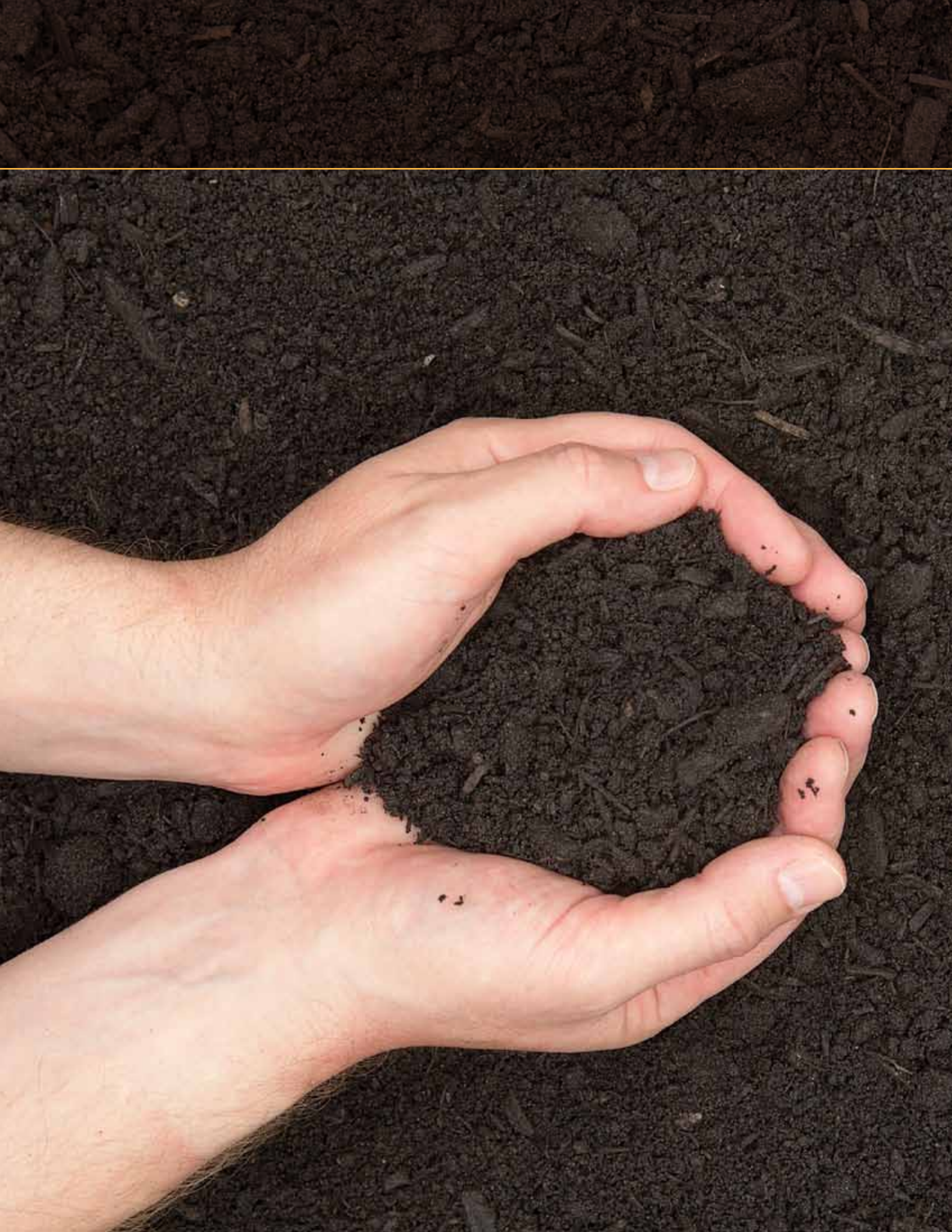


building on our accomplishments today  
for **growth** tomorrow

2010 Annual Report to the Community





# mission | history | vision

Our mission is in our name... At Ability Beyond Disability we discover, build and celebrate the ability in all people.

Founded in 1953 by a small group of parents who envisioned a brighter future for their children with disabilities, Ability Beyond Disability has grown into a leading provider of home, health, employment and rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities living in Connecticut and New York. Ability Beyond Disability has become a leading resource for changing lives; helping to make the hopes and dreams of thousands of people with physical and mental disabilities a reality by providing services that ensure full lives in the community.

