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**ABILITY ONLINE ORGANIZATION** Announces 2019's Board of Directors

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Toronto, ON, May 16, 2019** – [Ability Online Organization](http://AbilityOnline.org), the first social media and secure technology platform for young people with disabilities to connect to each other and the world around them, announces this year's board of directors, including four incumbents and five newly appointed members.

**Board of Directors**

**Laurie M. Clark CDI, DOSJ, Chair of the Board since 2017:** Founder of two technology companies and awarded the "[Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada](#)", Ms. Clark is a serial entrepreneur with over 20 years of capital markets experience and over \$7B in direct budget oversight across Technology, Banking, Trading, Wealth Management, Start-Up/Sale, Joint Ventures, and Mergers & Acquisitions. Ms. Clark has over nine years of experience as an Independent Corporate Director, and is the Board Chair of Ability Online, which has grown to an international brand under her stewardship. She has served on compensation, audit, and nomination & governance committees for public companies. Ms. Clark is often asked to speak at conferences around the world as a motivational or expert speaker on Finance and Technology.

**Vince Morelli, Vice-Chair of the Board:** In MED-RX Brand Development and Canadian Hospital Specialties, Mr. Morelli has enjoyed a 30 year career in the Medical Device industry in a variety of sales, marketing and business development roles as well as a stint as the General Manager for the Canadian operations of a global manufacturer of mobility devices and home healthcare products. Mr. Morelli is a Past-Chair of the Board, and has been a member of the Board since 2011.

**Scott Gasson, Accountant, Board Director and Treasurer:** A retired Internal Audit professional with over 20 years of experience leading corporate Internal Audit functions in the transportation, consumer packaged goods, telecommunications, energy and post-education sectors. A strong understanding of corporate governance was developed through Mr. Gasson's reporting relationship with Board Audit Committees and Corporate CEOs. In addition to providing assurance and guidance on financial and operational control environments, he led and facilitated enterprise risk management practices for many of the organizations he worked with over the years. Mr. Gasson was a member in good standing with the Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario and the Institute of Internal Auditors until his retirement in 2017. He has been a member of the Board since 2006.

**Rob Wittmann, Board Director:** 35 years of experience in financial services and capital markets, with a focus on payments, foreign exchange, and interest rate trading. Mr. Wittmann's consulting practice provides advisory services to U.S. and Canadian fintech companies and banks on the oversight and implementation of firm-wide strategic plans, new product development, and

guidance and oversight of acquisitions, including due diligence, regulatory approvals, and integration. He is the past President and CEO of Jameson Bank, and a founding partner of Knightsbridge Foreign Exchange Inc. Mr. Wittmann previously led the North American commercial foreign exchange division of Travelex Americas, and was also a Managing Director with RBC Capital Markets for over 15 years, responsible for their global foreign exchange trading and sales platform. He is past president of The Financial Markets Association, past member of the Canadian Foreign Exchange Committee, and former Chair of The Canadian Committee for Professionalism. Mr. Wittmann has been a Board member since 2016.

**Edi Cote, Board Director**, appointed April 2019: Over 25 years' experience in the Information Technology arena in a variety of industries and business sectors both nationally and internationally. Ms. Cote is a top performer for IBM's Global Services in Canada working with IBM clients worldwide. Edi has a broad base of sales and solutions experience encompassing a broad range of services (financial, energy, government etc.) across Canada, the United States and Mexico. Awarded "Best of IBM" in 2015, given to only 500 IBM employees worldwide, for her contribution within IBM as a top performer; and also awarded the IBM 100% club 3 times in the past 5 years for her contribution to IBM customers and to IBM's revenue growth. Ms. Cote holds an Associate Arts and Science diploma from Capilano University in North Vancouver, BC, has participated in the highly recognized Business Insight and Industry Program at the Harvard Club in Boston, Transformative Selling in Dynamics Markets at Boston University as well as complete up to Level 3 education in the WSET (Wines and Spirit Education Trust). Ms. Cote is a passionate believer in volunteerism and philanthropy.

