Provided 82 paid job sampling opportunities
- Supported 23 students with community based student transition services

## All Smiles For That Perfect Job

Davine has been capturing hearts and attention since her very first day at Abilities in 2016. Davine has been involved in many programs within Abilities, and has recently been working in the STAR program to find the perfect job match.

After working with her job coaches and sampling a diverse array of employment options, she found her dream job. When Davine first job sampled at McDonald's in Phillipsburg, she quickly realized this is where she wanted to work, telling her job coach, "I was born to work here and do this job". Davine currently works at McDonalds three days a week, where she has swiftly become a beloved employee. Her manager and fellow employees admire her personality and dedication to her job. Through STAR, Davine has found her perfect fulfillment of work.

*Congratulations Davine, and keep up the great work!*



## Art with Heart

Imagination, creativity, and just some plain old fun. Abilities' new art program, CreateAbilities, offers individuals the opportunity to become the artists they were born to be. Through the program, our service recipients create and sell hand-made art such as paintings, crafts, candles and other unique pieces. With the support of funding partners, our creative artists have new opportunities to learn the art of ceramics and clay, where they truly put their hearts into their work. Art is featured and exclusively sold at PossAbilities Thrift Boutiques.

*“I'm still thinking about your lovely rendition of “You Are My Sunshine”. It made me smile then and I'm still smiling! What a great, dedicated enthusiastic and talented group of singers. Keep on singing... it brings such joy to everyone. ”*

## Musically Noted

The power of music has made its way to Abilities with our new music program offered to all service recipients within our programs. Individuals participate in weekly artistic activities centered on musical concepts, instrumental performance, group singing, and even a little dancing to soothe the soul. The program is 100% inclusive of all Abilities' service recipients and is a phenomenal resource to inspire the artist in all. Abilities' Choir debuted at our Abili-Tee's Invitational Golf Outing and has performed at several community events where they show off their talent and heart.





## Explosion of Sensations

Sensory rooms are designed to be a place where individuals can go to explore and develop their sensory skills. They are a place for fun and creativity, as well as a place to go and just relax. Through the generosity and support from our community partners, Abilities has been able to create state of the art sensory rooms at several of our program locations benefiting over 100 individuals daily.

## Connecting to the Community

Volunteering gives us the opportunity to see our community in a new light. Its a chance to share our time, talents and energy with people in need while turning our community into a family. Volunteering gives us the opportunity to learn new job skills, make cherished memories, and create a true difference in people's lives. Abilities day programs are learning the benefits of volunteering at the following organizations:

- Meals at Home
- Meals on Wheels
- Sussex County Community Garden/ Project Self Sufficiency
- Branching Out Food Pantry
- BARKS
- Habitat for Humanity
- Pet Adoption League
- Common Sense for Animals
- PossAbilities Thrift Boutiques



**“ I had no idea that there are actually people who do what's right and not just what's easy! We're lucky to have Abilities in our lives! Keep being the person who stands up and gives a voice to someone who has none. ”**



## Diversifying Opportunities



Imagine what you can find! PossAbilities Thrift Boutique is a new initiative that offers retail training opportunities for the individuals that Abilities serves while also supporting our communities. PossAbilities Thrift Boutique Phillipsburg celebrated its grand opening in September and a second location opened in Flemington in December. Our thrift boutiques offer more than just a bargain, they provide opportunities to grow and expand skills.

*“Ten months ago I came to Abilities. I didn't know what to expect. Thank you for your kindness, patience and understanding, it is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your advice, humor and your friendship. Your encouragement helped me make it to the end of the day.”*



Offering custom screen printing, embroidery and direct to garment printing, Abilities' storefront brings our community and skill training program together. Service recipients learn customer service, retail and other valuable employment skills that will help them reach their fullest potential in life all while helping to create amazing garments that anyone would be proud to wear.



SustainAbilities™ Electronics Recycling program provides a service to the local community, while offering training and employment opportunities for people with different abilities. Individuals learn fine motor skills, decision making, tool recognition and math skills.

**TOTAL WEIGHT RECYCLED: 221,135.40 LBS**



## From Class To Community



Tanner first joined the Abilities family shortly after he graduated high school when he was 18 years old. Tanner quickly became involved with the STAR program, Get a Plan, Get a Job, Keep a Job, based on the campus of Warren County Community College.

Tanner worked closely with his job coaches to find his perfect employment. After job sampling at several places,

Tanner soon found his passion. He always had a strong desire to work with cars from a young age and after job sampling at Johnson Dodge Dealership in Washington, he knew this was the career for him.

