

# BESTBUDDIES®

## Press Kit

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Vol.2 Revised 05.23



# 2023 Fact Sheet

## 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.

## Who We Serve

The IDD community that Best Buddies serves includes, but is not limited to, people with Down syndrome, autism, fragile X syndrome, Williams syndrome, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury and other undiagnosed disabilities.

## History of Service

Best Buddies was founded 34 years ago, when Founder, Chairman and CEO Anthony K. Shriver recognized that people with IDD lacked opportunities to socialize with their peers without disabilities. 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.

## About

Best Buddies International is the world's largest nonprofit organization solely devoted to providing opportunities for friendship, employment, leadership development and inclusive living for people with IDD. Best Buddies' volunteers annually contribute, at no cost to their communities, support services that equate to more than \$330 million USD.

## Participants



# 3,000

Chapters around the world

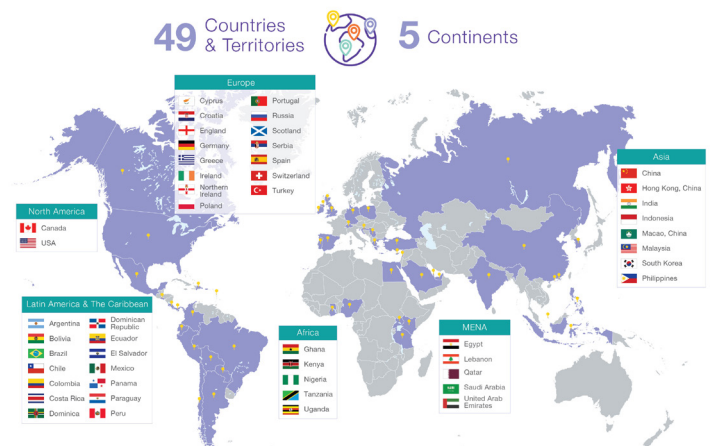


# 1M

Positively impacted people with and without IDD

## Best Buddies Around the World

Best Buddies operates accredited programs in all 50 states and in 47 countries and territories spanning 5 continents.



### Global Headquarters

100 Southeast Second St, Suite 2200  
Miami, FL 33131



P 305.374.2233 | F 305.377.1969



BESTBUDDIES.ORG



@BESTBUDDIES

# BESTBUDDIES® Programs



## ■ One-To-One Friendships

Builds friendships between people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, offering social interactions while improving the quality of life and level of inclusion for a population that is often isolated and excluded.

### **BESTBUDDIES®** Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges and Citizens

Creates an inclusive community for students and adults, helping them become socially integrated with their peers at every age.

### **e-BUDDIES®**

Provides opportunities for volunteers with and without IDD to develop one-to-one friendships online and create connections using the power of technology.



## ■ Integrated Employment

Secures jobs for people with IDD, allowing them to earn an income, pay taxes, and continuously and independently support themselves.

### **BESTBUDDIES®** Jobs

Matches skilled, qualified individuals with IDD with businesses seeking enthusiastic and dedicated employees. Best Buddies develops partnerships with employers, assists with the hiring process and provides ongoing support to the employee and employer.

An estimated 81% of adults (18+) with developmental disabilities do not have a paid job in the community. The Best Buddies Jobs program strives to place participants with IDD in supported employment, with the potential to receive benefits and earn a total income upwards of \$900K over 30 years. In turn, these individuals will contribute \$153K in taxes back into the economy, rather than receive nearly \$895K in Federal SSI and Medicaid benefits during that time period.



## ■ Leadership Development

Educates and empowers people with and without IDD to become leaders, public speakers, and advocates.

### **BESTBUDDIES®** Ambassadors

Offers people with and without IDD the opportunity to gain the public speaking skills, self-esteem and confidence needed to successfully advocate for themselves, their peers and Best Buddies in communities, workplaces, and government.

### **BESTBUDDIES®** Promoters

Empowers youth to become advocates for the disability rights movement and help open new Best Buddies chapters and programs by organizing events that promote awareness to the disability rights movement.



## ■ Inclusive Living

Fosters 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.

### **BESTBUDDIES®** Living

Provides individuals with and without IDD an opportunity to live together in a vibrant community that encourages independent living, life-changing relationships, and professional growth opportunities.





# About Best Buddies

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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 3,000 elementary school, middle school, high school, and college Friendship and Promoter chapters worldwide. Best Buddies programs engage participants in each of the 50 United States, and in 47 countries and territories 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 million individuals with and without disabilities worldwide.

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



# About Anthony K. Shriver

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Anthony Kennedy Shriver is the Founder, Chairman and 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 people with IDD 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 IDD.

Best Buddies is comprised of nine programs that positively impact more than 1 million individuals with and without disabilities worldwide. The organization is active in each of the 50 states and operates accredited international programs in 47 countries and territories.

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 the father of five beautiful children and resides in Miami Beach, Florida.



# Disabilities Defined

Every person is unique, therefore each person's disability may manifest in a different way. The descriptions provided include common characteristics of each disability and may or may not be part of the person's behaviors or learning styles.

