

**Brown Middle School
8th Grade Giving Project 2014**

NOMINATIONS

The following causes, presented in alphabetical order, were nominated by members of the Brown Community for the 8th Grade Giving Project.

Please read the descriptions to find out what's so great about each of these causes, and why they deserve our support!

Best Buddies
Circle of Hope
Gathering Change, Inc.
Inner City Weightlifting
The Jimmy Fund
Kiva
Kukkiwon
Make-a-Wish Foundation
The Network/La Red
Project Giving Kids
Read to a Child
The Rukmini Foundation
Shooting Touch
Special Olympics
The Trevor Project
WAGLY
Waypoint Adventures

Organization: Best Buddies
Website: www.bestbuddies.org

Best Buddies: Team Believe

Best Buddies is an organization that creates opportunities and hope for teens and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Too often, individuals with these disabilities, especially as they get older, are deeply undervalued and endure life-long frustration and social isolation. Best Buddies is changing that by providing connections: opportunities to make friends; help to find jobs and live an independent life; and training to develop skills and make a contribution to society. More than 800,000 individuals are supported by Best Buddies' amazing efforts in all 50 states, and around the world.

In our own school system, we have many students with intellectual disabilities, who will hopefully one day benefit from the support that Best Buddies can provide, and who will face a much brighter future because of it. And the rest of us, their friends, families and community, will benefit just as much, when we get a chance to share the joy, courage, creativity, humor and inspiration that Best Buddies is helping to unleash!

Our Best Buddies team, 'Team Believe,' was set up in support of Joshua Yood, currently an Angier 5th grader, soon to be a Brown 6th grader. You may already have been inspired by his triumphant smile in the Best Buddies' TV ad. We want to make sure that every individual with an intellectual disability gets a chance to smile like that. We hope we can help Best Buddies' amazing efforts in making this world a better place for everybody! [Click here](#) if you'd like to support our team.

Organization: Circle of Hope
Website: www.circleofhope.org

Circle of Hope

Circle of Hope is dedicated to serving people in need. Its mission is to promote the dignity and wellbeing of people when they need it most. They are staffed by compassionate volunteers, and currently operate two human-service programs:

Circle of Hope, Boston: Collects, sorts and distributes new and gently used clothing for children, women and men, as well as linens and toiletries for individuals and families living in homeless shelters, and those struggling for independent lives. Supports local organizations like Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Boston Healthcare for the Homeless, Casa Nueva Vida, Jewish Vocational Services Refugee Program, Long Island Shelter, On the Rise, Project Hope, Renewal House, Rosie's Place, United Homes Shelter, Women's Lunch Place and Year Up.

Circle of Hope, Haiti: Provides stable medical care to people in rural Haiti by Haitian medical professionals and volunteers who periodically travel to the area to provide services.

Organization: Gathering Change, Inc.

Website: www.gatheringchangeinc.org

Gathering Change

Gathering Change, Inc. brings together neighbors to help alleviate hunger, by raising awareness and facilitating the collection of spare change and other funds to give to local food pantries. Gathering Change, Inc. teaches people they can make a difference, thereby creating a sense of community.

This organization urges people to collect spare change to be donated to local food pantries. They raise awareness about hunger in every community, not just the ones that are clearly struggling, and they focus on giving funds to food pantries in the community in which the funds are collected. This organization is doing really great things to help reduce hunger and to build community!

Organization: Inner City Weightlifting

Website: www.innercityweightlifting.org

Inner City Weightlifting

Inner City Weightlifting, based out of Dorchester, was started to help get teens – girls as well as boys – into a dedicated sport and divert them from a more violent and dangerous way of life. Its mission is to reduce violence and promote professional, personal and academic achievement amongst urban youth. Inner City Weightlifting works with young people at the highest risk for violence in order to reduce youth violence by getting our students off the streets and into the gym, where they are empowered with the confidence and positive support needed to say no to violence and yes to opportunity. <http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=9537094>.

