

BEST BUDDIES®

Friendship, Jobs, Leadership Development & Living



Celeena & Rebecca
Friendship program participants

BESTBUDDIES®

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.

BESTBUDDIES, 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.

e-BUDDIES.

Offers an e-mail program, in which a participant with IDD communicates online with a friend without IDD.

Integrated Employment

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

BESTBUDDIES, Jobs

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

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

Leadership Development

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

BESTBUDDIES, Ambassadors

Offers people with IDD the opportunity to gain the public speaking skills, self-esteem and confidence needed to successfully advocate for themselves, their peers and Best Buddies in communities, workplaces and government.

BESTBUDDIES, Promoters

Empowers youth to become advocates for 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.

BESTBUDDIES, 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.



Program participant Alexander & Best Buddies Global Ambassador Kyrie Irving

“ **BESTBUDDIES**® changed my life. I have a job that I love. I have many friends at work and a very special friend in my buddy. I wake up with a smile on my face every day. ”

- Colleen, Best Buddies Jobs participant since 1997



MAKE A FRIEND | DONATE | JOIN THE JOBS PROGRAM

To find your local Best Buddies office, visit:

BESTBUDDIES.ORG

BESTBUDDIES® New Mexico



Trae and Jesyah, Buddies Since 2011

Best Buddies 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 and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Research Shows

96%

of Best Buddies participants with special needs say they feel more accepted by their friends.

96%

of peer buddies are more aware that people with IDD can hold jobs in the community.

95%

of peer buddies would work at a company that employs people with IDD.

Best Buddies helps develop the social and leadership skills that make students college and career-ready.

Nathan Reiman
Director, State Operations & Programs
Email: nathanreiman@bestbuddies.org
Phone: 505-299-2552
Address: 3507 Wyoming Blvd. NE, Suite A
Albuquerque, NM 87111

The Need

- **83%** of adolescents with IDD between ages 12-21 have experienced bullying, which puts them at risk for **crushing loneliness** and **depression**. (Reiter and Lapidot-Lefler, 2007)
- There were **8,403** New Mexicans with IDD enrolled in public schools statewide in 2018. (US Department of Education)
- **Only 50%** of New Mexico students with disabilities spend most of their day in inclusive settings. This is **13% lower** than the national average. (US Department of Education)

New Mexico Programs

- Best Buddies inclusion programs serve **781** participants — **717** in friendship programs and **64** through Best Buddies Jobs.
- There are Best Buddies chapters in **25** schools. These chapters support **104 one-to-one friendships** between participants with IDD and their typical peers.
- Youth with IDD that participate in Best Buddies have the chance to build positive peer relationships, leading to improved school attendance, fewer disciplinary incidents, and improved academic performance. (Florida Legislature OPPAGA Report on Mentoring, 2011)
- In New Mexico, **87%** of high school participants with IDD and **91%** high school participants without IDD **would recommend participation in Best Buddies to others**. (Best Buddies International Annual Survey, 2019)
- **73%** of high school participants with IDD and **64%** of high school participants without IDD report that **Best Buddies has made their school more inclusive**. (Best Buddies International Annual Survey, 2019)
- **86%** of high school participants with IDD report that since joining Best Buddies, they **feel better about themselves, more connected to their school community, and more confident speaking up for themselves**. (Best Buddies International Annual Survey, 2019)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Best Buddies enables New Mexico youth with IDD to participate in social activities with their typical peers. This is achieved through the creation and management of school-based, volunteer-led chapters which facilitate and support one-to-one mentoring friendships between participants with IDD and their typical peers. A study conducted by UNC concluded that "Best Buddy relationships appear to offer unique benefits to the psychological adjustment of adolescents with IDD. The frequency of contact that young people with IDD had with their peers without disabilities was concurrently associated with lower frequencies of peer victimization, better adaptive behavior, higher levels of self-esteem, and fewer psychological symptoms." (Prinstein, 2005)

PROGRAMS

Best Buddies Middle Schools matches students with IDD with other middle school students to create one-to-one friendships between them. In today's middle schools, students with IDD often enter the same building and walk the same hallways as their peers, but are frequently left out of social activities. Best Buddies Middle Schools brings young adolescents into the inclusion movement early to help develop young leaders.

Best Buddies High Schools matches students with IDD with other high school students to create one to-one friendships between them. By introducing Best Buddies to public and private high schools, we are crossing the invisible line that too often separates those with IDD from those without.

Best Buddies Colleges matches adults with IDD age 18 and up with college students. Best Buddies helps combat the isolation experienced by adults with IDD who have not had the opportunity to have friends outside of their own, often lonely, environment.

Best Buddies Ambassadors educates and empowers people with IDD to be leaders and public speakers in their schools, communities, and workplaces.

2019-2020 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Elementary Schools

Chamiza Elementary
Chaparral Elementary
Dennis Chavez Elementary
John Baker Elementary
Rio Rancho Elementary
Seven Bar Elementary

Middle Schools

Aspen Community School
Desert Ridge Middle School
Hoover Middle School

Lyndon B Johnson Middle School

McKinley Middle School

High Schools

Albuquerque High School
Atrisco Heritage Academy
Centennial High School
Cleveland High School
Del Norte High School
Eldorado High School
La Cueva High School
Las Cruces High School

Manzano High School

Rio Rancho High School

Valley High School

Volcano Vista High School

Colleges

New Mexico State University
University of New Mexico