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For Immediate Release

GrahamBerries are Back at Abilis and Available in Greenwich, Darien and Stamford!

Delicious organic blueberries are part of Abilis Competitive Employment program

GREENWICH, Conn., July 9, 2024 — **GrahamBerries**, the delicious organic blueberries available each summer through **Abilis**, are back for a limited time and while supplies last! These just-picked farm-fresh organic blueberries are sold at several locations around Greenwich, Darien, and Stamford, Connecticut. GrahamBerries are from a unique partnership with “**Blueberry Hill**,” an organic blueberry farm in upstate New York owned by **Peter and Phillipa Orzulak**, whose son **Graham**, is an Abilis community member. GrahamBerries are available now through mid-August, or as long as supplies last, and available for \$12 a quart, \$8 pint or \$5 a half-pint. Orders can be placed in advance at Abilis Gardens & Gifts by calling 203-531-GIFT or in-person at all of the following locations:

- **Abilis Gardens & Gifts:** M-F, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 50 Glenville Street, Greenwich, Connecticut.
- **The Café at Greenwich Library:** M-Th, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Fri-Sat, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Sun 1:00p.m.-4:00 p.m., 101 W. Putnam Avenue, Greenwich.
- **Island Beach Concession Stand:** M-Sun, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- **Cos Cob Firehouse:** M-Th, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., 200 E. Putnam Avenue, Greenwich.
- **Old Greenwich Farmers Market:** Wednesdays, 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., 38 West End Avenue, Old Greenwich.
- **Greenwich Town Hall:** M-Th, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., 101 Field Point Road, Greenwich.
- **The Café at Darien Library:** M-Th, 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Fri, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Sat, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., 1441 Post Road, Darien.
- **Abilis Courthouse Café:** M-F from 8:00 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the courthouse at 123 Hoyt St. in Stamford.
- **Boxcar Cantina:** GrahamBerries are used in special GrahamBerries Blueberry Margaritas, 44 Old Field Point Road, Greenwich.

“We are so excited to have GrahamBerries back again this summer,” noted Amy Montimurro, CEO and president of Abilis. “GrahamBerries have been a summer favorite going on close to 13 years now. Selling the berries provides a great opportunity for Graham, the namesake of GrahamBerries, and other individuals supported by Abilis, to learn valuable sales skills while selling the blueberries around town and at our Abilis-managed Cafés and the Island Beach Concession Stand. It is a great opportunity to learn retail sales skills as well as customer service and we are proud to have GrahamBerries as part of our Abilis Employment program. This ongoing program helps provide positive work experiences for adults with special needs and disabilities. Selling the GrahamBerries is both fun and empowering for our Abilis community

members and we love that we've been able to partner with the Orzulak's on this important initiative."

The Orzulak family, who owns the blueberry farm "Blueberry Hill," and their team pick the blueberries, package them and personally transport them to Greenwich, where the Orzulak's son Graham and his team of blueberry sales staff set up locations around town.

Graham has received services from Abilis beginning when he was a baby with Abilis' Birth to Three program. Diagnosed as an infant with Angelman Syndrome, a genetic disorder, Graham started to receive supports in the Early Intervention program. As Graham approached adulthood, his family wanted him to have opportunities to be more independent and that included a job. Abilis developed an individualized day program, a beautiful home for Graham and his friends and an employment plan, which included selling and delivering organic blueberries from his family's farm.

"Selling the blueberries is one of Graham's favorite activities," noted Philippa Orzulak, Graham's mother. "Having a child with special needs requires some creative thinking when it comes to having a job. After Graham graduated school and was ready to work, we started thinking outside the box and worked with the Abilis Employment team to come up with some work that Graham could do. He started with a paper shredding business and then serviced vending machines. When we started our organic blueberry farm in 2011, it was natural to extend the blueberry sales to the Abilis community to sell them and give proceeds back to Abilis. We also knew it would be a great experience to help individuals with disabilities learn how to interact with customers, perfect their sales techniques and learn new job skills. Selling the blueberries or 'GrahamBerries' is now Graham's favorite thing to do and he loves that he is often referred to as 'the Blueberry Mayor of Greenwich,' which he loves."

Abilis' Employment Program was designed to work with individuals to create customized career plans that build upon their interests and skills and offer avenues toward employment in the community. Abilis' businesses are part of the Employment program and include Abilis Gardens & Gifts, Abilis Café, and shredding, GrahamBerries, The Café at Greenwich Library, Island Beach Concession, The Café at Darien Library, The Café at the Darien YMCA and the new Abilis Courthouse Café at the Stamford courthouse. Abilis also partners with more than 100 other local businesses as part of the Competitive Employment Program and works with partners such as Feinsod's Hardware, Gregorys Coffee, Stop and Shop, Something Natural, Home Depot, The Greenwich Country Club and many other businesses to provide additional job training and meaningful work for its Abilis community.

To learn more about GrahamBerries call Abilis Gardens & Gifts at 203-531-GIFT (4438). To learn more about Abilis' Competitive Employment Program, visit abilis.us or call 203-531-1880.

Abilis is a 501c3 non-profit organization that supports more than 800 individuals with disabilities and their families from birth throughout their lives. Founded in 1951, Abilis is a leader in providing meaningful supports to the community in Fairfield County, Connecticut, in towns including Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk, Ridgefield, Stamford, Westport and Wilton. The organization has a long-standing reputation for individualized, high-quality care. For more information, visit www.abilis.us, or follow on Facebook @Abilis, Inc., Instagram @abilis_us or Twitter @Abilis.

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