Duane, Best Buddies Jobs participant, The Ferraro Law Firm
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**BEST BUDDIES ANNUAL REPORT**

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Dear Best Buddies family,

There is no denying the challenges we have faced over the past year and a half — however, in many ways, Best Buddies is coming out of the pandemic stronger than we were before it started. Across the nation and globally, our programs hosted hundreds of virtual chapter events and Ambassador trainings, allowing participants to remain engaged and connected with the mission. Our Jobs program transitioned to the digital space to ensure participants thrived in their work-from-home positions and remained job-ready.

We ended the year more certain than ever of the essential and life-changing role that Best Buddies programs play in connecting people and developing a more inclusive world for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Best Buddies’ resilient staff and leadership team, my fellow board members, and our dedicated partners in the public and private sectors have shown incredible fortitude and commitment throughout the challenges stemming from the pandemic.

With your support, Best Buddies reached thousands of participants with IDD and provided them with the resources needed to feel included, confident and optimistic about the road ahead.

I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished together over the past year. Our Best Buddies staff, volunteers, and supporters quickly adapted to unprecedented change while at the same time continuing to support and engage with Best Buddies participants here in the U.S. and internationally.

As we reflect on the global impact of Best Buddies’ mission and the millions of lives touched, please know that I am deeply grateful to each of you who have supported this organization and made our mission possible. Thank you for making this world a better place for individuals with IDD.

Looking ahead, we will need each of you to help lead our mission forward because there is still much more work to be done. Together, we will meet the moment and continue to change lives through the power of inclusion.

In Friendship,

Anthony K. Shriver,
Founder, Chairman & CEO, Best Buddies International
Why We Matter

Throughout nearly six decades, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have gained access to opportunities that have improved their lives. Despite this, society is far from being inclusive in every aspect. The number of people within the IDD community who still face access barriers, social isolation, and discrimination is staggering. Many people with IDD are unemployed and do not experience the simple joys of genuine friendships that people without disabilities often take for granted.

This is where Best Buddies International plays a vital role. Best Buddies is the world’s largest organization dedicated to ending the social, physical and economic isolation of the 200 million people with IDD. For individuals within this community, Best Buddies serves as a lifeline to creating life-long friendships, securing successful jobs, living independently, and gaining self-confidence.

Currently, an estimated 81%* of adults (18+) with IDD 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 $900,000 over 30 years. In turn, these individuals will contribute $153,000 in taxes back into the economy, rather than receiving nearly $895,000 in Federal SSI and Medicaid benefits during that time period.

This is just one of the countless examples of how Best Buddies works to improve the quality of life for individuals with IDD.

Through the creation of meaningful one-to-one friendships with peers without disabilities, the pursuit of integrated employment and inclusive living opportunities, and the development of leadership skills for individuals with IDD, Best Buddies is changing lives and building a more inclusive world for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For more information, please visit BESTBUDDIES.ORG

“Best Buddies is the world’s largest organization dedicated to ending the social, physical and economic isolation of the 200 million people with IDD.”

A Parent’s Perspective

“When I first learned that my son Riley had a disability, I had a realization that has given me endless joy as a father. I knew that no matter how difficult Riley’s journey would become, he would never have to go through it alone. He and I are in it together as a union.

Riley has been involved with Best Buddies for more than 20 years and participates in the Best Buddies Jobs program in California.

- Brian Grazer, Riley’s dad, Oscar-winning producer and philanthropist

Riley wakes up happy every day. He is the glue, soul, and heartbeat of our family. All I want is for him to really hear me when I say how important he is to me and to the family itself.

I didn’t understand Best Buddies at first, but once I realized it’s about making sure every kid like Riley gets some incoming phone calls from a pal, and that leads to friendships that lead to things like going to a movie theater, grabbing a coffee and other social outings – my outlook completely shifted. All those things have given Riley, and anyone like Riley, confidence, love and a sense of appreciation.

You should join Best Buddies if you want to be part of a community of people who don’t judge you but comfort you, giving you a sense of confidence and tools to go forward in your life.”

“...You should join Best Buddies if you want to be part of a community of people who don’t judge you but comfort you, giving you a sense of confidence and tools to go forward in your life.”
Best Buddies International is the world’s largest organization dedicated to ending the social, physical and economic isolation of the 200 million people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Our programs empower the special abilities of people with IDD by helping them form meaningful friendships with their peers, secure successful jobs, live independently, improve public speaking, self-advocacy and communication skills, and feel valued by society.

Mission
Best Buddies International 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).

Vision
To put Best Buddies out of business, Best Buddies envisions a world where people with IDD are so successfully integrated into schools, workplaces and communities that its current efforts and services will be unnecessary. Until that vision becomes a reality, the organization will continue to educate middle school, high school and college students, community members, corporations and employers about the emotional, functional, and natural needs and abilities of people with IDD.

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.

Programs
Best Buddies programs sit on the four key mission pillars below:

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One-To-One Friendships
Builds friendships between people with and without IDD, offering social mentoring while improving the quality of life and level of inclusion for a population that is often isolated and excluded.

Best Buddies, Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges and Citizens
Creates an inclusive community for students and adults with IDD, helping them become socially integrated with their peers at every age.

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

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

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

BEST BUDDIES, Ambassadors
Offers people with 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.

