

BEST BUDDIES®



Best Buddies International Global Programs Manual

Mission Statement

The mission of Best Buddies is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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Our Movement

Our Mission

Our mission is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Our Vision

Our vision is to put Best Buddies out of business.

The Big Picture

Best Buddies, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver. We are a vibrant organization that has grown from one original college chapter to more than 1,500 college, high school and middle school campuses across the globe. Best Buddies programs engage participants in each of the 50 United States, and we have accredited international programs in over 50 countries on six continents; with additional country programs in advanced phases of development.

Our eight formal programs – Best Buddies Citizens, Colleges, e-Buddies®, High Schools, Jobs, Middle Schools, Ambassadors and Promoters – will positively impact more than 700,000 individuals this year. Even though Best Buddies has advanced tremendously in our short existence, many areas of the country and many regions of the world still lack programs to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities become part of mainstream society. Best Buddies volunteers annually contribute, at no cost to their communities, support services that equate to more than \$193 million USD.

Calendar Year

Having a good grasp of the Best Buddies calendar can help staff plan ahead, stay on top of projects, and ensure that their participants are well-informed. Supervisors should be sure to go over the programmatic calendar (found in the School Based Manual) with new staff thoroughly during their first few weeks on the job, and refer to the calendar frequently during individual meetings to ensure that staff are managing their time well and Program Managers are setting clear and effective deadlines for their chapter leaders. Below is a list by month of major projects and deadlines.

January:

- Staff Leadership Conference in Miami, Florida – staff who have worked 1+ year with Best Buddies may be invited to attend
- Bi-Annual Report due to International Programs Team at HQ
- Coordinate Travel Plans for the Annual Latin America Global Staff Forum

February:

- Finalize plans for local Best Buddies Month event (volunteers, agendas, press releases)
- Coordinate plans with International Programs Team at HQ for Best Buddies International Annual Leadership Conference.

March – Best Buddies Month

- Hold an activity or participate in Best Buddies Month activity
- Organize and attend Spread the Word to End the Word events
- Latin America Global Staff Forum

April:

- April 26-28, 2013 — Global Youth Service Day

May:

- Select chapter for Country Outstanding Chapter Award
- Begin to submit BBI Leadership Conference registration, medical release, travel itineraries, and travel costs to International Programs Team at HQ.

June:

- Audi Best Buddies Challenge: Hyannis Port Boston, MA
- Deadline for Best Buddies staff to submit students travel itineraries for BBI Leadership Conference to HQ International Programs team.
- Country offices hold a parent information meeting for BBI Leadership Conference attendees.
- June 3rd — Outstanding Chapter applications due directly to HQ International Programs Department

July:

- CBDs, CPs, Ambassadors, officers and staff attend BBI Leadership Conference
- Bi-Annual Report due to International Programs Team at HQ

August:

- Local Leadership Training Days for Middle, High School and College chapter officer corps are held for those that did not attend Leadership Conference (hosted by Best Buddies staff, all officers attend)

September:

- Audi Best Buddies Challenge: Hearst Castle, California
- Attend and/or plan Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day event (fourth Saturday of September)
- Coordinate Travel Plans and Registration for the Annual European and Asian Global Staff Forum

October: National Disability Employment Awareness Month

- The Audi Best Buddies Challenge: Washington DC
- Annual European Global Staff Forum

November:

- Best Buddies Miami Beach Gala
- Annual Asian Global Staff Forum

December:

- If selected to attend, register for Staff Leadership Conference in Miami, Florida

Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (IDD)

Best Buddies uses the terms “intellectual disabilities” and “developmental disabilities” in following the lead of the international community, including the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities and the World Health Organization. As of 2010, Rosa’s Law was passed in the United States, mandating that Federal statutes will no longer use the term “mental retardation;” but will now only use the phrase “intellectual disability.”

According to the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID), it is estimated that there are seven to eight million Americans of all ages (about 2.5-3% of the U.S. population) who experience IDD. IDD affect about one in ten families in the U.S. The World Health Organization states that up to three percent or almost 200 million people of the world’s population have intellectual disabilities

What are Intellectual Disabilities (ID)?

According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), an ID is a particular state of functioning that begins in childhood before age 18 and is characterized by significant limitations in both intelligence and adaptive skills as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. Adaptive skill areas are those daily living skills needed to live, work and play in the community. They include communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics (reading, writing, basic math), community participation and employment. A complete and accurate understanding of this definition must involve the realization that an ID is a particular state of functioning that begins in childhood, has many dimensions, and is affected positively by individualized supports. A person with an ID generally will have an IQ below 75 and significant limitations in adaptive behavior that impact the person’s daily life and ability to respond to a particular situation or environment. (AAIDD 2010)

What are Developmental Disabilities (DD)?

DD are categorized by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) as life-long disabilities attributable to mental and/or physical impairments which manifest themselves before the age of 22 years and are likely to continue indefinitely. They result in substantial limitations in three or more of the following areas:

- self-care
- comprehension and language
- skills (receptive and expressive language)
- learning
- mobility
- self-direction
- capacity for independent living
- economic self-sufficiency
- ability to function independently without coordinated services (continuous need for individually planned and coordinated services)

Persons with DD require individually planned and coordinated services and supports (e.g., housing, employment, education, civil and human rights protection, health care) from many providers in order to live in the community. (ADD 2010)

Reference: Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010

Are “intellectual disabilities” the same as “developmental disabilities”?

As explained by the AAIDD, ID are a subgroup within the larger universe of DD, but the boundaries often blur as many individuals fall into both categories to differing degrees and for different reasons.

Some DD are purely physical, such as congenital deafness or visual impairment. These are not ID. Other DD can be caused by cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, or other disabling conditions. These conditions might or might not include ID.

Still other DD can result from chromosomal disorders, such as Down syndrome, fetal alcohol syndrome, and Fragile X syndrome. These instances could well include ID—but not always. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control, males with Fragile X syndrome generally have mild to severe ID, whereas females can have average intelligence or some degree of ID.

On the other hand, some causes of ID are not physical. These include social factors, such as the level of child stimulation and adult responsiveness, and educational factors, such as the availability of family and educational supports that can promote mental development and greater adaptive skills. (AAIDD 2010)

The Importance of Language

Person First Language

Person first language recognizes that individuals with IDD are - first and foremost - people. It emphasizes each person's value, individuality, dignity and capabilities. Generally, in choosing words about people with IDD, the guiding principle is to refer to the person first, not the IDD. In place of saying “the disabled,” it is preferable to say “people with disabilities” and it is only important to refer to the person’s IDD if it is relevant to the conversation or situation.

Spread the Word to End the Word

Best Buddies has taken a strong stand against the use of the “R-word” by joining forces with Special Olympics in the Spread the Word to End the Word campaign. In the English language, the term “retarded” and “mental retardation” or “mentally retarded” are old and outdated terms, and most importantly, they have gone beyond words used as a medical diagnosis in previous years, to terms used to hurt and belittle those we call friend, co-worker and family member.

History and Research

No matter how much children are nurtured and loved by their family, when children enter school they need and typically seek membership and warm accepting relationships. Norm Kunc (2000) calls the basic human need to belong “a right” that is glaringly absent in today’s schools: “Belonging – having a social context – is requisite for the development of self-esteem and self-confidence... Despite the essential importance of belonging... it is interesting to note that ... schools provide little nurturance or assistance.”

Experiencing the sense of belonging to groups with typical-age peers and having friendships gives children and adolescents the security needed to focus on achievement, mastery, recognition, and respect. “Providing a person with a sense of belonging is pivotal for that person to excel.” Belonging and acceptance must not be made conditional on achievement.

In our society segregated special instruction classes (in the form of resource rooms, self-contained classrooms, remedial reading groups and ESL classes) predominate as the approach to address differences in achievement and behavior. Many students in these classes do not develop a sense of self-worth because their need to belong is made contingent on achievement, and they cannot earn their way out of the special classroom. Consequently, the students in segregated classrooms learn not only that they are not good enough to belong but also that they will never belong, because their IDD, and the subsequent reason for their banishment, can never be removed.

Parents and teachers of children with IDD recognize the social isolation these children face, isolation that is well-documented by researchers. A report from 2001 noted, “... children with [IDD], are more vulnerable to feelings of loneliness than their peers without [IDD].” (Loneliness in Children with Disabilities; Pavri; 2001)

Clearly, the opportunity to develop social skills as children is essential to success in adulthood for those with IDD. Best Buddies provides the experience of having and being a friend from middle school on, thereby training children with IDD in the skills necessary to succeed in the community and the workplace. As with any successful social movement, the key to change is changing people’s minds and hearts. By introducing one person with a IDD to a peer who does not have a IDD, Best Buddies both meets the immediate need for socialization and effects long-term change in people’s attitudes toward individuals with IDD.

Best Buddies was founded in 1989, when Anthony Kennedy Shriver recognized the need for people with IDD to become more involved in the community. Best Buddies was born when he matched 52 of his fellow college students at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., with “Buddies” (people with IDD), from the nearby Kennedy Institute. By riding the bus together, going to the movies, doing homework together, participating in civic projects -- any and all activities which friends do together -- each Best Buddies pair builds a foundation for understanding their similarities through friendship and employment.

Programs

This section is designed to provide the leadership team with an overview of Best Buddies International programs.

