

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 896

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Best Buddies for its honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly pause to recognize those community institutions and organizations that strive to improve the lives of children and adults suffering with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding organization is Best Buddies, a non-profit 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); and

WHEREAS, IDD are conditions that affect more than 7.5 million American children, adults, and families, and public knowledge and understanding are the most effective weapons for alleviating the serious problems associated with IDD; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1989, Best Buddies is a vibrant, international organization that has grown from one original chapter to encompass more than 1,500 colleges, high schools, and middle schools across the country and around the world; and

WHEREAS, with six extraordinary programs operating across the country, including Best Buddies Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges, Citizens, e-Buddies, and Jobs, this remarkable organization positively impacts the lives of more than 350,000 individuals each year by matching individuals suffering with IDD with compassionate and empathetic volunteers; and

WHEREAS, believing deeply in its vision of social inclusion, Best Buddies encourages all citizens to realize that every face in the community belongs and that individuals with IDD should be afforded full access to leisure activities, employment, and community housing; and

WHEREAS, Best Buddies tirelessly strives to introduce socialization opportunities and job coaching, providing the necessary tools for the afflicted to become more independent and, consequently, more included in the community; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee was first privileged to experience Best Buddies's presence through its Vanderbilt University Chapter in 1992, and the Best Buddies Tennessee office officially opened in January, 2010, thanks to the noble efforts of Anneliese Barron; and

WHEREAS, Anneliese Barron, a Best Buddies volunteer and Williamson County resident, is the first individual in Best Buddies's twenty-year history to raise the necessary funds to open a Best Buddies state office on her own;

WHEREAS, despite possessing no experience in fundraising or event planning, she brilliantly organized the Best Buddies Cocktail Reception, Best Buddies Gala, and 5 for Friendship 5K Run/Walk, and partnered with local celebrities, such as Nashville Predators Head Coach Barry Trotz, News 2's Bob Mueller, Fox 17's Nick Paranjape, Nashville Predators Defensemen Dan Hamhuis, to raise \$146,240 in fourteen months; and

WHEREAS, extending its healing touch throughout the State, Best Buddies Tennessee plans to launch ten chapters on middle school and high school campuses this year, serving 150 students with IDD and positively impacting the lives of 1,500 Tennessee residents; and

WHEREAS, the people of this State are fortunate indeed to be served by the caring staff and volunteers of Best Buddies, and it is appropriate that they are recognized for their dedication to meeting the unique needs of Tennessee's children and adults suffering with IDD; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend the leadership, staff, and volunteers of Best Buddies for their honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee and wish them every them the very best in all of their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.