BEST BUDDIES, Promoters
Empowers youth to become advocates for people with IDD and help open new Best Buddies chapters and programs by organizing special events that promote awareness to the disability rights movement.

Inclusive 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.

BEST BUDDIES, Living
Provides individuals with and without IDD an opportunity to live together in a vibrant, educational community that supports all residents in advancing their employment, financial literacy, continued education, and life skills as they work to achieve their personal goals.
Best Buddies hired its first Director, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion to develop and lead the organization's diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce, leverage the benefits of diverse cultural groups, create a more inclusive work environment, and engage Best Buddies chapters globally.

Best Buddies revamps its e-Buddies program to provide opportunities for volunteers with and without IDD to develop one-to-one friendships online and create connections using the e-Buddies online platform, which is designed to expand friendships and create shared experiences through virtual social events.

Best Buddies opens an office in Dominica in November 2021 to serve a new community of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities on a global scale.

Aidan and Jordan, Friendship program Buddy Pair

2021 Highlights

Launches

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Milestones

1987-1998

• Anthony K. Shriver charts the original Best Buddies Chapter while a junior at Georgetown University in 1987.
• 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 (IDD).
• Best Buddies establishes the Best Buddies Fine Art Collection, featuring masterpieces by Keith Haring, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Rauschenberg.
• 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 BEST BUDDIES®, Citizens, a friendship program that pairs adults with IDD with their working peers who do not have disabilities.
• Best Buddies launches BEST BUDDIES®, Jobs, a supported employment program, targeting high-paying, white-collar jobs for people with IDD in Florida, California and Massachusetts.
• Best Buddies establishes BEST BUDDIES®, High Schools, pairing special education students in one-to-one friendships with high school volunteers without IDD.
• The BEST BUDDIES®, Middle Schools pilot program launches, 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

• BEST BUDDIES®, launches 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.
• 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, Best Buddies updates its mission statement: “To establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with IDD.”
• For the first time, Best Buddies has programs in 50 countries around the world.
• BEST BUDDIES®, Ambassadors becomes Best Buddies’ seventh formal program.

2012-2018

• 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 25th Anniversary.
• Best Buddies launches the I’m In To Hire campaign 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 an 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, Inclusive Living.
• BEST BUDDIES®, 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 for the transition into the Jobs program.
• In October 2019, under the leadership of the 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 BEST BUDDIES®, Ventures, creating a new source of revenue independent of traditional methods of fundraising. The first-ever venture opens in Miami, FL: BEST BUDDIES®, X Rosetta, The Italian Bakery --- 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.

Michael and Natalie, Best Buddies participants
Without love, support and friends, life may feel isolating – this is a reality people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have faced throughout history. Best Buddies offers people with IDD the chance to have a friend, gain self-confidence and self-esteem and share interests, experiences and activities that many other individuals enjoy.

**BEST BUDDIES, Middle Schools, High Schools and Colleges**

Best Buddies offers students with IDD the opportunity to have a friend and enjoy common interests, experiences, and social activities in the Middle School, High School, and College programs. Each friendship pair commits to speaking and spending time together every week throughout the year. These programs create lasting friendships and help facilitate an environment of inclusion throughout the school and in the community.

**BEST BUDDIES, Citizens**

For people with IDD, the absence of meaningful friendships extends into adulthood. Best Buddies Citizens pairs adults with IDD in one-to-one friendships with adults without IDD in corporate and civic communities. Citizen buddy pairs commit to a one-year friendship in which they will talk once a week and see each other twice a month. These relationships commonly grow into friendships that last a lifetime.

**e-BUDDIES**

This program creates social inclusion and friendships for people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in a virtual space. Technology is an integral part of society and by participating in e-Buddies, participants can develop the skills needed to communicate across a variety of platforms.

In 2021, e-buddies served 3,236 total participants. These participants exchanged more than 50,000 emails. e-Buddies was also used as a teaching tool in the classroom by more than 100 special education teachers and other professionals across the country.
Ian Kahalewai, 22, first heard about Best Buddies in 2018 during his senior year of high school. When he graduated, his mom reached out to the staff of Best Buddies in Hawaii to see how Ian could join the Friendship program. Ian attended a meet-and-greet party at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa campus and became a member. Since then, he has developed the confidence to be himself, and credits his best friend and buddy, Rohan Sridharan. The two have been matched since 2018 and although the pandemic has kept them from seeing each other, they still text and FaceTime often.

“When I was young, I told my parents I would never make any friends. Then, along came Rohan. We’ve been buddies ever since! His friendship has impacted me so much. He’s been there for me and supports me and all the people and things I love. Having a friend like Rohan has changed my life. He likes a lot of the same things that I like, such as playing basketball. I have learned how to cook, gotten better at math and I am appreciative of Rohan for introducing me to his sister, brother, and his college friends.” – Ian

“It’s hard to remember that Ian and I met through Best Buddies because it feels like we have always been friends. “When I joined Best Buddies and matched with Ian, I knew we would be great friends because we’re close in age, kind of look alike (everyone keeps asking if we’re brothers), and like the same kinds of things.” – Rohan

Ian and Rohan’s connection is rooted in shared interests and grows stronger every year. They love cooking together, going to sporting events, and celebrating Ian’s favorite holiday – Halloween!

