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Nonprofit Spotlight

Brooks Lambert, Best Day Foundation

Brooks Lambert and a group of volunteers from Best Day Foundation are making it possible for kids with special needs to experience a perfect day at the beach.



About Brooks

By Jennifer Padget

A perfect day at the beach -- sunshine, warm sand, and crashing waves. It may sound effortless, but for kids with special needs, finding a way to enjoy that magical day by the shore can mean overcoming a lot of obstacles.

Brooks Lambert believes that all kids -- no matter their ability -- are entitled to the opportunity to feel the wind in their face and the sand on their skin. In fact, he says, for a child with disabilities the result of a special day at the beach is much more than a sleepy drive home and a sun burn.

It can mean a big boost of confidence and optimism for some of the most emotionally fragile youth in our society.

That's why, with the help of volunteers, Lambert and [Best Day Foundation](#) are inviting kids and young adults with special needs out into the waves for a day of guided kayaking, body boarding, and tandem surfing.

Lambert founded Best Day Foundation with Max Montgomery in Santa Cruz, Calif., in 2008. A self-described "serial entrepreneur" with a wide and diverse background in launching and growing businesses, Lambert had been a volunteer with Montgomery at [Ride A Wave Foundation](#), which has conducted surfing camps for over a decades. The two were so inspired that they decided to launch a nonprofit to help expand the power and potential of similar programs.

Lambert's goal with Best Day is to help other communities develop their own programs by simplifying their "back office" activities. Interested communities contact Best Day Foundation, and the organization sends them volunteers who teach the basics of a successful program. The team has already helped volunteers in Monmouth, N.J., plan six days of camps and will open a chapter in Ventura, Calif., in the spring.

Best Day [welcomes](#) any volunteer interested in supporting its mission -- whether they have a background in surfing or not. Aside from getting wet, other volunteer roles include fundraising and outreach to families of children who could benefit from the program.

Yet Lambert says getting the word out about Best Day's opportunities has been the biggest challenge. That's because most volunteers think they need to be surfers to help out.

"The surfing community is pretty tight so it's not too challenging to spread the word at that level," said Lambert. "But finding and attracting 'non-surfing' volunteers is an on-going challenge because of the preconceived need to be a surfer to volunteer. In fact, the most fun opportunities do not require any surfing or even swimming skills -- just a love of kids and being at the beach."

He says the best way to welcome new volunteers is to make sure there are skilled leaders training them and helping them to get acclimated to the way the program works. Also, making sure that volunteers know that they're making a contribution

About Best Day Foundation

Best Day Foundation enables kids with special needs to build self-esteem and confidence through safe fun, ocean based adventure activities which stretch their limits, expand their true potential and connect them with diverse populations in their community.

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www.bestdayfoundation.org

Check out [Best Day Foundation opportunities](#) at VolunteerMatch.

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from start can be a great way to make it a positive experience for everyone.

As for himself, Lambert says being part of Best Day Foundation is the perfect way to give back and have a great time.

"I have gained so much from my experiences as a volunteer that I wanted to share these opportunities," he said. "At the end of the day, my days on the beach really are my best days!"

VolunteerMatch is proud to help organizations like Best Day Foundation to expand the world of potential for those with special needs. We can help your program find great volunteers too: Log in at VolunteerMatch.org today and [update your listings!](#)

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