



## FACT SHEET

**International Headquarters:** Miami, Florida

**Online:** [www.bestbuddies.org](http://www.bestbuddies.org), [facebook.com/bestbuddies](https://facebook.com/bestbuddies), [twitter.com/bestbuddies](https://twitter.com/bestbuddies)

**Mission:** To establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

**Vision:** To put Best Buddies® out of business.

**About Best Buddies:** Best Buddies International is the world's largest nonprofit organization devoted solely to providing opportunities for friendship, employment and leadership development for people with IDD. In the United States, the organization's 2019 cash budget is \$43 million. If Best Buddies had to pay its volunteers, operating costs would be closer to \$373 million. 83% of all revenue goes directly to Best Buddies programs for people with IDD, while only 17% is spent on administration and fundraising.

**History of Service:** Best Buddies was born 30 years ago, when Founder, Chairman and CEO Anthony K. Shriver recognized that people with IDD lacked opportunities to socialize with their peers without disabilities. Believing that friendship is key to building the self-esteem essential to a happy and productive life, Shriver incorporated Best Buddies as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization in 1989. Today, Best Buddies offers nine programs: *Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges, Citizens, e-Buddies®, Jobs, Ambassadors, Promoters and Inclusive Living*.

**Participants:** With nearly 2,900 chapters around the world, Best Buddies positively impacts the lives of over 1.25 million people with and without IDD.

**Countries:** Best Buddies operates accredited programs in 54 countries spanning six continents: **(Africa)** Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda; **(Asia)** Hong Kong, Indonesia, South Korea, Macao, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam; **(Europe)** Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, England, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Turkey, and Ukraine; **(Latin America & The Caribbean)** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela; **(MENA)** Lebanon and Qatar; **(North America)** Canada and the USA; and **(Oceania)** New Zealand.



**BESTBUDDIES®**  
Friendship, Jobs, Leadership Development & Living

## ABOUT BEST BUDDIES

Best Buddies® is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development and inclusive living for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Founded in 1989 by Anthony K. Shriver, Best Buddies is a vibrant, international organization that has grown from one original chapter to nearly 2,900 middle school, high school, and college chapters worldwide. Best Buddies programs engage participants in each of the 50 United States, and in 54 countries around the world. Best Buddies' nine formal programs — *Middle Schools*, *High Schools*, *Colleges*, *Citizens*, *e-Buddies®*, *Jobs*, *Ambassadors*, *Promoters*, and *Inclusive Living* — positively impacts more than 1.25 million individuals with and without disabilities worldwide. Best Buddies' volunteers annually contribute, at no cost to their communities, support services that equate to more than \$330 million USD.

In many cases, as a result of their involvement with Best Buddies, people with IDD secure rewarding jobs, live on their own, become inspirational leaders, and make lifelong friendships.





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## ABOUT ANTHONY K. SHRIVER



Anthony K. Shriver is the Founder, Chairman & CEO of Best Buddies International, which he created in 1989 to foster one-to-one friendships between people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Recognizing the tremendous volunteer potential of university students, Shriver first inspired his college peers to personally collaborate in expanding the realm of opportunities that persons with intellectual disabilities should experience.

Today, through Shriver's stewardship and entrepreneurial spirit, Best Buddies® has grown into a leading nonprofit entity with increasing international reach across six continents, establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development and inclusive living for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Best Buddies is comprised of nine programs that positively impacts more than 1.25 million individuals with and without disabilities worldwide. The organization is active in each of the 50 United States, and operates accredited international programs in 54 countries.

A graduate of Georgetown University, Shriver has been recognized for his work on behalf of Best Buddies with diverse international accolades and honorary degrees. He is a father of five beautiful children and resides in Miami Beach.



## BEST BUDDIES PROGRAMS

**Best Buddies Middle Schools** fosters one-to-one friendships between students with and without IDD. Students with IDD are often isolated and left out of social activities. Best Buddies Middle Schools helps to create an inclusive school climate for students early on in their educational development.

**Best Buddies High Schools** fosters one-to-one friendships between students with and without IDD. The high school years are a time of heightened social and emotional development and can be difficult even for those without IDD. Best Buddies High Schools helps break through social barriers at an important time in a young person's life.

**Best Buddies Colleges** fosters one-to-one friendships between college students and adults with IDD and college students without IDD. Historically, adults with IDD have been isolated in home or work environments. Best Buddies Colleges is changing this by providing the opportunity for people with IDD to be involved in campus and community life.

**Best Buddies Promoters** empowers youth to become advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by organizing and attending special events that promote advocacy and bring awareness to the disability rights movement.