“We transcend the mission of Best Buddies,” says Rohan. “I think of Ian as my third sibling. He has gotten to know my friends and family and now he works with my sister at the Department of Health to practice social skills and learn how to navigate within the community. I am thankful for Sandy and Danny (Ian’s parents) because they are so supportive of our friendship and welcomed me into their home. I don’t have a lot of family here, so having Ian really has helped me, too. Although I am a senior this year, Ian and I will always remain friends and I plan to stay in Hawai‘i and create more memories with him.”

When I was young, I told my parents I would never make any friends. Then, along came Rohan. We’ve been buddies ever since! His friendship has impacted me so much. He’s been there for me and supports me and all the people and things I love.”

- Ian
Best Buddies Jobs assists participants in finding meaningful employment, earning a competitive income, receiving benefits, and working alongside others in the community. The program offers people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) the opportunity to become financially independent, removing the need for government assistance or parental support. A focus on competitive, professional opportunities is what sets the Best Buddies Jobs program apart from other employment services.

Best Buddies Jobs furthers the integration of people with IDD into the community through supported employment. The focus is on facilitating competitive, integrated job placements that allow participants to earn an income, pay taxes and work in an environment alongside their peers in the community, leading to full inclusion and independence. Coaching is provided in essential job interviewing skills, and once employment is secured, there is assistance with on-the-job training.

The Jobs program prides itself on developing employment opportunities in professional environments and focuses on white-collar jobs such as receptionist, mail room assistant, file clerk, office assistant, front desk assistant, and retail associate. Employers range from some of the top law firms and talent agencies to well-known retail businesses and luxury hotels.

The states with an active Best Buddies Jobs program as of December 31, 2021, include Arizona, California, Capital Region, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.
Key Jobs Program Stats

- Total Participants: 2,780
- U.S. Participants: 1,787
- Employed: 1,787
- International Participants: 993
- Average Weekly Hours Worked: $20.68
- U.S. Retention Rate: 95%
- States with active Jobs Programs: 17
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- U.S. Participants: 1,787
- Employed: 1,787
- International Participants: 993
- Average Weekly Hours Worked: $20.68
- U.S. Retention Rate: 95%
- States with active Jobs Programs: 17

Top 5 Jobs Participants Highest Hourly Rates

- John H., Civic Edge Consulting, San Francisco, CA: $33.22
- Chantom P., Central Park Conservancy, New York, NY: $30.98
- Michael D., JLL@Google, MA: $29.33
- Anthony S., Kaiser Permanente South Bay Medical Center, Long Beach, CA: $27.91

Top 5 Jobs Participants Highest Salaries With Benefits

- Paul P., Whiting Turner, CA: $61,006
- Miguel H., City of Hialeah, FL: $56,383
- Chantom P., Central Park Conservancy, NY: $53,872
- Michael D., JLL@Google, MA: $53,248
- Anthony S., Kaiser Permanente South Bay Medical Center, Long Beach, CA: $56,383

Best Buddies Jobs Around The World

- Countries*: 11
- Cities*: 89

**Global jobs stats are calculated based on total jobs participants and U.S. average hours and wages.
** Represents benefits received by U.S. BB Job participants.
*** All Jobs Program stats are as of 12/31/2021.
Before becoming involved with Best Buddies, Zach was not very socially active and did not participate in many extracurricular activities. After joining his high school Best Buddies chapter during freshman year, that all changed. Zach made tons of friends, went to parties, and even was named the Best Buddies Buddy Director at his school. This confidence led Zach to have the chance to catch a touchdown pass from Tom Brady at the Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port event in Boston, which he says was one of the best moments of his life. From there, Zach went on to join his college Best Buddies chapter and live and work in New York City. Zach is currently part of the Jobs program and is also matched in a one-to-one friendship in the Citizens program.

One of the biggest challenges Zach faced in 2021 was trying to find a job. After graduating college in May 2020, he did not have much luck getting responses or invitations to interview. That’s when the Best Buddies Jobs program offered assistance. The New York City Jobs team supported Zach in finding employment as a GSIS Statistician at the National Football League (NFL) headquarters, which has been a perfect fit and huge growth opportunity.

“My life has positively improved in so many aspects since securing my job at the NFL,” says Zach. “Not only have I developed amazing social relationships with my co-workers, but I’m now living on my own for the first time in my life. I’m responsible for paying my own rent, cleaning, buying groceries, and figuring out transportation around the city. Not only has the job brought me the tasks that employment provides, it has also made it so that I have more responsibilities to succeed now that I’m living on my own in the largest city in the U.S.”

In this role, Zach is responsible for the support, audit, and process of all NFL and NCAA game statistics for the 2021 season. The skills he has learned have been predominantly technical, but what he loves the most is getting to watch football on Sundays with his co-workers.

When describing his experience, Zach says, “Being in an NFL-related job is one thing, but when you add amazing people to work with in that environment, it doesn’t get better than that. Best Buddies has helped me improve my social communication skills, establish close friendships, attend many fun events, and find a job I love. I am very thankful for the opportunities and support Best Buddies has given me since joining.”

“My life has improved in so many aspects since securing my job as a Statistician at the NFL.”

