SHOUT, Inc. Business Plan 2022-2025

Table of Contents

SHOUT, Inc.

Introduction

In 1999, founder Pat Loewi’s 10-year old daughter, Sammy, asked her 4th grade class to host a Special Olympics day at Graland Country Day School in Denver, Colorado.  As the only student in a wheelchair because of her muscular dystrophy, she wanted her classmates to be exposed to “difference” and realize “kids are just kids” no matter what challenges they face. Twenty-three years later that one-day event has evolved into “Sammy’s Buddy Program” (SBP), pairing able-bodied students with differently-abled students (children with physical and intellectual differences), providing opportunities for all students to develop a sense of belonging and engagement.

The mission of the non-profit organization SHOUT, Inc., the book SHOUT, and the initiatives within Sammy’s Buddy Program are to change school culture by normalizing and celebrating difference, encourage inclusion and build understanding around the challenges experienced by students with different abilities, while developing student leaders within the community. These challenges range from major disease diagnosis (muscular dystrophy, down syndrome, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, autism) to less visible medical issues such as hemophilia, diabetes, heart failure, kidney disease, Crohn’s disease, seizure disorders cancers, and mental health conditions.

On May 25, 2021, CEO of Children’s Hospital Colorado, Jena Hausmann, declared a "State of Emergency" in youth mental health, a first in the hospital system’s 117-year history.  The mental health needs among children are growing at a very rapid pace and with that, the resources and access to care must also support and expand. Although mental health issues have been on the forefront of schools in recent years, the extent to which students are negatively affected by the pandemic and global conflict is alarming. Students with disabilities have a higher risk of depression and often feel socially isolated. These feelings stem from a variety of reasons including  communication difficulties, transportation barriers and limited social opportunities. SHOUT, Inc. and Sammy’s Buddy Programs works tirelessly to create spaces and opportunities for all students to feel seen and heard and celebrated. Able-bodied students participating in our program recognize the challenges faced by students with disabilities providing a breadth of understanding and empathy.

The level of the child’s impairment and support and attitudes from others are key factors that inﬂuence the mental health and wellbeing of differently-abled children. When those around them take effective steps to include children with disabilities and ensure their needs are met, they can help foster positive mental health and wellbeing. However, when this does not occur, mental health difﬁculties are more likely to develop.

With the generous support from foundations and individual donations, Sammy’s Buddy Program is currently operating in nine schools, with the goal of replicating it across the Denver Metro area, in 4th-8th grade classrooms. Both able-bodied and differently-abled students at have shared through testimonials that the program has been life-changing.

Landscape and Opportunity

We know from research that a sense of belonging and engagement are building blocks to success in school and that bullying breaks down that foundation. Bullying isn’t a new problem; however, it significantly impacts the ability of a differently-abled student to thrive and succeed at school. Some differently-abled children may have challenges in forming and maintaining relationships because the impairments caused by the disability limit or restrict them from participating in everyday activities with their peers. Some children with disabilities have difﬁculty in picking up social cues that allow them to participate cooperatively with others (e.g. following the rules of a game, taking turns). They may ﬁnd it hard to participate in games that other children play or to approach their peers to engage in social activities. As a result, children with disabilities may lose conﬁdence in their ability to make friends or to participate in activities that other children their age enjoy. The combination of these factors can lead children with a disability to be at risk of developing mental health problems, such as low self-esteem and depression. However, when families, schools and communities take steps to understand the child’s individual needs, build on their strengths, and provide supportive and respectful environments, children with additional needs can experience good mental health and their potential for learning can be maximized.

In a three-year study of anti-bullying programs by the Colorado Trust Foundation, schools which ranked highest on positive school climate (and thus low on bullying) translated to 78% of students scoring at proficient or advanced in math, verses 34% in schools with a less positive school climate. When kids feel safe and accepted, attendance and academic performance increases. The book [SHOUT](https://shouteffect.org/) shares shocking statistics about bullying – while one in three able-bodied students report being bullied (National Center for Education Statistics 2013) differently-abled children or those who identify as LGBTQ are two to three times more likely than other students to be bullied for being different. Every day 160,000 teens skip school, one in 10 teens drops out of school due to repeated bullying, and 80 percent of all teens are cyber-bullied.

