

Informing Families ... Today and Tomorrow

A resource of the Washington State DD Council



Best Buddies International Leadership Conference 2019. (L-R) Michael Graham, Margot, Ivanova Smith, Mary-Kylie Cranford, Grace Goldman, Devon Adelman, Erica Brody, Gwen Gabert (Photo credit: Best Buddies Washington)

Sharing Opportunities for All

As we say goodbye to winter, I am thrilled to see hints of spring and the promise of longer days, warmer weather, and (hopefully) some drier days.

It's a great time to share some exciting community resources that you and your family can explore throughout the spring and summer.

As always, the most meaningful opportunities are ones that can be experienced by all people—regardless of age, disability, or background.

In a world that all too often focuses on our differences, there is so much to learn from others who have different lived experiences, identities, and perspectives.

In many cases, these bonds can last a lifetime and can help us understand ourselves better too.

In this issue we highlight a couple of resources that focus on building meaningful relationships and sharing recreational experiences

together. The great thing is that some opportunities—such as Best Buddies—are not connected to DDA eligibility and are open for all people to participate.

This issue also includes important information about applying for DDA eligibility and services, as well as ways to stay connected with the latest DDA news and updates.

As always, please know that my door is always open to you. Feel free to call me at 360-586-3558 or send me an email at jeremy.norden-paul@ddc.wa.gov.

Thank you for reading. I wish you and your family a happy spring full of shared experiences with friends, new and old alike.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Norden-Paul
Executive Director
Washington State DD Council



Introduction to Planning and Services in Washington State



Our free four-page LifeCourse Toolkit includes:

- A Star Form to help identify supports to reach goals of any kind.
- The process for applying to DDA for eligibility and services.
- Tips for organizing key documents needed to apply for programs throughout life.
- DDA's Waiver Programs and Community First Choice (CFC).

Download or order your free copy: informingfamilies.org/life-course-intro.

Now available in Spanish

(Photo credit: Best Buddies Washington)



(L-R) Erica Brody, Grace Goldman, Laurel Freedman, Devon Adelman, Molly McCabe

Best Buddies is giving Washington State

something to celebrate this spring with the opening of its first state office, paving the way for expansion into schools and communities throughout the state.

It's welcome news to Devon Adelman, Michael Graham and Ivanova Smith.

As founding members of the state chapter, they want to help end the social isolation of other people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) who have a hard time connecting with peers without disabilities.

In a recent interview with Informing Families, Ivanova explained that Best Buddies creates a safe way for people with and without disabilities to form friendships.

"Best Buddies comes in and helps get us past the first impressions," she said. "You have interests. I have interests. Let's do stuff together. And it develops into a natural friendship."

Michael agreed. He got involved right out of high school, after connecting to a chapter at Seattle University.

"I would say that for the people that are really isolated, they truly don't get many friends because they

don't know how. Best Buddies can change that and show how you truly can make friendships."

According to Erica Brody, Best Buddies Washington Advisory Board Chair, the friendship door swings both ways.

"There aren't natural venues in society that allow for having really natural organic connections to people who are different from us," she said. "And so Best Buddies creates that venue for expanding your circle with somebody who shapes who you become."

Devon said that joining Best Buddies was life changing. "I was able to be myself without anyone judging me or doubting my abilities."

Devon's first peer buddy, Molly McCabe, said there is nothing artificial about the friendships.

"It's truly about the most authentic

Mark Your Calendars



BEST BUDDIES

FRIENDSHIP WALK

May 16, 2020

University of Washington

Learn More:
bestbuddiesfriendshipwalk.org/washington

relationship you can think of. Sometimes, friendships don't work out. And that's a reality that people with disabilities don't get to experience—it's a part of developing yourself as a person."

Ivanova said one of the best things about the program is that it's open to anyone with IDD. "Best Buddies doesn't have the gate keeping that a lot of services have, where you have to be DDA eligible," she said.