- Zach
Best Buddies educates and empowers people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to become leaders, public speakers and change agents. Through the Ambassadors and Promoters programs, participants inspire their communities to build a more inclusive world for people with IDD.

**BEST BUDDIES® Ambassadors**

Best Buddies Ambassadors is a program that provides training for participants with and without IDD in speech writing, public speaking, and self-advocacy. Ambassadors develop the skills to share their life stories, promote Best Buddies programs, network, and, most importantly, advocate.

Ambassadors participate in trainings focused on the art of public speaking and advocacy. Once trained, they share their stories and become more involved and empowered as citizens. Ambassadors are encouraged to speak about opportunities for people with IDD, present at recruitment fairs and Best Buddies events, and develop partnerships in the community.

**BEST BUDDIES® Promoters**

Best Buddies Promoters empowers youth to become advocates for people with IDD by organizing and attending special events that promote inclusion. Students attending a school without a special education program can join a Promoters chapter to develop connections with people with IDD or can start one by contacting their local Best Buddies state office.

Each Promoters chapter is led by a chapter president from the student body and a faculty advisor and is assigned a Best Buddies staff person who offers regular support and guidance. Once formed, Promoters chapters host events, activities, and fundraisers where they advocate for people with IDD, and promote the Best Buddies mission.
"Hello! My name is Allie and I want to share with you a bit about myself and why Best Buddies means so much to me. My middle and high school years were hard. I remember being in high school and never getting a phone call to hang out. That made me so sad. I didn’t have many friends in middle school and in high school; I just wasn’t included in activities. I was at a different lunch than most of my friends, so I often sat alone. Think back to your middle and high school years and think about not having friends by your side. It was not fun, to say the least.

Instead of sitting back and just accepting this as the way my life would be, I started getting involved in activities geared towards individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). I am involved with Special Olympics, and I work 25 hours a week at an early childhood center. Finding and keeping friends is often hard for people with IDD and Best Buddies helps us do that so well. Best Buddies has changed my life and allowed me to stay connected and engaged with my friends during the pandemic. Throughout this time, we had dance parties, practiced yoga, and had lots of fun chats via Zoom.

I love that Best Buddies helps connect people with and without IDD who have similar interests. I am part of the Best Buddies Citizens adult friendship program and the day I was matched with my buddy Nicole was a day filled with excitement. My buddy and I are a perfect match. We are both disability advocates, we’re also both great public speakers, and we love to have lots of fun together. So far, we have gone to the farmer’s market, to some coffee shops, and eaten outside at restaurants during the pandemic.

I am excited to see so many people celebrating true friendship through Best Buddies. It is important to be a friend and to have a friend. That’s what Best Buddies does so well."

- Allie, Best Buddies Ambassador

“I became a Best Buddies Ambassador because I want to advocate for myself, and my peers within the IDD community.”

- Allie
Inclusive Living

Supporting and empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to live as integrated, contributing members in the larger community is the next frontier in the movement to create a more inclusive society. Best Buddies Living fosters a dynamic environment where people with IDD can learn, grow and thrive.

**BEST BUDDIES® Living**

The Best Buddies Living program encourages people with and without IDD to live together in a vibrant community that focuses on supporting residents in accomplishing their life goals and dreams.

The Best Buddies Living program supports inclusion by:

- Developing programs that foster an opportunity for residents to experience living with friends and colleagues. Programs include weekly shared meals, fitness classes, cultural events, holiday parties, social activities, and sports.

- Offering an environment that encourages the development of independent living skills, life-changing relationships, and educational pursuits in connection with a college or university. Through an affiliation with a nearby school, all residents can immerse themselves in campus life, attending sporting events and enjoying fitness and dining facilities alongside their student peers.

- Matching people with and without IDD in a residential experience, and providing a supportive environment that encourages full-time or part-time employment.

As of December 31, 2021, Best Buddies operated two Living residences in Washington, D.C., and one in Miami, FL.
“My name is Vince, and I currently live in the Best Buddies Living residence at Union Market. I first learned about the organization when I attended an activities fair in 8th grade, just before entering high school.

Since joining Best Buddies, my life has undoubtedly changed for the better. I am part of all four Best Buddies programs --- I am paired with a buddy, I advocate for my peers with intellectual and developmental disabilities as an Ambassador, I have a job thanks to the Best Buddies Jobs program, and of course, I live at the Best Buddies Living: Union Market residence.

The past two years have presented many obstacles due to the pandemic, but thankfully, I have been able to keep in touch with my family and friends virtually and sometimes in person. My housemates at Best Buddies Living have also helped me over the past two years; everyone is so friendly and welcoming. A bonus is that I love my neighborhood!

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities deserve to be included, and we deserve the opportunity to experience an inclusive living environment like Best Buddies Living. What I know for sure is that I am a lot more confident and independent since joining this program. As a Best Buddies Living participant, you will learn, grow and thrive.”

- Vince, Best Buddies Living resident

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities deserve to be included, and we deserve the opportunity to experience an inclusive living environment like Best Buddies Living.”

- Vince
Best Buddies’ International Programs (IP) began 2021 focusing on sustainability, with goals that included finding new funding sources, helping return to in-person events safely, continuing to pivot to virtual events when needed, and strategic planning for participating countries. Some programs were naturally unable to survive the pandemic and were forced to close in 2021. Therefore, IP shifted its efforts from expansion to strengthening the existing international presence.

