

NEWS RELEASE: March 17, 2010

Abilities First open house, proclamation presentation Thursday afternoon

Abilities First, formerly known as the Greene County Board for the Developmentally Disabled, will hold an open house the afternoon of Thursday, March 18, for the public to tour the agency's new facility at 1370 E. Primrose St (at Primrose and Fremont Avenue) in Springfield.

Greene County Presiding Commissioner Dave Coonrod will also present a proclamation at 1:30 p.m., officially recognizing March as National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

Abilities First provides support, advocacy, funding and coordination to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Services include First Steps, a program for infants to 3-year-olds, and The Next Step, for age 3 to adults.

Abilities First is partially funded by Greene County taxpayers. In August, 1978, Greene County voters approved a referendum establishing a "sheltered workshop," funded by a 5-cent per \$100 assessed valuation property tax levy. Later that month, the Greene County Commission established the Greene County Board for the Developmentally Disabled, pursuant to RSMo. 205.970, to "... develop and/or provide community-based services for the developmentally disabled, in cooperation with public and private agencies."

The board sets policy for Abilities First, and for 32 years, both board and agency operated under the name, the Greene County Board for the Developmentally Disabled. In December, 2009, the board and the agency changed their name to Abilities First, to reflect their person-first philosophy for improving the lives of Greene County citizens.

For more information, visit www.gcbdd.org or call Jan Jones, Executive Director of Abilities First, at 417-831-0007; or Jenny Fillmer Edwards, Greene County Public Information Officer, at 417-829-6019 or 417-379-5713.

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