



Annual Report 2022





Many people with disabilities face barriers that prevent them from enjoying video games and experiencing the many benefits they offer.

Video games bring people together, creating friendships for life and rich social communities. Everyone deserves those experiences regardless of their disability.

We enable play so that people with disabilities can have the experiences they want to have with their friends and family.

“The QuadStick has brought me great joy because it has allowed me to do one thing that I enjoyed doing on the daily basis before my injury. AbleGamers Peer Counselor was awesome. Without them, I would not be able to use my QuadStick or have it tailored to me.” - Damion



“I didn't think this would be possible! I can game and I have had a chance to play against someone on the internet. What a feeling!” - Kody

OUR MISSION

AbleGamers is a nonprofit organization creating opportunities that enable play in order to combat social isolation, foster inclusive communities, and improve the quality of life for people with disabilities.

Letter from the Founder

2022 was a watershed year for the work of AbleGamers. At the start of the challenges that defined the last few years, your generosity gave us the resources to build capacity and bring new expertise into this mission. We know you want us to bring the experiences that people with disabilities wish to have in gaming, whether they want to connect with friends and family, have fun... or hopefully both.

Your Peer Counseling team grew significantly in 2021; Dr. Andy Wu, the new Sr. Director of Peer Counseling rebuilt the process to bring support and meet the players where they're at. Laying that groundwork in 2021 took off in 2022.

To meet the players where they are means we had to think differently. We launched the "Power by AbleGamers" program. This program partners with world class facilities to bring gaming to those in their communities. Like Jordyn, a 15-year-old with Cerebral Palsy, who wanted to play video games with his friends at school, and his brother at home. Our partner AbilityKC said, "Sure, we can help you!" knowing that you had their backs. Your Peer Counseling team worked with the team at AbilityKC, and you were able to give Jordyn what he needed to enjoy the amazing experiences that gaming brings. In 2022 we enlisted six new sites, including Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, Texas Children's Hospital, and even Mount Sinai Hospital. Because of you, \$180,000 in funding and equipment went to the "Powered by AbleGamers" program.

Your support didn't stop there. Not everyone is near a "Powered by AbleGamers" site. That is not going to stop us from this mission. We launched the AbleGamers Knowledge Base in 2022. This project empowered players with the knowledge to start a quest to help themselves by giving them guides to common solutions learned over the past 18 years of working with players with disabilities. Over 1,000 people have used the Knowledge Base to start their journey to game, but it's still not enough. Each one of us is unique, and our needs, as well as our motivations, are different; a "standard solution" may not work. For these players empowering them to game is not easy. It may take a few hours, but it can be a few months for others. A one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work. Your Peer Counseling team (Andy, Jessie, and Aaron) apply their vast knowledge to work one-on-one to find the solutions that enable that player an opportunity to game.

Getting individual players enabled to is only half the mission. We want something to play, something to get excited about, something to look forward to. We invested in your User Research and Professional Development team, and they are also starting to see a major impact in their work. Game Developers want as many people as possible to experience their game, including players with disabilities. They need the knowledge to unlock the options that will allow a player to play. Companies big and small are reaching out to AbleGamers to get educated on the needs of players with disabilities and how to craft the next generation of games that welcome them to the story. It's impossible to measure the impact of this on players with disabilities. Still, if social media is any indication, players with disabilities are finding what they need to have the experiences they want.

There is more that I could share, but that is why we have created this impact report, So I will leave you with this thought, As we turn the corner from the challenges of the global pandemic with renewed hope as the world is opening back up, don't forget that for many players with disabilities, gaming is their window to the world. Your support has already opened up a new world for them. I can't wait to show you what we do together in 2023.