Ability Beyond Disability will provide the highest possible quality of services to people with disabilities so that they can pursue their dreams and lead lives enriched with endless opportunities.





# a surge in opportunities

"Times are tough." "The economy is bad." "Next year's State budgets will be the worst ever for health and human service agencies." These truths are heard over and over again at meetings of State agencies and non profit organizations serving people with disabilities locally, regionally and around the country.

OK... so now what? That is the real question. Over the last 50–60 years, tremendous strides have been made in recognizing and promoting the rights, the potential and the ability of people with disabilities in our society. Depending upon how we respond to the statements above in the next few years, we may see either an erosion of the progress made or a surge in opportunities for people with disabilities.

Agencies like Ability Beyond Disability have a unique and important responsibility at this time: We must take the lead in creating a bright new future for those we serve. There is no time for agonizing over the challenges of today. The reality is that the challenges of today will be with us for decades to come. The changing demographics of our society and the debt burden carried by our country means that there will be diminishing public resources available for health and human services. Though it is an overused phrase, we must do more with less.


Ability Beyond Disability has a history of innovation in service delivery. Now, more than ever, we must build on that history to create new ways of promoting independence and high quality lives for people with disabilities. We must work with the public sector, encouraging a greater focus on quality services, positive outcomes and efficient operations rather than regulations, paperwork and process. We must turn to our old friends and make new friends in efforts to gain support for new

initiatives that can pave the way for better lives for those who seek an opportunity to live a life of dignity and independence.

Anticipating the impending shortage of workers in our society, we must forge new partnerships with the business community to create new paradigms for employing willing workers who have disabilities. Recognizing the explosion of technological advances, we must employ these advances to enhance health and safety, provide supports enabling greater independence and create new opportunities for people to be full members of our communities, all the while increasing the efficiency of our operations.

For the past several years, the Boards and management of Ability Beyond Disability have been developing plans to create a better future for people with disabilities. Our Vision for the Future does not look the same as the services of 50 years ago, 20 years ago or even 5 years ago.

We believe that a combination of ingredients... passion, commitment, creativity, partnership, hard work, sound planning, flexibility and innovation... can lead to a brighter future for people with disabilities in spite of challenging times. Accomplishments from the past fiscal year are evidence that we are heading in that direction and that we are absolutely committed to being a leader in creating that future!



*Thomas H. Fanning*  
President & CEO

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# table of contents

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president’s message	3
57 years of growing to meet needs	6
financials	7
philanthropy	8
<b>cultivating our workforce</b>	
2010 Highlights	10
Health and Wellness	10
quality services	12
<b>residential living</b>	
Community Living Supports	15
Young Adult Transitional Living	15
<b>independent living</b>	
In-Home Supports	16
Employment Resources	17
School to Community Transitional Services	18
Social and Community Integration	19
Transportation	19
Clinical Services	19
creating bright futures	21

# 57 years of growing to meet needs

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Ability Beyond Disability was founded in 1953 by a small group of parents who believed that their children with disabilities deserved the right to be a part of their community. It is that same belief and passion that has allowed Ability Beyond Disability to grow to be one of the largest providers of community based services for individuals with disabilities in the Northeast. Over the years, Ability Beyond Disability has provided quality services to thousands of individuals, offering them a growing number of opportunities to contribute to their communities.

It is our commitment to the core beliefs of our founders and our consistent dedication to the individuals we serve that has helped us to achieve notable success and has led us to develop a standard of best practice methods which many other agencies strive to achieve. Each year we look to our five guiding principles when we set our goals:

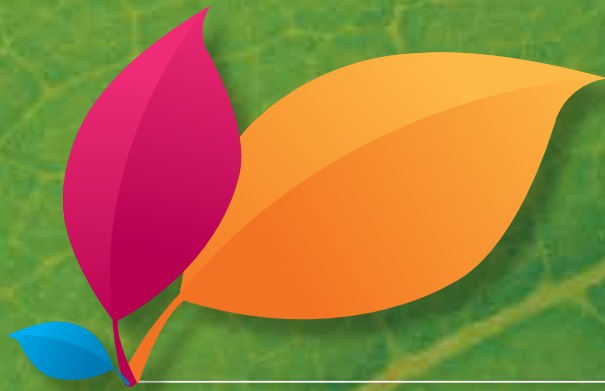
1. Offer consumers the choices and services they desire
2. Continuously evolve to be successful in a changing world
3. Improve service quality
4. Be the employer of choice in our industry
5. Ensure a stable financial foundation

