Jennifer and Molly
Friendship program Buddy Pair
Message From Our Chairman

Dear Friends,

In 2019, Best Buddies celebrated its 30th Anniversary, a remarkable milestone for the organization. When I started Best Buddies 30 years ago at Georgetown University, I never imagined that this organization would impact the lives of more than 1.2 million people across the globe, spanning 57 countries and five continents. Furthermore, if someone had told me then that I would live to see individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) working in tech labs earning more than $50,000, participating in pension plans and receiving full healthcare benefits; reporting for a national television show, testifying in front of Congress, and delivering the keynote address at an annual corporate conference in Silicon Valley; I would not have believed any of it. Thirty years later, our world is much more inclusive and diverse, although there is still so much more to be done.

To celebrate our 30th Anniversary, we were excited to launch the organization’s newest program, Best Buddies Living. This program represents our organization’s fourth key mission pillar, Inclusive Living. 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.

As we look ahead, I am excited to watch the next generation of leaders step up to the plate to guide our global movement to new levels. I was only in my early 20’s when all of this began, and I have never lost faith in the endless creativity, genius level of talent, leadership and power that young people have. We will need each of you to help lead our movement forward as I am confident that the spirit of Best Buddies will continue to live on through each of you.

As we celebrate the impact Best Buddies has had on over a million lives, please know that I am eternally grateful to each and every one of you who have supported this organization over the past 30 years. Without you, we would not have reached this momentous milestone. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for making this world a better place for people with special abilities.

In Friendship,

Anthony K. Shriver
Founder & CEO, Best Buddies International
What has given me the most joy as a mother is seeing just how similar Randy’s life and problems are to any other 25-year-old’s life. This is because Randy is living his most independent life with the good and the not so good. The life he lives today—having attended college and now living and working independently—was not a life I allowed myself to dream about for him, but he did. He wanted these things, and he constantly pushed for them on his path to independence. Randy never gave up. To see him now living independently as a kind and caring man, with his sense of determination and happiness, makes me beam with pride and joy. My life is filled with love because I am Randy’s mom. I think of how, before Best Buddies, Randy’s social life was essentially my social life and my friends were basically his only friends. Nobody should grow up feeling that way. Once he joined Best Buddies in high school, things changed for Randy. He suddenly was sitting at lunch with his new friends that he met in Best Buddies. Then he started to go to football and baseball games at the high school with his friends in Best Buddies."

As a mom, my biggest concern for Randy in high school, and after, was that he would feel alone. I think that isolation is a large concern when you are the parent of someone with an IDD. Best Buddies helps to ensure that does not happen. As a mom, there is comfort knowing that Randy has friends and that, even in times of great isolation, the friendships Randy made in Best Buddies remain and those friends are there to help each other through good times and bad. It is difficult to find the proper words to explain the happiness I feel when I look at Randy’s accomplishments. So, I can simply say that I am grateful and blessed to watch Randy live his most independent life in the way he chooses to live it."

- Nina Greene, mother of Best Buddies participant Randy and South Florida Advisory Board Member

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, our 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 is working 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 opportunities, the development of leadership skills for individuals with IDD, Best Buddies is helping people with IDD grow one friendship, one job, one leader, and one inclusive living opportunity at a time.

Best Buddies serves as a lifeline to creating life-long friendships, securing successful jobs, living independently and gaining self-confidence."

“What has given me the most joy as a mother is seeing just how similar Randy’s life and problems are to any other 25-year-old’s life. This is because Randy is living his most independent life with the good and the not so good. The life he lives today—having attended college and now living and working independently—was not a life I allowed myself to dream about for him, but he did. He wanted these things, and he constantly pushed for them on his path to independence. Randy never gave up. To see him now living independently as a kind and caring man, with his sense of determination and happiness, makes me beam with pride and joy. My life is filled with love because I am Randy’s mom. I think of how, before Best Buddies, Randy’s social life was essentially my social life and my friends were basically his only friends. Nobody should grow up feeling that way. Once he joined Best Buddies in high school, things changed for Randy. He started to have a social life. He suddenly was sitting at lunch with his new friends that he met in Best Buddies. Then, he started to go to football and baseball games at the high school with his friends in Best Buddies. I began to have to wait up for him to get home at night on the weekends because now he was out with his friends. He had so many plans that it was hard to keep up."

- Nina Greene, mother of Best Buddies participant Randy and South Florida Advisory Board Member

*Source: 2016-17 National Core Indicators Survey
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).

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:

- **One-To-One Friendships**
- **Integrated Employment**
- **Leadership Development**
- **Inclusive Living**

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.

Integrated Employment

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

Leadership Development

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

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.
Our Impact

3,021 Chapters
129,103 Participants
1,291,030 Impacted
50 States
57 Countries

One-To-One Friendship

- 525 Middle School Chapters
- 1,356 High School Chapters
- 550 College Chapters

Integrated Employment

- 1,612 Participants Employed

Leadership Development

- 352 Elementary Schools Promoters Chapters
- 70 Middle School Promoters Chapters
- 158 High School Promoters Chapters
- 10 College Promoters Chapters

Inclusive Living

- 1 Open Location in LA
  - Officially Launched September 2019
- 1 Development Location in Washington, DC

All program stats are as of 12/31/2019, and reflect the most recent Best Buddies program year (July 1 – June 30).

Program Participants

- 63,805 High Schools
- 29,834 Colleges
- 12,713 Middle Schools
- 7,554 Citizens
- 2,057 e-Buddies

Average Total Participant Stats

- 33,836 Weekly Hrs. Worked
- 1,657,958 Yearly Hrs. Worked
- 4,327,271 Yearly Wages Earned
- 21,636,353 Yearly Taxes Paid

Avg. hrs worked per week (20), Avg. hrly wage $12.56 (in the U.S.)

