

# 2017 DAC Achievement Award Nomination Form

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## **Nominee Information**

Nominee Name: John and Vanessa McCracken owners of Sunnyside Bicycles

Nominee Address: [REDACTED]

Nominee Phone: [REDACTED]

Nominee Email: [REDACTED]

## **Nominator Information**

Nominator Name: Karen Ray

Nominator Address: [REDACTED]

Nominator Phone: [REDACTED]

Nominator Email: [REDACTED]

## **Nomination Category (please select one):**

☒ Individual

☐ Organization

☐ City of Fresno Employee or Department

## **Nominated for:**

☐ Improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities

☐ Advocacy for issues pertaining to individuals with disabilities

☒ Volunteerism that has a positive impact on individuals with disabilities

☐ Development of new programs or services impacting individuals with disabilities

☐ Customer service to individuals with disabilities that is above and beyond the standard

To Disability Achievement Award Committee:

John and Vanessa McCracken are the owners of Sunnyside Bicycles. They are dedicated to making the cycling experience for everyone a great one! I first met them 5 years ago as Camp Director for the local iCan Bike program, which teaches people with disabilities to ride a regular 2 wheel bike over a 1 week camp. They have actively participated in the program for 5 years by coming to the camp, assisting families to purchase the correct bike for their child, offering a “trade up” program for the children’s bikes, and sending staff to volunteer at the camp.

We started our local Best Buddies Chapter here in Fresno just one year ago. Best Buddies is an international organization dedicated to serving people with special needs through leadership, friendship and jobs programs. One way we are raising money to support the organization is through the Hearst Challenge, a annual Best Buddies cycling event on the Central Coast. We approached John and Vanessa about partnering with us for support on the team. They have been unbelievable! They organized a kickoff event at their store, inviting their regular customers and friends. We had 46 people sign up that night for the event! Additional riders have joined and we now have a team of 74. John and Vanessa have provided coaching, sag (support during our training rides), been instrumental in creating our team jersey, and overall leadership of the training and team. They have created an entire training schedule for our team to follow to prepare for the ride.

John and Vanessa organize rides routinely that leave from their store and go a variety of places. They are welcoming to everyone. There are several riders with disabilities that are fully included in these rides, made to feel welcome and a part of the group. As a parent with a child with special needs, I truly appreciate their openness and willingness to serve all in our community.

Additionally, John and Vanessa have taken the time and effort to have their store CASP certified to insure all people can access their store and staff.

John and Vanessa deserve to be recognized as a leader in our community for volunteerism. They have dedicated their lives to making our local

community a better place for everyone. They promote cycling for all, have worked tirelessly to support Best Buddies Central Valley and the iCan Bike program.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Ray, CPNP  
Best Buddies Central Valley Advisory Chair

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Esteemed members of the City of Fresno Disability Advisory Commission,

It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity to nominate John and Vanessa McCracken, of Sunnyside Bicycles for the 2017 Achievement Award.

I was lucky enough to meet John and Vanessa last January at a Best Buddies Central Valley (BBCV) strategic planning meeting. Best Buddies, a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of individuals with intellectual and development disabilities through friendships, leadership development and integrated employment opportunities, had just officially opened an office in Fresno a few months prior. The BBCV board had decided to gather a team of cyclist to participate in the upcoming Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle and invited John and Vanessa to see if there were opportunities to collaborate.

Since that initial meeting John and Vanessa have proven to be invaluable assets to Best Buddies and a force in the IDD community. They opened up their bike shop, their network and their hearts to the mission of Best Buddies, helped recruit one of the largest teams in the bike event and have worked tirelessly to get more people educated about the challenges people with IDD face. They treat every individual with respect and see everyone for their abilities.

They also have hosted a number of community events promoting inclusion and have helped train their team members to ride a bike up to 100 miles to advocate for improving the lives and opportunities available to people with IDD.

With the leadership of John and Vanessa the team will raise over \$100,000. These dollars will go back to expand programs not only in the Central Valley but all throughout California, the United States and internationally. They are working hard to make sure the IDD community is further integrated into schools, workplaces and communities. They have played a pivotal role in bringing the Project Search internship program which will be officially launched in early 2018. In this program, young adults transition from school to work with a 1 year internship to learn skills to help prepare them for full employment.

Without a doubt, in their year of involvement, the McCracken's and Sunnyside Bicycles have furthered awareness, promoted integration and substantially expanded the development of new programs for the advancement of people with IDD.

Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] should you like to discuss their qualifications further. I'd be happy to expand on my recommendation.

Best wishes,

Sam Corti  
Director, Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle

[REDACTED]  
[www.BestBuddiesChallenge.org](http://www.BestBuddiesChallenge.org)



Shannon M. Mulhall  
Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator  
2600 Fresno Street, Room 4011  
Fresno, CA 93721

July 30, 2017

Dear Ms. Mulhall;

On behalf of Best Buddies California, I would like to nominate John and Vanessa McCracken for the Disability Advisory Commission 2017 Achievement Award, for their exemplary volunteerism that has had a positive impact on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the greater Fresno area.

Best Buddies is a global volunteer organization dedicated to ending the social, economic, and physical isolation of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities through opportunities for one-to-one friendships, leadership development, and integrated employment.

In July 2016, with the support of the McCracken's, who have a personal connection to our mission through their niece who has a disability, we launched a Best Buddies Advisory committee, and began raising funds and awareness to bring the Best Buddies Friendship, Leadership, and Jobs programs to the Central Valley. Each year, Best Buddies hosts the annual Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle- a 5 star charity cycling event that raises funds and awareness for Best Buddies programs across the nation. Avid cyclists, and the owners of Sunnyside Bicycles, John and Vanessa jumped at the chance to develop "Team Central Valley", a local cycling team that's training to participate in the 2017 Best Buddies Challenge, and raise important startup funds to launch the Best Buddies Central Valley office in Fresno.

