

Proposal Format

AGENCY GRANT PROPOSAL TO THE ABLE TRUST

11-046

Agency Name: Best Buddies International, DBA Best Buddies Florida

ORIGINAL

State of Florida Charitable Registration # CH2971

IRS Employer Identification Number: 52-1614576

501(c)(3)?: YES NO

Mailing Address

Street: 100 SE 2nd Street, Suite 2200

City: Miami

State: Florida

Zip Code: 33131

Physical Location where Services Provided

12400 SW 152 Street

Miami

Florida

33177

Executive Director's Name: Sandra Wilt, State Director

Phone Number: (407) 898-0787 ext 101

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Primary Project Contact: Karen Reyes, Miami Programs Supervisor

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Agency Website: www.bestbuddiesflorida.org

Project Name: Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami

Disability Population Served in proposed project: CIRCLE/HIGHLIGHT APPLICABLE

- Developmental Disability
- Epilepsy
- Spinal Cord/Head Injury
- Mental Health
- Hearing Impairment
- Learning Disability
- Drug/Alcohol Dependency
- Visual Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Disability Neutral
- Other: Orthopedically Impaired, Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Multiple Disabilities. Students 18-22 years old pursuing a special diploma.

County/Countries to Benefit Most from the proposed project:

Miami-Dade

Is Agency currently involved in ANY Litigation: YES NO

If Yes, attach an explanation page to the Cover Sheet

Indicate how you learned of The Able Trust: CIRCLE/HIGHLIGHT ONE

Radio – Magazine – Television – Newspaper – Internet – State Agency – School – Other

(list): Previous award recipient

of Persons proposed to be served during the project: 12 (2010-2011), plus 9 (2009-2010)

of Persons proposed to become employed during the project: 11

Total Amount of Funds Requested of The Able Trust: \$57,412

Total Amount of Funds Projected to support the proposed project: \$101,190

Cost Per Person to become Employed: \$9,199

[Redacted Signature]

Signature & Date Executive Director

[Redacted Signature]

Signature & Date Board Officer

WALTER ROBINSON, BOARD CHAIR

Brief History

Founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, Best Buddies International is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to uplifting the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Best Buddies Florida was founded as a subsidiary of Best Buddies International in 1991. Best Buddies executes its services through seven formal programs: *Middle Schools*, *High Schools*, and *Colleges* (school-based friendship programs between students with and without IDD), *Citizens* (a community-based friendship program between adults with and without IDD), *Jobs* (a supported employment program), *e-Buddies*® (an e-mail pen pal program for people with and without IDD), and *Buddies United in Leadership Development (BUILD)* — a training program that educates and empowers people with IDD to be leaders and public speakers. Currently, Best Buddies International's five largest corporate sponsors are: Audi, Pepsi, UBS, CSC, and Country Kitchen. BBI is not a primary corporate entity or a subsidiary of any other agency, corporation, service provider, etc. The Best Buddies Miami Jobs program will collaborate with Project SEARCH (a school-to-work model utilized by Best Buddies), Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS)—a service provider assisting with curriculum development, support staff, and funding, Zoo Miami (the work site), and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (a funding source beginning once participants are hired) during the proposed project.

Agency Mission

The official mission statement of Best Buddies is *to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for people with IDD*. Our proposed project fits within the official Best Buddies mission, because it will offer twelve capable individuals with IDD integrated employment opportunities that would otherwise not have been easily accessible to them. The overall vision statement of Best Buddies is *to put ourselves out of business*.

Project Name

Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami: This proposal seeks a second year of funding from the Able Trust. Best Buddies Florida recognizes that first year funding from the Able Trust was provided as start-up funding with the expectation that the program would be self sufficient after one year. We are pleased to report that the program has been a tremendous success, but has not yet attained financial self sufficiency. The reasons for not reaching that goal, solutions for ensuring future financial stability, and description of programmatic changes necessary for participant success are enumerated within this proposal and form the rationale for seeking a second year of support from the Able Trust.