Leadership Development

- 804 Ambassadors
- 5,180 Elementary Promoters
- 131 College Promoters
- 4,623 High School Promoters

Inclusive Living

- Miss Indiana Teen USA 2019 Catie Combellick, Best Buddies Global Ambassador Lauren Potter, and Miss Indiana USA 2019 Tate Fritchley at the 2019 Best Buddies Leadership Conference: Inclusion Lives Here
2019 Highlights

Launches

- Best Buddies opens offices in China and Ukraine to serve a new community of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) on a global scale.
- The Best Buddies Jobs program, begins operating in 10 new markets: Cape Cod, Massachusetts; Des Moines, Iowa; Long Beach, Orange County and Sacramento, California; Tampa, Florida; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Peoria, Illinois; Troy, Michigan; and the Dominican Republic.

Partnerships

- Best Buddies joins forces with Autism Speaks and Special Olympics, under the leadership of Entertainment Industry Foundation, to launch Delivering Jobs, an inclusion campaign designed to create pathways to one million employment and leadership opportunities for people with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and other intellectual and developmental disabilities by 2025.
- MOD Pizza commits to its first nationwide partnership with Best Buddies focused on raising awareness for inclusive hiring practices and raising a minimum of $50,000 to support Best Buddies programs. MOD has approximately 300 supported employees with IDD across its 455+ locations in the U.S. and U.K. Throughout the month of October, MOD donated a portion of all sales of a select menu item to Best Buddies.

Key Events

- Best Buddies officially launches its fourth mission pillar, Inclusive Living. BESTBUDDIES® Living provides an integrated experience in which people with and without IDD live independently in a dynamic environment where they can learn, grow, and thrive.
- In March, 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.
Anthony K. Shriver charters 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.
e-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.
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.
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.
Without love, support and friends, life may feel isolating—this is a reality people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have often been 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.

Middle Schools, High Schools & Colleges

In today’s schools, students with IDD enter the same building and walk the same hallways as their peers, but they often miss out on key elements of the school experience such as sitting with friends at lunch, attending homecoming or prom, or joining a club.

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 they also help facilitate an environment of inclusion throughout the school and in the community.

Citizens

For people with IDD, the absence of meaningful friendships extends into adulthood. After age 21, some individuals with IDD may never spend time with anyone besides a paid caregiver and family. 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

In 2019, e-Buddies served 2,057 total participants. These participants exchanged more than 30,000 e-mails, and also posted more than 500 messages on the e-Buddies Community message boards. e-Buddies was also used as a teaching tool in the classroom by more than 100 special education teachers and other disabilities professionals across the country.
Tanner & Tyler
Friendship Program Buddy Pair, Higley High School, Gilbert, AZ

“I think at the heart of inclusion is the belief that everyone has something to contribute and everyone is worthy of being loved.” - Tanner

Though they have only been matched for a year, Tanner and Tyler’s friendship is so strong it seems like they have known each other their entire lives.

Tanner said, “Tyler is actually a pretty big reason why I got involved with Best Buddies. Tyler is so compassionate and energetic with everyone that he meets. He quickly taught me how to carry on that kind of love for others.”

“Tanner and Tyler have become such an inspirational buddy pair,” explained Mrs. Wittenburg, their Best Buddies advisor. They spend birthdays together and see each other in unified sports daily. Tanner tries to keep up with Tyler’s outgoing and sarcastic personality, but sometimes gets caught off his feet by Tyler’s zingers. Tanner, being our schools Student Council President, has really been able to show the campus what a true buddy pair looks like, as well as what Best Buddies has to offer!”

Tanner and Tyler have truly become best friends. Tyler said, “I love Best Buddies because I love hanging out with Tanner --- he’s my best friend. He takes me out to lunch, we go on double dates, we hang out all the time and he came to my birthday party. I love Tanner.”

There is no doubt that Tanner and Tyler will stay friends for the long haul and will continue to show the world what Best Buddies is all about! Tanner stated, “Any love I show to Ty is returned tenfold, and I think kindness and inclusion are often like that, because they are truly the gifts that keep on giving!”

“He’s my best friend. He takes me out to lunch, we go on double dates, we hang out all the time and he came to my birthday party. I love Tanner.” - Tyler
Since its inception, Best Buddies Jobs has assisted thousands of participants in earning an income, paying taxes, receiving benefits and working in an environment alongside others in the community. The Jobs program offers the opportunity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to become financially independent through their own efforts, removing the need for government assistance or parental support. This program focuses on white-collar jobs, which sets it apart from so many others. Best Buddies assists individuals in finding jobs that are enjoyable, inclusive and competitive in terms of pay.

**Integrated Employment Program**

Best Buddies Jobs furthers the integration of people with IDD into the community through supported employment. The focus is on developing competitive, integrated jobs 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. Best Buddies Jobs conducts a person-centered approach with each participant, working with the individual to ultimately achieve his or her personal employment goals. Coaching is provided in essential job interviewing skills, and once a job is secured, there is assistance with on-the-job training. Job placement for participants depend on factors such as their skills and abilities, location and vocational preference. Once fully adjusted to their job, Best Buddies supports participants with job coaching for continued career development.

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 active Best Buddies Jobs programs as of December 31, 2019 include California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin.
Key Jobs Program Stats

- **1,002** U.S. Participants
- **2,517** Total Participants
- **15** States with active Jobs Programs
- **1,612** Total Employed
- **94.07%** Retention Rate**

- **1,515** International Participants
- **33,836** Average Total Hours Worked

- **94.07%** Retention Rate**

- **26.81%** Paid Vacation/Sick Days
- **16.76%** Medical & Dental
- **8.45%** 401K Plan
- **2.66%** Receiving Benefits**

- **$21,636,353** Average Total Yearly Wages Earned
- **$4,327,271** Average Total Yearly Taxes Paid