Covered here is:

- Program overview
- Glossary of terms
- Program staff roles and responsibilities
- General program policies and protocols

In addition to the information in this manual, there are several other resources regarding Best Buddies programs. These include:

- Program manuals: manuals for each program which outline the expectations, member roles, leadership structure, organizational timeline and required forms and/or data tracking of the program.
 - School Based Programs Manual for Chapter Leaders
 - Citizens Program- Citizen Buddy Manual, Buddy Manual and Sponsor Manual
 - Ambassadors Program- Buddy Ambassador Manual
- School Based Programs Program Manager Manual and Citizens Program Manager Manual: includes best practices and clear expectations for program managers to manage their program and general program policy and protocols
- Best Buddies Jobs Policies and Procedures Handbook: outlines the expectations, policy and procedure for staff working with Best Buddies Jobs
- e-Buddies Staff Manual: outlines the expectations, policy and procedure for e-Buddies
- Best Buddies Promoters Resources: outlines the program, provides ideas for Promoters Chapters and applications.
- Best Buddies staff: fellow global staff members in the field and the HQ International Programs, who are always available to answer questions and lend support

Each staff member should be familiar with the program manuals and program manager/staff manuals for each program that they run in their country.

Mission Focused

The Mission

Best Buddies is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment and leadership development for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

One-to-One Friendships

One of the major components of our programs, and the keystone of the Best Buddies mission, is to provide the opportunity for one-to-one friendships. Best Buddies has identified the population most in need of this service to be individuals with IDD who do not have many

opportunities to socialize and form relationships with their peers without IDD. All friendships formed are peer relationships in which both members commit to participate in age appropriate activities. By participating in these activities, Best Buddies participants are given the opportunity to develop social skills in a fun, safe environment.

Many participants gain self-esteem and greater independence, as well as improved communication and social skills. Strong social skills are necessary to secure a job, gain higher acceptance in the community, and increase a person's likelihood of obtaining life skills and money to live independently. Our friends challenge us and give us the support to define and reach our goals.

Integrated Supported Employment

Best Buddies Jobs continues the integration of people with IDD into the community through supported employment. This program assists individuals in locating and maintaining jobs of their own choosing by providing ongoing support and training. Our focus is on developing competitive, integrated jobs, which allow individuals to earn an income, pay taxes, and work in an environment alongside others in the community. We pride ourselves on developing jobs in professional environments.

Leadership Development

Best Buddies is committed to provide effective leadership training to all our participants, both with and without IDD. To fully realize the strength of our mission and in order to see our vision come to fruition, Best Buddies understands that we must develop the leaders of the disability movement throughout the world. Best Buddies offers an array of trainings. The annual BBI Leadership Conference, Global Forums, and Local Leadership Training Day are a few examples of the opportunities designed to provide our volunteers with the best tools to become leaders of their communities.

Foundation of Our Friendship Programs

Core Principals

Within Best Buddies' friendship programs there are several constants that maintain the fabric of the organization and its mission.

Friendship programs:

- **One-to-One Friendships:** In all of the friendship programs, a Buddy (person with IDD) is paired one-to-one with a Citizen Buddy, College Buddy, Peer Buddy or e-Buddy. Friendships with more than one participant with or without IDD are not recognized as Best Buddies friendships and do not fulfill our mission.
- Buddy Pairs **communicate with one another once a week.** This communication can occur in person, over the phone/text, via email, social media or through written correspondence. e-Buddies communicate with each other via email.

- Buddy Pairs interact **in person twice a month** (excluding e-Buddies). Any type of activity where the two friends are able to spend quality time together one-on-one and in person, whether with a group or exclusively, is considered a one-to-one contact. Within the Citizens program, once the PM determines the friendship is strong, the Buddy Pairs are given the option to either see each other twice a month or meet for a single four-hour outing per month.
- Buddy Pairs commit to their friendship for at least **one year** (academic year for school friendship programs, calendar year for the others). We believe that dedicating a year to the friendship will foster the foundation for a mutually-enriching, long-lasting friendship.

Other principles of the school friendship programs include:

- Guidelines to consider for a club to be an active Best Buddies chapter in your country:
 - Chapters should submit all required information including membership applications for all members.
 - The one-to-one matches are meeting the commitment of two outings per month and weekly contact.
 - The CBD/CP and officers attend Local Leadership Training Day or other training provided by Best Buddies staff.
 - Chapter is recognized by the school and has the proper paperwork on file with the school administration to be an active student organization.

Other principles of the e-Buddies Program include:

- Agree to the e-Buddies code of conduct
- Permit Best Buddies to perform a background check
- Fill out membership application at e-Buddies.org
- During application process supply references

Other principles of the Citizens Programs include:

- Communication between the PM and Buddy Pairs is essential. We recommend Buddy Pairs maintain regular contact with their PM to provide updates on the status of the friendship.
- (e.g. how the Buddy Pair fulfilled the mission that month, if any problems arise, to share success stories).
- All participants should complete the membership application process with their PM
 - Complete membership application
 - Responsible for sharing updates regarding contact and outings with PM

Additional information on guiding principles and requirements can be found in the program manuals for each program.

Defining Participant Roles & Terms

The following terms can be used at the discretion of each country to best suit the needs of their programs. It is recommended that you use our terminology whenever possible.

Participant Roles

School friendship programs

- **Buddy** – a volunteer with an IDD who is paired in a one-to-one friendship with a person without an IDD.
- **College Buddy** – a volunteer without an IDD from a college or university who is paired in a one-to-one friendship with a person in their community with an IDD.
- **Peer Buddy** – a volunteer without an IDD from a high/middle school chapter who is paired in a one-to-one friendship with a person either at their own high/middle school or an identified host site with an IDD.
- **Associate member/associate Buddy** – a chapter member who is not matched in a one-to-one friendship, but who attends chapter meetings and group outings.
- **College Buddy Director (CBD)** – a full-time undergraduate student, who organizes, leads and maintains an active chapter of Best Buddies for the duration of one academic year.
- **Chapter president (CP)** – a full-time high/middle school student, who organizes, leads and maintains an active chapter of Best Buddies for the duration of one academic year.
- **Buddy Director (BD)** – an individual with an IDD who works closely with the chapter leadership to ensure the full participation of all Buddies.
- **Faculty advisor (FA)** – a member of the school faculty or full-time staff who serves as a liaison between the school administration and the chapter, providing support to the student leaders and chapter members throughout the year.
- **Host site coordinator (HSC)** – a professional trained in the field of IDD, who acts as a liaison between the chapter and the host site by providing on-going information, education and training with regard to the social integration of people with IDD.
- **Special education advisor (SEA)** – a member of the high/middle school faculty who serves in the Special Education Department and acts as a liaison between the chapter and special education classroom by providing on-going information, education and training with regard to the social integration of students with IDD.
- **Membership coordinator (MC)** – a member of the Colleges officer corps who ensures full participation of all members and is responsible for monitoring the one-to-one friendships through monthly friendship updates.
- **Activities coordinator (AC)** – a member of the Colleges officer corps who organizes all chapter activities, including Best Buddies Month, Eunice Kennedy Shriver (EKS) Day, and Spread the Word to End the Word.
- **Treasurer** – a member of the Colleges and High Schools officer corps who prepares and monitors the chapter budget, ensuring there is enough funds for chapter activities.
- **Vice president** – a member of the High Schools officer corps, who plans, supervises and evaluates all chapter activities and program initiatives, including Best Buddies Month, EKS Day and Spread the Word to End the Word.

- **Secretary** – a member of the High Schools officer corps who completes chapter forms/resources required by the school and/or BBI and reviews monthly friendship updates on each match.
- **Parent advisor** - a parent or guardian of a Middle Schools chapter member who serves as a liaison between chapter leaders and chapter members' parents, assisting in the planning and communication of chapter events and outings.
- **Chapter representative** – a member of the Middle Schools officer corps who supports the chapter president to lead and maintain an active chapter, completes chapter forms/resources required by the school and/or BBI and reviews monthly friendship updates on each match.
- **Friendship update coordinator** – a member of the Middle Schools officer corps who monitors and supports the chapters' Buddy Pairs by collecting and reviewing monthly friendship updates on each match.
- **Key players** – the key players include the CBD/CP, HSC/SEA and FA from a chapter who oversee the management and facilitation of their Best Buddies chapter.
- **Student leaders or officer corps**– participants from the Middle Schools, High Schools and Colleges programs who are chosen to lead the Best Buddies chapter on their campus and fill the designated officer positions as outlined in the program manuals.

Citizens

- **Citizen Buddy** – a volunteer without an IDD from the community who is paired in a one-to-one friendship with a person with an IDD.
- **Buddy** – a volunteer with an IDD who is paired in a one-to-one friendship with a person without IDD from the community.
- **Sponsor** – a person who knows the Buddy very well and is willing to serve as a resource to the friendship. He or she will be able to answer questions that the Buddy, Citizen Buddy, or PM may have.

e-Buddies®

- **e-Buddy** – a volunteer without an IDD from the community who is paired in a one-to-one online friendship with a person with an IDD.
- **Buddy** – an individual with an IDD who is paired in a one-to-one friendship with a volunteer without an IDD online.

Jobs

- **Jobs participant** – a person with an IDD who is of 18 years of age or older and qualifies for supported employment services.
- **Jobs employer partner** – a small business or company that chooses to partner with Best Buddies Jobs in hiring one or more Best Buddies Jobs participants.
- **Jobs contract partner** – in the US this is the Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Department of Rehabilitation; Regional Center; or Department of Developmental Services division of state government that authorizes BBI to operate a supported employment program within the respective state and open contracts to receive referrals from new and prospective Best Buddies Jobs participants.