SAMMY’S BUDDY PROGRAM

## Vision

Shift our current school culture through exposure to a plan of activities that exposes students in grades 4th - 8th to children of difference (whether physical, emotional, mental, intellectual or gender-wise different) to increase knowledge, understanding, kindness, compassion, leadership skills and respect.

## Mission

The mission of Sammy’s Buddy Program is to normalize difference, encourage inclusion and build understanding around the challenges experienced by students with different abilities while developing student leaders within the community.

## Stakeholders

SHOUT’s role is to support the replication of Sammy’s Buddy Programs and to foster and build on the successes of differently-abled student populations in Denver metro area schools. We have many key supporters in this effort, chief among them Administrators, teachers, parents and students at the schools where Buddy Programs are hosted:

Administrators - update this – have been enthusiastic supporters of SBP from CEO of DSST, Bill Kurtz to Josh Shald, VP of Rocky Mountain Prep Schools. Josh Cobbs, Principal at Graland has been a strong advocate for SBP for twenty-two years.

Teachers - School site enthusiasm, becoming advocates for a school culture where differences are appreciated…assisting program managers in creating a tailored year long plan of activity, meeting students where they are.

Students - Students have been a huge force in the success and growth of the program. Changing attitudes and debunking stereotypes… becoming leaders with non-participants and modeling respect for differently-abled kids.

Remove because it is not current or leave in for historical perspective?PBS - SHOUT and Rocky Mountain Public Broadcasting System (PBS) recently partnered to offer public service spots highlighting differently-abled kids and their achievements.

Hogan Lovells, LLC – The international law firm has provided pro bono legal work for the Sammy’s Buddy Program and the companion book SHOUT, for 501(c)3 filings, as well as trademark and copyright designations.

The Anschutz Foundation – The Anschutz Foundation is currently supporting Buddy Programs in the Denver Metro Area and has donated $50,000 in that effort.

The Daniels Fund has also supporting Sammy’s Buddy Program in the

Denver Metro Area and has donated $25,000 in that effort. There is a pending grant request for $50,000.

LARRK Foundation - The LARRK Foundation is currently supporting Buddy Programs in the Denver Metro Area and has donated $20,000 in that effort.

Individual Contributions - over the past two years, SHOUT, Inc has received individual contributions totaling $39,000 to support Sammy’s Buddy Program initiatives.

Plan of Activity

All it takes is permission from school administration, identifying one or several teachers willing to work with a Special Education teacher or teachers in designing and executing a program that is school specific. At the beginning of the academic year, able-bodied students are matched with differently-abled students through pre-program surveys and teacher recommendations. Then a year of activities take place, from helping guide the Buddies - through getting to know each other - to more interactive activities as the year goes on. Through these activities, they get to know one another which leads to developing friendships outside of the program.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| MONTH | STUDENT ACTIVITY | TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES | NOTES |
| September | Sammy’s Buddy Program introduction and conversation around what it means to be differently-abledGet acquainted with “Get to Know You” session, name tags with personal traits to explore | Matching surveys given toall able-bodied students and support in pairing buddiesGet to Know You worksheet distributed for all pairs | These activities can happen virtually or in-person |
| October | Lunch together outside and fall nature observation | Teachers to help facilitate the project with teams | These activities can happen virtually or in-person |
| November | Book reading and author visit by Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins; Jennifer invited to speak and answer questions for students | Reading of All The Way To The Top with students prior to Jennifer’s visit; discussion questions prepared by students | Supplies needed TBD |
| December | - Winter activity - in person celebration or craft project | Supplies provided by SBP; teachers to help facilitate the project | Supplies and needs TBD |
| January | - MLK themed activity Leadership Lesson with able-bodied students | - English assignment of researching and writing about a famous person who is differently-abled, a select few will be asked to present during the Leadership Lesson | T-shirts needed, other needs TBD |
| February | Kindness Month | - Activities include Kindness Boxes in each Classroom, book readings about kindness, kindness bracelets distributed, writing buddies letters or emails! | Event can happen in-person or virtually |
| March | Hands-on and fun project/activity with buddies (i.e. making a Terrarium together or learning about and holding reptiles) | Select group project – organized by SBP | Event is planned for in-person learning; virtual event will be substituted if need-be |
| April | Special Olympics Guests Speaker Spring in Denver Activity | Local outing organized by SBP | Guest speaker and activity planned for outside |
| May | End of Year Celebration: Students plan what gamesthey want to play in teams with their buddies | Plan four game stations with PE teachers – SBP buys all supplies and icies or special treat for students | In-person event only |