**Best Buddies Citizens** fosters one-to-one friendships between adults with and without IDD in corporate and civic communities. This program helps people with IDD become part of mainstream society and creates an inclusive and diverse community for all.

**e-Buddies** provides a safe online forum to develop one-to-one friendships between people with and without IDD. Technology is an integral part of society and by participating in e-Buddies, participants can develop the skills necessary to be able to communicate using a variety of sources.

**Best Buddies Ambassadors** educates and empowers people with IDD through group trainings and workshops to be leaders and public speakers in their schools, communities, and work places. Best Buddies Ambassadors is the next step for the disability rights movement — teaching people with IDD the skills they need to successfully self-advocate.

**Best Buddies Jobs** is a supported employment program that secures competitive paying jobs for people with IDD, therefore enabling them to work as respected individuals. The program develops partnerships with employers, assists with the hiring process, and provides ongoing support to the employee and employer.

**Best Buddies Living** provides individuals with and without IDD the opportunity to live together in a vibrant community that supports all residents in advancing their employment, financial literacy, continued education and life skills as they work to achieve their personal goals.



## MILESTONES

### Year One

Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization on January 19, 1989, Best Buddies® becomes America's first national, unified, social, and recreational program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### 1989 – 1993

- The *Best Buddies Fine Art Collection* is developed, featuring masterpieces by Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg.
- Best Buddies hosts the first *Leadership Conference*, training both college student leaders and people with disabilities by providing intensive lessons in public speaking, management, team building, problem solving and leadership skills.
- Best Buddies launches *Best Buddies Citizens* with the goal of pairing adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities with their non-disabled working peers.

### 1994 – 1998

- Best Buddies launches *Best Buddies Jobs*, a supported employment program, targeting high-paying, white-collar jobs for people with disabilities in Florida, California and Massachusetts.
- Best Buddies establishes *Best Buddies High Schools* with the goal of pairing special education students in one-to-one friendships with high school volunteers.
- The *Best Buddies Middle Schools* pilot program is launched, reaching out to an even younger age group with the hope that inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will have a lasting effect on societal norms for the next generation.

### 1999 – 2006

- *e-Buddies®* is launched as a cutting-edge online friendship program.
- Maria Shriver writes a landmark book about friendships with people with disabilities titled, *What's Wrong with Timmy?* Proceeds benefit Best Buddies.
- Best Buddies launches the most successful fundraising event in its history, the nationally televised inaugural *Volvo Hearst Castle Challenge*, a 100-mile bike ride along the Pacific Coast Highway chaired by California First Lady Maria Shriver.
- Volvo signs deal through 2007 as title sponsor of the *Volvo Hyannis Port Challenge* and *Volvo Hearst Castle Challenge* and becomes the "Official Vehicle of Best Buddies."
- For the first time, Best Buddies has programs in all 50 of the United States and on six continents.



## MILESTONES (continued)

### 2007 – 2011

- In 2007, Best Buddies International and German luxury car manufacturer Audi launch a five-year, international partnership. In 2011, the deal is extended for another three years
- Best Buddies celebrates 20 years of friendships and jobs in 2009.
- In honor of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Best Buddies updates its mission statement to: “To establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).”
- For the first time, Best Buddies has programs in 50 countries around the world.
- Best Buddies Ambassadors becomes Best Buddies’ seventh formal program.

### 2012-Present

- Best Buddies Jobs expands to Washington D.C. and San Francisco, CA.
- Best Buddies Promoters officially launches as the organization’s eighth program for the 2012-2013 school year. It is the first Best Buddies program open to elementary schools.
- Best Buddies celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- Best Buddies launches its *I’m in to Hire* campaign in October 2014, to promote the business benefits of hiring people with intellectual and development disabilities (IDD) and motivate employers to create a more inclusive workforce.
- In October 2015 A&E Network partnered with Best Buddies and premiered a new docu-series, *Born This Way*, which chronicles the lives of seven young-adults with Down syndrome, several of whom are Best Buddies participants.
- In April 2016, Best Buddies Global Ambassador Katie Meade becomes the first woman with Down syndrome to become the face of a major beauty campaign, *Fearless*. The campaign is a partnership between Best Buddies and Beauty & Pin-ups.
- In September 2016, the hit A&E docu-series *Born This Way* wins an Emmy award for “Outstanding Unstructured Reality Program.”
- In May 2017, Best Buddies hosts the inaugural Mother’s Day Brunch in Malibu, CA, with Global Ambassador Cindy Crawford and her daughter, Kaia Gerber.
- In April 2018, Best Buddies Global Ambassador Tom Brady travels to Qatar to launch integrated employment initiative in partnership with the country’s Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, Qatar Museums and Best Buddies Qatar participants.
- In October 2018, Best Buddies is featured on ESPN’s 50 Game Changers – a docu-series about the achievements of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and the game changers who promote inclusion for people with IDD in the sports world and beyond.
- Best Buddies celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary on January 19, 2019.
- Best Buddies officially launches its fourth mission pillar, Inclusive Living. BESTBUDDIES® Living provides an integrated experience in which people with and without IDD are active, contributing citizens – living independently in a dynamic environment where they can learn, grow, and thrive.