Mark Barlet
Founder and Executive Director



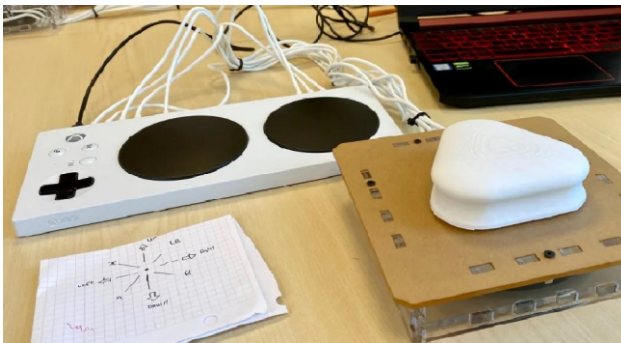


OUR PROGRAMMATIC PILLARS

What We Do**PEER COUNSELING**

We're using the power of video games to bring people together. Reducing barriers to play giving people with disabilities the opportunity to experience rich social engagements, build lifelong friendships, and connect with family, friends and players who share similar experiences.

Our Peer Counseling team consists of players with disabilities and occupational professionals who work together to find the best solutions to enable play. An AbleGamers' Peer Counselor gets to know the player with disabilities to understand their unique needs. With the information, we identify the accessibility hurdles and provide resources and suggestions to facilitate play and engagement in the community spaces around gaming to create rich social experiences.

**ENGINEERING RESEARCH**

Sometimes our Peer Counselors encounter barriers to play that current technology and options cannot meet. In these cases, we work with industry partners, makers, and research institutions to innovate new technology that can break down these barriers for a wide range of people.

**COMMUNITY AND INCLUSION**

Community and Inclusion focuses on supporting, improving and cultivating opportunities that amplify the voices of players with disabilities and forge lifelong relationships. Our Community and Inclusion team works directly with the industry and supports community initiatives resulting in a more inclusive gaming community.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Professional Development team works with our partners to give them the knowledge and skills needed to enable our players into the experiences they are designing.

The AbleGamers professional services work with industry partners to ensure that disabled players are included in the experiences they create, be they traditional gaming, alternate realities or mobile.



USER RESEARCH

While our User Research team then works with these partners to evaluate games and other interactive media to ensure there are no barriers that keep people with disabilities from having the intended experience.



I'm a 15-year-old, I now do something EVERY other 15-year-old is doing as well," says Jordyn, a young gamer with Cerebral Palsy. Now Jordyn is in the driver's seat, playing his favorite racing games with his brother and friends from school.



Our Team

Passionate and dedicated, our diverse team has a breadth of expertise. Drawing their knowledge from a variety of industries and backgrounds in an effort to enable play for people with disabilities.



Mark Barlet
*Founder &
Executive Director*



Steven Spohn
*Sr. Director of
Development*



Craig Kaufman
*Sr. Director
of Community
& Inclusion*



Christopher Power
*Managing Director,
AbleGamers Canada*



Christian Bernauer
*Managing Director,
AbleGamers Brazil*



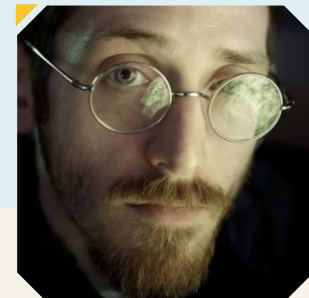
Mark Burgess
*Sr. Director
of Finance*



Andy Wu
*Sr. Director of
Peer Counseling*



Cheryl Mitchell
*Director of
User Research*



Steve Weitz
*Director of
Professional
Development*



Our Team



Jessie Hall
Sr. Peer Counselor



Kim RockVam
Director of Impact



Samus Wolfe
Sr. User Researcher



Vinny Santore
Program & Marketing Admin



Aaron Price
Peer Counselor



Jameil Johnson
UX Researcher



Larry Ruston
Shipping Manager



Maggie Judge
Events Manager



Peer Counseling

2022

Designed to explore accessibility barriers to play with the end goal of providing individualized solutions. To that end, peer counselors spend as much time as necessary, and figuring out the gaming setup for people with disabilities can be extremely time-consuming. Peer counseling sessions serve as a starting point for each individual's journey to game.

