

Exceptional Children's Foundation and First Bank Launch 'Future in Bloom' Volunteer Day in Inglewood

Partnership Supports Vocational Training, Culinary Skills, and Employment Pathways for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Los Angeles County

INGLEWOOD, CA, UNITED STATES, April 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- First Bank and Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF) joined together on March 26 for "Future in Bloom," a volunteer day at ECF's Inglewood headquarters focused on vocational training, workforce development, and community service for adults with developmental disabilities.

During the event, First Bank employees worked alongside ECF program participants to build, paint, and plant garden boxes that will support ECF's hands-on training programs. The project is part of ECF's broader employment and skills development model, which provides adults with diverse abilities with practical experience tied to long-term independence and job readiness.

The garden also supports a broader training cycle within ECF. Seasonal vegetables grown in the planters will be used in ECF's culinary program, where participants gain food-preparation experience and help create meals that are served back to the local community. The result is a full-circle program connecting gardening, culinary instruction, vocational training, and community impact.

"This partnership is about more than gardening. It is about helping our participants build practical skills, confidence, and meaningful pathways to employment," said Samson Mulugeta, Director of Employment Services at ECF. "By taking part in every stage of the process, from planting to culinary preparation, our clients gain hands-on experience that supports greater



Exceptional Children's Foundation

Exceptional Children's Foundation and First Bank came together in Inglewood to participate in the "Future in Bloom" project

independence.”

The volunteer day gave First Bank employees a direct view of ECF’s mission and the role that employer and community partnerships can play in expanding opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Through projects like “Future in Bloom,” ECF continues to connect training with real-world experience, strengthening both individuals and the surrounding community.

The "Future in Bloom" collaboration highlights how local businesses and nonprofit organizations can work together to create sustainable career pathways and strengthen workforce inclusion for adults with developmental disabilities. As the only agency in California providing a full lifespan of services for these individuals and their families, ECF offers a comprehensive range of support across Los Angeles County, including early intervention, education, employment services, and community-based programs.



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Samson Mulugeta, Director of Employment Services at ECF

About ECF

Exceptional Children’s Foundation (ECF) provides the highest quality services for children and adults challenged with special needs—empowering them to reach their greatest potential. Established in 1946, ECF serves nearly 4,000 clients annually at 14 service sites throughout Los Angeles County. ECF is a leader in providing a lifetime of support, including early start programs, special education, therapeutic services, and adult vocational training. Learn more at www.ecf.net.

About First Bank

First Bank is a full-service, family-owned financial institution dedicated to providing a remarkably personal banking experience. With a history spanning over a century, First Bank offers tailored solutions for individuals and businesses, with a specialized focus on the unique needs of family-owned enterprises. Operating approximately 80 branches across Missouri, Illinois, and California, First Bank combines the capabilities of a large institution with the personal touch of a

community partner. Learn more at www.first.bank.

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The vegetables and fruit planted at the Exceptional Children's Foundation for the "Future in Bloom" Project in Inglewood partnered with First Bank



Samson Mulugeta, Director of Employment Services at ECF pictured with First Bank volunteers at the Exceptional Children's Foundation in Inglewood for the "Future in Bloom" project



Volunteers from Exceptional Children's Foundation and First Bank together in Inglewood for the "Future in Bloom" Project

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