Top 5 Jobs Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Total Job Participants</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael D. Genentech</td>
<td>$51,168</td>
<td>Vacation Pay, Holiday Pay, Medical Care, Retirement Plans, Fitness Center, Dental Care, Vision Care, Other, Sick Pay, Complimentary Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristen M. Holland &amp; Knight</td>
<td>$50,668</td>
<td>Life Insurance, Vacation Pay, Holiday Pay, Medical Care, Retirement Plans, Dental Care, Sick Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric H. Fried Frank Harris &amp; Shriver &amp; Jacobson</td>
<td>$46,228</td>
<td>Vacation Pay, Holiday Pay, Medical Care, Retirement Plans, Dental Care, Sick Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul P. Whiting Turner</td>
<td>$45,344</td>
<td>Life Insurance, Vacation Pay, Holiday Pay, Medical Care, Retirement Plans, Education Assistance Programs, Dental Care, Vision Care, Sick Pay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Paul L. Jones Lang Lasalle (JLL) Google</td>
<td>$44,616</td>
<td>Medical Care</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top 5 Jobs Participants Highest Hourly Rates

- **$25.40** Hourly Wage
  - Michael D. Genentech, San Francisco, CA

- **$25.36** Hourly Wage
  - Cristen M. Holland & Knight, Boston, MA

- **$24.60** Hourly Wage
  - John H. Civic EDGE Consulting, San Francisco, CA

- **$24.00** Hourly Wage
  - Adraine A. Jones Lang LaSalle, New York, NY

BESTBUDDIES JOBS Around the World

- **11 Countries**
- **89 Cities**

Top 5 Jobs Participants Highest Salaries With Benefits

**Reflects countries and cities that have the Best Buddies jobs program, as of 06.30.2020

* 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 12/31/19.
Fred
Jobs Program Participant, Central Park Conservancy, New York, NY

“I am so proud that I have been working at the Central Park Conservancy in New York City as part of the Best Buddies Jobs program since August 2016! Before that, I was part of the Citizens program and was working part-time at a movie theatre. I knew I wanted to get a better, full-time job, but was not sure how to do that. The Citizens program manager connected me with the Jobs team, and it was like magic! I had two interviews with Central Park, and I told them about my experiences, and I got their attention. They offered me the job and I have been working as a groundskeeper ever since.”

“I love my job. Some of the tasks I have learned are mowing, weeding, mulching, raking, sweeping, planting and irrigation. One thing I am most proud of is that I now manage the volunteers who come to work in the park every Thursday. I worked hard to learn plant identification and I can now teach the volunteers how to identify which are the weeds and which are the plants. I tell the volunteers that we can learn a lot from each other and that it is ok to make mistakes. I treat my volunteers like a team and I am proud of this.”

According to Fred’s supervisor, “Fred is a great guy and takes great pride in his job. During the last year and a half, he has been improving his skills in managing the group of volunteers assigned to him; on top of that, he has learned to recognize many trees, shrubs and weeds, and this knowledge helps him manage, in a more productive way, the area he takes care of.”

When asked what he loves most about his job, Fred says, “I am thankful for my job. I have great benefits, a great salary and am also able to earn overtime pay. When the weather is bad and I must work outside all day, I always tell my job coach, ‘somebody’s got to do it’ or ‘it comes with the job.’ I think my positive attitude makes me a great employee.”

“I am thankful for my job. I have great benefits, a great salary and am also able to earn overtime pay.” - Fred
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.

Ambassadors

Best Buddies Ambassadors is a program that provides training for participants with and without IDD in areas of 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. The program prepares people to not only become active agents of change, and informed, compelling advocates for the disability rights movement.

Ambassadors participate in trainings focused on the art of public speaking and advocacy. Once trained, they are expected to identify opportunities in their chapters, communities and states to share their stories and become more involved and empowered as citizens. They are encouraged to make high-profile connections, speak to state and national legislators about opportunities for people with IDD, present at recruitment fairs and Best Buddies events and develop partnerships in the community. Ambassadors also help fundraise, present to other interest groups and train their peers with IDD.

Participants are paired with a speech coach for the duration of their Ambassador training to assist with the writing and presentation of a speech. Speech coaches help Ambassadors in areas of brainstorming and organization, and serve as guides who provide one-on-one attention, as needed.

Promoters

Best Buddies Promoters empowers youth to become advocates for people with IDD by organizing and attending special events that promote inclusion and bringing awareness to the disability rights movement. 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, fundraisers and assemblies where they advocate for people with IDD, educate the public about inclusion and promote the ideals of Best Buddies’ mission. Throughout the school year, Best Buddies encourages all Promoters chapters to host as many activities as possible on and off campus that are inclusive of people with IDD.
Jada
Best Buddies Ambassador, Chicago, Illinois

From the time Jada Thompson was young, her mother told her that she would someday be speaking in front of important people and have an audience. “I knew what she was called to do as a verbal person on the autism spectrum; I knew she was meant to be the person to speak up,” her mother Deanna explains.

Fast forward to 2018 when Jada found Best Buddies. She first joined the Jobs program, and her job coach recommended the Ambassador program. Near the end of 2018, Jada came to her first Ambassador training and explains that “it was the start of something magical.” These trainings, hosted throughout the year, help individuals learn to tell their stories, speak publicly, and advocate for inclusion. In 2019, Illinois trained 18 State Ambassadors, including Jada, to speak in their communities and build bridges of acceptance and understanding.

In Jada’s words, “Best Buddies has changed my life tremendously. It helped me be true to who I am and embrace my differences, and now I get to be myself unapologetically. I learned that I am brave and have a powerful, impactful voice. The Ambassador program has given me a chance to use that voice.” Jada has spoken at the Annual Best Buddies Leadership Conference, the Meeting of the MODs (receiving a standing ovation from 900 people), the Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle, the Best Buddies Friendship Walk in Illinois, and more.