## IDD

**Intellectual Disabilities:** According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), an individual is considered to have intellectual disabilities based on the following three criteria: intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 70-75; significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skills areas, such as communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics (reading, writing, basic math), community participation and employment; and the condition is present from childhood.

Intellectual disabilities can be caused by any condition that impairs development of the brain before birth, during birth, or during the childhood years. Several hundred causes have been discovered, but in about one-third of the people affected, the cause remains unknown. The three major known causes of intellectual disabilities are Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, and fragile X.

**Developmental Disabilities:** According to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), developmental disabilities are severe disabilities attributable to cognitive and/or physical impairments which appear before the age of 22 and are likely to be lifelong. They result in substantial limitations in three or more of the following areas: self-care, comprehension and language skills, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency, and ability to function independently without coordinated services.

**How Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Differ:** According to the AAIDD, intellectual disabilities fall under the umbrella of developmental disabilities, but the boundaries often blur as many individuals fall into both categories to differing degrees and for different reasons.

Some developmental disabilities are purely physical, such as congenital deafness or visual impairment resulting from the individual's mother contracting rubella while pregnant. These are not intellectual disabilities. Other developmental disabilities can be caused by cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or other disabling conditions. These conditions might or might not include intellectual disabilities.

Still other developmental disabilities can result from chromosomal disorders, such as Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, and fragile X syndrome. These instances could well include intellectual disabilities — but not always. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control, males with fragile X syndrome generally have mild to severe intellectual disabilities, whereas females can have average intelligence.

On the other hand, some causes of intellectual disabilities are not physical. These include social factors, such as the level of child stimulation and adult responsiveness, and educational factors, such as the availability of family and educational supports that can promote mental development and greater adaptive skills.

**Prevalence:** The Arc estimates that close to five million Americans have an intellectual or developmental disability.



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*Creator of the Best Buddies  
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## PEOPLE-FIRST LANGUAGE

Best Buddies promotes social inclusion and respect for all people. The easiest way to show respect is in how we speak about people. People-first language is an approach that many organizations and people in the disability rights movement use when speaking about our peers with disabilities.

The basic tenant of people-first language is the power and importance of recognizing a fellow person as a human being above all else. When we recognize people with disabilities as people (first), the fundamental respect warranted to another person is easier for us to realize.

People-first language recognizes that individuals with disabilities are— first and foremost— people. It emphasizes each person’s value, individuality, dignity, and capabilities.

When choosing words to use about people with disabilities, refer to the person first, not the disability. A person with an intellectual or developmental disability **should not** be described as a “*disabled person*,” rather “*a person with an intellectual or developmental disability*” instead. By doing this, we place the emphasis on the person, not the disability.

By using people-first language, we are helping to eliminate the negative stereotypes and limitations that others often ascribe to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### Examples of People-First Language:

People First Language	Language to Avoid
People with disabilities.	The disabled.
He has a disability	He’s mentally retarded.
She has autism (or an autism diagnosis).	She’s autistic
He has a diagnosis of Down syndrome.	He’s Downs.
She has a learning disability (diagnosis).	She’s learning disabled.
He has a physical disability (diagnosis).	He’s a quadriplegic/crippled.
She’s of short stature/she’s a little person.	She’s a dwarf/midget.
He has a mental health diagnosis.	He’s emotionally disturbed/mentally ill
She uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.	She’s confined/wheelchair bound.
He receives special ed services.	He’s in special ed.
He has a physical disability.	He’s a quadriplegic/is crippled.
Kids without disabilities.	Normal or healthy kids.
Communicates with her eyes/devices/etc.	Is non-verbal
Congenital disability	Birth defect
Brain injury	Brain damaged
Accessible parking, hotel room, etc...	Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc...



