Natural Supports & Community Connections

Opportunities for you and your family
Natural Supports and Community Connections

What are natural supports?
Natural Supports are the relationships that occur in everyday life. Natural supports usually involve family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors and acquaintances. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities often need help in developing these connections, but once they do these “natural systems of support” become an important part of their life in the community.

For example, being involved in a YMCA swimming program, community center arts class, or worship services may lead tofriendships and connections that last far beyond the actual event. Overtime, these connections can help an individual build a strong community network and support system.

Some ways to build natural supports include:

• Participate in community activities and projects
• Join groups and clubs
• Socialize with family and neighbors
• Explore work opportunities
• Attend church and faith based activities outside of traditional worship services
• Volunteer
Within this booklet, we have highlighted four organizations that help individuals with disabilities strengthen their natural supports, but there are many others in your community. Please use this as a guide to get you started and on your way to building Natural Supports and Community Connections!
What can an Aktion Club do?

Aktion Club provides an opportunity to build leadership and decision-making skills, as well as hold leadership roles in the club. Members experience meaningful community-service activities. They learn organization, teamwork and leadership. But the most important lesson they learn is that individuals working together can and do make a difference in the world around them.

Some Aktion Clubs:

- Conduct fundraisers such as car washes, paper drives and recycling projects to raise money for needs in the community
- Perform community services, such as environmental projects, park beautification, food drives or nursing home visitations
- Organize canned food and clothing drives to support local shelters
- Make cards for children who are in the hospital
- Assist Kiwanis clubs, CKI and Key Clubs with their service initiatives
- Take time out for fun! Aktion Club members visit zoos, museums, and sporting events, among many other activities
How do I join?
Membership is open to any adult with a disability who desires to become a leader in his or her community and wishes to provide service to others. Each Aktion Club is sponsored by a Kiwanis club.

Below is a listing of Aktion Clubs in Indiana and their sponsoring Kiwanis Club city:

Capitol City, sponsored by Indianapolis
City of First, sponsored by Kokomo Golden K
Decatur County, sponsored by Greensburg, Santee
Elkhart, sponsored by Elkhart
Franklin County, Brookville, sponsored by Brookville
Friends In Aktion, sponsored by Mooresville
Goshen Aktion Club, sponsored by Goshen
Hamilton County JDS, sponsored by Carmel Golden K
Johnny Appleseed Aktion Club, sponsored by Fort Wayne
Johnson County, sponsored by Greenwood
Lebanon - Arc, sponsored by Lebanon
Madison County, sponsored by West Anderson
Merrillville, sponsored by Merrillville-Breakfast
Noble County ARC, INC, sponsored by Kendallville
Options Bloomington Indiana, sponsored by South Central Indiana
Porter County, sponsored by Valparaiso
RISE Into Aktion 101, sponsored by 101 Lakes of Steuben
County, Angola
Shelbyville VC, Sponsored by Shelbyville
Sullivan County, sponsored by Sullivan County
Twin Lakes, sponsored by Monticello
Wabash River, sponsored by Lafayette-Harrison
Warren Township, sponsored by Warren Township, Indianapolis

For more information on Aktion Clubs in your area or information on how to start an Aktion Club, please visit www.aktionclub.org
Best Buddies

What is Best Buddies?

Best Buddies pairs students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in one-to-one friendships with middle school, high school, and college students without I/DD. In the past, individuals with I/DD have not had the opportunity to have friends outside of their special education programs. By introducing Best Buddies into schools and universities, participants are crossing the invisible line that too often separates those with disabilities from those without. Best Buddies also offers volunteers a unique opportunity to develop leadership skills.

For more information on Best Buddies Middle School & High School programs please contact Kristen Johnson at kristenjohnson@bestbuddies.org

For more information on Best Buddies College programs please contact Laura Cummings at lauracummings@bestbuddies.org

You can also get more information by calling Best Buddies at 317-436-8440 or by visiting their website at www.bestbuddiesindiana.org

Indiana Middle School Chapters
Brownsburg East MS  Decatur MS
Brownsburg West MS  Westlane MS
### Best Buddies Indiana High Schools

| Bloomington HS North | Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired |
| Bloomington HS South | Lafayette Jefferson HS |
| Brownsburg HS | Lake Central HS |
| Carmel HS | Lawrence Central HS |
| Cathedral HS / BACA / Worthmore Academy | Lawrence North HS |
| Center Grove HS | Lebanon HS |
| Columbus East HS | Mooresville HS |
| Columbus North HS | Mount Vernon HS |
| Covington HS | Muncie Central HS |
| Crawfordsville HS | Muncie Southside HS |
| Crown Point HS | Munster HS |
| Decatur Central HS | New Albany HS |
| Delta HS | New Palestine HS |
| Fishers HS | Noblesville HS |
| Frankfort HS | North Central HS |
| Franklin Central HS | Pendleton Heights HS |
| Franklin Community HS | Perry Meridian HS |
| George Washington Community HS | Pike HS |
| Greencastle HS | Southport HS |
| Greenwood Community HS | Warren Central HS |
| Guerin Catholic HS / Independence Academy | West Lafayette HS |
| Hamilton Southeastern HS | Western HS |
| | Westfield Washington HS |
| | Whiteland Community HS |
| | Zionsville Community HS |