Organization: The Jimmy Fund

Website: www.jimmyfund.org

The Jimmy Fund

The Jimmy Fund supports cancer research and care at the Dana Farber Institute. The community of Room 216 believes that, because The Jimmy Fund focuses a great deal of their resources on helping children, it is the perfect foundation for Brown to help. They have many reasons, including:

- “They are kids – just like us, and they should be able to have their whole lives ahead of them to look forward to.”
- “The kids are the future.”
- “It’s sad when someone dies from cancer, but even more so when a child does.”

The Jimmy Fund Clinic is a place where children and their families find hope.

Organization name: Kiva

Website: www.kiva.org

Kiva: Loans that change lives

Kiva works with organizations on five continents to provide loans to low income people without access to traditional banks. One hundred percent of the loan is sent to these organizations, called Field Partners, who administer the loans in the field.

Through Kiva, you can help people buy things like seeds and fertilizer, clothing or materials to start up/maintain a business and support themselves. You can choose to give to rural (remote) communities, conflict zones, vulnerable groups (like widows and refugees), to empower youth entrepreneurs, or many more. Help someone go to college or buy books for school. Choose from themes like housing, health, green (sustainable living), personal use, agriculture, etc. – people you have a distinct passion to give to. At Brown, we could conduct a student poll, and then lend money based on the results. Each profile of a person applying for a loan is complete with a detailed story about the person, where he or she lives, their situation, and how your loan (of \$25 or more) can help and change their lives.

Kiva is a great charity for Brown to give to because it is a gift that keeps on giving. Once the loan is paid back, it is credited to your account, called your “Kiva Credit.” Then you repeat the process, helping/funding another person or group of people. Unlike ordinary charities, this one donation that Brown gives to fund loans this year can help many others in years to come, creating a cycle of sustainable change. This is a link to a video, “2013: A Year of Inspiration,” that explains it in a more beautiful way than I ever could, with clips of over one million people helped in 2013: http://www.kiva.org/u/videos/2013_a-year-of-inspiration.

Organization: Kukkiwon

Website: www.kukkiwon.or.kr/eng/index.action

Kukkiwon

Kukkiwon is an association founded in 1972. It is the world’s Tae Kwon Do center. Un Yong Kim founded it. The headquarters were built in Gangnam-Gu, which is a district in Seoul, South Korea. The building’s roof is made of blue kiwa tiles, which are also on the roof of the Blue House, the official residence of the President of South Korea.

Kukkiwon keeps track of all the black belt members and organizes special events, like Olympic sparring, or founding new locations. Each black belt gets a Kukkiwon ID to make sure students advance to higher degrees of black belt at the right time. There are limits to how long a student stays at a degree of black belt (for example, you must be a 1st degree black belt for at least a year).

The founder Un Yong Kim resigned on November 15, 2001. His successor, Woon Kyu Uhm was elected on March 2, 2004. In 2005, the president was Yong Gye Um. On December 10, 2009, Seung Wan Lee was elected. In 2010, Won Sik Kang became president. Very recently, he retired and the interim president Kyu Sok Lee.

Organization: Make-a-Wish

Website: <http://wish.org>

Make-a-Wish

Make-a-Wish grants the wish of a child diagnosed with a life-threatening medical condition in the United States and its territories, on average every 38 minutes. Make-a-Wish is guided by the belief that a wish experience can be a game-changer, and seeks to grant wishes that change lives.

Make-A-Wish serves a unique, and vital, role in helping strengthen and empower children battling life-threatening medical conditions. Wish kids say that these experiences bring back hope and the ability to fight harder against their illnesses. Wish parents say that their family bonds are strengthened and repaired. And medical professionals believe wishes can influence a child's physical health condition.

Organization: The Network/La Red

Website: <http://tnlr.org>

The Network/La Red

This organization is completely bilingual (English/Spanish). They offer a variety of services including a 24-hours hotline, a safe home/shelter, an active advocacy program, and offer educational seminars and workshops. According to the website: "Today, The Network/La Red is a national resource and model for domestic violence service providers, batterer intervention programs, and organizations beginning to address partner abuse in LGBTQ relationships".