# BESTBUDDIES®

Friendship, Jobs, Leadership Development & Living

## 2019 EVENTS

### **Best Buddies Month: March 2019**

*Worldwide*

What started 26 years ago as a one-day event has evolved into a month-long celebration commemorating Best Buddies' mission. Best Buddies Month, which takes place each year in March, is a time for Best Buddies participants to reflect on the importance of friendship, jobs, and the development of future leaders. More importantly, it is a time to show the world the significance of these essentials in every individual's life. In March 2019, Best Buddies' chapters and individual volunteers will showcase their passion for Best Buddies by participating in community carnivals, regional dances, and school-wide assemblies.

### **Spread the Word to End the Word Day: March 2019**

*Worldwide*

A global day of awareness for Best Buddies' and Special Olympics' *Spread the Word to End the Word* campaign, which is designed to raise the consciousness of society about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the R-word ("retard(ed)") and encourage people to pledge to stop using it.

### **Best Buddies Friendship Walk: South Florida: March 16, 2019**

*Museum Park*

*Miami, Florida*

The Friendship Walk is the latest and greatest life-changing movement created by Best Buddies. Since 2009, more than 55,000 participants have walked in over 26 states and three countries, raising more than \$5 million for Best Buddies. This is where you can make a difference! You can promote community inclusion simply by participating in this year's Friendship Walk. Walk for inclusion. Walk for friendship, Walk for a better South Florida community!

### **Best Buddies Mother's Day Brunch: May 11, 2019**

*Malibu, California*

Mother's Day is a celebration honoring motherhood, maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society. The spectacular Second Annual *Best Buddies Mother's Day Brunch* will be honoring Best Buddies, the incredible mothers of our participants, and mothers all around the world! We will pay homage to the gifts of love and friendship that mothers give to their children, especially the amazing mothers of our Best Buddies Participants.

### **Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port: June 1, 2019**

*Boston & Hyannis Port, Massachusetts*

The *Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port*, chaired by Tom Brady, is a 100, 50, or 20-mile cycling adventure from Boston to Hyannis Port, with an optional 5K run/ walk chaired by Olympian Carl Lewis. The event kicks-off with the *Tom Brady Football Challenge* and concludes with celebrity tandem races, a celebratory clambake, and a private concert by a special musical guest.



## 2019 EVENTS (continued)

### ***Best Buddies Leadership Conference: July 19-22, 2019***

*Bloomington, Indiana*

This annual *conference* welcomes over 2,300 students and community leaders with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities from Best Buddies' eight programs, and more than 200 staff professionals from around the world, to a four-day conference that prepares students to lead successful Best Buddies chapters in the upcoming year.

### ***Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle: September 7, 2019***

*Carmel & San Simeon, California*

The *Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle*, is a 100, 62, 30, or 15-mile cycling adventure along the Pacific Coast Highway, from Carmel to the renowned Hearst Castle in San Simeon, with an optional 5K run/walk led by Olympian Carl Lewis. The event includes celebrity tandem races, a festive barbeque, and a private concert at the Hearst Ranch.

### ***Best Buddies Friendship Walk: Capital Region: October 2019***

*National Mall, Washington, D.C.*

The *Best Buddies Friendship Walk: Capital Region* is a powerful social movement that supports inclusion and acceptance for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Open to all ages and athletic abilities, the Capital Region Walk has the energy of a big family gathering. More than 2,000 Best Buddies program participants, with and without disabilities, walk side-by-side to promote friendship and community inclusion.

### ***13<sup>th</sup> Annual Best Buddies Dallas Gala: November 2019***

*Dallas, Texas*

The *Dallas Gala* is an incredible event, featuring a gourmet dinner, live and silent auctions, and a private concert, with **Jan and Jeff Rich serving as honorary chairs** to help support Best Buddies endeavors in Texas.

### ***Best Buddies Challenge: Miami: November 22, 2019***

*Miami, Florida*

The *Best Buddies Challenge Miami* is a world-class cycling event limited to just 50 riders. This 62-mile ride features a Tour de France-style police escorted peloton with road and intersecting closures, support vehicles, and three fully-stocked rest stops. Lunch in the Marlins Park owner's suite ends the ride followed by the *Miami Gala* that evening.

### ***23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Best Buddies Miami Gala: November 22, 2019***

*Miami, Florida*

The *22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Best Buddies Miami Gala* is a spectacular event supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities around the world. Each year, more than 800 prominent local and international guests attend this elegant event, including notable celebrities, athletic superstars, and incredible performers. Guests will celebrate Best Buddies while enjoying a gourmet dinner, a top-notch auction, and dazzling entertainment.