- **Employment consultant (EC)** – a Best Buddies staff member who works with individuals with IDD and employers to create and ensure the long-term success of integrated employment arrangements.

Ambassadors

- **Ambassador** - a participant who has completed an official Ambassadors training and is committed to promoting and educating audiences about the mission, philosophy, and benefits of Best Buddies through public speaking.
- **Speech coach** – a volunteer who is paired with one Ambassador for the duration of an Ambassadors training to assist with the writing and practicing of a speech. Speech coaches help Ambassadors in areas of brainstorming, organization, and editing. Speech coaches should not be writing speeches for their matched Ambassadors, but serve as a guide and mentor who provides one-on-one attention as needed.

Common Terms

- **Buddy Pair** – two people, one with IDD and one without IDD, matched in a Best Buddies friendship.
- **Chapter** – a group of students from a college, high school or middle school that is organized to create friendships between individuals with and without IDD and is recognized by BBI.
- **Group outing** – a planned event where Buddy Pairs join together to participate in an activity as a chapter or group of matches.
- **Host site** – a residential facility or other program that serves people with IDD. These organizations or agencies are selected to partner with a school to form a Best Buddies chapter, or can refer individuals with IDD to the Citizens, e-Buddies® and Jobs programs.
- **Mid Year/End Year Reports (MYR and EYR)** – these reports can be used as a resource by countries to collect information from the PMs. These reports will help country offices complete their bi-annual reports. It is recommended that a PM reports on their entire program twice a year. The MYR should be submitted half way through the school year and the EYR during the last month of the school year. These reports provide outcomes for each program and assist each office with the management of their programs. MYRs and EYRs are submitted to your country's headquarters. (Citizens PMs only complete the EYR)
- **One-to-one friendship** – the pairing of one individual with IDD and one individual without IDD.
- **Program manager (PM)** – a member of the Best Buddies staff who oversees the daily management and development of all aspects of the Best Buddies program (Colleges, High Schools, Middle Schools, e-Buddies, Citizens and Ambassadors) he/she is managing.

Our Programs

School Based Friendship Programs

Colleges

Best Buddies Colleges is the premise upon which the international organization of Best Buddies began. The mission of Best Buddies Colleges is to provide an opportunity for college students to be matched in a one-to-one friendship with individuals who have IDD. College chapters are active on over 400 campuses worldwide. Each chapter is a registered student organization on its college campus, and is matched with a local agency that provides services to people with IDD.

Best Buddies Colleges creates a unique opportunity for friendship to the college student as well as the peer or older adult member with an IDD. With the college chapter matched with a community service provider, referred to as the host site, the college student is provided with an opportunity for community involvement outside of their college campus. The participants from the host site have the opportunity to be involved in college campus life – many for the first time in their life. The Colleges program model provides the structure for distinctive and successful one to one friendships between two segments of society who would commonly fail to cross paths without it.

Outstanding opportunities for leadership are also provided with the college program – for both those with and without IDD. The College Buddy Director (CBD) leads the chapter and in this position acts as the point person between the Program Manager (PM) or home office and their chapter. This can be a demanding position, particularly with a large chapter or with a chapter that is struggling to find support from faculty or students. It is imperative that PMs provide the CBD with the proper guidance, support and motivation necessary to be successful in their position.

PMs are responsible for ensuring that each of the officer positions is filled as well as the FA and the HSC positions. The FA is a recognized university faculty or staff member who provides support for leadership development and campus resources. The HSC is a staff member at the designated host site who acts as the contact between the host site, the college campus and Best Buddies staff. They provide support with selecting Buddies, activity planning, transportation and host site staff support as needed.

Best Buddies staff can best support a college chapter by:

- Choose the appropriate CBD candidate (dedicated and fully understands the position's responsibilities)
- Maintain contact with the CBD at a minimum of two times per month; more when a chapter is not meeting minimum requirements
- Ensure all chapter leadership positions are filled
- Ensure all chapter leaders are communicating effectively with each other and fulfilling their responsibilities for the chapter

- Provide proper training to the CBD, officers, HSC/FA, Buddies and other members early in the year
- Work with the CBD and HSC/FA to establish realistic goals each semester and revisiting these goals on each visit/meeting
- Work with chapter leadership to ensure that Buddy Pairs are being matched properly (matches based off of common interests, gender and location)

High Schools

Best Buddies High Schools is in over 900 schools worldwide. Each chapter is a registered student organization within their school and, in some cases matches high school students with and without IDD from the same campus. In high school settings without a special education program, the school is matched with a host site school campus – often another school for students with IDD.

The chapter is led by a Chapter President (CP) along with the strong support of a Faculty Advisor (FA) and a Special Education Advisor (SEA). It is imperative that the PM work with these three key players to ensure that they have a positive relationship and communicate with each other regularly. It is recommended that the key players are supported by the rest of the officer corps, including a Buddy Director, vice president, treasurer and secretary.

Best Buddies High School chapters often require a great deal of support from Best Buddies staff. PMs should have regular communication with these chapters and we recommend a visit one time a month.

These chapters are most successful with the following support from the PM:

- Choose the appropriate CP candidate (dedicated and fully understands the position's responsibilities)
- Maintain communication with the CP and SEA/FA
- Attend chapter meetings and events
- Support the CP with leadership of and delegation to the officers and other chapter members; PM should model positive communication and constructive feedback skills
- Work with the CP and SEA/FA to establish realistic goals each semester and revisiting these goals on each visit/meeting
- Provide proper training to the CP, officers, SEA/FA, Buddies and other members early in the year
- Work with chapter leadership to ensure that Buddy Pairs are being matched properly (matches based off of common interests, gender and location)
- Encourage regular communication among the chapter leaders

Middle Schools

Best Buddies Middle Schools provides friendship and leadership opportunities for nearly 130 middle schools worldwide. With the support of school faculty and Best Buddies staff, students with and without IDD lead and direct the chapters in their schools. Recommended leadership

roles for the middle school students include a Chapter President (CP), Buddy Director, Friendship Update Coordinator and a minimum of two chapter representatives.

PMs that oversee Best Buddies Middle Schools chapters should be flexible and understand that each chapter may require a different level of support. Chapters are most successful when they utilize students, faculty and parents to lead the program on their campus.

Best Buddies recommends that chapters:

- Choose the appropriate advisors & CP candidate (dedicated and fully understands the position's responsibilities).
- Select a parent advisor to serve as the liaison between chapter leaders and chapter members' parents and communicate chapter events, outings and transportation needs.
- Develop a friendship update committee: a group of students who, under the guidance and supervision of the friendship update coordinator, support and monitor matches by collecting and reviewing monthly friendship updates. A committee can better maintain the responsibility of overseeing the Buddy Pairs and monitoring their success.
- Provide full trainings of the middle school officer corps, including the completion of semester evaluations. Training materials for Middle Schools officer training can be provided by the International Programs Head Quarters team.
- Work with chapter leadership to ensure that Buddy Pairs are being matched properly (matches based off of common interests, gender and location).

PMs can best serve the Middle Schools chapters by selecting and training dedicated advisors. Advisors serve a more active role in the middle school chapters than in any other Best Buddies program. These advisors consist of one faculty member that teaches a general education subject (FA), one faculty member in the special education program (SEA) and an optional parent advisor. Together these faculty members, with their knowledge of the student population with and without IDD, work with the PM to select dedicated students to serve the mission. With the PM, they make matches and select students that will serve in the leadership roles that make up the officer corps. In addition to the responsibilities named above, these advisors are primarily accountable for the following:

- Work with the PM to train officers in their role, host a mandatory officer training.
- Encourage communication between the officers and PM.
- Host meetings in their classroom, or working with faculty to select an appropriate meeting place for students to host activities, where they will be present.
- Support the PM in informing parents of chapter happenings.
- Inform administrators and other faculty of chapter activities and needs.

Community Based Friendship Programs

Citizens

After people with IDD age out of school, usually after age 21, there are very few services that provide opportunities for social integration, which is exactly where the Citizens program comes

in. Best Buddies Citizens pairs people over the age of 18 with IDD in one-to-one friendships with individuals in the corporate and civic communities without IDD.

The Citizens PM position is somewhat different than that of the PM of school friendship programs. Whereas each of those positions oversees a student leader and two adult advisors who in turn manage a chapter of Buddy Pairs, the Best Buddies Citizens PM directly manages each Buddy Pair. In many ways this position resembles a CP/CBD.

The Citizens PM is responsible for recruiting all the participants for their program. This includes Buddies, Citizen Buddies and sponsors. Buddies are recruited primarily from referrals from a host site, a family member or social worker. The Citizen Buddies are recruited through public relations efforts including public speaking, networking at events, meeting with corporations, speaking to civic groups, posting flyers, buying advertising, etc. but most successfully through word of mouth recruitment. Sponsors typically come to Best Buddies searching for social opportunities for their client, family member or friend.

It is recommended that every participant go through the membership application process, which includes a phone screening, home interview, and completion of a membership application; additionally, all Citizen Buddies should have a background check completed. Executive Directors should research how background checks are completed locally and implement if it is an appropriate action in your country.

After matches are made, the Citizens PM trains all participants and monitors the friendships closely. Citizens matches are asked to maintain their friendships for a minimum of one year. Throughout this time, the PM should maintain regular (at least monthly) contact with each Buddy Pair.