MEASURING SUCCESS - need to review these

## Impact and Evaluations

With the generous support of The Anschutz Foundation, the Daniels Fund and the LARRK Foundation, as well as individual contributors, Sammy’s Buddy Program has been completed in ten schools. Currently in five public schools and one private school, with the goal of replicating it across the Denver Metro area, ideally in 5th grade classrooms. Both able-bodied and differently-abled students have shared through testimonials on Post-Surveys that the program has been life- changing. A formal evaluation by the Department of Special Education Teacher Training Program at Metropolitan State University is created at the end of each school year and has provided

The program began in the fall of 2016 and has now served a total of 3,482 students over five years, of which 81% represent free and reduced lunch students in several of the schools. The Rocky Mountain Prep Network we

currently work with has 87% students of Color.

Program participation increased 47% in 2017 and is attributed to both student and teacher interest/advocacy.

80% of participating students at the beginning of the program expressed they were nervous, uncomfortable, shy, and timid about interacting with one another. By the end of the program 92% said they felt comfortable, accomplished, and proud in interacting with and supporting their new buddies.

A series of pre and post-surveys demonstrates that able-bodied students became more respectful, empathic and understanding of their differently-abled peers by the end of the school year.

Differently-abled students looked forward to interacting with their buddies and voiced they didn’t feel invisible or devalued as they had previously. In addition, they felt safer and more comfortable attending school – leading to a decrease in absenteeism.

A recent UCLA study found that bullying peaks in middle school, while students are making the transition from children to young adults. This research and feedback from program participants have resulted in the decision to focus most program replication on Elementary school students going forward.

## Impact

Sammy’s Buddy Program has impacted over 11,000 students in 26 schools since its inception, turning the original one-day event into a program that has expanded into four distinct initiatives for each and every participating school. These innovative initiatives begin with a customized calendar of events for each school focusing on the monthly Buddy Activities, ongoing Leadership Lessons, a donated Inclusion Library, and a month-long and school-wide Kindness Campaign. Each of these initiatives circles back to Sammy’s original dream of being seen, heard, understood, and accepted and thus, ensuring that all  students feel a sense of belonging and acceptance.

## Performance Metrics - need to review this

Included in the budget is support for a formal evaluation conducted by Metropolitan State University with required engagement of teachers and student participants at each Sammy Buddy program host school:

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| --- | --- |
| Strategies | Outcomes |
| Raise awareness and understanding of challenges experienced by differently-abled students | Change student attitudes and stereotypes towards differently-abled students in at least 92% of student participants |
| Create experiences to “normalize” differences in school culture | Modify socialization and behavior patterns with differently-abled students in at least 92% of student participants.  |
| Replicate Sammy Buddy Programs in the Denver Metro Area | Increase the number of existing Buddy Programs to 14 over the next three years |
| Create the Buddy Program Member Council | Engage teachers and students as advocates on behalf of program success |

GOVERNANCE

**Shout, Inc. Governance**

**Board of Directors**

**Pat Loewi**

Pat grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, where she taught English and history before moving to Washington, D.C. working on Capitol Hill doing press work. She is currently living in Denver, Colorado, near her daughter Kim, and her three granddaughters. Pat has spent most of her professional career in communications, radio ownership and nonprofit work.  She served as CEO for Special Olympics Colorado as well as the Kempe Foundation for Abused and Neglected Children.  However, she admits to learning most about kids who are “different” from her daughter Sammy’s experiences of feeling marginalized.  Sammy was in a wheelchair with Ullrich Congenital Muscular Dystrophy from the age of 10 until her untimely death at age 22.  Pat is therefore motivated to change the culture by promoting kindness, compassion and acceptance of kids who are “different.”  SHOUT is Pat’s first book and, in March 2016, according to the Denver Post, SHOUT was the number one best-selling title in paperback non-fiction books, in the Denver region.  SHOUT earned the Parent’s Choice award in 2016 out of 4,000 books nationally.