Despite the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Best Buddies’ International Programs (IP) reached its strategic goals in 2021. IP aided in bringing in more funding to Macau, Greece, Serbia, Chile, and the Philippines. Virtual trainings were hosted to reach more Best Buddies global staff members and guide them on programs and strategic planning for their respective programs.

For 2022, Best Buddies’ International Programs department is excited and optimistic. Goals include hosting virtual regional staff events, launching a new IP website, developing a public service announcement, facilitating marketing alignment among countries, and expanding to new countries for the Friendship and Jobs programs. The department also looks forward to providing chapter grants to programs in Latin America, fortifying strategic partnerships such as the US Embassy and multinationals, improving the International Programs accreditation process, and hosting department-specific events such as Best Buddies Leadership Conference in July 2022 and the Global Staff Forum in November 2022. Lastly, the department looks forward to finalizing a strategic plan for the regions where we operate.

Key Updates

- **Serbia**: In 2021, Best Buddies in Serbia successfully started a partnership with the US Embassy in Belgrade. This allowed them to officially launch their programs and provide monthly online trainings to local and U.S. participants and staff.

- **Chile**: 2021 proved to be a great year for Best Buddies in Chile, as their Jobs program expanded and welcomed new partnerships, such as Taller VerdeSur and Grupo Mingas.

- **Kenya**: Best Buddies in Kenya celebrated their return to in-person events by hosting a family field day event for all participants, staff, family and supporters.

- **Saudi Arabia**: This year Best Buddies in Saudi Arabia officially launched in partnership with ACCEL. The program kicked off with their first match party!

- **Macau**: Best Buddies in Macau held an in-person Best Buddies Friendship Walk on May 9, 2021. The event was attended by over 400 participants, including buddies and their families and friends from various companies.
The purpose of special events is to garner support, funds, and awareness for the Best Buddies mission. There are numerous ways to get involved with Best Buddies events including attending, volunteering, and pursuing sponsorship opportunities. Best Buddies was excited to safely host both in-person and virtual signature events again in 2021.
Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port

October 1 - 2, 2021 | Boston to Hyannis Port

The Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port, presented by Pepsi-Cola and Shaw’s and Star Market Foundation returned to Massachusetts for its 22nd year. The Challenge weekend kicked off Friday, October 1 with the annual Guy Cooking with Best Buddies Celebrity Chef Food Festival, presented by Pepsi-Cola and Shaw’s and Star Market Foundation at the Encore Boston Harbor. On Saturday, October 2, professional cyclists George Hincapie, Christian Vande Velde, and hundreds of riders took to the starting line at the JFK Library in Boston for the picturesque 100-mile ride portion of the event, from Boston to Hyannis Port. The Challenge concluded with a New England-style clambake and live musical concert.

Best Buddies Challenge: California

October 30, 2021 | Petaluma, CA

The Best Buddies Challenge: California presented by Pepsi-Cola kicked off on Saturday, October 30 at Rosewood in Petaluma, CA. The event featured an in-person event and a Do-it-Yourself (DIY) event for those who wanted to participate in their local communities. The in-person event included a 5-star 100K (62-mile) cycling experience, starting and ending at Rosewood.
Best Buddies Challenge: Miami
November 19, 2021 | Miami, FL

Four-time Tour de France winner Chris Froome joined professional cyclists George Hincapie and Christian Vande Velde for the Hublot Best Buddies Challenge: Miami Chaired by the Kenneth C. Griffin Charitable Fund on Friday, November 19. Additional professional cyclists participating in the 2021 event included Leanda Cave, Bobby Julich, Tom Pidcock, Magnus Sheffield, and Cam Wurf. In total, the event raised $1.5 million for Best Buddies programs.

Best Buddies Breakaway Camps

Malibu, CA
April 28 - May 3, 2021

Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Malibu offered cyclists a world-class, five-day riding experience through the scenic canyon roads and rock-studded hilltops of the Santa Monica Mountains overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Base camped at the world-renowned Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village, cyclists ended each ride focused on recovery with daily massages and gourmet meals handcrafted by sports nutrition experts.

December 8 - 12, 2021

The second Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Malibu offered cyclists another opportunity to ride through the scenic canyon roads and rock-studded hilltops of the Santa Monica Mountains overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Asheville, NC
August 25 - 29, 2021

Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Asheville offered riders a once-in-a-lifetime cycling experience, traversing some of the most beautiful vistas that can be seen on a bike as they spend five days exploring the iconic Blue Ridge Mountains.
Best Buddies Friendship Walk

The Best Buddies Friendship Walk continued to grow and expand – aiming to be the number one walk in the country raising awareness and funds to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The Best Buddies Friendship Walks are fundamental in supporting local Best Buddies programs dedicated to ending the social, physical and economic isolation of the 200 million people worldwide with IDD.

In 2021, over 30,000 participants in more than 60 cities walked to move Best Buddies’ mission forward. Collectively over $5 million was raised as participants, sponsors, volunteers and public figures joined the movement that celebrates friendship, inclusion and unity. Over the years, Best Buddies Friendship Walks have made a profound impact in communities nationwide, providing a platform for participants to showcase the Best Buddies mission. Each walk provides an atmosphere for new friendships, promising opportunities and most of all, inclusion for all people.