Organization: Project Giving Kids**Website:** <http://www.projectgivingkids.org/>Project Giving Kids

I am nominating a local non-profit, Project Giving Kids (PGK), that launched in December. It needs two things: funding and more people to know about what it does. PGK's mission is to help kids develop empathy by connecting them with causes they care about. Empathy is caring about people besides yourself. Kids always hear about the importance of giving to others, but it can be a struggle to find a way to do anything with our busy schedules. Some choose to set aside part of their allowance and give it to charity, some are able to make a commitment to a particular cause, but many do not end up doing anything because they don't have the time or resources to find suitable projects.

With the PGK website, kids can pick a cause they are interested in. Current ones are helping kids, animals, the elderly, comforting the sick or helping fight hunger. Kids then indicate how much time they have (from less than ½ an hour up to 4+ hours) and whether they want to volunteer in person, volunteer from home, or donate goods. PGK lets them know what activities fit their criteria. So, if someone wants to comfort the sick, has 1-2 hours and wants to volunteer from home, s/he can choose to either decorate a flower pot or make a joke book for someone who is sick. Or if s/he wants to help feed the hungry, has 2-4 hours and can volunteer in person, s/he can help grow food in Lincoln or host a bike wash to support the Ride for Food.

With PGK, kids can try helping different causes and different organizations. The website removes the hurdle of "what can I do to help" that can get in the way of kids doing anything. And, unlike just giving money to a cause, kids get to feel that they have more of a direct impact on a problem. The charities and individuals they serve get help that they never would have received on their own. I urge you to support PGK so that it can grow its website and get the word out about its site. At a minimum, please go try it yourself, and spread the word. It's an idea that sells itself: a free resource that connects kids with charities that could use their help.

Organization: Read to a Child**Website:** <http://readtoachild.org>Read to a Child

Change the course of a child's future – over lunch! Read to a Child offers a program designed to make volunteering easy: the lunchtime reading program. One day a week, it brings adult volunteers into elementary schools for read-aloud sessions. Just one lunch break a week is all it takes for a child to become a stronger, more enthusiastic reader. To establish consistency but allow schedule flexibility, volunteers can partner with a coworker to read to their student on alternate weeks.

One-on-one reading increases the child's proficiency, often along with his/her interest and comprehension in other areas, and the consistent, positive interaction with a caring adult makes a child feel valued, boosting confidence. Everybody benefits. The kids' enthusiasm makes it fun for volunteers, and the volunteers' time makes it special for them.

Organization: Rukmini Foundation

Website: www.rukminifoundation.org

Rukmini

Born in Nepal at a time when educating girls was considered socially unacceptable, Rukmini was slightly rebellious, and would eavesdrop on her brothers' lessons, memorizing what was being taught. At age 10, she was "given" in marriage, and by age 20 she was widowed with an infant son. She worked tirelessly to give her son an opportunity to learn; he was able to become a respected teacher, and went on to establish an affordable school that would accept students of all backgrounds, regardless of gender or caste.

Rukmini was able to overcome being a child bride to raise a successful family, with education as the cornerstone. Her strength and courage is the inspiration behind the Rukmini Foundation. The Rukmini Foundation's mission is to improve the lives of underprivileged girls by empowering them through education. Sadly, many girls are still being denied the opportunity that is afforded to boys, and too many young girls are being married way too early and bearing children while themselves being children. Without action, this cycle of hardship and discrimination will never end.

In order to promote development in impoverished nations like Nepal, we have to support the most important agents of change... the young girls. By providing educational opportunities for underprivileged girls in Nepal, Rukmini is fostering the next generation of mothers, employees, employers and community leaders.

Organization: Shooting Touch

Website: www.shootingtouch.com

Shooting Touch

Shooting Touch harnesses the power of basketball to elevate the health, education and opportunities of youths and young adults around the world.