Through the years, we have grown into a \$53 million organization with over 900 employees providing support to over 1,400 individuals throughout Connecticut and New York. We have repeatedly been recognized for our leadership and innovative services for people with disabilities throughout our history. Ability Beyond Disability was the first in the nation to provide transitional living services for people with traumatic brain injury, was among the first to close our sheltered workshop and commit to providing 100% community based services for the people we serve, recently opened an innovative training and employment program for people on the autism spectrum, and are working to develop a specialized residential environment for individuals with disabilities who are aging with significant medical needs... all of which are first of its kind programs.

...we have grown into a \$53 million organization with over 900 employees providing support to over 1,400 individuals throughout Connecticut and New York.

# financials

Each year, Ability Beyond Disability relies on philanthropic support to fill the gap between the cost to provide services and the funding we receive. We are proud to say that 88¢ of every dollar raised goes directly to funding our programs and services. We recognize that we could not have grown so significantly over the past 56 years without the philanthropic support of many individuals in the communities where we provide services – and beyond.



## Where the dollars came from in FY2010

Residential Living	37,690,637
Independent Living	12,028,152
Philanthropic Support	
Fundraising	1,784,160
Endowment Earnings	338,366
	<hr/>
	51,841,315



## Where the dollars go

Staff Support	38,161,896
Homes & Program Space Needs	5,856,550
Client & Program Support	4,159,527
Transportation Services	1,325,299
Fundraising	1,319,056
General	783,726
	<hr/>
	51,606,054

...an investment in  
the potential of many...



# philanthropy

In fiscal year 2010, we once again witnessed an outpouring of support from our partners and friends in communities throughout Connecticut and New York.

Philanthropy will continue to play a major role in providing the services that are needed today and will be needed tomorrow for people with disabilities. Those who support the work we do recognize it as more than a helping hand; it is an investment in the potential of many, and continues to build our communities and our society while enriching all of our lives.

This year's Gala, the Confetti Gala, was a fun and festive event that honored the humanitarian spirit of Noel Hord, our recipient of the Robert S. Young Humanitarian award. Over 560 people attended the April event which raised approximately \$520,000.

The first ever Hoops for Hope wheelchair basketball event was held at Danbury High School, raising awareness for our mission and support of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. It was held during Disability Mentoring Week, recognizing our employment partners and raising approximately \$10,000.

In conjunction with major special events, fundraising activities for Ability Beyond Disability occur year-round. During fiscal year 2010, many of our supporters made outright contributions to our Annual Fund totaling approximately \$640,000. Volunteers donated over 1,000 hours of service and the generosity of our own employees continued as they gave over \$20,000 to our Money Club which goes directly to funding community based activities for the people we serve. We also benefitted from the generosity of our supporters through third-party fundraising events including a private art showing at the NYC gallery of renowned artist Peter Max.

In fiscal year 2010, we also introduced our newest fundraising activity, Family Giving Circle, which encourages groups of family and friends who are passionate about our mission to recruit a circle of supporters. Circle members make annual or monthly donations to our programs and services goals. These families and friends led the way raising \$25,000 in the initial stage of the program.



# cultivating our workforce

At Ability Beyond Disability, we know that our employees are the key to growing our organization. It is through the selfless acts of kindness and commitment to the people we serve that Ability Beyond Disability has achieved a distinguished level of success in becoming the “Provider of Choice” for people with disabilities. Each year we look to develop new programs and opportunities to help strengthen our workforce.

Since the launch of our career path program, “Pathways to Excellence” in 2009, we have experienced overwhelming success. In fiscal year 2010, we congratulated 68 new Direct Support Professionals (DSP’s) as they graduated from the program. Additionally we piloted the first of our specialty certification training programs – Mentoring and Supervision. 15 frontline supervisors participated in the program and provided positive feedback about its effectiveness.