Best Buddies Champion of The Year

In 2021, Best Buddies’ Champion of the Year Galas and social events continued to raise critical funds and awareness for the organization. Community leaders, corporate partners, and Champions for inclusion showed unwavering support through both virtual and in-person events. These core events collectively raised over $6.5 million and engaged 380 Champions across the country. Since 2015, Champion of the Year Galas have generated over $19.5 million through the efforts of over 1,300 Champion leaders and their supporters. These events and the people that lead them continue to provide life-long support and opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
The 2021 Best Buddies Leadership Conference (BBLC) was a three-day digital event uniting Best Buddies leaders, volunteers, and community advocates from around the globe to imagine, create, lead and empower the future of the inclusion movement. Over the past 32 years, BBLC has inspired thousands of leaders to be Best Buddies advocates and to bring about social change in their communities.

Traditionally held as an in-person conference, the 2021 Best Buddies Leadership Conference transitioned to an online experience that allowed thousands of participants and advocates from around the world to unite virtually, creating connections and building community as they prepared for the year ahead.

March is Best Buddies Month! What began as a one-day celebration of the Best Buddies mission evolved into a month-long festivity to reflect on the importance of inclusion and acceptance for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The month kicked off with the annual Spread the Word: Inclusion campaign, that encouraged participants to showcase how they promote inclusion in their communities. In March 2021, participants hosted virtual chapter parties, awareness activities and engagement campaigns, to honor their unity in advancing opportunities for friendship, employment, leadership development, and inclusive living.

Created in 2010, Eunice Kennedy Shriver (EKS) Day serves as a unique opportunity to celebrate her legacy, indomitable spirit and life-long commitment to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Even during a time when society did not, Eunice Kennedy Shriver believed in the abilities of people with IDD and led the effort to end the physical and social isolation they endured.

EKS Day promotes a global call for individuals to commit to actions of change, inclusion, and acceptance for people with IDD. Across the United States and in 100 countries, EKS Day is celebrated with love, justice, faith, hope and courage – her five key values. Activities included sports clinics, picnics, leadership trainings and disability rights awareness efforts.
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Wilmingtion Trust

$5,000 to $9,999
AEILG Transocean Charities
Albert & Mabel Herzenstein Charitable Foundation
AmazonSmile Foundation
Ane and Uta's Foundation
Bank of America - CT
Bret Boyer Foundation Inc.
Bing’s Family Foundation
Cady Family Foundation
Campbell Foundation Inc.
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Variety-The Children’s Charity
Vegas America Charitable Foundation
Waksokeusa Wyoming Community Foundation
WHAS Crusade For Children, Inc.
Will Fromm Foundation
York County Community Foundation
YourCause, LLC

$50,000 and Above
California Department of Rehabilitation
Florida Department of Education
Illinois Department of Human Services
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Texas Education Agency
U.S. Department of Education

$250,000 to $499,000
Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
New Mexico Public Education Department

$10,000 to $24,999
Anne Arundel County, Maryland
Arkansas Rehabilitation Foundation
Barnett County, New Mexico
BlueCare Tennessee
City of Allenton and Resilience Fund CARES Act
City of Tampa, Florida
College of New Rochelle
Fairfax County, Virginia CARES ACT
Golden Gate Regional Center
Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services
Michigan Department of Education
University of Michigan
Michigan Department of Health
Maryland State Department of Education
Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services
Miami-Dade County, Florida Office of Management and Budget
New York Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

$5,000 to $9,999
Delaware Legislature
Harkin Regional Center
Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
Musi County, Hawaii and Department of Human Concerns

$10,000 to $24,999
Arizona Office of Persons with Disabilities

$10,000 to $24,999
Arkansas Rehabilitation Foundation
Barnett County, New Mexico
BlueCare Tennessee
City of Allenton and Resilience Fund CARES Act
City of Tampa, Florida
College of New Rochelle
Fairfax County, Virginia CARES ACT
Golden Gate Regional Center
Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services
Michigan Department of Education
University of Michigan
Michigan Department of Health
Maryland State Department of Education
Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services
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Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services

$5,000 to $9,999
Delaware Legislature
Harkin Regional Center
Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
Musi County, Hawaii and Department of Human Concerns

$25,000 to $49,999
Arizona Office of Persons with Disabilities

$25,000 to $49,999
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Arizona Office of Persons with Disabilities

$50,000 to $99,999
Delaware Legislature
Harkin Regional Center
Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
Musi County, Hawaii and Department of Human Concerns

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Musi County, Hawaii and Department of Human Concerns
Financials

Consolidated Statement of Activities* (as of 12.31.21)

Domestic Revenue

- **Individual**: $10,342,952 (25%)
- **Foundations & Corps.**: $9,911,633 (24%)
- **Special Events**: $2,807,768 (7%)
- **Government**: $1,658,629 (1%)

Total Domestic Revenue: $41,400,639

Domestic Expenses

- **Programs**: $20,057,302 (80%)
- **Fundraising**: $3,779,033 (15%)
- **Administration**: $1,318,999 (5%)

Total Domestic Expenses: $25,155,294

Domestic Net Asset Summary

- Net Assets (beginning of year): $17,098,734
- Change in Net Assets: $16,245,345
- Net Unrealized Gains (Losses) on Investments: (150,186)