Her Citizens buddy, Kara, talks of the pride she feels watching Jada speak: “She’s shy and extremely humble, but when she gets on stage, she speaks with love, truth, passion and an understanding that everyone in the room can feel. I’m lucky to call Jada one of my best friends and to be part of her journey as she continues to become a global impact to individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

Jada is going to be a Global Ambassador for Best Buddies International starting in 2020, along with two others from Illinois! To her, being an Ambassador means being a role-model and inspiration for others. She explains, “I want to educate people about the need for inclusion and to teach those with disabilities to be themselves. Be brave and don’t change who you are for anyone just because they don’t see your potential yet.” We are so proud of Jada and are looking forward to seeing the continued impact of her powerful story and voice.

“Best Buddies has changed my life tremendously. It helped me be true to who I am and embrace my differences, and now I get to be myself unapologetically.”
- Jada
Inclusive Living Program

Supporting and empowering individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to live as integrated, contributing members in the larger community. The program encourages people with and without IDD to live together in a dynamic and enriching environment rooted in a college or university setting.

Living

Best Buddies Living locations are near school campuses – offering an environment that encourages the development of independent living skills, life-changing relationships, and educational pursuits in connection with college life.

The Living program is open to individuals over the age of 18 who are ready to embrace independent living. Residents are asked to participate in weekly group meals and activities, maintain employment or attend a higher education program, and support fellow residents when needed.

Program participants are immersed in the campus experience, attending college sports games, cultural events, holiday parties, volunteer opportunities, and other social activities alongside their student peers.

Each Inclusive Living location will have a unique pricing structure that includes room and board, onsite support, transportation and access to campus facilities and amenities, and Best Buddies team members onsite to support residents and ensure an inclusive environment. As of December 31, 2019, Best Buddies operated two Living residences --- one in Westwood, CA, and one in Washington, D.C.
Ain

Best Buddies Living Resident, University of California, Los Angeles, CA

Born and raised in Pakistan, Ain joined the Best Buddies Living program at the start of his freshman year at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He was drawn to Best Buddies Living because it was an entirely new concept that the university dorms didn’t offer. The living is completely integrated, 100% inclusive and beyond that, the program’s description convinced Ain, “the residence didn’t just include sleeping accommodations, but it was fully immersive, offering weekly activities and THAT was what convinced me to apply.”

Ain and his brother Adeel reside in the Best Buddies Living’s flagship residence in Westwood, just minutes away from the UCLA campus, with Residential Manager Shammir Khan, and Best Buddies participants Aric and Austin. Since day one, Ain experienced the Best Buddies mission of inclusion and acceptance. “Everyone was incredibly hospitable, our roommates cooked dinner for us, took our luggage to our rooms and immediately helped us feel welcome in a new country.”

Ain shares that acclimating became easier with support from the Best Buddies Living program: “activities, like grocery shopping or public parking, add up and end up forming a big part of your day – they can create discomfort when you move to a new place, but we didn’t experience that because they were there with us since the very first day.”

Through this program Ain and his roommates participate in group outings, house dinners and Best Buddies meet-ups. Ain describes the Best Buddies Living experience as enlightening, providing a better understanding of the challenges and social barriers people with IDD face. “In Pakistan, we don’t talk about people with IDD and their rights. This experience has allowed me to recognize the intricacies of IDD – you can read about it, but you have to immerse yourself in inclusion to better understand, as we have through Best Buddies Living.”

Inspired by Best Buddies Living, Ain plans to get more involved with UCLA’s Best Buddies chapter and continue growing alongside his new Best Buddies family. “The biggest thing that Best Buddies Living achieves is facilitating personal and professional growth. We’ve all grown so much, socially – we all interact with each other’s friends and encourage them to get involved with Best Buddies programs. We learn from each other daily, especially Adeel and I from Austin, Aric and Shammir, about how to excel in school and in the workforce. We vent, laugh and enjoy each other’s input and advice.”

“We’re more than roommates, we’re friends, great friends with unique perspectives and diverse experiences! We’re all working to break the stigma and proving that this should be the norm on every college campus and in society, as a whole.”

This experience has allowed me to recognize the intricacies of IDD – you can read about it, but you have to immerse yourself in inclusion to better understand, as we have through Best Buddies Living.” - Ain
Best Buddies
International Programs

International Program participants representing more than 30 countries with Founder & CEO Anthony K. Shriver (center) at the 2019 Best Buddies Leadership Conference in Bloomington, Indiana.
International Programs

Despite challenging headwinds in 2019, Best Buddies continued to expand internationally.

In 2019, Best Buddies International launched Friendship programs in both China and the Ukraine. Three Open Houses were held in Europe to share the importance of friendship and inclusion at schools and universities – including one in Dublin, Ireland; Kiev, Ukraine; and Paris, France. Response to Best Buddies Friendship programs has been overwhelmingly positive and has included excellent media coverage including a segment on the news in Ukraine.

An International Jobs Training Program was held in Boston last spring and the Dominican Republic joined Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Peru and Russia in opening a Best Buddies Jobs program in 2019. More than 1,500 individuals with IDD are now part of our Best Buddies Jobs programs overseas, with over 800 participants employed to date. Our program participation grew by 13% with U.S. corporations in the Asian region reaching out to Best Buddies to learn more about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and the possibility of establishing a Jobs program with their corporate partners. Diversity, Inclusion and “Decent Work” are all key components of the 17 United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals. Companies today are eager to promote their corporate social responsibility as a record number of millennials join the workforce in search of employers who wish to make a difference in society.

Goals for 2020 include reaching 2,000 jobs worldwide by launching an integrated employment program in at least three new countries and recruiting corporate partners on a global scale.

Remote solutions are currently being put in place to continue our chapter activities and trainings around the globe, while events such as the Virtual Friendship Walk will be expanded to 14 Latin American countries in an effort to raise funds for the region and continue promoting our mission. Best Buddies will also continue to introduce Friendship programs to new countries including Portugal and Serbia, in 2020. In addition to hosting Open House events and providing staff trainings to launch the programs throughout Europe and Asia, the International Programs team will actively pursue additional funding opportunities from high net-worth individuals, foundation grants and supranational entities like the European Union.