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PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
HELPED THROUGH ONE-ON-ONE
PEER COUNSELING SERVICES

1000+

INTERACTIONS RESULTING
IN REDUCED OR ELIMINATED
BARRIERS TO PLAY

\$25,000

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND
EQUIPMENT GRANTS PROVIDED
TO INDIVIDUALS IN NEED





Powered by AbleGamers

2022

PARTNERING FOR GREATER **IMPACT**

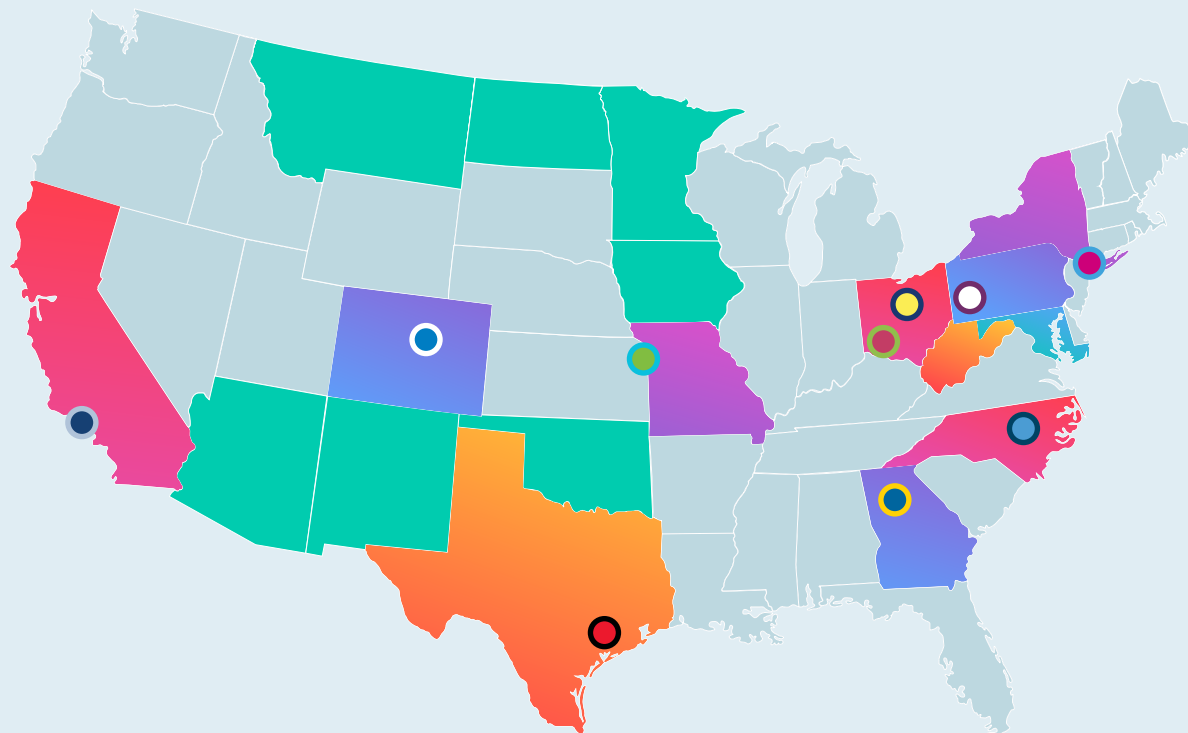
AbleGamers partners with various organizations, including hospitals and rehabilitation centers to reach many more players and provide them with a nearby location to assist in setup to enter the world of gaming.

Partner organizations are powered by AbleGamers through initial and ongoing support and training for staff and donation of specialized controllers and other devices.

6 ADDITIONAL
POWERED BY ABLEGAMERS
PARTNER SITES ADDED IN 2022

\$180,000

IN FUNDING AND EQUIPMENT
GRANTED TO PARTNERS IN 2022



AbleGamers also supports hospitals and state level AT programs supporting people with disabilities in the states highlighted in green above.