Population Served

All Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami participants will have IDD. According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, an IDD is a state of functioning that begins before age 18 and is characterized by significant limitations in both intelligence levels and adaptive skills. We primarily serve people with mild to moderate mental retardation, Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury, fragile X syndrome and autism spectrum disorder. Project participants may also have the following disabilities: orthopedic disabilities, emotional disabilities, behavioral disabilities, learning disabilities, and multiple disabilities.

Statement of Need

In 2008, the employment rate of working-age people with cognitive disabilities in Florida was 25%, in comparison to 78.4% of working-age people without disabilities. Secondly, the percentage of working-age people with cognitive disabilities working full-time/full-year in Florida was 13.5%, in comparison to 60.1% of working-age people without disabilities. (2008 Disability Status Report: Florida, *Disability Statistics*, Cornell University). Additionally, Florida residents with a disability, on average, earned 24% less than non-disabled residents (StateData: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes, *Institute for Community Inclusion*, University of Massachusetts Boston, 2009). Therefore, Florida residents with cognitive disabilities are less likely to be employed, are less likely to work full time and year-round, and are paid significantly less than Florida residents without disabilities. These gaps are partly due to the lack of employment readiness people with

IDD possess upon high school graduation. Community work experience and coordinated transition services have been recognized as key factors in successful school-to-work transitions for young people with disabilities. Although federal law now mandates transition assistance for people with disabilities, such services are not consistently available to them. Consequently, youth with disabilities often miss out on opportunities to develop the work habits, communication skills, and attributes that employers look for when making hiring decisions. Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami tackles these challenges by preparing students with IDD for future employment by utilizing a unique MDCPS curriculum, guiding them from their school to work lifestyles by matching them with a MDCPS Special Education teacher as well as a Best Buddies Employment Consultant (EC), and allowing them to explore multiple work roles on-site at Zoo Miami.

Project Plan and Description

- All Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami participants are young adults with IDD (18-22 years old) pursuing a Special Diploma. There are two ways that individuals become a part of Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami. The primary way is through MDCPS; High School Transition Specialists can recommend students to participate in the project. Another way participants gain access to the project is through Project Victory—a half-day employment preparedness program for high school students; Project Victory personnel can recommend students to the project. Each student applies to the program and is accepted through a selection committee process.
- The needs of each participant are determined by the MDCPS Special Education Teacher and the Best Buddies EC. During the participant's first week, the EC attends all work-related functions with him or her—assisting with personal training, preparing and educating coworkers, and dealing with possible transitional issues. Secondly, job development and employer connections take place throughout the community and are accomplished through introductory phone calls, internet searches and referrals from family members, friends, and co-workers. After students are employed, follow-along, extended services will take place to ensure employment success.

Rationale for requesting second year funding support:

- As a result of the deficits we observed at the end of year one, Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami will incorporate a new curriculum. The specific curriculum that will be utilized throughout the project is *Life Centered Career Education* (LCCE), which helps prepare students to function independently and productively as family members, citizens, and workers. LCCE is a motivating and effective classroom, home, and community-based curriculum. The LCCE curriculum is an educational system designed to provide students who have mild IDD, learning disabilities, or who are "at risk" with the important skills needed to function successfully as productive workers in the home and community. The curriculum focuses on both the paid and unpaid work that one does as a responsible community and family member, a citizen and volunteer, an employee, and a productive leisure and vocational participant. Six separate courses will be offered to all participants: (1) Social and Personal Skills, (2) Self-Determination, (3) Career Preparation, (4) Career Placement, (5) Supported Competitive Employment, and (6) Leadership Skills Development. Participants will move through the curriculum one-by-one.
- Year two of Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami will also incorporate the *Microcomputer Evaluation of Careers and Academics* (MECA), which is an age-appropriate transition, career exploration and vocational assessment system related to training, education and employment.
 - The system begins with a quick screening of interests, utilizing the "interest indicator." The results are then electronically scored and stored.
 - The management system then assigns activities for the user and delivers all assigned hands-on activities ("work samples") as well as job-specific, academic/basic skills assessments. The system includes career planning and a career portfolio for post-secondary goal setting. The system assesses user self-determination skills related to setting and achieving academic and career goals.
 - Then it scores, interprets, and assigns skill-enhancement activities based on assessment results and finally delivers skill-enhancement activities. Learned skills, if practiced, become habits in 21