Total Domestic Net Assets (end of year): $33,193,893

Balance Sheet (as of 12.31.21)

Assets

- **Current Assets**
  - Cash and cash equivalents: $6,567,077
  - Investments: $21,141,312
  - Accounts receivable: $119,421
  - Contributions receivable, net: $1,478,069
  - Grant receivable: $3,629,202
  - Inventory artwork: $58,428
  - Prepaid expenses: $162,616
  - Total Current Assets: $33,156,125

- **With donor restriction**: $5,363,514
- **Without donor restriction**: $27,830,379

Total Net Assets: $33,193,893

- **Property and Equipment**
  - Computers: $461,645
  - Furniture and equipment: $67,605
  - Auto: $24,000
  - Land: $1,152,473

- **Total Property and Equipment, Cost**: $1,705,723

- **Less Accumulated Depreciation**
  - ($547,354)

Total Property and Equipment, Net: $1,158,369

- **Other Assets**
  - Long-term contributions receivable, net: $256,244
  - Security deposits: $89,588
  - Investments - Rosetta Bakery x Best Buddies: $54,172
  - Investments - deferred compensation plan: $93,226

Total Other Assets: $493,230

Total Assets: $34,807,724

Liabilities and Net Assets

- **Current Liabilities**
  - Accounts payable: $821,458
  - Deferred revenue: $580,730
  - Compensated absences payable: $110,417
  - Paycheck Protection Program, notes payable: -

Total Current Liabilities: $1,512,605

- **Long-Term Liabilities**
  - Security deposit: $8,000
  - Deferred compensation plan liability: $93,226

Total Long-Term Liabilities: $101,226

Total Liabilities: $1,613,831

- **Net Assets**
  - With donor restriction: $5,363,514
  - Without donor restriction: $27,830,379

Total Net Assets: $33,193,893

Total Liabilities and Net Assets: $34,807,724

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* Statement of Activities for calendar year 2021 based on Best Buddies International’s Form 990
** “Other” represents revenue generated from a collection of sources including: Chapter Dues, Annual Best Buddies Leadership Conference, Investment Income and Cause-Related Marketing.
*** Gross consolidation of International Licensees that operate as their own NGOs.
2021 was an abundant year for Best Buddies in California. Our staff, volunteers, and key stakeholders worked eagerly to bounce back after the effects of the pandemic on our programs and funding in 2020. Those efforts were fruitful and major highlights of 2021 included the launch of two new offices in Sacramento and Orange County, surpassing fundraising goals for our two signature events in each location it was held, and the programmatic growth that came with returning to school and offices in person. Despite continued roadblocks from the pandemic, we were thrilled to exceed programmatic and fundraising goals this year and continue the vital inclusive programming across our seven California offices.

With schools across California returning to in-person learning, our Friendship program engagement continued to flourish. While many events were still held virtually, schools began meeting in-person during shared lunches and after school again. The school Friendship programs across all offices grew by 41 new school chapters and we worked to provide support to the 151 established schools. By the end of 2021, 192 school chapters had active Best Buddies programs, and the adult matching program – Citizens – grew to 45 matches.

Employment opportunities for our Jobs program began to grow again as many individuals placed in jobs were allowed to return to the office after nearly two years. In 2021, Best Buddies in California served a total of 253 people across the state of California and helped secure new employment opportunities for 69 individuals. Industries including retail and food and beverage job opportunities grew making up around 25% of employed Best Buddies participants each. One of the biggest successes of the year was the launch of a Jobs program in Orange County and Sacramento for the first time.

In 2021, our Leadership pillar continued to thrive virtually. In total, 160 ambassadors were trained through 16 training courses. Additionally, 13 Ambassadors were promoted to State Ambassadors. The Best Buddies Leadership Conference was held virtually for the second year in a row with over 400 attendees from the state of California. This year, we piloted a Pre-Employment Transition program for the first time, focusing on a small group of students in a transition program in San Diego. Over the course of eight weeks during the summer, our team worked in-person with 12 students between the ages of 17-22. The eight Pre-ETS workshops focused on self-advocacy, job exploration counseling, and workplace readiness training.

Following a challenging year in maintaining and growing the vital funding our programs need to thrive, we were thrilled to have a successful 2021 with Best Buddies Friendship Walks in Southern California, San Francisco, Fresno, and Sacramento. These events raised nearly $350,000 and exceeded goals. Similarly, we were excited to honor 13 Champion Candidates in San Francisco and Los Angeles. These two Best Buddies Champion of the Year Galas resulted in fundraising over $285,000 and exceeding goal. We were additionally grateful for the foundations and corporate partners who increased their programmatic giving and the supporters who continued funding during a challenging time.

We see a vibrant future for 2022 and are looking forward to continuing to move our mission forward through launching a Jobs program in San Diego for the first time, maintaining and growing the quality, quantity, and accessibility of all programs, securing diverse funds across our seven offices, and building a sustainable donor and volunteer network. We are enthusiastic about offering our Best Buddies Friendship Walk and Champion of the Year as an engagement across the entire state and continue to grow private revenue.