Today, Tanner works as a car detailer at the dealership three days a week, where he gets supports from his job coaches and fellow employees. His job coaches still visit him on the job to ensure his success, where they see his incredible growth of independence and hard work. Tanner has successfully turned his passion for cars into a perfect job match.

*Congratulations Tanner!*

## Star Achievements

- 16 individuals completed STAR classroom training on the campus of Warren County Community College
- Get a Plan, Get a Job, Keep a Job soft skill training, career supports along with community based job sampling
- 4 students secured new community employment

## Family Enrichment

“ Thank you for going out of your way to assure the happiness of the person that we love most. You all are so special with the most incredible hearts to do what you do each and every day and you are very much appreciated. ”



Our Family Enrichment events are offered as outlets for the individuals we serve, and their caregivers, to connect with and support each other while building a stronger relationship with us. Event offerings include movie nights, dances, and sing-a-longs. There are also educational events where information, resources and opportunities are shared. Family Enrichment



is a vital component of future program development and ensures our parents, families and caregivers are knowledgeable in services available.

# PossAbilities Campaign

Abilities continues to develop, strengthen and expand services for the individuals we serve. We have officially launched our PossAbilities Campaign in 2018 to raise \$1.75 million dollars, over the next five years, to fund our vision of expansion and support for the growing number of lives in need. Success of our campaign will allow for:

- State of the art sensory rooms and equipment
  - Increased employment and volunteer opportunities
  - Expanded life skills training, technology to support goals
  - Recreation, health and wellness programs
  - Speech, occupational and behavioral therapies, music enrichment
  - Resources and support for the community
- ... and ultimately, supporting individuals to unlock their potential and explore PossAbilities.



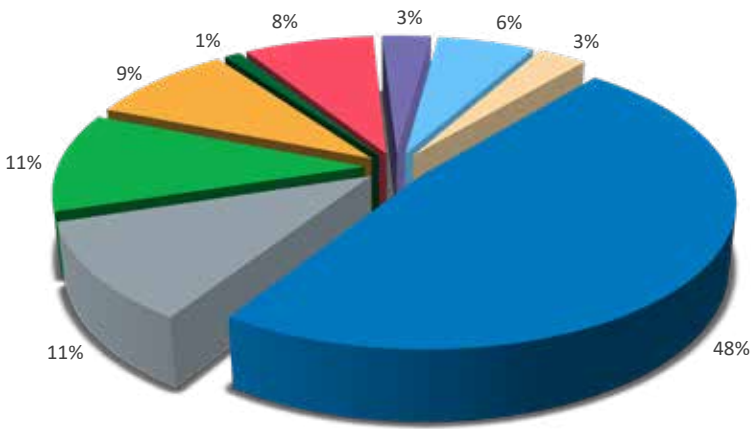
## Valued Community Support

- *Century Wire Products* \$20,000 Sensory Room Support
- *John & Margaret Post Foundation* \$15,000 Abilities Phillipsburg
- *People with Disabilities Foundation* \$6,000 Sensory Room Support
- *Cathay Bank Foundation* \$5,000 PossAbilities Thrift Boutique and Branching Out Food Pantry
- *Greenwich Autism Alliance* \$2,000 Autism Supports
- *Warren County Cultural & Heritage Commission* \$1,000 Ceramic Project
- *Roselle Bank* \$1,000



“ Every day you provide a safe and caring atmosphere in each of your centers. You show grace and acceptance to all who receive your services and we are so grateful. ”

## Who We Serve



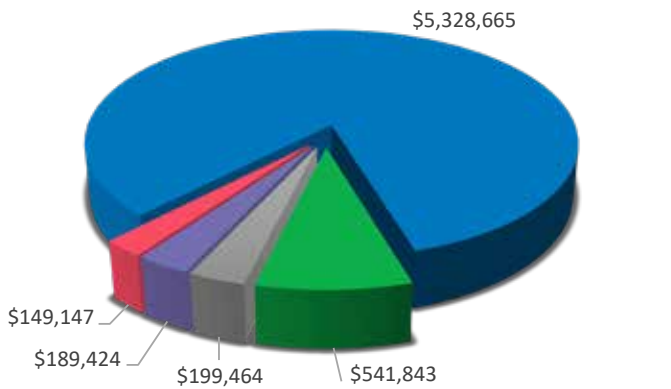
■ Intellectual/Developmental    ■ Autism Spectrum    ■ Down Syndrome  
■ Epilepsy    ■ Psychiatric Disorder    ■ Cerebral Palsy  
■ Encephalopathy    ■ Congenital Anomalies    ■ Other Disabilities

“To see our son so happy to be a part of the Abilities family warms our heart. We thank you for treating him with kindness and love.”