Because the Citizens PM works within the community, s/he should have strong communication and presentation skills. They are the face of Best Buddies in the community, especially in the field of IDD, because they are in direct contact with service providers. Additionally, the Citizens PM should know the area well and make contacts easily. This position is integral to how well a community embraces the mission of Best Buddies.

It is recommended that Citizens PMs submit a monthly report to their supervisor. There is a template to be followed and the supervisor should read these reports monthly to provide feedback and support to their staff member. The International Programs Department will provide feedback to the PM as well.

Best Buddies staff can best support their Citizens participants by:

- Recruiting participants from across their region to ensure members of a Buddy Pair will be in close proximity to one another
- Maintaining regular contact with each Buddy Pair
- Training all participants on what it takes to be a good volunteer for Best Buddies
- Organizing group events for the Buddy Pairs and participants on the waitlist

- Making sure that the best match possible is made based on common interests, gender and location

e-Buddies®

e-Buddies is an e-mail pen pal program that provides opportunities for one-to-one e-mail friendships between people with and without IDD. People with IDD are often left out of technology education, denying them access to the abundance of social and creative outlets that can be found using computers and the Internet. e-Buddies provides opportunities for computer literacy, while also forming a new friendship.

e-Buddies matches a person with IDD in an online friendship with a person without IDD. Participants are matched based on age, gender and similar interests. Anyone over the age of 10 can participate in e-Buddies. Students are matched with other students and adults are matched with adults. e-Buddies agree to e-mail each other once a week for the duration of one year.

All applicants are screened and, once matched; all communication is conducted through the e-Buddies e-mail system. This e-mail system allows users to communicate without divulging their personal e-mail address and also filters out personally identifiable information and inappropriate content.

e-Buddies is always free for people with IDD and is currently available in English only. A onetime fee is required for all applicants without IDD over the age of 18.

Leadership Programs

Ambassadors

Best Buddies Ambassadors educates and empowers people with IDD to be leaders and public speakers in their schools, communities, and workplaces. Ambassadors is the next step in the Disability Rights Movement, teaching people with IDD the skills needed to successfully advocate for oneself. Ambassadors prepare people with IDD to become active agents of change.

What began as an initiative to provide additional skills to our participants with IDD at our annual BBI Leadership Conference, Ambassadors blossomed into the seventh official Best Buddies program in 2010. Ambassadors' focus is to teach Buddies the art of public speaking while encouraging them to become self-advocates in the Disability Rights movement.

The Ambassadors program impacts all areas of the community; from Buddies who attend the trainings, to volunteers who serve as speech coaches, and audiences who listen to speeches and learn more about Best Buddies and the incredible abilities of people with IDD.

Promoters

Best Buddies Promoters empowers youth to become advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Students who take part in Promoters will be successfully introduced to the disability rights movement and the importance of the inclusion revolution through local awareness events. To this end, Promoters is an essential part of Best Buddies' future and will help make our vision a reality.

Students and teachers who would like to have Promoters in their school will recruit a Chapter President (CP) and a Faculty Advisor to oversee the chapter. It is recommended that the chapter president attend the Best Buddies Leadership Conference to learn how to successfully lead a Promoters chapter. The chapter will host a minimum of two special events each school year, designed to raise awareness about social inclusion and the disability rights movement.

Annual Program Events

Best Buddies International Leadership Conference

Each summer Best Buddies hosts an annual BBI Leadership Conference to train our student leaders engaged in serving as the CBDs and CPs of their college or high school chapters. The annual conference occurs the fourth weekend of July and is held at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Each year, the cost per attendee is determined by BBI and each country determines at what level they are able to participate. Each country is responsible for paying for the flight and the conference fee which includes room, board, and conference materials for each attendee. This conference is an extraordinary investment of our financial resources in order to make sure all of our chapters have the tools to effectively implement our mission.

The annual BBI Leadership Conference also provides training opportunities for other members of our programs that are interested in attending the conference.

- Ambassadors- For individuals with IDD who are committed to promoting and educating audiences about the mission, philosophy, and benefits of Best Buddies through public speaking.
- Advisors/coordinators- For college and high school FAs, SEAs and/or HSCs who support the chapter leadership and assist with the management of their chapter.
- Buddy Director- This track focuses solely on the Buddy Director position; it details the specifics of the position and trains the Buddy Director on how to become an asset to their chapter.

Chapter officers- Participants from the High School and Colleges chapters who are chosen to lead the Best Buddies chapter on their campus.

International Pre-Conference

International staff and students may choose to attend a pre-conference to learn about Best Buddies around the world and share about Best Buddies in their own country. The pre-conference also gives the opportunity to adjust to the time difference and have a fuller experience of Indianapolis, USA. The fee for pre-conference will be announced annually by BBI.

Staff role at BBI Leadership Conference

All programs staff have the opportunity to take an active role in the planning and execution of the BBI Leadership Conference. In February, the International programs team develops a committee of staff members around the world to serve on the pre-conference education committee and the student management committee. These staff members work alongside the International programs team to manage these aspects of the conference.

All staff members will be responsible for managing their conference delegation and providing training to their student leaders. These days of training help shape the future of our programs and provide each staff member the opportunity to develop valuable relationships with their student leaders for the year. Following the close of the conference, programs staff members will depart when their conference attendees have departed the campus and airport.

Best Buddies Month

March is Best Buddies Month. All Best Buddies offices are expected to plan activities during the month of March to increase awareness of our mission and celebrate the friendships that have been created. PMs should encourage their chapters to participate in any local Best Buddies Month events and/or plan individual chapter activities. Best Buddies Month events can be anything from a dance, field day, pizza party, etc. We encourage your country office and chapters to get creative.

Program staff should:

- Begin preparations 3-4 months in advance to secure a chair for the planning committee, the following should be led by the committee:
 - Plan the type of event (e.g. picnic, walk, field day, etc.)
 - Determine resources needed
 - Secure event locations
 - Reach out for in-kind donations
 - Promote “save the date” to chapters, volunteers, board members, other constituents
- Keep in communication with chapters regarding Best Buddies Month
 - Supply them with event details
 - Confirm if they are hosting their own individual chapter activity if they are not attending the state event. Have them invite neighboring chapters.
 - Invite Citizens, Ambassadors and Jobs participants to attend your event
- Remind chapters to publicize the Best Buddies Month event in their school announcements, newspapers, flyers and banners
- Share information about your Best Buddies Month event on your website and social networking site
- By February, finalize plans for Best Buddies Month event (volunteers, agendas, press releases)

Spread the Word to End the Word

Spread the Word to End the Word™ is an ongoing effort by BBI, Special Olympics, and our supporters to raise the consciousness of society about the dehumanizing and hurtful effects of the word “retard(ed)” and encourage people to pledge to stop using the R-word.

The annual day of activation for the campaign falls on the first Wednesday of the month in March. While most activities are centered annually in March, people everywhere can help spread the word throughout their communities and schools year-round thru pledge drives, youth rallies and online activation.

The campaign, created by youth, helps to build awareness around the world and teach that respectful language is essential to the movement for the dignity and humanity of people with IDD. For more information and to learn more about Spread the Word to End the Word campaign please visit www.r-word.org or www.facebook.com/endtheword.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day (EKS Day)

EKS Day is an annual celebration in September that honors the memory of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics movement, long-time supporter and board member of BBI, and leading international advocate for the rights of people with IDD. Encourage staff, participants, friends and family to celebrate Eunice Kennedy Shriver's value and life mission, by participating in this global call for people to engage in acts of acceptance, inclusion, and unity for people with IDD.

The three key components to honoring her legacy are:

- **PLAY:** A day of sports, training clinics and sports activities to commemorate Eunice Kennedy Shriver's belief in building greater equality through organized athletics.
- **JOIN:** An effort to share her life and impact and to educate people about the urgent needs of people with intellectual disabilities and to motivate new fans and friends to act.
- **BUILD:** A regional effort to dedicate new or renovated athletic facilities in Eunice Kennedy Shriver's honor in the poorest communities.

For more information on activities in your area please download the EKS Day resource on www.bestbuddiesonline.org or visit www.eksday.org.

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD)

Each April, in conjunction with Youth Service America, BBI is proud to serve as a lead agency for GYSD. Visit www.gysd.org for the next scheduled GYSD. For more information and tip sheets on planning events, getting grants, fundraising, receiving publicity, and many other useful topics visit the GYSD website at www.gysd.org, www.ysa.org or contact the International programs team.

Program Management

This section applies to supervisors of school friendship, e-Buddies, Ambassadors, Promoters and Citizens programs. For detailed information on supervising Jobs and employment consultants, please refer to the Best Buddies Jobs Policies and Procedures Manual.

School Friendship Programs

Chapter Organizing & Reporting

It is recommended that each chapter complete a chapter charter. Depending on the procedures of your country this may be used to recognize the chapter as an official Best Buddies chapter or just to have a quick reference form for each chapter. It is also a good practice to have chapter members complete a membership application and, if they are interested in being matched, a matching survey. In addition to a sample of a membership application and matching survey, there are many forms and resources that can be edited and utilized to help your chapters run smoothly. These resources provide a wealth of information and tools to assist the chapter with organization, fundraising, and chapter and leader development. See School Based PM Manual for details on chapter forms and resources.