days. While doing all of this, the management system is tracking, scoring, benchmarking, storing, and printing information on each user in the system.

*Once participants locate and maintain employment, they (along with their employers) will complete a *Participant Satisfaction Survey Form* and a *Supervisor's Evaluation*. The evaluations determine if the participant is satisfied or needs alternate placement, or if the employer has questions or concerns. Both forms of evaluation are administered at 90-day and six month intervals. EC's are in continual communication with the employer to address their needs and, if necessary, provide ongoing training for the participant.

- There are several ways Best Buddies obtains employment opportunities in the community. Examples include: (1) introductory calls and cold calls, (2) referrals from family members, friends, and co-workers, (3) job fairs, (4) hotel association events, (5) community networking, (6) Chambers of Commerce, and (7) business leadership networking.
- Also recognized as a deficiency in year one was the students' abilities to navigate public transportation, and be emotionally and personally "job ready". Year two participants will have more intensive one-on-one personal readiness. After participants secure employment, the EC teaches them how to get from their house to their new job using public or private transportation. During their on-the-job training phase, the EC temporarily goes to work with the participant and provides support. In addition, the EC will work with management and co-workers on how to best support the participant in achieving successful employment. This individualized support continues until the participant is comfortable enough to work independently. As long as the participant remains employed, Best Buddies continues to periodically monitor their performance based on the individual's needs, and provides additional support when requested. The EC will communicate with employers and other support service providers on a regular basis over the phone and in person, and they supply progress reports and/or case notes to the participant's assigned Vocational Rehabilitation counselor as necessary.

Expected Project Outcome

In addition to the educational curriculums executed by MDCPS personnel and individual job seeking discussions with the EC, more intensive "job readiness" and "personal readiness to work" subjects will be formally covered this year. Secondly, we have learned that our students will be best served by placing them into jobs when they are ready and after a job has been developed (as opposed to when they complete the regular school-year schedule). By staggering the timing of placement activities, there will not be a rush of ten to 12 students all needing job development assistance in the April and May of each year. With the aforementioned additions to Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami, Best Buddies anticipates obtaining the following results in measuring our success:

- 80% of participants will be placed in employment at an appropriate time during the school year.
- 80% of participants will report that they were adequately trained for their job;
- 80% of participants will report that the project supported employment services were easily accessible;
- 80% of participants will report that the project helped them achieve their career goals; and
- 80% of employers will report that they found the experience of working with persons with an IDD to be a positive one.

Amount Requested/Total Project Cost

Best Buddies is requesting from The Able Trust \$57,412 in support of Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami. The total cost of the project is \$101,190. When implementing the program in year one, multiple funding/reimbursement roadblocks inhibited the project to become "self-sufficient" entering year two. Those situations included:

1. It was anticipated that the 12 students (ages 18-22) identified by MDCPS exceptional education staff, would be eligible for job placement assistance at the completion of their academic and employment training at the Zoo Miami site from the State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Further, it was anticipated that longer term job stability funding would be provided (where eligibility was established) through Medicaid.