## Fast Facts

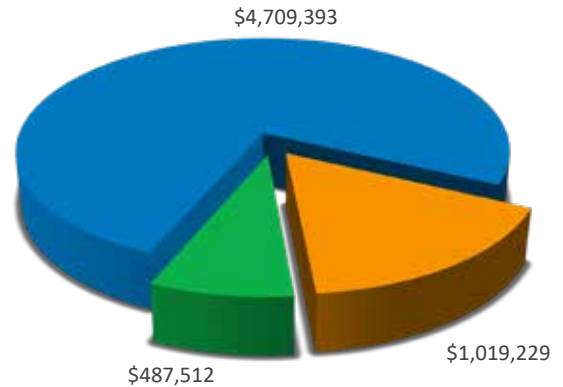
- 92% of funds are used to directly support program services.
- Of the 139 staff at Abilities, 25% have been employed for more than 15 years.

## Revenue



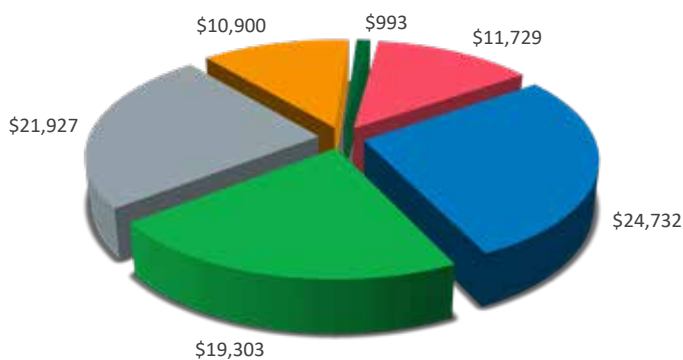
■ State & County Funding    ■ Business Services    ■ Third Party Contracts  
■ Grants    ■ Private Donations

## Expenses



■ Center Based Services    ■ Community Employment Support  
■ Administrative & General

## Events



■ Annual Gala    ■ Festival of Trees    ■ Golf Tournament  
■ Tricky Tray    ■ Quilt Raffle    ■ Miscellaneous



# Locations

**Business and Administration**  
264 Route 31 North  
P.O. Box 251  
Washington, NJ 07882  
Phone: (908) 689-1118  
Fax: (908) 689-6363  
info@abilitiesnw.com

**Community Rehabilitation Program**  
264 Route 31 North  
P.O. Box 251  
Washington, NJ 07882  
Phone: (908) 689-1118  
Fax: (908) 689-6363  
info@abilitiesnw.com

**Medical Special Needs**  
264 Route 31 North  
P.O. Box 251  
Washington, NJ 07882  
Phone: (908) 689-6677  
Fax: (908) 689-6363  
msn@abilitiesnw.com

**Abilities Washington**  
264 Route 31 North  
P.O. Box 251  
Washington, NJ 07882  
Phone: (908) 689-1118  
Fax: (908) 689-6363  
wec@abilitiesnw.com

**PrintAbilities**  
56 East Washington Avenue  
Washington, NJ 07882  
Phone: (908) 689-0612  
Fax: (908) 689-0614  
printing@abilitiesnw.com

**Employment Pathways**  
14A Brass Castle Road  
Washington, NJ 07882  
Phone: (908) 689-7460  
Fax: (908) 689-7435  
employmentpathways@abilitiesnw.com

**Abilities Mary Apgar**  
22 Kayharts Lane  
Washington, NJ 07882  
Phone: (908) 689-2063  
Fax: (908) 689-0116  
mec@abilitiesnw.com

**Individual Specialized Program**  
22 Kayharts Lane  
Washington, NJ 07882  
Phone: (908) 689-4674  
isp@abilitiesnw.com

**Abilities Hackettstown**  
999 Willow Grove Street  
Suite 6  
Hackettstown, NJ 07840  
Phone: (908) 850-8214  
Fax: (908) 850-8217  
hec@abilitiesnw.com

**Abilities Phillipsburg**  
1224 South Main Street  
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865  
Phone: (908) 454-2579  
Fax: (908) 454-5392  
pec@abilitiesnw.com

**PossAbilities Thrift Boutique Phillipsburg**  
1224 South Main Street  
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865  
Phone: (908) 878-6887  
Fax: (908) 454-5392  
possabilities@abilitiesnw.com

**PossAbilities Thrift Boutique Flemington**  
1 Church Street  
Flemington, NJ 08865  
Phone: (908) 237-1329  
possabilities2@abilitiesnw.com

## Affiliations

**Abilities is an approved provider of:**  
NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)  
NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)  
NJ Department of Children & Families (DCF)

**Abilities is an accredited agency of:**



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