Powered by AbleGamers Partner

About 24 patients within Craig Hospital's Adaptive Gaming Program received more than 110 pieces of gaming equipment over the last year.

"Our partnership with AbleGamers helps patients obtain their very own custom gaming controller without the added financial stressors," explains Craig Hospital's director of Sponsorship and Engagement. "In a time when patients are experiencing so many intense challenges and losses, we are thrilled to be able to help them find enjoyment and relaxation through gaming."

And it's so much more than just playing a video game. It's a way to experience joy, combat social isolation, build strong connections, and foster community—all with a huge therapeutic value.

Craig Hospital patient Karen using an Xbox Adaptive controller that was funded through Powered by AbleGamers partnership.

"Video gaming has been a huge part of my life. As a little kid I played to bond with my siblings. These days I mainly use it to relax. Now, more than ever, I plan to use it to improve my reflexes and get my arm muscles back" - Karen





Engineering Research

2022

Hardware innovation is the lifeblood of adaptive gaming. As we help more players, we are constantly identifying opportunities to create new controllers and accessories that address barriers our players encounter, but for which there is no solution. These critical advancements in technology only exist because of your support.

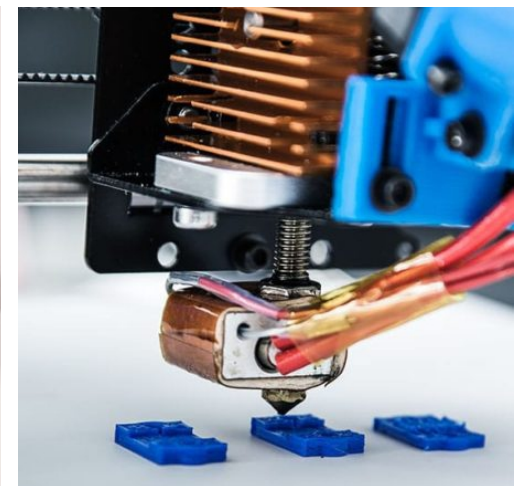
Engineering highlights from 2022:

In a new partnership with Makers Making Change we have created a prototype bluetooth connector for players to use the controls of their powered wheelchair with game systems in a new partnership with Makers Making Change.

In collaboration with the University of Prince Edward Island, we invented a device that enables players with low strength and dexterity to play without lifting, holding, or pulling their controls.

With our partners at KUPOCARE we have evaluated and iterated the designs of the AbleGamers Adaptive Play Surface which allows for positioning and configuration of a wide range of physical controls.

Working with partners across the US, we have expanded the network of gaming professionals and enthusiasts in 3D printing of adaptive equipment so that people can get the hardware they need when they need it.





Professional Development

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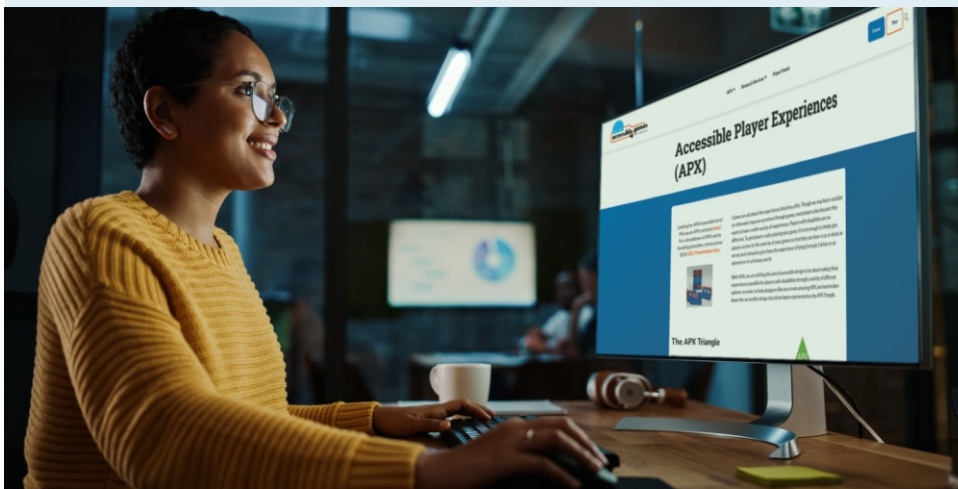
INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS TRAINED
AND CERTIFIED IN APX