Katelyn Quintero, State Director, California
San Francisco Office
901 Mission Street, Suite B-13, San Francisco, CA 941036
P 415.371.1169 | F 415.371.1129
Freshman year of high school is a big transition and can often be overwhelming. However, it is much easier to go through this change with a buddy by your side. Katie and Mackenzie joined Best Buddies and were matched in a one-to-one friendship as freshmen at Trabuco Hills High School in 2018. Four years later, their friendship is still going strong.

Mackenzie said, “Before becoming involved in Best Buddies my life was good, but Best Buddies has made it better! I love the club so much! I made some amazing friends!” Katie’s life was also greatly impacted by Best Buddies and her relationship with Mackenzie. She said, “Best Buddies has opened my eyes, mind, heart, and soul. Best Buddies personally helped me to realize that life begins when you don’t let obstacles hold you back.”

However, times were not always easy for Katie and Mackenzie. Almost half of their high school experience was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. After navigating a year of lock-down, Mackenzie still found the new normal difficult to adjust to. Mackenzie said the hardest part of 2021 was continuing with online classes, and she really missed hanging out with Katie. While it was tough not being able to enjoy Katie’s company in person, they stayed connected and fostered their friendship over text.

For Katie, the biggest struggle she had to overcome in 2021 was more physical. She fractured her foot right before her senior season of cross country. She was devastated, but she said, “Finally, when the day came that I got my boot off, I couldn’t wait to go to school and show off to all my friends that I could wear two shoes again, but not a lot of people noticed. However, the moment I stepped foot into the classroom (no pun intended) for our Best Buddies meeting, so many buddies mentioned it right away and we shared excitement. This made me feel special.”

Now that they have returned to school, Katie and Mackenzie are able to spend the rest of their senior year together. Katie said she missed hearing about Mackenzie’s involvement in choir as, “Mackenzie is a phenomenal singer and has a passion for choir, so when her choir practices came to a halt so did her stories about singing.”

Now that they are back in school, Katie is thrilled Mackenzie is back to doing what she loves!
Megan
Integrated Employment

Megan has been involved with Best Buddies for the past 12 years and truly uplifts every person she interacts with.

The year 2021 brought a lot of changes to Megan’s life. Megan worked full-time as a Front of House staff at Facebook (Meta) for almost 4 years. She, unfortunately, had to come to the decision to leave the job she loved due to a reduction in work hours and moving further away. She was so sad to leave but she “really just wanted to be out in the community and with people.”

With the help of the Best Buddies jobs program, Megan quickly found a job at Trader Joe’s, where she has thrived using her customer service skills. When asked about her new job, Megan says: “I love my job. It’s fun, it’s close to home, and they have given me the opportunity to try new things such as being a cashier. I love learning new skills. I have been able to meet and make new friends. I’m much happier.”

Megan is thrilled to start learning the cash register and has worked on her bagging, restocking, and money handling skills.

Having this job is important to Megan as she is very independent. “I want to continue working, making money, learning new skills, one day drive car to get to work, and make enough money to support a future family,”

In addition to her new job, Megan also hopes to learn how to drive, which will help her become even more independent.

Megan is thriving in her new role and her supervisor at Trader Joe’s agrees.

“She is the best example of what a Trader Joe’s employee is and represents. Megan is an inspiration for the team, and we are happy for the energy and positivity she brings to work each shift.” - Judan
My name is Eric. I have been a member of the Best Buddies family for the past seven years. Throughout these seven years, I have been a part of the Best Buddies Jobs and Friendship program. In 2021, I expanded my participation by joining the Leadership Development program by becoming an ambassador for the state of California.

Through Best Buddies, I have learned to communicate more directly. Important life lessons that I had learned before joining this family were emphasized to me throughout my years here. My can-do attitude was derived at an early age. I have applied the same principle all throughout my life. My life has not always been easy. As a child, my doctors suggested I enter a mental institution. I was so grateful to have parents who were appalled by that suggestion and gave me the right tools for a better life moving forward. This did not mean that I did not encounter additional obstacles along my journey. In my school years, my classmates ridiculed and berated me socially and mentally. Throughout these important developmental years, I chose not to let these hurdles define me. Since then, the can-do attitude my parents taught me allowed me to overcome barriers. My experience as a person with a handicap coupled with that can-do attitude, is what has driven me to encourage people like myself.

As a Best Buddies Ambassador, I can tell you that as long as you continue to possess a can-do attitude, you will reach your full potential. Obstacles may arise from time to time but continue to push through them. The ball is now in your court. The future is in your hands. Don’t be satisfied with your current accomplishments. Strive to do more because you can grow to greater heights, and do not let others put you down. Remember, do not let your spirit be extinguished.”

Eric is an inspiration to us all and we all should strive to have the same can-do attitude.
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**Copy & Editing**
Nicole Maddox, Vice President, Communications
Jessica Schwartz, Vice President, Marketing & Partnerships

**Global Statistics**
Christopher Dourov, Deputy Director, Jobs
Yelba Gutierrez, Coordinator, International Programs
Bill Maurer, Director, Online Programs

**Supporters**
Lisa Derx, Vice President, Government Relations
Heather Gray, Senior Director, Partnerships & Stewardship

**Financials**
Lori Penaloza, Senior Vice President, Finance & Operations

**Art Direction**
Melissa Franco, Director, Creative Design & State Marketing
Stephanie Guzman, Lead Graphic Designer

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