**Kim Knous Dolan**

Kim is currently working in the Denver Public Schools as Regional Specialist for Career and College Success at DPS and, prior to that served as the Associate Director of the Donnell-Kay Foundation.  Her work revolved around school accountability, new school development, youth, and school leadership pipelines. In 2006 she helped lead the Manual High School renewal and support initiative as a loaned executive to Denver Public Schools.  Prior to joining the foundation, Kim worked on state policy issues for Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO) as well as the Colorado Association of School Boards. She also served as legislative aide to U.S. Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD), and was Associate Director of the Democratic Steering Committee in Washington, DC. Kim actively fundraises for education and youth-related causes, serves on the Board of Directors for the Donnell-Kay Foundation, is active on the development committee of STRIVE Preparatory Schools, and participated in Leadership Denver (class of '05).  Kim also was selected as one of Colorado's "fifty for the future" by the Colorado Statesman in 2007. She holds a master's degree in public affairs from the University of Colorado at Denver. Kim, a Denver native, enjoys spending time with her three adorable and energetic young daughters and practicing yoga.

**Robert S Fotheringham**

With a BA in English Literature from the University of Utah, Bob was accepted at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. In 1971, he started his own advertising and public relations firm, Fotheringham & Associates. His became the largest locally-owned agency in the market, then named FJC&N. This was sold to junior partners in 2000, and Brand Force, Inc, was born as a branding consultancy. Bob and his wife, Kathy, left to serve a three-year church mission until 2008. Bob has continued consulting on a part-time basis to this day. In the community Bob has served on the boards of the SL Area Chamber of Commerce, University of Utah Alumni Association, Crimson Club, Catholic Community Services, Garff Automotive, and Shout Utah. He was a founding member of the Judicial Performance Evaluation Commission (JPEC) and served there for 10 years. Bob loves college-age students and has taught advertising and Institute of Religion classes at the University of Utah and at LDS Business College (now Ensign College). He enjoys snow skiing, Jackson Hole WY, University of Utah athletics, and the St Louis Cardinals. He and Kathy revel in the antics of their four children and 18 grandchildren.

**Ann Kiley**

Ann Kiley is president of the Law Office of Ann C. Kiley, P.C.  Her firm specializes in representing the elderly, the disabled, and the people who care about them. Ann's cases have ranged from bringing claims under the National Childhood Vaccine Program Act on behalf of an injured child to investigating claims of financial exploitation of the elderly on behalf of the Denver Probate Court.  Her *pro bono* experience includes writing a Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals *amicus* brief on behalf of the National Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and handling cases for Metro Denver Volunteer Lawyers and the Legal Center for People With Disabilities.  A 1996 graduate of the University of Denver College of Law, Ann has a BA from Connecticut College and an MA from the University of Colorado. A non-traditional law student, she began law school after a 20-year career in the health care industry.  Ann recently completed several years of service on the Board of Directors of the Colorado Health Facilities Authority (COHFA).  COHFA is a state authority responsible for issuing over $5 billion tax-exempt bonds on behalf of non-profit healthcare facilities in Colorado and nationwide. Other prior community activities include serving on the Board of Trustees for Big Brothers of Metro Denver, Inc., the Denver Zoological Foundation, and Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital.

**Anne Kimble**

Anne grew up in Salt Lake City and received a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Utah. She moved to California for graduate school and earned a master’s degree in education from Pepperdine University. She began her career as a high school English teacher and focused much of her teaching pedagogy and curriculum on inclusion. Anne believes in supporting the marginalized within the classroom and community by teaching understanding, acceptance and empowerment. Anne has owned and operated a private tutoring business that caters to struggling students, including those with disabilities. Additionally, Anne has taught college writing to both local and international students and loves seeing her students broaden their perspectives and find their voices. Anne has volunteered in the community and nonprofit sector for over two decades. She now uses both her educational and nonprofit experience as the Utah Director for Sammy’s Buddy Program. Anne currently lives in Salt Lake City with her husband and four children. As an Utah native, she enjoys outdoor adventures including hiking, skiing and kayaking.

**Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins**

Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins is a passionate advocate for the support and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and an activist for disability rights. She joined the disability rights movement at age six and at age eight she participated in the famous” Capitol Crawl” protest to support the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act. In 1990, she received the Americans With Disabilities Act Award from The Task Force on the Rights and Empowerment of Americans with Disabilities. Jennifer received her GED in 2002 and an Associate of Arts Degree in 2008 both from Arapahoe Community College before earning a B.S. in Family and Human Development from Arizona State University in 2017.