With its Washington office opening this spring, Best Buddies can now grow its school and adult Friendship programs, accelerate its Ambassador training program, and launch a Jobs program in the Seattle area.

Several K-12 schools on the west side of the state are already coming on board, and Best Buddies plans to expand throughout the state to meet demand.

"I am super proud of what I accomplished," Devon said, "and I want to continue being able to grow with Best Buddies Washington. I can't wait!"

Learn more about Best Buddies: bestbuddies.org/washington.

Interested in starting a Best Buddies chapter in your school or community? Contact Erica Brody at: ericabrody@bestbuddies.org.



Buddy Pair Michael Graham & Grace Goldman (Photo Credit: Best Buddies)



Recreation for All

by Katrina Davis

When you think of recreation for children, teens, and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), what images or programs come to mind?

Maybe you think of happy campers playing games outside, trips to the zoo, bowling, hiking, swimming, or people circled around a craft table.

Perhaps you struggle with this question because you've had difficulty finding a program to meet your child's unique needs.

Regardless, we all know recreation, leisure, and play are particularly important for individuals with IDD.

Whether your child attends a day or overnight recreation experience, you are providing him or her with a valuable opportunity for growth, exploration, and independence.

Meaningful and appropriate recreation opportunities are also a powerful means to provide dignity

and respect for those with IDD.

Finding a program that can accommodate the specific and unique needs of your child will take some work, and there may be a few failed attempts. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What medical staff will be present at camp?
- How are medications given?
- What behavioral training do staff have and how are behavior plans implemented?
- Are camp staff open to additional training or support to meet my child's needs?
- How will I know what my child did during his/her stay?
- What is the communication plan if staff need to reach you?

WHERE TO FIND SUMMER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

[Center for Children with Special Needs Camp Directory](#)

Although the program closed

due to loss of funding, the camp directory is still online: cshcn.org/resources-contacts/summer-camp-directory.

Local Arcs and Parent to Parent
Arcs and P2P can connect families with local resources and activities. Visit arcwa.org for chapter listings.

DDA Respite in the Community
If your child is enrolled in the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), ask your case manager for a list of summer recreation programs that are contracted with DDA.

LEARN MORE

For a list of these and other recreation resources and ideas, visit informingfamilies.org/rec.

About the Author
Katrina Davis is a mother of two children, and a career advocate in family support and social services who brings a blend of personal and professional expertise to Seattle Children's Autism Center.

DDA News and Information



Get instant updates!

- News & announcements
- Provider information
- Resources
- Trainings & events

Sign up to receive information:

- Text "DDA" to 468311
- Visit dshs.wa.gov/dda (click on the envelope to the right)

CONNECT with COMMUNITY at ANY AGE

There may be days when you think it is impossible to find community resources or engagement opportunities.

With multiple paths and avenues available, it can be hard to know where to start. What may work for one family or individual does not work for another.

The Community Connections Guidebook offers ideas, tips and resources to help envision a full and meaningful life for your family member.

View or download your free copy at: informingfamilies.org/guide. (Available in English and Spanish)



State of Washington
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Developmental Disabilities Administration
P.O. Box 45310
Olympia, WA 98504-5310

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OF ENTERPRISE SRVCS
98501

SCAM ALERT

Scammers pretending to be government employees try to scare and trick people into giving out their personal information and money. Some of them make threats and demand immediate payment to avoid arrest or other legal action.

DON'T BE FOOLED!

- The government will never call out of the blue and ask for a social security number.
- The government will never ask for payment by gift card or wire transfer.
- Social security numbers cannot be suspended.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- The call, text or email says there is a problem with your Social Security Number or account.
- Someone asks you to pay a fine or debt with retail gift cards, wire transfers, pre-paid debit cards, internet currency, or cash.
- Scammers who pretend they're from Social Security or another government agency.
- Callers threaten you with arrest or other legal action.

LEARN MORE AT [OIG.SSA.GOV/SCAM](https://www.oig.ssa.gov/scam)