Selecting Chapter Leaders

Selecting dedicated and qualified leaders is arguably the single most important responsibility of a PM. An outstanding CBD/CP can turn a struggling chapter around, improve upon an already strong chapter, and generally foster the success of the Best Buddies mission. On the other hand, an inadequate student leader will cause a chapter to struggle, but you will also see the strength of the one-to-one friendships negatively affected.

It is a best practice of established PM's from around the world to be on the lookout for up-and-coming leaders at each chapter visit throughout the year. They should also encourage the current officer corps to mentor younger students for future leadership positions in the chapter. The recruitment, application and interview period are critical for each chapter when selecting the student leader for the next year. The supervisor should review this process for each chapter and ensure that the PM has interviewed multiple candidates when possible and has personally approved the selection of each CBD/CP.

Similar to recruiting a CBD/CP, selecting advisors is the responsibility of the PM and is just as crucial to the success of a chapter. Often HSCs/SEAs/FAs will stay with a chapter for many years, so selecting strong HSCs/SEAs/FAs will benefit the mission for a long time to come. PMs should look for HSCs/SEAs/FAs who are dedicated to the mission, have strong communication skills, and are willing to work with Best Buddies staff to develop the student leaders' skills.

While the CBD/CP and are responsible for selecting their officer corps, this is a process which the PM needs to closely monitor. The PM should train the CP/CBD regarding selecting candidates that are dedicated and qualified so that they will have the proper support throughout the year.

Training Chapter Leaders

There are several trainings in place for the student leaders discussed in this section along with suggested trainings for chapter members. Many of these are elaborated in the School Based Programs PM Manual.

- BBI Leadership Conference
 - If possible, CBDs and high school CPs attend the four-day BBI Annual Leadership Conference or similar training preceding their leadership year. The annual BBI Leadership Conference also provides training opportunities for other members of our programs that are interested in attending the conference. (HSC/SEA/FA, Ambassadors, officers, Buddy Directors)
- Local Leadership Training Day (LLTD)
 - PMs are also responsible for training each officer corps on a local level to ensure that each officer understands their role, that the officer corps is fostering a positive dynamic that will be supportive of meeting Best Buddies expectations, and that they are prepared to receive and follow through on delegated tasks. Tools for successfully fulfilling their role should be provided to each officer. PMs should make sure they have a plan and follow through on training each officer corps by the middle of the second month of school. Resources for leading a LLTD can be provided by International Programs HQ staff. Global field staff can also find resources on Team Best Buddies, including agendas, handouts and lessons.
 - Best Buddies staff should be utilizing their Ambassadors during these trainings.
- Officer trainings
 - Officer trainings, either with individual chapters or with several chapters at once are essential to ensure that each officer understands their role and to assist the officer corps with their communication and delegation plans. These can be held at the discretion and availability of the PM, within one month of leadership selection.

Volunteer Training

Within the school friendship programs, the PM should assess the training needs for the chapter/program and provide training for volunteers to be prepared to form proper, strong Best Buddies friendships. Best Buddies is currently working to develop a more comprehensive and specific training on this topic, known as the Global Volunteer Training Model. The long term goal will be for this to become the model used around the globe to ensure every volunteer is prepared to meet our mission by developing a committed, quality friendship with their Buddy.

PMs need to be aware and sensitive to training issues that may come up throughout the year. At times, an incident may occur that would warrant a mid-year training. The PM needs to remain informed and knowledgeable of such issues and assist in providing training as needed.

HSCs/SEAs/FAs are often capable and willing to provide or assist with basic IDD training and Best Buddies organizational training needed for the volunteers, and should be utilized as appropriate.

Supporting Chapter Leaders

Through bi-monthly contact (phone, e-mail, Facebook, text, etc.) and frequent chapter visits, a PM should be able to provide adequate support to most of their student leaders. Those that seem to be struggling with recruitment of officers or members, making matches, organizing activities, or fundraising should be prioritized during periods of difficulty and may require additional support and visits. It is the responsibility of the PM to identify those chapter leaders that are struggling with their responsibilities and provide the support needed to make sure that the chapter is meeting the mission of Best Buddies.

Travel & Visits

PMs for the school friendship programs are encouraged to visit High School and Middle School chapters a minimum of once a month and College chapters should be visited twice a semester; however those in larger regions may only be visited once a semester based on time and travel budget. **It is recommended that the PM plan their travel budget at the beginning of each semester to assist in the travel planning.**

During a chapter visit a PM should aim to visit as many people from the chapter as possible. Goals should be created for each visit and PMs should always plan ahead, schedule meetings with key players and prepare prior to the trip. PMs should also visit host sites and special education classrooms whenever possible, not only to meet with the HSC/SEA, but to also see the Buddies to ensure that they are appropriate for the program and, most importantly, that they are having a positive experience in their chapter and with their College/Peer Buddy.

School friendship programs site visit task list: A PM should accomplish a multitude of tasks during each visit to a chapter. At the beginning of the academic year, and prior to each visit throughout the year, the PM should focus on developing a list of goals you would like to accomplish based on the current needs of the chapter. Below are suggested tasks the PM should accomplish during each visit to support the chapter leadership and campus awareness of Best Buddies.

- Attend a volunteer fair or set up a recruitment table to recruit student leaders and chapter members.
- Meet with school administrators to introduce Best Buddies or network for an existing chapter.
- If applicable, file the appropriate paperwork on campus to be a recognized campus organization (if the student leader has not already done this).
- Schedule and speak to various classes about Best Buddies to recruit chapter members.
- Attend the organizational/introductory meeting.
- Assist the CBD/CP with interviewing chapter members.
- Meet with and build a relationship with the HSC/SEA/FA.

- If the FA or SEA/HSC positions are vacant, recruit volunteers to fill them. *It is the responsibility of the PM to recruit for these roles when vacant.*
- Meet with Buddies to determine their needs, interests and abilities to form mutually enriching friendships.
- Provide training to officer corps, Buddies, and other chapter members.
- Ensure that all membership applications from Buddies, College Buddies/Peer Buddies, and HSCs/SEAs/FAs.
- Attend officer meetings: ensure chapter officers are fulfilling their roles and supporting the CBD/CP and chapter.
- Attend chapter meetings and group activities.
 - Ensure one-to-one matches are made and seeing each other regularly.
 - Meet with Buddy Pairs to determine their level of friendship and activity.
- Review chapter's annual calendar, if there isn't one; work with the officers to create one.
- Review chapter's fundraising status and budget.
 - Ensure the chapter is referring to their budget when planning activities.
 - If applicable work with leadership team to determine if any additional funds will be needed to cover the cost of travel for the CBD/CP to attend the BBI Leadership Conference and any other expenses associated with registration fees and travel for the chapter officers, FA or HSC/SEA.
- Invite chapters and HSC/SEA/FA to local Best Buddies fundraising and volunteer recognition events; discuss how they can be involved in raising funds, sponsors, donors or other support.

When on a site visit, Best Buddies staff should always keep in mind the following opportunities when interacting with students, parents, faculty and administrators:

- Identify possible parents, advisors or participants who may be interested in getting involved by serving on a committee, donating funds, or providing contacts. Be sure to put your executive director or development staff in touch with these volunteers.
- Network with the school's administration including the dean of student activities, the student government association, the student activities staff, the president's office, the faculty, the school's media outlets (newspaper, PR department, alumni office, etc.), sports teams (to secure tickets to events for chapter outing), Facilities Management (to secure meeting space when needed), etc.
- Identify Buddies who may be interested in serving as a Buddy Ambassador.

Citizens

Paperwork

All Citizens' participants will need to complete and submit a membership application. It is recommended that The Citizen Buddy get two referral letters and possibly agree to a background check, according to your countries procedures.

Member/Sponsor selection and program support

It is the responsibility of the PM to recruit and select dedicated Citizen Buddies, Buddies and sponsors for the program. A recruitment plan will need to be devised for each type of participant. For recruitment ideas, please review the Citizens PM Manual. Once the PM feels they have found appropriate and interested candidates they conduct home visits. It is essential that the Citizen Buddy and Buddy meet the following requirements:

- Must be over the age of 18
- Conduct a phone screening (recommended)
- Submit a completed membership application
- Complete a home visit interview/training with the PM (recommended)
- Complete a criminal background check (recommended - Citizen Buddies only)
- Have a genuine interest in forming a new friendship
- Commit to a one-year friendship
- See one another twice a month or for a single four-hour outing
- Maintain weekly contact by telephone, mail or e-mail

It is your responsibility to develop a strong recruitment plan for your country. Please seek additional assistance from the executive director of your program or the HQ International Programs staff if there are questions or issues regarding home visits, background checks or any other issues that may arise.

A PM can best support their participants by providing consistent and regular communication with the matches, including monthly phone calls and/or e-mails to Buddies, Citizen Buddies, and sponsors. This communication is tracked in the PM's communication log and recommended monthly report. It is vital that the PM gets to know the current matches, makes a personal connection with each participant and continues to motivate them. The Citizen Buddies need to see the PM as a facilitator who they can come to when they have questions or problems with their match, as well as to share their positive experiences. It is your responsibility to ensure that communication is consistent and issues within the friendship are addressed in a timely manner.

Citizens Trainings

We recommend that Citizens PMs should hold at least two volunteer trainings a year. There are two primary types of trainings within the Citizens program: Citizen Buddy trainings and Buddy trainings. These can include trainings for potential volunteers (i.e. people who are on the waitlist) and trainings for current volunteers (i.e. people who are currently matched). This being said, often the best Citizens trainings combine both people from the waitlist and people currently matched.