Today Jennifer is an educator and a motivational speaker and together with her new illustrated biography “All the Way to the Top, how one girl’s fight for Americans with disabilities changed everything, Jennifer teaches audiences the importance of the ADA, the Capitol Crawl, and the disability rights movement and its place in American history, with an emphasis on education, advocacy, and empowerment. The book has been recognized as a 2021 Schneider Family Book Award Honor Book for the young children’s category (0 to 8), from the American Library Association, along with being A 2020 A Mighty Girl Best Book of the Year and a 2021 EUREKA Honor Book Award winner, to name a few. Jennifer is currently the brand ambassador for Mobility of Denver and Vantage Mobility International. She is the proud owner of Jennifer Keelan-Chaffins LLC, established in May 2020 and lives in Arvada, Colorado.

**Sammy Michelle Loewi (Honorary)**

In spite of battling muscular dystrophy, Sammy Loewi made the absolute most of every moment until she died unexpectedly of pulmonary edema at age 22.  She never let her physical challenges define her.  Although she needed help getting dressed, with toileting, hair brushing and bathing, there was so much she could do and she focused her energies there.  She played the piano for 11 years, as well as the soprano saxophone and guitar.  She swam three times a week from the time she was two, eventually entering the National Disability Swimming Competition, where she set national records in the backstroke and the front crawl - even though her arms and legs were bent due to permanent muscle shortening.  Sammy’s quiet strength and unyielding positive attitude were an inspiration to others.  She fought for better wheelchair transport with the airlines, more accessible hotel accommodations and public transportation, and fair and equal treatment in the workplace for people with disabilities.  It was Sammy’s idea as a 10 year old to start the Buddy Program, she worked for a summer in the Daniels Executive MBA program office, and was a graduate of Graland Country Day and East High School in Denver Colorado.  She served three years as the Colorado Muscular Dystrophy Ambassador and the kindness and empathy she exhibited to everyone she met serves as a reminder of how we can all give to others more of ourselves.  Sammy was the essence of “handicapable while being differently-abled.”

**Buddy Member Council Representatives (Ex-Officio Advisors)**

Representatives consist of one teacher, one administrator, and one student advisor representing all host schools.  These individuals serve as a voice for the interests of program participants in order to communicate opinions and experiences, as well as ensure board members understand the successes and challenges of executing the Buddy Program.  They act as a communication link between program operations and the board.

MARKETING

An introduction video for both fundraising purposes and school kick-off events was created.



A one-pager was created to succinctly display information for potential funders We also have an additional Fact Sheet to share with new schools and with potential funders which describes our history and programs more in depth. (See attachments)

The Sammy’s Buddy Program [website](http://www.sammysbuddyprogram.org) was created for an online presence as well as a landing spot for our teachers to access materials and resources.

4 initiatives

In each of our participating schools, Sammy’s Buddy Program offers social and emotional learning-based initiatives for students with and without disabilities:

* The Buddy Program pairs students with and without disabilities for enrichment throughout the school year.  Students are carefully matched at the beginning of the program and spend 40-60 minutes a month in community service or socializing events.
* The Inclusion Library is a beautifully diverse group of book titles written by or about people with different abilities, providing an inclusive collection of books donated to classrooms and school libraries to celebrate and elevate characters of all abilities. Currently there are 16 titles, and each year the goal is to add 4-6 new titles to each library.
* The Kindness Campaign encourages classrooms and entire schools to spread kindness through words and actions throughout the entire month of February.
* The Leadership Lesson is taught to able-bodied students who participate in the Buddy Program. These leaders are given the training, tools and resources to understand the challenges that differently-abled students may face and are encouraged to advocate for those who perhaps cannot (literally) speak for themselves with regards to equity and accessibility.

Looking Ahead

Expanding Inclusion Library

Kindness campaign school wide

Expand into middles schools

At least 12 schools, some, wrapping up 2nd year for xx returning schools and recruiting XX new schools

Budget

Explanation – SHOUT, Inc. will change its fiscal year to align better to the school calendar. For 2022, we will split our fiscal year into 2 sections. The first half of 2022 will be one fiscal period ending on June 30. Our new fiscal cycle will then start on July 1, 2022 and end June 30, 2023. The new fiscal year will then subsequently end each June 30 so that we can best budget our programming for schools and not split the budget between school years.

Anticipating that schools will participating in Sammy’s Buddy Programs for at least two years with our support, we budget to overlap schools and. By the third year they are asked to sustain the Buddy Program activities using their own school funding. This way we can continue to grow the program and add different schools on a two year cycle.

HEATHER WILL INSERT 2022-2025 BUDGET