2. Despite continued requests from Best Buddies Jobs and MDCPS staff, cases were not opened by Vocational Rehabilitation on a timely basis. In order for a funding stream to be established, a minimum of eight cases had to have been opened by December 2009. Approximately 90 days is required for Vocational Rehabilitation intake, testing, and administrative procedures prior to participant eligibility for placement. If done properly, students ready for community job placement by March 2010 would have had funding to support the assistance activities; however, only one case had been opened, another student was placed into a perfect job setting (but without accompanying Vocational Rehabilitation funding to Best Buddies), and one other student dropped out of the program altogether. Finally, at this writing, the remaining students are in "job seeking status" but in less than one month, a new group of 12 students will be ready to begin their educational/vocational training at Zoo Miami and there will be no funding to cover the services of the Best Buddies EC.

In addition and at this time, the Medicaid waiting lists to either become eligible or to be authorized for job placement, follow-along services is long. Best Buddies is willing to find funding for this component and will continue to work with the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ADP) to address this issue.

Fully committed to continuing Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami for a second year, Best Buddies, MDCPS, and Project SEARCH convened a meeting with top representatives of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to discuss their desire to partner in this project and make a difference for their clients. Once the district Vocational Rehabilitation staff learned of the referral timeliness problems, they stepped forward to develop solutions.

At this writing, a specific Vocational Rehabilitation counselor has been appointed to work with and expedite enrollment of students participating in Project Search-Zoo Miami. We believe that the sustaining funding for Zoo Miami in the 2011-2012 school year will be created through this process if Best Buddies succeeds in successfully placing students into competitive community employment. That is our challenge and to date, our 80% placement rate speaks to our ability to accomplish this goal and fund and expand this program.

The grant from The Able Trust will fund: a full-time EC; a lease on a golf cart to transport participants to and from their worksites throughout the 300 acre zoo; two-way radios and cell phones; uniforms for participants and staff; recruitment activities; and monthly Metro Passes for students who are not eligible for Social Security's Golden Pass benefits. Best Buddies supported employment services encompass the costs of the rehabilitation services, supported employment services and job coach assistance, for the first year of the program while the students are still in training. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will not pay for these services until participants have secured employment and have left the umbrella of the public school system. MDCPS will contribute the Average Daily Membership funding (the amount of funding a student generates in public education) in the form of teacher salary, paraprofessional salary, a curriculum support specialist, materials, and supplies. Zoo Miami will serve as the host site, provide a staff member to serve as the business liaison, identify over a dozen unique work sites, and provide staff mentors for the participants.

Describe the Future Funding situation:

The changed relationship and a "fee for service" contract with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation will enable, by the end of year two, the development of an ongoing funding stream. The outcome of 80% placement rate will support sufficient funding for an employment consultant and related costs for year three of Zoo Miami. In addition, Best Buddies and the Project SEARCH partnership will seek funding from other foundations and public entities as they become available to expand the program to other training sites. The key to developing a solid funding stream to serve students is to take this pilot to other job training sites. In addition to support from Vocational Rehabilitation and to ensure the long-term fortitude and expansion of the project, we have an active Best Buddies Miami Advisory Board, whose primary responsibilities include furthering Best Buddies' mission by fundraising, networking, and planning special events. We will also be seeking an increase in our funding through the Dade Community Foundation, based upon growing demand for this project.

"Project SEARCH is the best thing that has ever happened in my life!"
– Louis Mojica, 2009/2010 Project SEARCH-Zoo Miami participant