In Boston, Shooting Touch has established a year-round presence and program that provides inner city and suburban youth with opportunities for development, both on and off the court. Shooting Touch has have given over 250 scholarships to summer basketball camps, offers group and individual clinics to players of all abilities and hosts an annual sports conference for young adults focused on helping them enter the sports industry.

Internationally, the Shooting Touch Sabbatical Program, known as the "Basketball Peace Corps," provides the opportunity for gifted college graduates to work in Rwanda, dedicating an entire year of service to using basketball as a catalyst for good. Grantees train local coaches, develop youth leagues and work with communities to construct courts. They utilize the platform and language of basketball to promote health education and disease prevention, academic enrichment and self- efficacy to thousands of African youth on a yearly basis.

Organization: Special Olympics**Website: www.specialolympics.org/**Special Olympics

Special Olympics is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1969. It is a world-wide organization that allows individuals who have either mental or physical disabilities to participate in competitive sports.

The Special Olympics strengthen communities and make them have more inclusivity towards people with disabilities. There are two competitions, the summer Olympic games and the winter Olympic games. The summer games include swimming, track badminton, basketball, bocce, bowling, cricket, cycling, golf, gymnastics, handball, kayaking, sailing, softball, tennis, table tennis, and volleyball. The winter games include alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, figure-skating, snowboarding, and speed-skating, among other sports.

Organization: The Trevor Project**Website: www.thetrevorproject.com**The Trevor Project: Saving Young Lives

The Trevor Project is the leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people ages 13-24.

The Trevor Project offers life-saving, life-affirming programs and services that create safe, accepting and inclusive environments over the phone, online and through text. These include:

- Trevor Lifeline
- TrevorChat
- TrevorText
- Ask Trevor
- TrevorSpace
- Trevor Education
- Trevor Advocacy
- Trevor Resource Kit

In 2013, there were 36,474 calls to Trevor Lifeline; 4,430 letters sent to lawmakers through Trevor Advocacy; and 64,783 members from 130 different countries who came together and found peer-to-peer support on TrevorSpace, a safe, monitored social media site.

Organization: WAGLY

Website: <http://wagly.org>

WAGLY

WAGLY is the West-Suburban Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Youth (originally the West-Suburban Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth). The mission of WAGLY is to support the health and emotional well-being of GLBTQ teens in the Boston MetroWest area by offering youth-led and adult-supported social and educational programs. The 3-year program meets at the Unitarian Universalist Society of Wellesley Hills every Monday evening from 6:45pm to 8:30pm, and provides social and support opportunities for youth in our area.

The average WAGLY meeting serves about 25-30 teens from over 30 area schools. A handful of new participants appear every meeting, and it is estimated that there has been participation over the past year by about 100 kids. Programming includes resources for friends, families, educators and the faith communities for providing support to GLBTQ teens. Currently they do not serve middle school youth, but that is their goal with their next level of fundraising.

Organisation: Waypoint

Website: www.waypointadventure.org

Waypoint Adventure: Transforming Lives Through Adventure

Waypoint is an experiential outdoor adventure program specifically targeting children and adults with special needs. Here is an outline of my reasons for nominating Waypoint:

My first experience: Climbing at Rock Spot with Perkins School for the Blind:

- Laughter
- Initial anxiety gave way to friendship (i.e. "What do you look like?")
- Achievement in climbing to the top
- Recognizing that participants climbed the same walls as everyone else – won't forget his sense of accomplishment; always told he can't do it... but here he did.

Why I like Waypoint Adventure:

- Focuses on outdoor adventure, which I love
- Gives me the opportunity to be with children/adults with special needs
- Kind and respectful atmosphere
- Just plain fun

Why Brown Middle School should support Waypoint Adventure:

- Breaks down barriers between participants through fun and adventure
- We would learn new skills, challenges, team work
- Increase the recognition of Waypoint across Boston, to reach and effect more lives
- Gives us, as middle schoolers, a comfortable place to be who we are and express ourselves.