

Chester County Community Foundation
Grant Proposal Summary Sheet

Contact Information

Organization Name: Best Buddies Pennsylvania
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Year Incorporated: 1989
FEIN: 52-1614576

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Has your nonprofit ever applied to the Community Foundation Yes X No__ Not Sure__
Has your nonprofit ever received funding from the Community Foundation? Yes__ No X Not Sure__
___Donor Advised Fund(s) ___Fund for Chester County ___Don't know/Not sure

Field/s of Interest:

___ Arts, Culture & Humanities ___ Environment/Animal Welfare ___ Education ___ Health X Human Services
___ Religion

Organization Information:

Geographic Area Served (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):
All of Chester County

Describe Population Served and Annual Number of People Served:

Students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities in middle schools, high schools, and colleges throughout Chester County

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 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Proposal Summary:

Best Buddies Pennsylvania (BBPA) is requesting funding for our School Friendship program which builds one-to-one friendships between people with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), offering social mentoring while improving the quality of life and level of inclusion for a population that is often isolated and excluded. Through their participation, people with IDD form meaningful connections with their peers, gain self-confidence and self-esteem, and share interests, experiences and activities that many other individuals enjoy.

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|--|---|
| Annual Budget \$ <u>978,865</u> | <u>6</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff |
| <u>85</u> % of budget for program expenses | <u>14</u> # of Board Volunteers |
| <u>1</u> % of budget for administrative expenses | <u>14</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers |
| <u>14</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses | <u>350</u> # of Volunteer Hours |
| <u>100</u> % total | |

Top 3-5 funding sources:

- Special Events (Best Buddies Friendship Walk & Best Buddies Pennsylvania TasteBuds)
- Grant from PHL Y Insurance
- Corporate & Private donations

Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation: \$10,000



History, goals, key achievements and distinctiveness

Anthony Kennedy Shriver founded Best Buddies in 1989 after noticing the unjustified lack of opportunities for people with IDD to socialize with nondisabled peers. **Best Buddies programs empower people with IDD to form meaningful friendships with peers, secure high quality jobs in integrated settings, and improve self-advocacy and communication skills.** Best Buddies has grown from one original chapter to almost 2,500 chapters in middle schools, high schools and colleges in all 50 states and in 54 international locations. Best Buddies Pennsylvania (BBPA), with offices in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, was established in 1994, as one of 26 state affiliates of Best Buddies International. BBPA currently supports more than 6,000 participants in 23 middle schools, 35 high schools and 25 colleges throughout the state.

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. Best Buddies created the 2020 Initiative in 2011, with the goal of opening offices in all 50 states by the end of 2020. The initiative also includes plans to train 4,000 Buddy Ambassadors, develop 1,000 jobs for people with IDD around the world, and increase the number of school-based chapters to 2,500. As a result of these ambitious expansion efforts, Best Buddies hopes to become a household name by the end of 2020.

Best Buddies helps young people with intellectual and developmental disabilities shape a secure future by giving them the tools they need to be self-reliant, active participants in their communities, and by empowering them to self-advocate. Additionally, our programs create a ripple effect of change by training students without disabilities in socially-responsible leadership, and by giving them an opportunity to learn about the struggles of, and to advocate for, a segment of society that is largely marginalized. These friendship opportunities will help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities learn the social skills necessary to engage in the life of their communities, and to secure and maintain meaningful employment. They will also help prepare society for the successful integration of all people with disabilities.

Program Description | Purpose of Funding

The Best Buddies Friendship program builds one-to-one friendships between students with IDD and those studying the standard curriculum, offering social mentoring while improving the quality of life and level of inclusion for a population that is often isolated and excluded. Through their participation, people with IDD form meaningful connections with their peers, gain self-confidence and self-esteem, and share interests, experiences and activities that everyone should enjoy.

Many students with IDD spend their formative years feeling alone. Attending school functions, participating in sports teams, or simply making a friend can be a nearly impossible prospect for someone with special abilities.

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Studies also indicate that these students are three times as likely to be bullied as their non-disabled peers. Best Buddies believes that through our school friendship chapters, we break down the isolation barriers and foster the growth of a peer support system. One-to-one interactions provide opportunities for students to learn valuable social skills from their typical peers. For these young people with disabilities, developing friendships is critical to a successful transition out of school and into the working world and community life.