(Accessible Player Experiences) Since the end of 2022 we have trained and certified 372 developers, giving them the knowledge to make their games as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.

\$62,000

IN SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

31 scholarships were awarded under our DPAD Initiative. Developers Promoting Accessibility & Diversity (DPAD) Initiative assists in cultivating a more inclusive gaming industry by granting marginalized developers (including developers who are disabled, people of color, women, and/or members of the LGBTQIA+ community), free access to the Accessible Player Experience Practitioner (APXP) Course.



User Research

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PLAYERS WITH DISABILITIES WERE PAID TO
PARTICIPATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF
VIDEO GAMES

\$11,600

PAID TO OUR PLAYER PANELS PARTICIPANTS

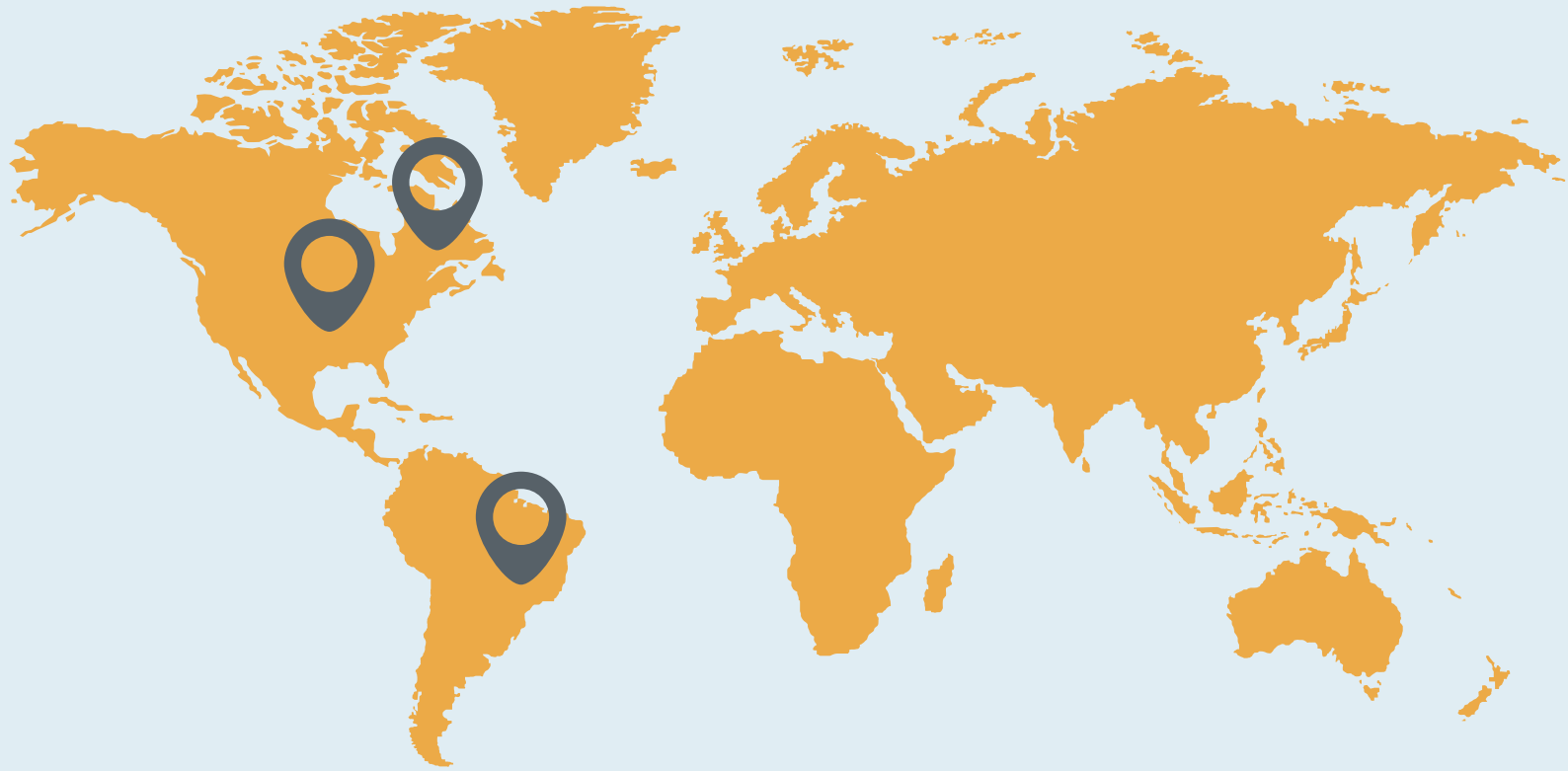
Player Panels is one of the world's largest groups of people with disabilities dedicated to lending their unique life experiences to create a more accessible world.