With the support of John and Vanessa, over 70 individuals with and without disabilities signed up to be a part of this year's Best Buddies event through Team Central Valley, which has committed to raise over \$100,000 for Best Buddies. John and Vanessa host and organize weekly group rides out of Sunnyside Bicycles, offer educational cycling clinics at their store, leverage merchandise and inventory to assist their riders with fundraising, and personally leveraged numerous relationships to recruit friends, family members, and clients to participate in this cycling event.

In November 2016, with the support and generosity of the McCracken's, we officially opened our Best Buddies Central Valley office in downtown Fresno. Since that time, we launched Best Buddies one-to-one friendship programs at 7 middle schools and high schools in the greater Fresno area, and will be officially opening our Best Buddies supported employment program- Best Buddies Jobs- in January 2018, through the Project Search program at Community Hospital in downtown Fresno. With the support of the McCracken's, and their cycling community, Best Buddies has been able to positively impact the lives of over 500 individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities in the Central Valley in the 8 months since launching this regional office, and spread awareness about the abilities of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout the community.

John and Vanessa opened their bicycle shop with the mission of eliminating barriers to getting on a bike-and finding creative ways to connect with all of their clients to introduce cycling into their lives. This same attitude has carried over into their approach of volunteering with Best Buddies, and providing opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to overcome barriers to employment, friendship, and leadership with the support of our Best Buddies programs, and integrating individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities into this cycling community, and onto Team Central Valley.

Thank you for your consideration of this nomination. If you would like more information about Best Buddies California, or John and Vanessa's contributions to our organization and our cycling event, you can reach me at [REDACTED]

Sincerely;

Jessica Brooks, State Director  
Best Buddies California

Nancy Daddino

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

July 28, 2017

Dear Disability Advisory Commission,

It is with great pleasure I nominate John and Vanessa McCracken, owners of Sunnyside Bicycles, for consideration for the 2017 Achievement Award in recognition of their time and efforts volunteering to help make a positive impact on individuals with disabilities.

Inclusion, job training, and advocacy are all very important issues that involve the disability community. John and Vanessa have a family member with developmental and intellectual disabilities and understand how important these things are. When John and Vanessa learned that a non-profit organization called Best Buddies had recently come to the Central Valley to help individuals with disabilities they wanted to know how they could help. One of Best Buddies annual fundraisers is a bicycling challenge along the coast near Hearst Castle. John and Vanessa wanted to make sure that the Central Valley had a team for this cycling challenge. As the owners of Sunnyside Bicycles they have opened their doors and been instrumental in the creation and organization of a Central Valley team. They have taken this fundraiser under their wings and helped make the Central Valley team the largest cycling team participating in the challenge. With over 70 riders the team will raise almost \$100,000 for Best Buddies.

John and Vanessa have spent countless hours helping raise awareness, organizing group rides and trainings, and hosting team events. They take time out of their day to sign riders up for the challenge. They have donated their time to help the team design a jersey. They lead rides before and after business hours to help participants train. They have been deeply committed to this team and its cause.

In addition to their volunteer efforts with Best Buddies Central Valley they also sponsor and support an I Can Bike Camp. This camp is geared directly to teaching individuals with disabilities to ride a bike. They give of their time and resources to this camp.

As the mother of a person with disabilities who has benefitted from these wonderful organizations that they have supported, I strongly encourage you to award John and Vanessa McCracken, owners of Sunnyside Bicycles the 2017 Achievement Award.

Sincerely,

Nancy Daddino

**July 30, 2017**

**I respectfully nominate John and Vanessa McCracken for the City of Fresno's Disabilities Advisement Commission's 2017 Achievement Award:**

John and Vanessa McCracken owners of Sunnyside Bicycles have a mission to educate, empower, and inspire as many people as possible to ride bikes as often as possible, because they believe bicycle rides transform lives. They have established a bicycle shop with inventory suited for both novice and expert bicyclist. Their staff is well versed in bicycle technology, repair, and overall customer service. In addition, they often schedule classes for customers teaching bicycle safety, bicycle maintenance, and tire flat fixing.

As a result, they have built a community of "Sunnysiders" of all riding abilities participating in several scheduled and supported rides throughout the week. Pictures of their customers enjoying their bicycles can be seen throughout their shop and social media documenting their mission is alive and well.

When it was decided to open a Best Buddies Central Valley office in Fresno and form a cycling team to raise money by participating in the California Best Buddies Challenge we immediately thought to partner with John and Vanessa.

They immediately began to partner with us by opening their shop for an information night and used their Sunnyside network. Because of their leadership, forty eight people signed up. Since, the team has grown to seventy four riders each committing to fund raise \$1,300.

John and Vanessa have helped the team in many ways. They provided each team member with a shop discount, donated multiple raffle items to boost fundraising, conducted several workshops for new riders, and lead and supported weekly training rides for all riders.

The team will be one of the largest participating in the Best Buddies Challenge this September. The largest ever assimilated in such a short period of time. This never would have been achieved without John and Vanessa's tireless support of the Best Buddies mission to providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with IDD.

John and Vanessa's selfless support of the Best Buddies Central Valley Bike Team, will result in the Team raising over \$90,000. This money will develop mentoring, job training, and advocacy programs in Fresno and the Central Valley. Through their love of bicycling and mission to inspire they have made a significant impact on individuals with disabilities in our community - A contribution worthy of recognition.

Best,

Robert Scott, Best Buddies, Central Valley Board Member