**[Natascha Kiernan](#), JD, CDI, Board Director**, appointed November 2018: An experienced attorney who has held senior positions at several prominent international law firms, including as a Counsel in the London office of Skadden, Arps. She was ranked as one of 2014's "Top 40 Under 40 Rising Legal Stars in Europe" by the *Financial News*. Ms. Kiernan represents financial institutions, equity sponsors and international governments in complex financings and mergers and acquisitions in jurisdictions around the globe. In addition to her experience with finance and M&A, Ms. Kiernan also has extensive experience advising corporations and other entities on corporate governance and strategic decision making. Ms. Kiernan serves as an independent director on the boards of several educational and non-profit organizations. As the mother of a young child who has experienced long-term hospitalizations and has overcome significant medical issues, she feels a strong personal commitment to helping young people experience full and active lives regardless of any physical challenges they may face.

**[Lori Kong](#), Board Director**, appointed February 2019: An accomplished Portfolio Manager with more than eight years of experience in leading and managing global teams delivering complex enterprise projects across North America. Ms. Kong advocates for effective communication, accessibility, and diversity while upholding the belief that excellence is attainable when the right people, processes and resources are aligned. Lori is fluent in English and Chinese. When not working, she dedicates a portion of her personal time and leadership expertise towards volunteer efforts in diverse Technology and Art community projects.

**[Mayank Pandya](#), Board Director**, appointed February 2019: Over a 20+ years career Mr. Pandya has worked for start-ups, multinationals and the public sector in 7 different countries. Regardless of industry and geography, he has operated at the intersection of technology and business and led global teams to transform complex environments, enable organizations to embrace modern technologies and deliver enterprise scale programs cheaper, faster, and better. Mr. Pandya brings his drive and experience to bear to help dynamic and high-growth organizations energize their

teams and increase their impact. As someone who has started thinking about the legacy he wants to leave, he is excited to broaden his life experience and give back to the community by being a part of the Ability Online family.

**[Neha Varma Maediratta](#), Board Director**, appointed February 2019: A results-driven professional with over 9 years of experience across 4 continents. Having handled over C\$2.3Billion of legal transactions, Ms. Maediratta started her career and found growth and success as a corporate commercial lawyer. Her passion for understanding problems and charting out uniquely creative solutions beckoned her to leverage her talent and focus on helping start-ups scale and thrive. Ms. Maediratta moved to Toronto from Singapore in 2018 after having helped a start-up raise C\$25 Million, and is currently working as the Director of Legal and Business Operations at Loopio Inc. in Toronto. Passionate about technology, she attempts to stay abreast of the new trends along with evaluating its impact on a social level.

“We are very pleased to have Natascha, Neha, Lori, Mayank and Edi join our board and look forward to their contributions,” said [Laurie Clark, Chair of Ability Online](#) and founder of [Smarten Up Institute](#) and [Canchek Corporation](#). “As leaders in their fields, they understand the power we have to challenge traditional thinking when it comes to applying technology for the greater ability of our over 7000 members across North America.”

Clark adds, “Their combined experience in international law, startups, global technology platforms, media and communications, along with their commitment to the Ability Online network, demonstrates this boards’ determination in applying technology in the best way possible; and for greater impact to a better quality of life.” “This will be invaluable to our members with physical and developmental challenges in this fast moving tech environment.”

“Having been involved with Ability Online for 29 years, I welcome the fresh perspectives and varied business, legal and technical expertise that each Director brings to the board. I look forward to working with each Director and am particularly excited by the energy of the group as we move to broaden our reach in North America”, said [Michelle McClure, Executive Director of Ability Online](#). “Of course, we will continue to be ever vigilant with Ability Online; offering a safe and secure social network to all our truly amazing online youth members!” McClure added.

**About Ability Online** [www.abilityonline.org](http://www.abilityonline.org)

Founded 29 years ago, Ability Online is the first not-for-profit social network connecting youth with disabilities to each other and the world around them, and:

- Gives youth with disabilities, parents and professionals a safe, secure and positive online experience every time they log in.
- Removes social barriers and reduces the stigma associated with being different, increasing self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Promotes independence and a better quality of life with online learning and skills development.
- Promotes respect, acceptance and inclusion.