“More than 1,500 individuals with IDD are now part of our Best Buddies Jobs programs overseas, with over 800 participants employed to date.”
Programs Around the World

50 States
57 Countries & Territories
5 Continents

North America
- Canada
- USA

Latin America & The Caribbean
- Argentina
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador

Europe
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Denmark
- England
- Faroe Islands
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Ireland
- Netherlands
- Northern Ireland
- Norway
- Poland
- Russia
- Scotland
- Spain
- Turkey
- Ukraine

Asia
- China
- Hong Kong, China
- Macao, China
- Indonesia
- South Korea
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Vietnam

Middle East
- Lebanon
- Qatar

Africa
- Egypt
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Nigeria
- Tanzania
- Uganda
Devon and Molly, 2019 Best Buddies Champion of The Year award recipients, raising $40,808 for Best Buddies in Washington

2019 Expansion Programs

Expansion in the U.S.

Best Buddies’ Expansion Team’s focuses on reaching areas of the country that do not have a physical office, but are aiming to bring one to the area by increasing awareness about the mission, piloting new programs and raising funds to support our efforts. The Expansion team saw a tremendous amount of growth in 2019 through programmatic initiatives, donor cultivation, and fundraising efforts. The team worked tirelessly to build relationships with companies like Divergent and SPMG that have become national partnerships. Newly hired staff in Michigan provided local support to our efforts, paving the way for the team to launch a partnership with Kelly Services and hire a Best Buddies Jobs staff member in the region. Through the support and dedication of volunteers, committees, and donors, we look forward to hiring staff in Minnesota, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Washington based on the successes of 2019!

Throughout 2019, the Expansion team and worked with “on-the-ground” volunteers to open 57 new school Friendship and Promoter chapters. Every state in the U.S. officially has a school-based program and Best Buddies’ mission was expanded by launching Citizens programs in Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, South Carolina and Washington, laying the groundwork to open programs in Colorado and Kansas and expand programmatic efforts in Michigan and Minnesota.

In order to further the organization’s mission and continue to serve areas that do not have a physical Best Buddies office, the Expansion Team relies heavily on volunteers to help run programs and raise funds. In seven different areas across the country, staff and a team of committed volunteers executed Friendship Walks that collectively raised over $76,000. The greatest success in fundraising events was through signature Champion of the Year galas in six different markets (three of those were new markets) which raised close to $920,000 collectively.

On behalf of Advisory Boards and the Expansion team staff, we would like to thank you for your continued support of our efforts to reach more individuals across the country. We have big plans for 2020 and cannot wait to impact the lives of even more individuals!

Best Buddies Ambassador Ivanova at the 2019 Best Buddies Leadership Conference: Inclusion Lives Here

BESTBUDDIES.ORG

BESTBUDDIES.ORG
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: volunteering, advocating and pursuing partnership and sponsorship opportunities. A few of the organization's prominent events are featured on the following pages.
Signature Events

Cyclists along the route of the 2019 Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port presented by Pepsi-Cola and Shaw’s and Star Market Foundation.

**BEST BUDDIES CHALLENGE, HYANNIS PORT**

May 31 – June 1, 2019 / Boston & Hyannis Port, Massachusetts

The Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port, presented by Pepsi-Cola, and Shaw’s and Star Market Foundation chaired by Tom Brady, Guy Fieri, Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy,III, and event chair Ted English, is a 100, 50 or 20-mile cycling adventure from Boston to Hyannis Port, with an optional 5K run/walk. The event kicked off with the Best Buddies Tom Brady Football Challenge and the Guy Cooking with Best Buddies Celebrity Chef Food and Wine Festival, presented by Pepsi-Cola and Shaw’s and Star Market Foundation and concluded with a celebratory clambake and a private concert by multi-platinum artist Flo Rida.

Best Buddies Global Ambassador Tom Brady at the 2019 Best Buddies Tom Brady Football Challenge.

Best Buddies Global Ambassadors Bret and Alphonso with a volunteer at the 2019 Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port, presented by Pepsi-Cola and Shaw’s and Star Market Foundation finish line festivities.

Celebrity Chef and Best Buddies Global Ambassador Guy Fieri with New England Patriots wide receiver Julian Edelman, Best Buddies program participants Chris and Joey Shriver.
The 16th Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle, presented by Pepsi-Cola, is a 100, 60, 30 or 15-mile cycling adventure along the picturesque coastlines of California, arriving at the renowned Hearst Castle in San Simeon, with an optional 5K run/walk. The event kicked off with the Official Opening Ceremony of the Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle, presented by Pepsi-Cola on Friday, September 6 at the Quail Lodge Resort & Golf Club in Carmel, and concluded with an exciting finish line village, a festive barbeque at Hearst Ranch and lively performance by KC and The Sunshine Band.
THE HUBLOT BEST BUDDIES CHALLENGE: MIAMI & BEST BUDDIES MIAMI GALA
November 22, 2019 / Miami, Florida

The Hublot Best Buddies Challenge: Miami, presented by Abaco Wines, Braman Miami, Mack Cycle & Fitness, Makarov Foundation and Pepsi-Cola, is a 100K six-star cycling event, limited to just 50 cyclists beginning and ending at Mr. C Hotel Miami in Coconut Grove. The Challenge was followed by the 23rd Annual Best Buddies Miami Gala at Mana Wynwood. During the event, Best Buddies awarded Ed Ansin, co-founder, president and CEO of Sunbeam Television Corporation with the Spirit of Leadership Award, the highest Best Buddies accolade presented to distinguished luminaries who have shown great leadership, generosity and spirit in supporting the organization’s mission. This star-studded event also included a gourmet dinner, a top-notch auction and a live performance by multi-platinum artist Flo Rida.
Best Buddies Global Ambassador Caley presenting a speech at the 2019 Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Malibu

Cyclists climbing the scenic roads of Malibu, CA

Best Buddies Founder & CEO Anthony K. Shriver with cyclists along the Pacific Coast Highway at the 2019 Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Malibu

Best Buddies Global Ambassador Caley presenting a speech at the 2019 Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Malibu

Cyclists climbing the scenic roads of Malibu, CA

Breakaway Camp attendees riding together along the majestic Pacific Coast Highway

Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Malibu

May 1-5 and December 11-15, 2019 / Malibu, California

The Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Malibu offers cyclists a world-class, four-day riding experience through the scenic canyon roads and rock-studded hillsides of the Santa Monica Mountains overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Cyclists pedaled from coast to valley through remote, twisting and winding canyon roads, cliff-side Malibu mansions and acres of forest.