### Best Buddies Indiana Colleges

| Ball State University | Purdue University |
| Butler University | Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology |
| DePauw University | University of Evansville |
| Franklin College | University of Indianapolis |
| Hanover College | University of Notre Dame |
| Indiana University, Bloomington | University of Southern Indiana |
| Indiana University/Purdue University | Valparaiso University |
| Marian University | Wabash College |
Who are the Self-Advocates of Indiana?

Self-Advocates of Indiana (SAI) is a group of people with disabilities who established a statewide organization in 1990. Their mission is to learn their rights and to speak out about their rights so that they get the respect they deserve. SAI has been active in raising awareness about the positive contributions persons with disabilities make to their communities and workplaces.

Indiana Self-Advocates have spoken to business leaders, families, and providers all over the state. They have reached out to residents of institutions with information about community living and participated as members of:

- Partners in Policy Making
- Back Home in Indiana
- DD Commission
- Governor’s Planning Council for People with Disabilities

For more information about Self-Advocate of Indiana contact Rebecca Sherpelz at 317-977-2375 or at rscherpelz@arcind.org
Self Advocate Groups and locations in Indiana:

Friendship Union, Valparaiso
TEAM Self-Advocates, Valparaiso
TRUTH, Highland
Advocacy Angels, Warsaw
Howard County Self-Advocates, Kokomo
Power for Independence - Elkhart Chapter, Bristol
Power for Independence- Goshen Chapter, Goshen
Self Advocates of Joseph County, Osceola
Self-Advocates of Cass County, Logansport
Self-Advocates of Wabash County, Wabash
Allen County First Self-Advocates, Ft. Wayne
One for All Self-Advocates, Columbia City
Pathfinders / Self-Advocacy Group of Wabash County, Wabash
The Change Makers, Ft. Wayne
Bloomington Self-Advocates, Bloomington
Normal Life Self-Advocates, Terre Haute
Self-Avocates of Monroe County, Bloomington
United Voices for Change, Terre Haute
Wabash Valley Self-Advocates, Terre Haute
The Self Advocate Club of the Wabash River, Lafayette
Awesome Westside Advocates (AWA), Avon
Circle of Friends, Fishers
Hamilton Co JDS Aktion Club, Noblesville
Johnson County Aktion Club, Franklin
OTB Self- Advocates, Indianapolis
Self Advocates of DSI, Indianapolis
Self Advocates of Indianapolis, Indianapolis
Shares SA (Shelby, Rush & Hancock Counties), Shelbyville
Shelbyville VC Aktion Club, Shelbyville
Kool Kats, Muncie
People First of Wayne County, Richmond
Self Advocates of Franklin County, Brookville
Self-Advocates of Grant & Blackford Counties, Marion
Self-Advocats of Henry Co/Cardinal Mgnt Svcs, New Castle
South Western Advocacy Group, Evansville
Decatur County Self-Advocacy Group, Greensburg
Self Advocates at New Horizon, Batesville
Self Advocates: Building A Future/ SA of Lawrence Co, Bedford
Self-Advocates of Southern Indiana, Floyd Knobs
Self-Advocates of Tomorrow,
the Aktion Club of Columbus, Columbus
Special Olympics Indiana provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in more than 20 Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, reaching nearly 11,000 athletes across Indiana.

Through Special Olympics Indiana, athletes gain opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics Indiana thrives on the gifts and abilities of its diverse members—athletes, volunteers, families, coaches, sponsors and donors. It’s a movement that impacts lives for the better.

For more information about local programs call 800-742-0612 or visit soindiana.org
Special Olympics has local programs in these Indiana counties:

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Sports available:

- Alpine Skiing
- Aquatics
- Athletics
- Ballroom Dancing
- Basketball
- Bocce
- Bowling
- Cross Country Skiing
- Equestrian
- Figure Skating
- Football (Soccer)
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Horse Shoes
- Motor Activities
- Training Program
- Play Activities
- Powerlifting
- Snowshoeing
- Softball
- Speed Skating
- Tennis
- Volleyball
The Arc Network

The Arc Network helps connect families and people with I/DD to information and resources on employment, community resources/natural supports, state and federal programs, and self-advocacy.

For more information, contact a member of The Arc Network Staff

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