



SPECIAL OLYMPICS and BEST BUDDIES *Partners Building an Inclusive Society*

Special Olympics unleashes the transformative power and joy of sports to reveal the full potential of athletes with intellectual disabilities, creating more inclusive communities, every day around the world. www.specialolympics.org

Best Buddies provides opportunities for friendships, jobs, and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). As a result of their involvement with Best Buddies, people with IDD secure rewarding jobs, live on their own, become inspirational leaders, and make lifelong friends. www.bestbuddies.org

What are Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)?

- IDD is a disability originating before the age of 18 and characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior.
- Intellectual functioning, or IQ, is measured by a test on which the average score is 100. People scoring below 75 are usually diagnosed as having IDD.
- Approximately 7 to 8 million Americans of all ages have IDD.

PROBLEM - Isolation and misunderstanding in the classroom

Students with IDD are 2 to 3 times more likely to be bullied than their peers without IDD. Researchers found that the bullying in this context was chronic in nature and was likely to be directly related to their disability. (*Walk a Mile in Their Shoes; AbilityPath.org, 2011*)

SOLUTIONS

Best Buddies programs bring youth and adults with and without IDD together through one-to-one matching, creating the foundation for real and natural friendships to develop. These friendships create inclusive environments in schools and communities.

- Best Buddies participants are more likely than peers to have few disciplinary incidents, read at grade level, and complete high school. Best Buddies participants outperformed a comparison group of students with similar exceptionalities by nine percentage points or more in reading at grade level. (*Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability, 2011*)
- Best Buddies volunteers annually contribute services that equate to more than \$164 million USD.
- Best Buddies' programs positively impact nearly 700,000 individuals with and without IDD worldwide.
- 96% of volunteers without IDD have a more positive attitude about the abilities of people with IDD due to their participation in Best Buddies. (*Best Buddies National Survey, Michael Hardman, PhD., University of Utah, 2011*)
- 93% of middle and high school special education advisors report that students with IDD are more socially integrated. (*Best Buddies National Survey, 2011*)
- 92% of middle and high school participants with IDD report feeling more accepted by their non-disabled peers. (*Best Buddies National Survey, 2011*)

(Over please)

Project UNIFY, a Special Olympics program, brings students with and without IDD together through education and sports related initiatives creating more inclusive school communities.

- 2,100 schools are taking part in Project UNIFY nationwide.
- 96% of participating schools implement a sports activity (e.g. Unified Sports) that includes both students with and without IDD
- 56% implement a campaign of awareness and advocacy for respect and inclusion of people with ID.
- 66% of teachers involved in Project UNIFY observe that Project UNIFY activities “help raise awareness about students with ID” and “increase opportunities for students with and without ID to work together.”
- Students involved in Project UNIFY activities report positive experiences that changed the way they interact with their classmates, becoming more patient (76%), learning to compromise (78%), and learning that they have things in common with their peers with IDD (65%).
- 75% of participating students said that Project UNIFY was a positive turning point in their lives.

PROBLEM – Unemployed, yet able

While nearly 3/4 of working-age adults in the U.S. are employed (72.8%), only 1/3 of people with disabilities are employed (33.4%). Employment of individuals with cognitive disabilities who live in the community is only 23.4%. People with ID specifically, are employed at even lower rates. (U.S. Census Bureau Figures 2010)

SOLUTIONS

Best Buddies Jobs helps individuals with IDD attain and maintain competitive jobs of their own choosing by providing ongoing support and training, enabling people with IDD to earn an income, pay taxes, and work in an integrated environment.

- Since its inception, Best Buddies Jobs has placed more than 500 individuals in integrated employment positions.
- Best Buddies Jobs participants earn an average of \$9.43/hour.
- Best Buddies Jobs participants work an average of 19 hours per week.
- 52% of working age Special Olympics Athletes in the U.S. are employed.

PROBLEM – Poor health services

Research shows people with disabilities have worse health care than the rest of the population.

- 50% of Special Olympics participants showed foot infections/problems causing pain and dysfunction;
- 25% have untreated dental decay and up to 50% gum infections, and 12% report oral pain at the time of health screening;
- 30% have hearing loss;
- 65% are overweight or obese;
- 22% exhibit low bone density.

SOLUTIONS

- The Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program has provided more than 1.2 million free health screenings to athletes with IDD. In addition, athletes receive free health products including eye glasses, hearing aids, and clinical exams, education, and referrals. Each year, Healthy Athletes recruits and trains more than 13,000 health professional volunteers who serve at more than 600 screening events.
- For every “seed dollar” that is made available to Special Olympics, five dollars in health care value are delivered. This is possible through powerful leveraging of donated services, materials, supplies, equipment and grants from foundations, corporations, universities, individual practitioners.