BBPA staff recruit, train, and guide faculty and student leaders in running successful chapters. At each school, a faculty advisor and a special education advisor work with student leaders to recruit students with IDD (buddies) to be matched in one-to-one friendships with students without disabilities (peer buddies). Buddy pairs commit to keeping in touch at least once a week through phone calls, e-mails, or seeing each other at school. They commit to spending time together at least twice a month on their own time by doing traditional friendship activities such as going to the movies, attending sporting events, and listening to music. One major key to the success of our project design is the **one year commitment** required of all buddy pairs. This continuity allows for meaningful friendships to develop while providing a mutually supportive community for participants.

Best Buddies school chapters host a variety of activities that include monthly member meetings as well as social activities and outings. Buddy pairs participate in activities and get together weekly, often daily, in school and outside of school. Our programs educate and empower people with and without IDD to become leaders, public speakers, and advocates. Best Buddies passionately believes that our program participants can lead the effort within their community and beyond to build a more inclusive world for people with IDD.

Leadership Program

The Best Buddies Leadership Development programs educate and empower people with and without IDD to become leaders, public speakers and advocates. It develops socially responsible leaders that manage and operate their school-based chapters with the assistance of Best Buddies staff. This program includes our Ambassador Trainings, two state-wide training events, one each in the fall and spring semesters, and the annual Best Buddies International Leadership Conference.

Ambassadors offers people with and without IDD the opportunity to gain the public speaking skills, self-esteem and confidence needed to successfully advocate for themselves, their peers and Best Buddies in communities, workplaces and government. Our staff will train over 100 Ambassadors at 4 Ambassador Training events during the 2019-2020 school year. Best Buddies Ambassadors is the next step for the disability rights movement – teaching people with IDD the skills they need to advocate successfully. Once trained, ambassadors are expected to find opportunities in their chapters and communities to share their stories and become more involved citizens.

Leadership Training Days are hosted annually by all Best Buddies offices as an official organization initiative to prepare, empower, and inform all students and teacher advisors of their leadership roles for the coming school year. The Best Buddies Programs team designs the comprehensive curriculum for the different leadership roles; this training reviews chapter expectations, goals, deadlines, effective communication, delegation, and best practices for making decisions.

Leadership Conference brings together leaders with and without IDD from high schools, colleges, and communities worldwide, providing chapter leaders with personalized training that develops the leadership



skills needed to organize a Best Buddies chapter and share the mission. Student leaders participate in workshops, seminars, and evening events and gain new knowledge and skills to improve their community by including people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Participants have the opportunity to network with other leaders from Iowa and across the country.

Evaluation

Best Buddies utilizes a variety of measurement and tracking methods to quantify the impact of our programs:

- Best Buddies Annual Survey: an evaluation tool used to identify outcomes and performance for programs. They were developed by Michael Hardman, Ph.D, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Utah
- Friendship Update: The chapter president completes this form and returns it to the program manager by the first of each month. This tool is useful for the chapters to evaluate the quality of the matches on a regular basis.
- Mid and End Year Reports: Best Buddies staff use information submitted from these reports, along with detailed information gathered throughout the semester, to complete a comprehensive report on each chapter. The reports indicate quantitative and qualitative data including number of matches and quality of matches (based on number of matches meeting the commitment), and goals that the program manager has developed with the chapter leadership for the following semester.

Results from the 2017-2018 survey indicate that:

- 93% of peer buddies report that they are more aware that people with IDD can hold jobs in the community.
- 95% of peer buddies report that they support having neighbors with IDD
- 93% of faculty advisors report that buddies in their schools are more socially integrated in the school/community
- 90% of special education advisors report that their school has an increased understanding of capabilities of students with IDD.
- 92% of students with IDD report that they feel more accepted by their friends and in their communities, and
- 90% of volunteers recommend participating in Best Buddies to others.

Funding received from the Chester County Community Foundation will support our Friendship and Leadership Program in the following schools: Conestoga HS, Owen J. Roberts HS & MS, Unionville HS, West Chester East HS, West Chester University, Stetson MS, Downingtown East HS, Phoenixville Area HS & MS, Henderson HS, Valley Forge MS, Pierce MS, JR Fugett MS, Charles Patton MS, Bayard Rustin HS and Kennett MS.