In addition to offering career path and leadership development opportunities, Ability Beyond Disability offers many unique incentive programs. In fiscal year 2010, we continued to promote a culture of lifelong learning through a new partnership with Post University. Through this partnership, Ability Beyond Disability employees and their families receive a discount on tuition and can also receive college credit for the completion of our Pathways to Excellence Direct Support Professional program and our New Employee Orientation Training program. We also continued to see interest in our unique LPN Incentive Program as six employees participated.

## Health and Wellness:

In fiscal year 2010, Ability Beyond Disability placed a great deal of emphasis on the health and wellness of our employees. In the Fall, we implemented a “smoke free campus” initiative that was coupled with incentive programs to help employees quit smoking. Today, all of our commercial locations are smoke-free. In late Spring, we launched our first organization-wide Walking Competition. Over 200 employees formed walking teams and challenged

each other for the “most steps”. Prizes and incentives were funded as part of our partnership with Cigna, our health benefits provider. As always, our annual Benefits, Health, Wellness and Education Fair was a huge success. There were more vendors than ever before and over 300 employees participated.

## 2010 Highlights

Ability Beyond Disability was invited to participate at the College of Direct Support’s National Board of Advisors meeting in Minnesota where our Pathways to Excellence program was referred to as a “National Best Practice Model.”

Ability Beyond Disability was recognized by the national trade association ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources), as one of the top five national performers in decreasing staff turnover.

For the third time, ANCOR honored one of our Connecticut direct support professionals, Susan Hancock, a 15-year veteran of Ability Beyond Disability, as the CT Direct Support Professional of the year. Also honored that night were co-workers Gigi Decarvalho and Nikeisha Wright.

A new project management structure was rolled out in fiscal year 2010 to facilitate organizational program growth. Harvard Business School alumnus Lee Barnes and Rogers Harper consulted with the teams and shared a framework for strategic planning to help the groups develop specific business plans for growth areas.



## Partnering with Leaders in the Field

Members of Ability Beyond Disability's Human Resources, Workforce Development and Quality teams collaborated with American Express and PepsiCo to develop a leadership model focused on performance management and leadership development. The new model is designed to prepare new leaders and continually develop existing leaders to support the organization's vision for the future. The initial research and outline has been completed, and we continue to work on implementing a comprehensive system of leadership development, goal setting and performance management.

In 2010, we implemented a “go mobile” program for our clinical supports team. Through this initiative, our nurses and behavior analysts were given laptops, increasing their ability to work in each of our residential locations, elevating their presence and enhancing our quality of services.



# quality services

Ability Beyond Disability is committed to delivering services of the highest quality to the people we serve. Year after year, we improve our data tracking efforts and develop new collaborations with other like organizations, allowing us to benchmark ourselves against others in the field. We use this information to enhance the quality of our services and the satisfaction of those who turn to us for help.