Potential Citizen Buddy trainings/potential Buddy trainings are used as a supplement to the home visit. These trainings allow the PM to get to know their waitlist better and provide further

information to the potential volunteers on what makes a successful Best Buddies friendship. Trainings for currently matched volunteers can help improve the program by not only enhancing a sense of community, but also by allowing participants to learn from each other how to overcome common friendship obstacles.

The Wall Map

It is recommended that the Citizens Program PM has a map of their region where the PM can mark both current participants and individuals on the waitlist. If your office does not already have a wall map, buy an area wide map, mount it on foam board and use pins to mark where participants live or work. The PM should code the pins by using numbers and/or colors that correspond with a host site and/or potential Buddy and potential Citizen Buddy names so you are able to know whom the pin belongs to easily. Then create a corresponding spreadsheet or utilize the waitlist to list all of the potential Buddies for quick reference.

It is good to put a pin in the map for each referral, regardless of where the Buddy or Citizen Buddy is in the process of being matched. By doing so, the PM will have a better idea of where they need to focus recruitment, how far potential participants are from each other, what areas of your region are an active source of potential Citizens Buddies or potential Buddies and how far the majority of your participants live from your next group event.

Home Visits

We recommend that Citizens PMs do a home visit with both potential Buddies and Citizens Buddies. This serves many purposes: get to know the potential participant, offer an individual training to each participant, and ensure that the home is a safe place for visitors. The goal is to leave the home visit confident that everyone knows everything they need to know (the PMs knows the potential participant and what to look for in a good match, and the potential participant understands Best Buddies).

Home visits should always be conducted in the potential volunteer's home. For Citizen Buddies, the meeting should be conducted right away, whereas for Buddies it is advisable that you wait to conduct the home visit until you have a potential match in mind.

Group Activities

BBI recommends that each Citizens program conduct at least four group activities every year, but you are encouraged to hold more. Often, the funding contract will dictate the minimum number of events and activities that are necessary to plan. These activities are one of the most powerful tools for PM to build community and strengthen the matches. Some typical Citizens group activities include: potluck dinners/Restaurant nights, volunteer recognition luncheon, ceremony or dinner, bowling, amusement park and zoo, Business Buddies, etc.

Promoters

Selecting Chapter Leaders

Selecting dedicated and qualified leaders is arguably the single most important responsibility of a PM. An outstanding CBD/CP can turn a struggling chapter around, improve upon an already strong chapter, and generally foster the success of the Best Buddies mission. On the other hand, an inadequate student leader will cause a chapter to struggle, but you will also see the strength of the one-to-one friendships negatively affected.

It is a best practice of established PM's from around the world to be on the lookout for up-and-coming leaders at each chapter visit throughout the year. They should also encourage the current officer corps to mentor younger students for future leadership positions in the chapter. The recruitment, application and interview period are critical for each chapter when selecting the student leader for the next year. The supervisor should review this process for each chapter and ensure that the PM has interviewed multiple candidates when possible and has personally approved the selection of each CBD/CP.

Similar to recruiting a CBD/CP, selecting advisors is the responsibility of the PM and is just as crucial to the success of a chapter. Often HSCs/SEAs/FAs will stay with a chapter for many years, so selecting strong HSCs/SEAs/FAs will benefit the mission for a long time to come. PMs should look for HSCs/SEAs/FAs who are dedicated to the mission, have strong communication skills, and are willing to work with Best Buddies staff to develop the student leaders' skills.

While the CBD/CP and are responsible for selecting their officer corps, this is a process which the PM needs to closely monitor. The PM should train the CP/CBD regarding selecting candidates that are dedicated and qualified so that they will have the proper support throughout the year.

Ambassadors

Best Buddies Ambassadors, our seventh program, works to provide public speaking training to our volunteers with IDD, which is a natural complement to our one-to-one friendship and supported employment programs. Best Buddies Ambassadors is the next step in the Disability Rights Movement - teaching people with IDD the skills needed to successfully advocate for themselves and others with IDD. Opportunities for Ambassadors in your country are limitless and will showcase the leadership and abilities of our volunteers with IDD in the community. From serving on the advisory board, to speaking at a corporate event, to traveling to schools sharing the mission – our Ambassadors have endless opportunities to be engaged in the mission.

To be an official Best Buddies Ambassador, all interested volunteers must complete an official Ambassador training in your country or at the BBI Leadership Conference. Training resources and materials are available to countries to utilize when hosting a training and staff are encouraged to work with the Deputy Director, International Programs, to develop their training

goals and agenda. Once the training has been completed and Ambassadors have been trained, staff should submit profiles for their trained Ambassadors to be considered for BBI events.

e-Buddies®

If you have English speaking Buddies in your country, we encourage you to get them enrolled in e-Buddies. Please note that while volunteers without IDD are welcome to join e-Buddies, there is a waitlist for people without IDD.

Recruitment Strategies

e-Buddies was designed to minimize support needed from the Best Buddies staff. All the information necessary to participate is available on our website (www.ebuddies.org), including the online application.

Below are everyday recruitment strategies that can increase state participation in e-Buddies:

- Talk about e-Buddies whenever you talk about Best Buddies
- Offer e-Buddies to current chapter members and SEAs
- Mention e-Buddies in other outreach efforts, such as newsletters and giving campaigns
- Refer people that inquire about opening new chapters to e-Buddies if there is limited expansion in your country
- If your country offers the Citizens program, refer Buddies on the waitlist to e-Buddies

For additional e-Buddies recruitment strategies or for more information, contact the deputy director, e-Buddies. The e-Buddies office is headquartered in Washington, D.C. and is available for support. If you do not have an e-Buddies program manager in your country, the e-Buddies HQ staff will work to ensure the Buddies involved in e-Buddies from your country stay active.

Program Management Best Practices - School Friendship and Citizens

Travel Administration

It is crucial that PM remain organized and focus on strong time management skills. PMs should keep mileage logs so they can easily submit their Best Buddies mileage expenses at the end of each month.

To plan an overnight trip, PMs should check with their supervisor for approval two weeks prior to their trip to ensure funding and the appropriate travel procedure for your country. There are times, however, that a chapter requires an immediate trip and the supervisor can work with the PM to speed the approval process. Travel expenses generally come out of the PM's personal resources and are reimbursed after s/he returns from his/her trip. However, a PM can request a travel stipend if the trip is planned far enough in advance. All PM's should follow the guidelines set by their home office for travel planning and reimbursements.

It is recommended that PMs are aware of their travel budget is for the quarter or semester, both for local mileage as well as overnight travel, so they can plan their visits efficiently with their time and the country's financial resources. Careful planning is necessary so that chapters and matches do not become neglected and travel budgets are followed as closely as possible.

Reports

Global staff members are responsible for submitting a comprehensive bi-annual report on their programs to the HQ International Programs Team. It is recommended that staff collect a report from chapter leaders at the end of each semester. BB refers to these reports as the Mid-Year Report and End-Year Report. These can be found in the addendum and can be edited to suit your countries needs. Collecting these reports will assist in gathering information about the programs in your country. Reports are based on the PMs continual contact and visits with the chapter and its key players as well as information gathered directly by the PM at the end of each semester from the chapter leaders.

If applicable, all reports are submitted to country HQ, and used to complete Bi-Annual reports (June and December) that are required by the International Programs team. Bi-Annual reports are reviewed by the international programs team, and are available to Anthony Shriver and the BBI board of directors for quality review of the programs. They are also used to compile statistics on the programs, grant reporting, grant requests and other funding requirements and requests. **The content and quality of each report is the ultimate responsibility of the supervisor.** They must edit each report to ensure that the template is properly followed and that the content is reflective of their personal knowledge of the program. Supervisors should work with their team of PMs well ahead of the due date for each report cycle to set a timeline report submission to ensure they will have the time needed to properly review, edit, and provide feedback. Supervisors should utilize these reports in their own ongoing management and support of their PMs and the chapters for which they are responsible. They should be directly involved in the goals established for the chapter and continue to hold the PM and the chapter responsible for these goals throughout the year.

Program Expansion Protocols

In order for Best Buddies to be successful in reaching expansion goals, it is important for us to spend time researching potential schools that could be a part of our mission. Below are questions that should be explored by staff when researching schools for expansion or when building a waitlist for your office. The questions below should have a positive answer, or the PM should be able to move them toward a positive answer, in order for the school to be pursued or added to the waitlist.

- Is funding in place for this chapter? Is the funding long term? If you are unsure, please discuss with your executive director or the international programs team.
- Does the PM have a caseload that can sustain additional chapters?
- Does the school have the need for social integration and friendships for 10 or more people with IDD? The potential for at least 10 matches needs to be confirmed to consider starting a chapter.
- Is the school located in close proximity to the office or to other existing chapters?
- Is the host site within 15-20 minutes away from the university? Can the student access public transportation to visit the host site?
- Is the administration at the school receptive to starting Best Buddies?
- Does the school have established fundraising experience and capability to raise necessary funds for chapter dues?
- Is there parental or community support for the school and or host site?

Expansion Protocol

If the executive director has confirmed that additional schools should be opened with the international programs team, then the researched schools should be pursued utilizing the below steps:

- Discuss which schools will be approached to open and get approval from your supervisor.
- Contact schools from waitlist.
- Set up meetings to interview potential schools.
- Hold meetings and/or interviews with the following key players:
 - At least one potential CBD/CP.
 - An interested SEA and FA position (middle schools/high schools).
 - An interested FA (colleges).
 - Interview potential HSC and host site.
 - Any interested students for potential leadership/officer roles.
 - At least one member of school's administration – (middle schools/high schools)
This could include the principal, vice principal, or director of inclusion programs/special education programs.
- Meet the special education students – make sure that they are appropriate for our program.

