



Contact: Kelsey Rondeau  
203-826-3183  
[kelsey.rondeau@abilitybeyond.org](mailto:kelsey.rondeau@abilitybeyond.org)

## ABILITY BEYOND RECEIVES TECHNOLOGY GRANT

(Sept. 22, 2017-Bethel, CT) – Ability Beyond has received a \$10,000 grant investment from The Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities, to support a first-of-its-kind, peer-to-peer technology program called the TIP Squad that empowers people with special needs through mainstream technology, removing barriers to independence in everyday self-care and community inclusion.

The grant will also support community workshops about direct-care technology in Bethel and Chappaqua, N.Y., and will advance *The Rights for People with Cognitive Disabilities to Technology and Information Access*, a global declaration for equal rights of people with cognitive disabilities to technology and information access. You can read about and endorse the declaration at [www.colemaninstitute.org/declaration](http://www.colemaninstitute.org/declaration). According to Shea Tanis, Associate Director of The Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities, "Technology expands and provides new opportunities for people with disabilities to become meaningful members of their communities. In our digital age access to technology can no longer be seen as a luxury but rather a necessity for inclusion. We are excited to partner with and support Ability Beyond in demonstrating the hope that access to technology and information has for people with cognitive disabilities."

"As we pioneer technology solutions for people with disabilities, we are honored to have generous support from The Coleman Institute," said Laurie Dale, senior leader of Empowering Technology at Ability Beyond. "Technology changes lives—and mainstream technology has incredible untapped potential to specifically empower people with limited mobility, verbal challenges and cognitive disabilities. Our TIP Squad gives the people we serve a true voice on the frontlines of advancing direct-care."

The TIP Squad is an educational training program that Dale established in 2015, comprised of young adults with disabilities who research, assess, pilot and implement mainstream technology into the lives of their peers with developmental and physical challenges. Today we have 10 interns who serve hundreds of individuals in Connecticut and New York; with grant funding, we will double the size of the TIP Squad.

Not only does the program bridge the gap to life-changing technology for people who face myriad barriers to independence, but it also creates a path for STEM training among young people with disabilities, who are underrepresented in the field. Our ultimate goal is to maximize through mainstream technology social inclusion, self-determination and quality of life for this population.

The Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities works to catalyze and integrate advances in technology that promote the quality of life of people with cognitive disabilities and their families. Cognitive disabilities include; intellectual disability (ID), Alzheimer's, brain injury, stroke, and serious, persistent mental illness.

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**Ability Beyond** is a 501{c} (3) organization headquartered in Bethel, Conn. and Chappaqua, N.Y. It provides a wide range of services for over 2,500 people with a disability that inhibits their activities of daily living -- including numerous residential alternatives, employment training, career counseling, job placement services, cognitive and life skills instruction, clinical and therapeutic support, and volunteer and recreational activities. Today, its services extend far beyond the Danbury community into much of Connecticut and the Hudson Valley, New York. For more information about Ability Beyond go to [www.abilitybeyond.org](http://www.abilitybeyond.org).