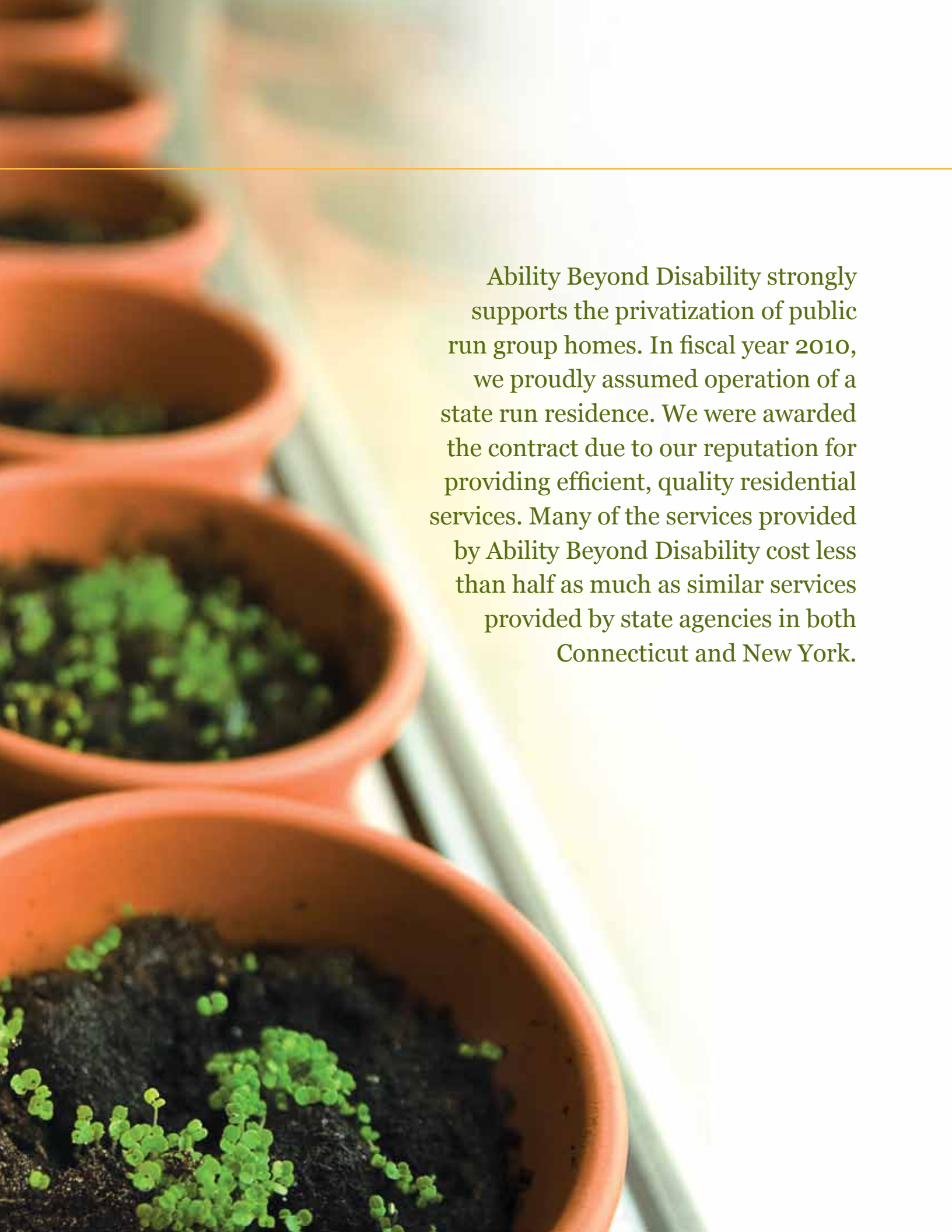
In addition, the implementation of new technology allows us to enhance the quality of our services. In fiscal year 2010, we utilized the expertise of staff and community leaders to develop both an IT Advisory Board and a Facility Advisory Board that could guide us. Both Boards have been instrumental in helping us identify available technology to enhance efficiencies, communications and quality of care across the organization. These Boards are providing invaluable knowledge to help us develop the capacity needed in order to make our vision for the future a reality.

As a recognized leader of quality services, each year members of our workforce are invited to share expertise with others at annual conferences, both locally and nationally. This past year members of our Clinical & Behavioral Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Residential Services presented on the following topics:

- *Performance Excellence and Best Practices in Workforce Development*
- *Reducing Turnover through Advanced Career Path Opportunities*
- *Reconfiguration of a Residential Service System*

Additionally, a member of our Behavior Analyst team conducted Mental Health First Aid workshops for other non profits in our region, showcasing our expertise in the area of mental health services.



A row of terracotta pots containing small green seedlings growing in dark soil. The pots are arranged in a diagonal line from the top left to the bottom right. The seedlings are small and green, with some showing two leaves. The soil is dark and rich. The background is a light, neutral color, possibly a wall or a window, with a soft, out-of-focus light source.

Ability Beyond Disability strongly supports the privatization of public run group homes. In fiscal year 2010, we proudly assumed operation of a state run residence. We were awarded the contract due to our reputation for providing efficient, quality residential services. Many of the services provided by Ability Beyond Disability cost less than half as much as similar services provided by state agencies in both Connecticut and New York.

At Ability Beyond Disability, we believe that helping someone have a safe place to call home is the first step towards developing a life of one's own. In fiscal year 2010, Ability Beyond Disability provided such a home to over 250 people with disabilities through our Residential Living Supports in Connecticut and New York.

## Community Living Supports

In fiscal year 2010 we saw growth in our Residential Living Supports through the transition of a Community Living Arrangement (CLA) in Danbury, CT from the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to Ability Beyond Disability. We were awarded the contract to take over the home in December of 2009 due to our reputation for providing efficient, quality residential services. In July of 2010 we proudly assumed operation of the home and began offering the eight men who reside there the supports they need and the kind of community opportunities they always wanted.