## Intellectual Disability

An intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem-solving) and in adaptive behavior, which covers a range of everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

### Characteristics may include difficulty with

- Problem solving independently
- Understanding non-verbal cues
- Reading/writing
- Math/numbers
- Telling time/concept of time
- Communication (expressive and receptive)
- Social Interactions

## Developmental Disability

Developmental disability is an umbrella term that includes intellectual disabilities but also includes other disabilities that are diagnosed during childhood. Developmental disabilities are chronic disabilities that can be cognitive, physical or both. The disabilities appear before the age of 22 and are typically lifelong. Some individuals may have a condition that includes both a physical and intellectual disability.

### Include but are not limited to

- Down Syndrome
- Fragile X Syndrome
- Autism
- Williams Syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy
- Traumatic Brain Injury

## Down Syndrome

Down Syndrome occurs when an individual has a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes intellectual impairments and physical abnormalities.

### Common characteristics

- Decreased muscle tone
- Short attention span
- Impulsive behavior
- Delayed speech and language development

## Fragile X Syndrome

Fragile X syndrome is a genetic condition that causes a range of developmental problems including learning disabilities and cognitive impairment.

### Common characteristics

- Delayed development of speech and language
- Anxiety
- Hyperactivity
- Impulsive actions
- Fidgeting
- Difficulty with communication
- Inappropriate social interactions

## Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, as well as how they communicate. The term “spectrum” refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity. Autism spectrum disorder begins in early childhood and can cause problems functioning socially, in school, and at work. People with ASD can have severe limitations in one area with no limitations in others.

### Characteristics may include difficulty with

- Making eye contact
- Verbal and non-verbal communications
- Fine motor or gross motor skills
- Understanding the feelings of others
- Staying on topic
- Reading social cues

### Common behaviors

- Repetitive behaviors such as hand-flapping, fidgeting, rocking
- Sensitivity to touch, smell, taste
- Upset by change in routine
- Have obsessive interests
- Repeat words or phrases

## Williams Syndrome

Williams Syndrome is a developmental disorder characterized by mild to moderate intellectual disability or learning problems, unique personality characteristics, distinctive facial features, and heart and blood vessel (cardiovascular) problems.

### Common behavioral and learning characteristics

- Phobias
- Trouble with visual spatial tasks
- Difficulty with attention and concentration

## Cerebral Palsy (CP)

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is a group of disorders that affect a person’s ability to move and maintain balance and posture. CP is caused by abnormal development of the brain or damage to the developing brain that affects the ability to control muscles. The brain damage that leads to CP can happen before birth, during birth, within a month after birth, or during the first years of a child’s life, while the brain is still developing. The symptoms of CP vary and some people will experience only the physical problems, where others may also have intellectual disability.

### Common characteristics

- Difficulty with gross/fine motor movement
- Seizures
- Visual impairments
- Hearing impairments
- Speech and language impairments
- Changes in spine or joints

## Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Traumatic brain injury is a form of acquired brain injury, which occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. Symptoms of a TBI can range from mild to severe, depending on the extent of the damage to the brain.

### Common characteristics

- Headaches (ranging from mild to severe)
- Confusion
- Memory loss
- Difficulty concentrating
- Mood changes
- Seizures

# Person-First Language



Best Buddies promotes social inclusion and respect for all people. The basic tenant of people-first language is the power and importance of recognizing a fellow person as a human being above all else.

Person-first or people-first language is a way of describing disability that involves putting the word “person” or “people” before the word “disability” or the name of a disability, rather than placing the disability first and using it as an adjective. Person-first language literally puts the person first instead of his or her disability.

Respect individuals with disabilities as people, not projects or people to pity. By referring to an individual as a “person with a disability” instead of a “disabled person,” you are providing an objective description instead of a label. The purpose of people-first language is to promote the fact that someone’s disability label is just a disability label—not the defining characteristic of the entire individual. Many guides on disability language and etiquette emphasize using person-first language, except, perhaps, when discussing certain disability cultural groups that explicitly describe themselves with disability-first language.

## Examples of Person First Language

### Say this

- People with disabilities
- They have a disability
- They have autism (or an autism diagnosis)
- They have a diagnosis of Down syndrome
- They have a learning disability (diagnosis)
- They have a physical disability (diagnosis)
- They are of short stature/a little person
- They have a mental health diagnosis
- They use a wheelchair/mobility chair
- They receive special ed services
- Communicate with their eyes/devices/etc
- Congenital disability
- Brain injury
- Accessible parking, hotel room, etc...
- They need\_\_or they use\_\_

### Not this

- The disabled
- They are mentally retarded
- They are autistic
- They are Downs
- They are learning disabled
- They are quadriplegic/crippled
- They are a dwarf/midget
- They are disturbed/mentally ill
- They are confined/wheelchair bound
- They are special ed
- Is non-verbal
- Birth defect
- Brain damaged
- Handicapped parking/hotel room, etc...
- They have problems/special needs