During the Best Buddies Breakaway Camp: Malibu, each attendee benefitted from a custom-designed program. Experienced cyclists and weekend warriors alike learned from various industry professionals including sports nutritionists, exercise physiologists, bike mechanics and personal trainers. The experience provided cyclists with a holistic approach to training, with special attention given to efficiency on the bike, proper rider nutrition, and post-training recovery; leaving them with the foundation for a sustainable, healthy lifestyle.
May 11, 2019 / Malibu, California

The 2019 Hublot Best Buddies Mother’s Day Celebration was co-hosted by Best Buddies Founder & CEO Anthony K. Shriver and journalist and philanthropist, Maria Shriver. During the event, Title sponsor Hublot introduced a 2019 limited-edition Best Buddies Classic Fusion Titanium Pavé, the first women’s timepiece in collaboration with the organization, crafted specially to honor the “Remarkable” women who strive to leave a legacy throughout their local communities and beyond.

The celebration featured cocktails, delicious food, live performances and a special award ceremony honoring Best Buddies’ Mother of the Year, Yanti Lugito.
Nearly 2,500 student leaders, chapter advisors, volunteers and community leaders gathered in Bloomington, Indiana for the 2019 Best Buddies Leadership Conference: Inclusion Lives Here. The conference brought together student leaders from Best Buddies Middle School, High School, College and Promoter chapters across the world from 15 countries, including Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Hong Kong, Ireland, Kenya, Lebanon, Macau, Mexico, Panama, Spain and the United States. The conference presented dynamic engagement opportunities, advocacy trainings, leadership development and expansion strategy sessions to teachers, community leaders, volunteers and supporters. Inclusion advocates and leaders in the disability rights movement provided engaging keynotes, educational workshops and interactive large group forums, preparing attendees to share the Best Buddies mission in their communities.
Attendees at the start line of the 2019 Best Buddies Friendship Walk: South Florida

Best Buddies participants at the 2019 Best Buddies Friendship Walk: Bay Area

Friendship Walk participants take to the start line to walk for inclusion at the 2019 Best Buddies Friendship Walk: Capital Region.

The Best Buddies Friendship Walk continues 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 with IDD. In 2019, over 40,000 participants in more than 55 cities walked to move our mission forward. Collectively over $5,000,000 was raised as participants, sponsors, volunteers and public figures joined the movement that celebrates friendship, inclusion and unity. Over the years, the Friendship Walks have made a profound impact in communities nationwide, providing a platform for participants to showcase the Best Buddies mission. Each Walk offers an atmosphere for new friendships, promising opportunities and most of all, inclusion for all people.
Best Buddies social events contribute to the life-changing community engagement needed to fuel the mission. Philanthropic trailblazers, community leaders and corporate partners play substantial roles in uniting their communities in the urgency of inclusivity. Unique events such as Chef Tastings, Best Buddies Galas and Champion of the Year gave a platform for the organization and its supporters to educate communities on the significance of changing how individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are perceived.

These core events collectively raised over $5.5 million dollars, an astonishing 85% increase over 2018. Of that, Champion of the Year - a signature series of local events - engaged 365 Champions in generating over $4.7 million dollars, a 39% increase over the previous year. These events, and those that lead them, continue to provide life-long support and opportunities for individuals with IDD.
Best Buddies Balls/Proms are a unique way for the organization’s state offices and chapters to showcase their achievements and celebrate friendship. Best Buddies Balls/Proms were offered to high school and college participants in nearly 40 locations nationwide in 2019. The celebrations offer activities for students and parents alike, including chef tastings and silent auctions. Best Buddies in Chicago hosted its 16th Annual Best Buddies Prom in 2019 at a local high school, relying on the energy and creativity of chapter leaders to organize the event, decorate, secure donated refreshments and DJs for dancing! Many Best Buddies Balls/Proms, such as the one hosted at the Bridgestone Arena in Nashville, Tennessee, offered participants tuxedo rentals, gown selections, hair and makeup for buddy pairs and a red carpet to round out the extravaganza.
Each year, the organization's celebrity supporters host community events that engage and inspire our program participants and corporate sponsors to promote Best Buddies' mission of inclusion and challenge communities to ignite change. These dynamic events, such as Bowling for Buddies and Best Buddies' Night of Beauty at Blushington, not only raise funds and awareness but also provide opportunities for Best Buddies program participants and supporters to develop life-long relationships.
March 2019

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 kicks off with the annual Spread the Word: Inclusion campaign, which invites all members to showcase how they promote inclusion in their communities. In March 2019, participants hosted school parties, awareness activities and engagement campaigns, to honor their unity in advancing opportunities for friendship, employment and leadership development.

BEST BUDDIES EKS DAY

July 20, 2019

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 include sports clinics, picnics, leadership trainings and disability rights awareness.
2019 Board of Directors

- John M. Carlin
  Senior Director
  Major Gifts & Planned Giving

- Lisa Derx
  Vice President
  Government Relations

- Alexander Hernandez-Dessauer
  Vice President
  International Programs & Special Projects

- Mark Lewis
  Vice President
  Marketing & Strategic Development

- Anthony Kennedy Shriver
  Founder, Chairman & CEO
  Best Buddies International

2019 Executive Team

- Mark J. Wylie
  Vice President
  Talent Relations

- Julie Torres
  Vice President
  Human Resources & Operations

- Scott Tracy
  Vice President
  Special Events, Development & Sponsor Relations

Honorary Board Members

- Eunice Kennedy Shriver
  Founder, Special Olympics Int.