Our reputation also allowed us to see residential growth in Yorktown, NY. At the request of a group of parents in fiscal year 2009, we received permission to take over a residential program for four young women who were receiving support from another agency. Ability Beyond Disability competed with several other organizations for the opportunity to provide a residential program that will help these young women to live successfully in the community. We proudly assumed responsibility of the home in fiscal year 2010.

We have also been approved for additional residential growth in New York. Plans are well underway to open two Supportive Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRA's) in Yonkers, NY, serving six young adults who are moving out of their family homes and into the community

During the past fiscal year we continued to focus efforts on our "Reconfiguration Initiative," a project that evaluates each of our Community Living homes to ensure that they currently – and will continue to – serve as the best possible environments to meet the needs of the people who live there. Throughout fiscal year 2010, we compiled our internal research findings and began developing programmatic and environmental best practice models. Our plans are well underway and renovations and reconfiguration of our residential programs will begin in phases during the next fiscal year.

## Young Adult Transitional Living

Due to our track record for quality services and successful outcomes, in fiscal year 2010, the Department of Mental Health and Addictive Services granted us the opportunity to expand our Young Adult Transitional Living Program. We developed a new five bed program in Bristol, CT for individuals with Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). Through this program we provide opportunities to learn the skills necessary to become fully integrated into the community, live independently and establish vocational choices. This interim support provides a safe, structured environment which promotes positive decision making, while transitioning individuals toward a successful, independent lifestyle.

2010 also marked the one year anniversary of the two transitional living residential locations we opened through a relationship with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The development of this program model was a milestone achievement for Ability Beyond Disability as it was our first opportunity to work with DCF and serve children in a transitional living capacity. The program is the first of its kind and serves as a stepping stone towards independence for the young men and women who reside at the homes. Drawing upon a strong collaboration between our residential and clinical support teams, the program is designed to deliver the best possible experience for each individual involved in the program. We have already begun to see successful transformations and look forward to celebrating many successes in the near future.

**We have been invited to speak at various national conferences on our extensive research and development of innovative residential models that allow us to continue to meet the needs of the people we serve at all stages of life.**

# independent living

At Ability Beyond Disability, our Independent Living Supports aim to help people live independently in their own homes or in their family homes, providing as much or as little support needed by each individual. In fiscal year 2010, we helped over 1,100 people to live, work and be a part of their communities through our Independent Living Supports.

## In-Home Supports

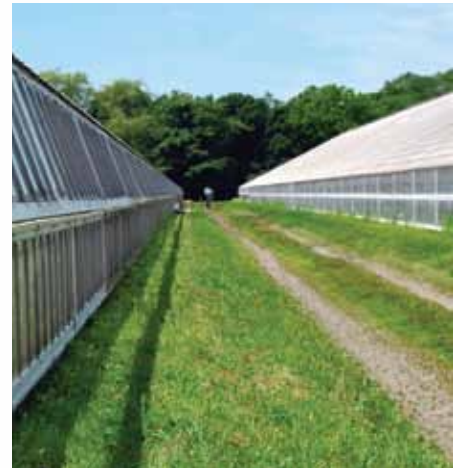
In fiscal year 2010, we helped 505 people by providing assistance in their family homes through our In-Home Supports. This type of assistance is based on individual and family needs and can include assessments, skills training, recreation and transportation and other services as requested.



## Employment Resources

Receiving a paycheck is the gateway to independence for any individual. In fiscal year 2010, we helped over 800 people become more independent through our community based employment services.

We witnessed a great deal of growth in our Independent Supported Employment services, adding 90 people to the program and expanding our geographic reach into lower Fairfield County in Connecticut. Growth was also seen in our Group Supported Employment through the development of three new work sites. We celebrated the grand opening of Roses for Autism in December 2009, our first social enterprise venture. The program operates out of a 50,000 sq. ft. hot house in Guilford, CT with plans to expand to 150,000 square feet when fully operational. It is the largest greenhouse in North America and provides individuals with autism the opportunity to learn real life work experience in an integrated agricultural setting. Individuals are involved in all aspects of the rose business including growing, cutting, packaging and selling. We have received a great deal of positive feedback from those involved in the program and we are eager to help even more people who need our support.