Once you have conducted the interviews, visited the campus, and met the potential key players please take the following steps:

- Speak with your supervisor to confirm that the school can be opened at the current time.
- Confirm that all key player positions are filled.

Waitlists

School friendship programs

If there is no room for immediate expansion, a chapter waitlist should be maintained for all schools that express interest in opening Best Buddies chapters. Schools that have expressed interest in becoming a Best Buddies chapter and they have been placed on the waitlist should be first priority when room for expansion becomes available. The total number of schools on the wait list is valuable information for current and potential funders and supporters. A sample waitlist can be found in the appendix. If a chapter has potential to fund itself annually, a conversation should be had with the executive director to strategize if there is room to open the chapter.

Citizens Program

Many offices have waitlists of potential Citizen Buddies and/or potential Buddies. Determine if your office has these waitlists and familiarize yourself with the individuals on the list. It is important that PMs are actively recruiting participants and that they communicate realistic expectations to both potential Buddies and potential Citizen Buddies for when they will get matched. Use past End Year Reports to determine how long individuals have been on the waitlist and determine the amount of time participants can expect to wait before being matched. Make sure communication logs are kept for all contact with people on the wait list and keep the list updated, eliminating volunteers who are matched or who move away.

Outstanding Chapter Awards

Country Outstanding Chapter Award

We are excited to announce the introduction of Country Outstanding Chapter Awards. For 2012, your country office has the opportunity to honor one High School, one College and one Middle School chapter as the Most Outstanding Chapters for your entire country. It is up to you, the supervisor, and your country to decide on the criteria and guidelines of this prestigious award. These chapters will be recognized at our annual BBI Leadership Conference.

Only chapters that have been awarded the Country Outstanding Chapter can apply for the Overall Outstanding Chapter Award with BBI.

Overall Outstanding Award

Each year, BBI and our board of directors recognizes one High School chapter, one College chapter and one Middle School chapter as being the Overall Outstanding Chapter of the Year at our annual BBI Leadership Conference. This incredible award will go to the chapter that truly exemplifies the mission of Best Buddies.

To qualify for this achievement the chapter must first be selected by your country as the Country Outstanding Chapter of the Year. All applications must include the following sections: quality of one-to-one friendships, effectiveness of group outings, chapter involvement, community awareness, and chapter communication. All applications for Overall Outstanding Chapter of the Year must arrive at BBI HQ by the deadline given each year. The deadline is typically at the end of May or beginning of June. Applications can also be e-mailed to: outstandingchapters@bestbuddies.org.

The following criteria will be used to determine the awards:

- Quality of one-to-one friendships
- Effectiveness of group outings
- Chapter involvement
- Community awareness
- Chapter communication
- Diligence with forms/ resources

Independent Program Evaluations

The National Survey (Hardman)

The National Survey is conducted in the US on an annual basis. If you would like to conduct a similar survey in your country, we can provide samples of survey questions. Please contact the international programs team for these resources.

Program quality is of the utmost importance to Best Buddies. We enlist the assistance of outside consultants to survey and evaluate our programs to ensure the consistent quality of our programs annually. The most frequent survey we participate in is the National Survey otherwise known as the Hardman Survey.

The years when we conducted the survey, a link to an online survey is sent in early spring from BBI to all chapter participants including Buddies, Peer Buddies, College Buddies, Citizen Buddies, and SEAs. The confidential survey gathers more subjective information regarding the outcomes that result from time spent between peers with and without IDD. The survey, developed by Michael Hardman, Ph.D., of the University of Utah, consists of a series of rating scales and other outcome measures evaluating everything from how often a Buddy Pair saw each other to if the Peer Buddies' view of people with IDD was changed as a result of the program. A report is pulled from the online surveying system and then sent to Dr. Hardman. He analyzes the data and provides outcome measures based on the results. As program staff, it is your responsibility to communicate with your participants to ensure that they complete the survey by the given deadline.

This data answers how the participants enjoyed the experience, if they would recommend it to others, and the more long-term outcomes that were achieved for all participants in the program. The results of this survey demonstrates the effectiveness of Best Buddies in achieving these more subjective long-term outcomes and positive effects of these unique peer relationships in the programs in your states. The results can be used in reporting to your board, applying to grants, program expansion, etc. The National Survey provides an accurate assessment of outcomes that can be used in the replication of the program and answers to validity of recreational programs and their positive long-term outcomes for people with IDD.

Since the survey's inception in 1994 through 2009 the same survey was used. In 2010, the survey was not conducted nationally while we took time to redevelop and updated it with the researchers. The survey will again be conducted nationally in 2011.

Here are some highlights from the 2009 survey results:

- 82% enjoyed the experience and would participate in Best Buddies again.
- 87% would recommend participation to others.
- 82% of the peer buddies have a more positive attitude about people with IDD.

If you would like the complete results, please contact the director, programs.

Dr. Mitchell Prinstein Study

Executive Summary

The Benefits of Friendship for Psychological Adjustment Among Adolescents with [Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities] (IDD)- April, 2005

This study has a myriad of points comparing Best Buddies friendships with friendships students with mental retardation made outside of the program. Here are a few highlights of the study that might be useful:

- Most students with [IDD] (Buddies) that researchers attempted to recruit for the study, reported that they did not have a best friend other than their Best Buddy, thus making it difficult to find 30 students to participate in the study.
- The study focuses on Buddies who have both friendships with a Peer Buddy and a best friend. Interestingly, the best friend in most cases was another student with [IDD].
- Buddies reported that they had the same level of interaction with their Peer Buddy and their best friend. This too is interesting in that most of the Buddies are in the same classroom and communities as their best friends seemingly on a daily basis. So the Buddies are seeing their best friends more regularly, but feel they have the same interactions with their Peer Buddies who they might see once a week or so.
- Peer Buddies in the study reported that they felt a lower level of friendship quality with their Buddies than the best friends felt. The Buddies on the contrary felt a higher sense of friendship quality through intimacy and support than the Peer Buddies felt in return. Researchers gleaned this information through a variety of activities that they state were –free of reporter bias.
- In one observed task of the friends, results suggested that the Best Buddies relationships have a higher level of positive affect.
- Reported results also state that the Best Buddies friendships made the Buddies more responsive and attentive to social cues. Meaning the Best Buddies friendships help the Buddies be aware and develop their social skills.
- Peer Buddies take the lead (dominate) in their friendships which the researchers view as a positive to help Buddies develop socially.
- The structure, or scaffolding, that Best Buddies provide to the Buddies is another positive affect in the friendships.
- The study states, “it appears that Best Buddies relationships possess many of the qualities that are known to be important components of adolescent friendships, as well as some additional relationship dynamics that may have important consequences for social-psychological development,” of Buddies.

- The study also found that Best Buddies friendships provide the Buddies a safe environment to learn new skills and experiment with new social roles (i.e. being an equal) that expose the Buddies to new experiences.
- Best Buddies friendships that have a higher rate of contact and of positive relationship qualities are associated with higher self-esteem in Buddies.
- In cases where the Buddies had higher levels of negative relationship quality in both their Best Buddies and best friend relationships, they had lower levels of adaptive behavior.
- Buddies who have symptoms similar to ADHD need to have more structure and “behavioral regulation” by their Peer Buddy. In these cases the study recommends pairing a Peer Buddy with more experience or training.
- Buddies who have better communication, life skills and adaptive behavior had a more balanced friendship with their Peer Buddy.
- Positive Best Buddies friendships with higher quality and somewhat higher frequencies of contact were associated with significant increases in communication skills over time.
- Additionally, in comparison to the best friends impact on adaptive functioning suggests that Best Buddies’ friendships may promote gains for the Buddies in adaptive behavior over time.
- It is recommended that Buddies involved in Best Buddies friendships maintain consistent and frequent social contact with their Peer Buddy throughout their involvement.
- Buddies with lower levels of functioning, seem to benefit from the structure the Best Buddies friendships provide them. Not necessarily the structure of the program itself, but the structure the friendship provides like social boundaries and expectations of friends.

As with all individuals, it is important to recognize that Buddies have varying needs within the Best Buddies program. Being aware of these needs when pairing the friends is important to the success of the friendship and impact it might make.

Filing Management for Programs

PMs and employment consultants are responsible for creating and maintaining organized files. In order to create a unifying organizational system throughout the country, the following guidelines are recommended:

School Friendship Programs

PMs should be able to track and organize all forms collected from the chapter. Below is a list of these suggested forms and recommendations on how to organize efficiently.

Using classification folders or small binder (1/4 inch), organize the files listed below and keep with you in your car or in a travel bag – some place that it can be quickly referenced during site visits.

Section 1: Quick Contact Reference (left side of the classification folder or first page of the binder)

- School name, address, phone, and website
- Middle/high school principal name
- CBD/CP name, phone, e-mail
- Host site name, address, phone, and fax (if applicable)
- HSC/SEA name, phone, e-mail
- FA name, phone, e-mail
- Directions to the school

Section 2: Current Year Information (second left side or tab one of binder)

- Chapter calendar/timeline
- School schedule with lunch periods listed
- Optional information: letters, newsletters, significant emails, awards, agendas, maps, etc.

