



Best Buddies Utah School Inclusion Project

Presenter Name, Organization, and Title

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Best Buddies Mission Statement

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

Request Overview

Best Buddies requests an ongoing appropriation of \$50,000 from the State of Utah to support the Best Buddies Utah School Inclusion Project.

Such funds would support Best Buddies chapters at 11 high schools and colleges, train 50 student leaders, and involve a minimum of 900 students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities during the 2018-19 academic year. Best Buddies staff will work with student and faculty volunteer leadership teams from these 11 Best Buddies chapters to create a minimum of 300 one-to-one friendships between people with IDD and their typical peers and deliver 44 inclusive activities.

History

Best Buddies is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which was founded in 1989. Best Buddies has more than 2,151 middle school, high school, and college chapters and reaches participants in all 50 states and 48 countries. Best Buddies' programs positively impact nearly 1,090,330 individuals worldwide.

Need and Programs

Because of physical and social barriers, little interaction occurs between students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their typical peers in the classroom or during informal situations such as the cafeteria or at lunch time. (Hyde, 2002) (Carter et al., 2000) Physical barriers, for example, include classroom settings. The majority of students with intellectual disabilities in Utah, 60.1%, spend more than half of the school day separated from peers. This is 11% greater than the national total. (www.ideadata.org) Social barriers include a student with IDD's "difficulty performing an array of important social skills." Typical peers encounter social barriers due to their lack confidence "in their skills and knowledge to interact with their classmates who have IDD." (Copeland et al., 2004) The isolation that students with IDD face will affect them as they age out of school. Researchers have found that social skills are essential for holding a job. While employees with IDD "are generally able to handle well the tasks required of them at work, the social interaction which others manage with ease often presents unexpected hurdles." (Holmes and Fillar, 2000) (Holmes, 2003)

Barriers to interactions between students with and without IDD create a "need for incorporating support based interventions in which aspects of school environments are arranged to promote



Best Buddies Utah School Inclusion Project

peer interaction.” (Carter and Hughes, 2005) Peer-to-peer support programs like Best Buddies create inclusive, accepting school climates, that “may moderate [the] relationship,” between “restrictive environments and higher risks for victimization,” of students with IDD. (<http://tinyurl.com/pck2bxj>) Adolescents with IDD in one-to-one friendships through Best Buddies show “lower frequencies of peer victimization, better adaptive behavior, higher levels of self-esteem, and fewer psychological symptoms...[Best Buddies’ friendships] were similar to friendships with best friends, with additional levels of support, nurturing and ‘scaffolding’ in skill development.” (Prinstein and Aikins, 2005) Bringing Best Buddies into schools is a time-tested and cost-effective way to connect students with and without IDD in meaningful, positive, social relationships.

Once they are out of the education system, adults with IDD often lack opportunities for socializing and establishing enduring friendships. “[Adults with intellectual disabilities’] social networks are highly restricted with regard to friendships and, in particular, likely to involve very few meaningful relationships with people who do not have [IDD], are not relatives, and who are not paid to support them.” (Robertson, et. al. 2001) A 2005 study by Sheppard-Jones, Prout and Kleinert found that adults with IDD, when compared to a sample of adults in the general population, reported significantly higher levels of personal loneliness, lack of friendships, and fewer opportunities to be with the friends they did have. Many adults with disabilities do not have continuous relationships. Instead, they may leave their families, be moved from one program to another, and have to adjust to staff people who come and go. Frequently, they lack the social skills and confidence necessary to gain independence to lead richer and fuller lives. Individuals with disabilities tend to have smaller and less diverse social networks. (Devlieger & Trach 1999, Carey et al. 2004) As a result, they may be disadvantaged in their career development.

To address these issues facing Utahns with IDD, the following programs would be supported through the project:

Best Buddies High Schools matches students with IDD in one-to-one peer mentoring friendships with their typical peers, provides inclusive group activities, and leadership development opportunities.

Best Buddies Colleges matches typical college students with adults with IDD in one-to-one friendships. Adults with disabilities are connected with our college program through partnerships with local agencies. By spending time with one another, the lives of both individuals are enhanced through a mutually-enriching friendship. Best Buddies helps combat the isolation experienced by adults with IDD who may not have had the opportunity to have relationships outside of family or paid support staff.

Best Buddies Chapters

Bonneville High School
Brigham Young University
Layton High School
Murray High School
Pleasant Grove High School



Best Buddies Utah School Inclusion Project

Provo High School
Southern Utah University
University of Utah
Utah State University
Viewmont High School
Weber High School

Project Budget

Summary of Expenses	Request	Total Project Cost
Staff Time		
Deputy Director of Expansion (12% of time on project)	\$ 4,227	\$ 5,380
Regional Director (30% of time on project)	\$ 10,740	\$ 13,670
Program Managers (48% of time on project)	\$ 12,433	\$ 15,825
Fringe Benefits @ 15%	\$ 4,110	\$ 5,231
Subtotal	\$ 31,510	\$ 40,106
Program Operations		
Site Visits/Travel	\$ 3,622	\$ 4,611
Staff Training	\$ 624	\$ 795
Volunteer Training	\$ 1,715	\$ 2,183
Volunteer Management	\$ 529	\$ 671
Community Engagement	\$ 521	\$ 664
Equipment	\$ 214	\$ 272
Office Space/Utilities	\$ 577	\$ 735
Supplies/Printing/Postage	\$ 142	\$ 181
Technology/Telecommunications	\$ 546	\$ 695
Subtotal	\$ 8,490	\$ 10,807
Indirect Costs	\$ 10,000	\$ 12,728
Total Expenses	\$ 50,000	\$ 63,641

Performance Measures

Best Buddies will use three tools to evaluate the effectiveness of our project: (1) the Friendship Update, used to evaluate the quality of the friendship matches on a monthly basis; (2) Mid- and End-Year Reports which are completed at the end of each semester by our staff and detail chapter activities, number of matches, goals, etc.; and (3) an annual survey that includes separate surveys for each participant-type. It is impartial, confidential,



Best Buddies Utah School Inclusion Project

and analyzes factors such as whether participants enjoyed their experience, if they would recommend it to others, and if they gained a better understanding of the challenges faced by people with IDD.

The project will measure its performance through the following outputs during the 2018-19 academic year:

- Support a minimum of 11 Best Buddies chapters
- Serve a minimum of 900 participants with and without IDD
- Match a minimum of 300 participants IDD in one-to-one friendships with 300 of their typical peers
- Provide opportunities 44 inclusive activities for participants with and without IDD
- Recruit, train, and mentor 50 student leaders on disability awareness, leadership, and Best Buddies' best practices

Best Buddies will submit quarterly reports to the Division of Services for People with Disabilities to demonstrate the project's progress.

Participants with and without IDD benefit as a result of the program. The project's outputs, like total friendships created and participants and chapters managed, create outcomes that remove some social barriers and mitigate the effects of physical barriers that inhibit interaction between students with and without IDD. Participants with IDD are more socially integrated in their school/community, have increased involvement in leisure activities with a friend, and demonstrate improved social interactions. They are, subsequently, more employable, more independent, and more included in their communities. Participants without IDD become more aware that people with IDD can hold jobs in the community, support having neighbors with IDD, and are willing to work at a company that employs people with and without IDD.