- Keith Allen Haring
  Pop Artist, Creator of the Best Buddies Logo
Financials

Consolidated Statement of Activities* (as of 12.31.19)

Domestic Revenue

- 13% Foundations & Corps. $4,226,886
- 44% Special Events $14,274,655
- 10% Individual $3,229,940
- 29% Government $9,432,748
- Other** $1,326,191

$62,792,420 Total Gross Revenue

Domestic Expenses

- 83% Programs $24,996,346
- 13% Fundraising $3,674,390
- 4% Administration $1,207,423

$30,158,159 Total Domestic Expenses

Domestic Net Asset Summary

- Net Assets (beginning of year) $12,311,015
- Change in Net Assets $2,334,261
- Net Unrealized Gains/(Losses) on Investments (-95,959)

$30,158,159 Total Domestic Revenue

Domestic Expenses

$30,158,159 Total Domestic Expenses

Net Assets (beginning of year) $12,311,015

Change in Net Assets $2,334,261

Net Unrealized Gains/(Losses) on Investments (-95,959)

Total Domestic Net Assets (end of year) $14,549,317

Balance Sheet (as of 12.31.19)

Assets

Current Assets
- Cash in Bank $3,802,036
- Marketable Securities $6,735,027
- Pre Paid Expenses $569,759
- Accounts Receivable $158,917
- Contributions Receivable $2,733,350
- Grant Receivable $1,996,818
- Investments - BB x Rosetta Bakery LLC $332,604
- Investments - Deferred Compensation Plan $89,363

Total Current Assets $16,417,874

Fixed Assets
- Computers $14,687

Total Assets $16,432,561

Liabilities and Fund Balance

Liabilities
- Accounts Payable $1,023,353
- Deferred Revenue $606,530
- Deferred Compensation Plan Liability $89,363
- LOC Payable $150,000
- Refundable Security Deposit $14,000

Total Liabilities $1,883,246

Fund Balance
- Beginning Balance With Current Year Adjustments $12,311,015
- Net Surplus/(Deficit) $2,238,302

Ending Fund Balance $14,549,317

* Statement of Activities for calendar year 2019 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.
2019 was an exciting year of new programs, new partnerships and new growth for Best Buddies in Massachusetts (MA) and Rhode Island (RI).

A major goal for 2019 was to address the challenges faced by students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who, when graduating from high school and our Friendship Program, needed assistance transitioning into adulthood and a career. Fuelled by innovation, we created and fully implemented the new Pre-Employment Training Program. Our team developed a curriculum to prepare students with IDD with the skills needed to enter the workforce and take that next step in their life.

Our team developed a curriculum to prepare students with IDD with the skills needed to enter the workforce and take that next step in their life. Looking into 2020, Best Buddies has plans to grow the regions where we can serve participants across each program. We will continue to provide services to current and new schools, pursue new state contracts to provide jobs services in new regions, and expand the Pre-ETS program in our region as well as nationally. Ultimately, we will do all that we can so that our participants at any age will be included, fulfilled and have the opportunity to live long successful lives in our community.

We know that this cannot be done without the incredibly generosity of our individual donors, foundation partners and corporate supporters. On behalf of the Best Buddies team, and all of the people whose lives your support has support them. Over 400 people joined the Gala where we heard many inspiring stories, awarded our program employee and employer of the year as well as recognized partners for their spirit of inclusion.

“Impressed with your determination, your ability to learn the language immersion, and your creative thinking,” Maya says. “Your empathy for others and your positivity radiates in everything you do. I have seen you go above and beyond for our chapter and everyone involved with it,” Maya says.

According to Hannah, “Maysa is one of my best friends ever since I met her at Best Buddies! She makes me feel happy and that I can accomplish anything with her support. We like doing things like going to the gym together to work out and going to concerts. We stay in touch by texting and snap-chatting every day.”

And now, the girls face their biggest challenge yet as Hannah’s family moves from Massachusetts to Washington. “The day I found out Hannah was going to be moving, my whole world kind of reversed. We quickly realized the importance of the foundation we built…. now our friendship is one thing we never have to worry about.”

“We will keep doing everything we can until we meet again in October. Our relationship is dear to us. We are so thankful for this experience,” Maya says.

“I’m excited for her to grow,” Hannah says. “I want her to have the same opportunities that I have had. I feel like I’ve grown significantly from this experience and I know she will too.”

Throughout their journey with Best Buddies, Hannah and Maya were also able to develop their leadership skills, both as individuals and as best friends. Together, the girls took on leadership roles within their chapter, spoke at statewide events, and attended Best Buddies Leadership Conference in Indiana. “I was taught to be a leader, to be kind, and to use my social presence for positive things. We have huge dreams for our chapter and everyone involved with it”, Maya says.

“Maysa is one of my best friends ever since I met her at Best Buddies! She makes me feel happy and that I can accomplish anything with her support.”

According to Hannah’s mom, “Every parent’s wish for their children is that they will be happy and confident; Best Buddies has helped make that a reality for our daughter. Meeting Maya provided a foundation for Hannah to become the happy and confident young woman that she is today and her world has become a brighter place.”

“During freshman year, things got kind of hard: a brand-new school, new people, harder classes, more work, everything was just so overwhelming. Then I met Hannah. Hannah would send me texts asking how I was doing and those messages encouraged me to get myself out of bed in the morning, just so I could see her in the halls. Seeing Hannah took a cloudy day and turned it right around. My days started getting so much brighter.” And then days turned into months, and months into years. “Hannah and I go to the gym, see concerts, make cookies, attend events, and so much more. Hannah is brighter than a ray of sunshine and I don’t know who I’d be without her.”

Looking into 2020, Best Buddies has plans to grow the regions where we can serve participants across each program. We will continue to provide services to current and new schools, pursue new state contracts to provide jobs services in new regions, and expand the Pre-ETS program in our region as well as nationally. Ultimately, we will do all that we can so that our participants at any age will be included, fulfilled and have the opportunity to live long successful lives in our community.