*“I cannot believe the changes I have seen in my son in just a few short months. Roses for Autism is the best thing that has happened for us.”*

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42% of the people served by Ability Beyond Disability are employed – while the national employment rate for people with disabilities is only 35%.

#### School to Community Transitional Services

In fiscal year 2010, Ability Beyond Disability continued its focus on helping students with disabilities transition out of the school system and into the adult world of work. In October, during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we celebrated our second annual Disability Mentoring Day event. This event provided job exploration opportunities to over 100 local students and individuals with disabilities through tours and hands-on experiences at 35 local businesses.





## Social and Community Integration

All work and no play makes for a very dull day. At Ability Beyond Disability, we recognize the importance of providing opportunities for the people we serve to build relationships and participate in social and recreational activities within their communities.

One of our most popular programs is our Special Olympics Program. In fiscal year 2010, the number of athletes on our Special Olympics team grew to 193. Also, new last year was the addition of a new sport, unified basketball, bringing the total number of sports available to choose from to 13.

The people served by Ability Beyond Disability not only played sports through Special Olympics and Miracle League Baseball, they cheered for their favorite teams at Major League Baseball games; took trips to the beach, the zoo, the Walkway Over the Hudson and hit the streets of Washington, DC. They danced, sang and performed on stage; went to concerts and watched their favorite artists perform; visited museums and libraries... and the list goes on.



## Transportation

In fiscal year 2010, we expanded our Transportation services to provide support for an additional 22 students in new geographical areas including Westport, Trumbull, Wethersfield, and Wallingford. This growth, combined with the daily transportation needs of the people we serve, has resulted in the expansion of the transportation department to include a fleet of 105 vehicles. Throughout fiscal year 2010, the department helped 280 people each day get to over 80 different locations totaling more than 130,000 trips.

Consistent with our efforts to increase efficiencies and reduce costs, we established a contract with Enterprise Fleet Management to help us maximize the utilization of our funding, reduce fleet related expenses, and increase operational control and efficiencies. If there is success with this partnership, we will develop our relationship further in the upcoming years.



## Clinical Services

Through our clinical services we deliver individually tailored medical, psychological and rehabilitation supports to the people we serve, making it possible for them to learn the life skills they need to be as independent as possible in the community.

The clinical supports of Ability Beyond Disability are integrated into all of the programs and services provided by our organization. As we go forward with our vision for the future, the clinical supports team will continue to see significant growth in order to meet the increased demand for services. In fiscal year 2010, we added new positions to our nursing, behavior and dietary teams.



# creating bright futures

As we begin the next fiscal year, we continue our focus on creating bright futures for all people with disabilities. We will draw on the successes and lessons we have learned throughout our history in order to continue to lead the way in providing innovative, quality services for people with disabilities in our community and beyond.

These are the initiatives we will focus on in the coming year:

**Residential Living** will provide security for those people we serve who are concerned about their own personal futures. By providing homes for the aging population, upgrading our present locations, combined with the purchase of new residences, the vision for a secure future will be assured.

**Independent Living** will provide jobs and clinical services, along with transportation and a host of other services, to truly make it possible for the people we serve to live side by side with us in our communities and achieve their highest level of independence.

**Pathways to Excellence** will provide consistency in attracting and retaining excellent employees which will ensure the continuity of care needed to give dignity to the people we serve.

**Systems Technology** will provide improved efficiency and assure coordination of services by linking employees, consumers, families and professionals with the technology tools they need.

**Consumer Technology** will provide us with the opportunity to improve the health, safety and independent functioning of the people we serve. We will do this by incorporating "Smart Home" technology in our residences and employing the use of adaptive equipment, safety devices, remote monitoring and communications systems.

Through these initiatives we are committed to:

- Doubling the number of individuals served by expanding services in Connecticut and New York
- Increasing our highly qualified workforce
- Providing lifetime health and human services to the growing population of individuals with disabilities

As highlighted throughout this report, this is a historic time for Ability Beyond Disability. What we have set out to do over the next five years is equivalent to what has taken 55 years for our organization to accomplish. We look forward to working with each of you as we continue on this journey of providing people with disabilities the support they need and deserve.

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