# Milestones 1987-2023

## 1987-1998

- Anthony Kennedy Shriver charts the original Best Buddies Chapter while a junior at Georgetown University in 1987.
- Incorporates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization on January 19, 1989, **BESTBUDDIES®** becomes America's first national, unified, social, and recreational program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).
- Best Buddies establishes the *Best Buddies Fine Art Collection*, featuring masterpieces by Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg in 1993.
- Best Buddies hosts the first unified Leadership Conference, training both college student leaders and people with IDD by providing intensive lessons in public speaking, management, team building, problem solving and leadership skills.
- Best Buddies launches **BESTBUDDIES®** Citizens in 1993 with the goal of pairing adults with IDD with their working peers who do not have disabilities.
- Best Buddies launches **BESTBUDDIES®** Jobs in 1994, a supported employment program, targeting high-paying, white-collar jobs for people with IDD in Florida, California and Massachusetts.
- Best Buddies establishes **BESTBUDDIES®** High Schools in 1995 with the goal of pairing special education students in one-to-one friendships with high school volunteers.
- The **BESTBUDDIES®** Middle Schools pilot program launches in 1996, reaching out to an even younger age group with the hope that inclusion of people with IDD will have a lasting effect on societal norms for the next generation.

## 1999-2011

- **e-BUDDIES®** launches in 1999 as a cutting-edge online friendship program.
- 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.
- In 2003, for the first time, Best Buddies has programs in all 50 of the United States and on six continents.
- Best Buddies celebrates 20 years of friendships and jobs in 2009.
- For its 20th anniversary in 2009, mission statement is updated to: "To establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with IDD."
- In 2010, for the first time, Best Buddies has programs in 50 countries around the world.
- **BESTBUDDIES®** Ambassadors becomes Best Buddies' seventh formal program in 2011.

## 2012-2018

- **BESTBUDDIES®** Promoters officially launches as the organization's eighth program for the 2012-2013 school year. It was the first Best Buddies program open to elementary schools at that time.
- Best Buddies celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014.
- Best Buddies launches the *I'm In To Hire* campaign in 2014 to promote the business benefits of hiring people with IDD.
- In October 2015, A&E Network partnered with Best Buddies International and premiered a new docu-series, "Born This Way," which chronicled the lives of seven young adults with Down syndrome, several of whom were Best Buddies participants.
- 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 IDD and the game changers who promote inclusion for people with IDD in the sports world and beyond.

## 2019-Current

- Best Buddies celebrates its 30th anniversary on January 19, 2019.
- Best Buddies officially launches its fourth mission pillar in 2019, 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.
- In March 2019, Best Buddies with Fundación MAPFRE launches a Pre-Employment Training Program in Massachusetts to prepare Friendship program participants ages 14-22 with IDD to transition into our Jobs program.
- In October 2019, under the leadership of Entertainment Industry Foundation, Best Buddies, Special Olympics and Autism Speaks, launch Delivering Jobs, a campaign to create pathways to one million employment and leadership opportunities for people with IDD by 2025.
- Best Buddies launches **BESTBUDDIES®** Ventures in 2020, creating a new source of revenue independent of traditional methods of fundraising. The first-ever venture opens in Miami, FL; **BESTBUDDIES®** X Rosetta Bakery is an equal partnership that creates employment opportunities for individuals with IDD, and serves as a profit-center for Best Buddies through a store-front bakery and coffee shop.
- **BESTBUDDIES®** Elementary officially launches as the organization's tenth program in 2022.
- In 2020, **BESTBUDDIES®** Transitions launches as Best Buddies' eleventh program, it helps prepare young adults with IDD for independence and inclusion in their communities as they move from school into adulthood.

# 2023 Special Events

**Best Buddies Friendship Walk**  
*Spring / Nationwide*

**Best Buddies Month**  
*The month of March / Worldwide*

**Spread the Word to End the Word**  
*March 1 / Nationwide*

**Best Buddies Celebrating Mothers**  
*May 13 / Los Angeles, CA*

**Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port**  
*June 3 / Boston to Hyannis Port, MA*

**BB Breakaway Camp: Malibu**  
*June 11 - 15 / Malibu, CA*

**BB Breakaway Camp: Malibu  
Ladies' Edition**  
*September 20 - 24 / Malibu, CA*

**Best Buddies  
Leadership Conference**  
*July 21 - 24 / Bloomington, IN*

**Best Buddies Champion  
of The Year**  
*Fall / Nationwide*

**Best Buddies Challenge:  
California**  
*October 14 / Marin, CA*

**Best Buddies Challenge: Miami &  
Best Buddies Miami Gala**  
*November 17 / Miami, FL*

**BB Breakaway Camp: Malibu**  
*Nov. 29 - Dec. 3 / Malibu, CA*

Join us to learn more about Best Buddies programs and to experience our mission in action. For more information, please visit **[BESTBUDDIES.ORG/TAKE-ACTION](https://BESTBUDDIES.ORG/TAKE-ACTION)**





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I See  
You

2022 BEST BUDDIES  
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

# Press Inquiries?

**Feel free to reach out to us!**  
[press@bestbuddies.org](mailto:press@bestbuddies.org)

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