We know that this cannot be done without the incredibly generosity of our individual donors, foundation partners and corporate supporters. On behalf of the Best Buddies team, and all of the people whose lives your support has drastically changed for the better, I thank you for your continued dedication and partnership.

The Friendship program experienced chapter growth throughout MA and RI, including in our largest urban school district, Boston Public Schools. The chapters came together in force at the Best Buddies Leadership Conference in July, where MA and RI represented one of the largest contingents with almost 200 student leaders, advisers, and Ambassadors from both states.

Our Jobs program continued to serve a growing number of clients exceeding 150 participants in all stages of job development and placement. We ended 2019 with an Evening of Opportunity, a celebration for the participants in our Best Buddies Jobs program and the employers that

2019 was an exciting year of new programs, new partnerships and new growth for Best Buddies in Massachusetts (MA) and Rhode Island (RI).
Corey credits the Best Buddies Jobs program with helping her seek employment opportunities beyond what she called the “dead end jobs” that she held before joining the program—jobs that neither paid well nor offered good hours. Referred by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Corey came to Best Buddies in December of 2010, and she explains that her life improved a lot as a result.

With Best Buddies’ help, Corey was offered a job at Sodexo at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute as a cafeteria attendant. Her tasks included cleaning tables, stacking condiments, and taking out the trash. A committed employee, she did this work for seven years.

Last year, however, she advocated to be moved into a more dynamic role in the kitchen—that of Prep Cook. Corey loves this position; “I get to do different things,” she says, including make dressings, prep salads, and bag sandwiches. Corey was also able to train her replacement in the cafeteria, another Best Buddies Jobs program participant. “She’s doing a very good job,” Corey reports.

Corey has performed extremely well at Sodexo, winning both their Employee of the Year award in 2018, as well as the Best Buddies Employee of the Year award in 2019. She plans to attend Bunker Hill Community College next year, and taking out the trash. A committed employee, she did this work for seven years.

Last year, however, she advocated to be moved into a more dynamic role in the kitchen—that of Prep Cook. Corey loves this position; “I get to do different things,” she says, including make dressings, prep salads, and bag sandwiches. Corey was also able to train her replacement in the cafeteria, another Best Buddies Jobs program participant. “She’s doing a very good job,” Corey reports.

Corey has performed extremely well at Sodexo, winning both their Employee of the Year award in 2018, as well as the Best Buddies Employee of the Year award in 2019. She plans to attend Bunker Hill Community College next year, with the goal of becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant.

“I like to work, but I really like to make money. My job provides me with financial independence so I don’t have to rely on other people. I don’t like to rely on anybody else. My money lets me treat myself and get my hair done and just take time for myself. More importantly, money helps me pay my bills and take care of my son, Javon.”

“Working and being a single mother is incredibly difficult, but my job helps me take care of [Javon]. My son has autism and doesn’t speak, and I stick up for him and make sure he gets everything he needs. I advocate for him at his school and make sure he gets all the services that he requires. Being a mom is hard but I am doing the best I can and I am doing a great job at it. He loves to smile, he loves to eat, and he is a happy kid. Thank you so much to Sodexo and Best Buddies for helping me get a job and helping me keep my job.”

“My name is Cassidy Bauer. I am 30 years old, and I have Down syndrome. I own a food trailer, Fired Up, where I sell hot dogs and paninis with my family. I am also in the process of writing a book—it’s about myself and my situation, and it’s called Fired Up Too. I train year round for power-lifting with the Special Olympics. I can deadlift 200 pounds, back squat 135 pounds, and bench 105 pounds. I have been involved in Best Buddies since I was in high school, continued through college, and now I am an Ambassador. I attended the Best Buddies Leadership Conference in 2019 and the Regional Leadership Training Summit in 2020. The first day I went to the Worcester office to attend an ambassador training was thrilling; I was so excited. The training was so fun, and I got to meet new people. It was so inspirational to see all the people and hear their stories at both events.

Before Best Buddies, I was lost. I did not know what to do as far as programs and other things like that. I wanted something to help me get more involved in my community. I wanted to make new friends and not be lonely.

I am, now, a part of the Best Buddies Ambassador program. I have been able to develop my leadership and public speaking skills even further. My goal is to become even more involved in Ambassador events in the future.”

My life has just been so awesome and amazing since joining Best Buddies. It makes me feel like I am part of another family. I would like to tell other people with IDD to just keep going. Just keep fighting. Don’t give up. I think it might be scary at first, but definitely get more involved with events. I’m an example; Best Buddies can change your life forever.”

– Cassidy, Best Buddies Ambassador
The Marketing and Strategic Development Department would like to thank Best Buddies International Headquarters, state offices and international department for all of their help in creating this report. This collaborative effort was supported by the entire organization and across all departments.

While we wish to thank everyone for their contribution, please also note the following people that played a major role in its development:

**Copy & Editing**
Nicole Maddox, Director, Communications
Kendra Guerrero, Coordinator, Marketing & Communications
Jessica Schwartz, Senior Director, Marketing

**Global Statistics**
Bill Maurer, Director, Online Programs
Mia Pollock, Director, Expansion Operations & Mission Advancement
Christopher Dourov, Deputy Director, Jobs
Yelba Gutierrez, Coordinator, International Programs

**Supporters**
Noelle Smikle, Senior Director, Stewardship Global Statistics
Lisa Derx, Vice President, Government Relations
Robert Nuell, Deputy Director, National Development

**Financials**
Jen Miller, Senior Vice President, Finance & Operations

**Art Direction & Design**
Melissa Franco, Director, Creative Design & State Marketing

Thank you,

Mark Lewis, Vice President, Marketing & Strategic Development

**Thank You!**

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Melissa Franco, Director, Creative Design & State Marketing

Thank you,

Mark Lewis, Vice President, Marketing & Strategic Development