With over 400 players currently in the group, these players are working with triple-A game studios, our indie friends, and more to add value in the creation of rich, accessible player experiences.



accessible.games was redesigned and launched in June, and since then we have seen a 200% increase in traffic. Studios (domestic and international) are scheduling discovery calls to learn about our services and how they can improve accessibility within their games for people with disabilities.

We also discovered our work can benefit industries beyond gaming, i.e., museums. Gamification is being adopted in many industries.



Where We Are

It is pretty remarkable to think about how an idea for an online forum for creating safe places for players with disabilities to share their thoughts and solutions grew into a 501c3 charity headquartered in West Virginia.

Even more remarkable is how our mission has inspired people worldwide to create more opportunities for players to have the experiences they want in gaming. In the last two years, we have seen an expansion of the mission into partner organizations in Canada and Brazil.

With our new nonprofit AbleGamers Canada, we have begun building relationships that can help further the goal of making it so everyone can game. We have developed a fantastic new partnership with the Neil Squire Charity through their disability focussed engineering non-profit Makers Making Change to find solutions for the barriers uncovered by



our Peer Counselling team. Further, we have had a very productive relationship with the University of Prince Edward Island and its Faculty of Sustainable Design Engineering. Through the collaborative clinic projects, engineering students from first to final year have been working to create innovative adaptive controllers and accessories for gaming.

AbleGamers Brazil was busy in 2022. With the return of in-person events, our presence in Brazil has raised the profile of accessibility at various events, including an incredibly accessible booth at the BIG Festival and a variety of in-person and online talks and lectures. One big opportunity that was presented this year was the partnership with DXC technologies and Submarino, the largest online retail store in Brazil, to deliver a series of lectures on accessibility. This commitment to improving and enabling gaming experiences resulted in AbleGamers being recognized at Premio eSports Brazil, South America's largest video game award ceremony.



Supporters

Thank you Our community kept showing up when we needed them the most and we couldn't be more grateful.





Thank you for helping us enable play.



Level Up

Level Up, our sustaining donor community, is a passionate and dedicated group of people on a mission to enable play and improve the quality of life for people with disabilities.

Fundraisers

Gamers and content creators around the world have done some pretty amazing things to raise money to help make gaming more accessible for people with disabilities.

Our Donors

AbleGamers relies on the kindness and generosity of all our donors. They help us fund services and programs for people with disabilities and create change in the gaming community. Every contribution counts, thank you all for supporting our mission.



AbleGamers.org

AbleGamers is a IRS 501(c)3 nonprofit organization
Federal Tax ID Number: 30-0533750