**Best Buddies Florida
Project Search-Zoo Miami**

Summary of Expenses	The Able Trust Request	Best Buddies Florida Contribution	Total Project Cost	Narrative
Salaries				
State Director (9% time on project)	\$ -	\$ 6,957	\$ 6,957	Fundraise, represent Best Buddies on the state level and ensure all Best Buddies International programmatic directives are being followed.
Area Director (14% time on project)	\$ -	\$ 7,142	\$ 7,142	Fundraise, represent Best Buddies on the Miami level, develop and maintain a Miami Advisory Board.
Deputy Directors (17% of time on project)	\$ -	\$ 7,826	\$ 7,826	Oversee and enhance program operations all while supporting the execution of developmental initiatives.
Program Supervisor (17% of time on project)	\$ -	\$ 5,895	\$ 5,895	Supervise staff, and organize awareness events, Full-time Job Coach. On-site and follow-along services provided once employment is secured.
Employment Consultant (100% time on project)	\$ 33,000	\$ -	\$ 33,000	Calculated at 22% for FICA, medical, unemployment, and workers compensation.
Fringe Benefits @ 22%	\$ 7,260	\$ -	\$ 7,260	
Subtotal	\$ 40,260	\$ 27,820	\$ 68,080	
Programs				
Employment Consultant Travel	\$ 4,140	\$ -	\$ 4,140	Budgeted at \$345 per month x 12 months (includes travel to place students and provide follow along services after school has ended).
Student Travel	\$ 5,070	\$ -	\$ 5,070	6 Bus Passes at \$50 per month (\$3,000) and 1 Daily, Round-trip STS Service at \$6 for 49 weeks (\$1470). Lead staff members are required to attend the Best Buddies International All-Staff Training. Included is the cost of the training, airfare, food and lodging. Cost is also included for staff to attend local professional trainings.
Staff Recruitment/Training	\$ -	\$ 933	\$ 933	Includes expenses associated with public awareness, marketing, and expenses associated with recruiting job sites and potential employment partners. Includes \$500 for a Parent Night/Kick-Off event at the beginning of the semester to introduce parents to the program.
Marketing/Job Development	\$ -	\$ 3,501	\$ 3,501	Duplication of materials, mail outs, folders, brochures, refreshments at recruitment events.
Student Recruitment	\$ 400	\$ -	\$ 400	
Subtotal	\$ 9,610	\$ 4,434	\$ 14,044	

Operational								
Equipment	\$	-	\$	1,313	\$	1,313	\$	1,313
Includes cost of monthly copier rental and replacement furniture and equipment for the office. \$175/month for 10 months. Also includes \$250 for maintenance of golf cart (part of leasing agreement states leasee is responsible for equipment failure and maintenance costs/normal wear and tear such as replacement of tires, belts, etc). Zoo Miami's vendor is the only option.								
Golf Cart Rental	\$	2,000	\$	-	\$	-	\$	2,000
Office Space/Utilities	\$	-	\$	7,094	\$	7,094	\$	7,094
Postage	\$	-	\$	343	\$	343	\$	343
Supplies/Printing	\$	-	\$	1,096	\$	1,096	\$	1,096
Monthly rent/utilities for a portion of the office space. All postage needs for material distribution. General printing, office and computer supplies. Students and staff must wear Zoo uniform shirts daily. Budget include 75 shirts (\$12/unit) for duration of program (includes 5 shirts per student and staff member).								
Student Uniforms	\$	900	\$	-	\$	-	\$	900
Includes 1 cell phone at \$75/month for use at the zoo. Also includes Best Buddies cost of \$30/month for staff cell phone (student, staff, parent, and district communication purposes) and agencies monthly phone, internet, and fax usage.								
Mobile telephone- required at training sites	\$	750	\$	1,678	\$	1,678	\$	2,428
Subtotal	\$	3,650	\$	11,524	\$	11,524	\$	15,174
These funds (4% of total request) are used by Best Buddies International to oversee the administrative and management needs of our state offices. This includes, but is not limited to: payroll, insurance benefits, accounting and legal needs, use of the logo and BBI materials, and the coordination of the national staff and volunteer training conferences. The funds are also used to cover a portion of the Best Buddies International Programs Department salaries. The Programs Department is responsible for hiring, training and supervising the State Director to ensure that the state office follows Best Buddies International's standard of high-quality service to our participants.								
Agency Support & Training (administrative)	\$	3,892	\$	-	\$	-	\$	3,892
Total Expenses	\$	57,412	\$	43,778	\$	43,778	\$	101,190