Section 3: Communication & Site Visit Log (opposite right side or tab two of binder)

- Communications log - to document details of all communications and site visits. Available on teambestbuddies.org.
- Site visit log - table to list what took place at each meeting and how many participants attended

Citizens Program

Citizens Matches

Section 1: Information about the Citizen Buddy (inside left side)

- Label reading "Citizen Buddy"
- Membership applications
- Two references
- Phone screening/home visit sheet completed

- Background check
- Miscellaneous information that the volunteer provides

Section 2: Information about the Buddy and Sponsor (opposite right side)

- Label reading "Buddy and Sponsor"
- Sponsor referral form
- Buddy membership application
- Sponsor phone screening/Buddy home visit completed
- Sponsor information application
- Miscellaneous information that the Buddy/sponsor provides

Section 3: All Correspondence (second left side)

- Label reading "Correspondence"
- Match sheet filled out
- Information sheet
- Newsletters
- Letters Sent Out to the Pair or Individual

Section 4: Logs (opposite right side)

- Label reading "Logs"
- Communication logs notes

Jobs

For filing management for Jobs please reference the Best Buddies Jobs Policies and Procedures Handbook.

Mission Based Decision Making Model

Many decisions you will have to make programmatically are unique to Best Buddies, and as your tenure grows, the answers will become more natural. The below model should help guide you in making these decisions. When looking objectively and with this perspective, often the right answers become very clear. When presented with an issue, ask yourself the following questions:

Is this your decision to make?

There are a lot of decisions that are your responsibility to make and act upon quickly, but occasionally you will come across a decision that your supervisor needs to make or be involved in. When you find that it is not your decision to make, be sure to explore all options available and be prepared to fully outline the given situation with your supervisor so that they can assist you with a resolution.

Examples of times you need to consult headquarters staff include, but are not limited to, the below:

- Programs losing funding
- Expanding to a new area
- Holding an initial Ambassador training
- When an incident requires medical attention or law enforcement involvement

If it is your decision to make, proceed to the next question.

Does this situation adhere to Best Buddies Policy?

Is this a one-to-one match? Is the pair meeting the monthly commitment? Is a participant happy at their place of employment? etc. If the answer to any of these questions is no, meaning that Best Buddies policy is being violated, then action needs to be taken and you should move to the next question.

Can I move this situation to adhere to Best Buddies Policies?

Your first effort should be to find a way to move the situation to follow Best Buddies policies, even if it will take some time. If it is not possible to alter the situation – for example, an advisor or administrator that will not comply, or a direct conflict with a school policy – then it is most likely necessary to make a decision that terminates the given situation. Before making this decision, make sure that every option has been explored and ask yourself the final question below.

Is our mission being met?

Ask yourself, is someone's life being enhanced? Are we providing the opportunity for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment or leadership development for people with IDD? If the answer to this question is no, then action must be taken to either alter the outcome to meet our mission or back away from the situation altogether.

Program Supervision Best Practices

Overview: Hands on Program Management

Why is program management an essential part of your supervisory role?

- To ensure Best Buddies expectations are being met in the field
- To ensure consistency among programs
- To ensure all funding goals are met
- To identify and address training and support needs

Three Categories of Management

- Meeting with staff
- Interpreting Information: asking the right questions, utilizing reports and paperwork
- Management by walking around- be engaged with your staff

Category One: Meeting with Staff

Weekly individual meetings

1. Topics to discuss
 - Review scope of programs, ask varying questions each week
 - Accountability and goals: Did the PM have any weekly tasks from the last meeting? Did they do what they said they would from the week before? Are they on target to meet their weekly/monthly/quarterly goals?
 - For school friendship programs: review individual chapter progress by using calendar in PM manual as a guide (chapter leadership, vol. recruitment, matching)
 - Troubleshoot any challenges they are facing
 - Review upcoming deadlines
 - Use reports to monitor progress- require weekly schedules and utilize management charts
2. *Preparing for individual meeting*
 - Both parties should develop an agenda (prepare topics)
 - Schedules, updates, and recent communications should be discussed
 - Any documents that need signatures should be present
 - Ensure you are copied on important communication
3. Basic elements in a staff meeting:
 - Programs update
 - Special projects update
 - Schedule update
 - Discuss goals and progress
 - Discuss outstanding issues
 - Q & A
 - Action plan until next meeting

4. Things to remember in staff meetings:
 - Staff look to you for leadership and approval, give it to them
 - If something doesn't seem right, it usually isn't
 - Be direct, ask direct questions and give/expect direct answers.
 - Look out for the three Ps: procrastination, poor planning, and personal disorganization
 - Compliment staff on achieving goals
 - Share programmatic stories, achievements- tie team goals and tasks back to the mission

Team meetings

1. Each team meeting should have a clear purpose and agenda for example:
 - Updating on programs
 - Coordinating schedules
 - Training
 - Event planning
2. Preparing for a team meeting
 - Delegate tasks to team members, get everyone involved
 - Create an agenda – allow the team to review and contribute
 - Plan ahead so that everyone can attend
 - Hold same date/time each month if possible
 - Utilize meeting for positive feedback, staff appreciation and motivation
 - Give each staff member a role in the meeting
 - Bring in a speaker for outside training
 - Go off site (at least a few times a year)
 - Give staff an opportunity to share ideas, plans, high points, etc.

Category 2: Interpreting Information

- Asking direct questions and offer systematic solutions.
- Utilize reports and chapter data and compare data with firsthand knowledge and conversations from the Program Manager

Category 3: Management by Walking Around

- Meet with your staff often and show support and encouragement
- Attend important meetings
- Attend random program meetings with PM's to get a sense of how they would normally be conducted if you were not there

Utilizing program visits

- Introduce yourself and talk to everyone you can
- Observe your PM and program in action
- Have a debriefing with your PM after the visit and review the visit, offer praise and suggestions as necessary

Knowing the programs and participating in field visits will not only help you manage your staff and help them succeed, you will also be compiling your own first hand experiences to use in grant requests, sponsorship pitches, and various other arenas.

Program supervisors and directors should observe the following while on field visits:

- Chapter activities
- School administrations
- Host site communication
- Meet supporters, parents and community leaders

Three Categories of Management conclusion:

- Listening to program information, ask questions and actively interpret it
- Use program information to identify programs and training needs
- Be present and visible in all programs

Volunteer Training and Recognition

Our volunteers are the cornerstone of our organization and it is our responsibility as staff to ensure that they are properly trained to successfully fulfill our mission. This section details what type of volunteers we need to make our movement happen, how we train them and lists ideas on appreciating their diligence. As a supervisor, you should be meeting and working with PMs throughout the year to ensure that all volunteers in all programs are receiving the training and support listed below.

Volunteer Opportunities in Best Buddies

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Buddy | Speech Coach |
| Peer Buddy | Sponsor |
| College Buddy | Office Volunteers |
| Chapter Officers/Leaders | Advocates |
| Buddy Director | Buddy Ambassadors |
| Associate Members | Event Volunteers |
| e-Buddy | Event Committees |
| Faculty Advisor | Event Sponsors |
| Special Education Advisor | Advisory Board Member |
| Host Site Coordinator | Committee Member |
| Ambassador | Guest Speaker |

Volunteer Trainings

Best Buddies International Annual Leadership Conference
Local Leadership Training Day
Officer trainings, which includes Buddy Director training
Ambassadors training
Peer/College Buddy training
Citizen Buddy training

Buddy training (CO/HS/MS/Citizens)

Understand Your Volunteers' Motivation

Take some time to get to know your volunteers and consider why each is volunteering. Chapter members are likely to remain involved if they ...

- See that they are making a difference
- Feel that their efforts are appreciated
- Enjoy the time they spend volunteering
- See you as a good example

Why do people volunteer?

- Believe in the mission
- To feel good
- To have an impact
- Because they were asked
- Because of who asked
- To be challenged
- To feel proud
- For fun
- To make new friends/contacts
- To explore a career
- To keep busy
- To demonstrate commitment to a cause
- To learn something new
- To feel needed
- To share skills
- To help someone
- To gain leadership skills
- To be involved with a group project
- To make a difference
- To be perceived as a "good" person
- To keep people happy
- To have an impact and influence on others
- Seeking responsibility
- To problem solve
- To receive rewards and recognition

Be a motivational leader:

- Be a good listener and show interest in and appreciation for others
- Praise in public
- Be considerate
- Give credit where it is due
- Make your wishes known by suggestions or requests- not commands
- Play up the positive
- Be firm, consistent, and fair

Here are some suggestions to help make your volunteer's experience positive, rewarding and fun:

- Maintain a positive attitude when around volunteers
- Train volunteers and provide them with the resources they need
- Learn your volunteers' names
- Personally thank each volunteer
- Send hand-written thank you notes
- Let them know you sincerely care about their experience
- Solicit donations (gift certificates, movie rentals/passes, etc.) to give as small gifts
- Send holiday and birthday cards

- Give opportunities for feedback
- Give shout-outs or kudos in your newsletter/website/social media
- Host a holiday social or pizza party to thank your volunteers

Communicating the Mission of Best Buddies

This section discusses the importance of effectively communicating our mission with staff and the larger outside community.

Messaging

Through our efforts to achieve our mission, we interact with a great number of people. Some people we interact with because we are asking for assistance and others because we want to inform them of our mission. In some cases, we are challenged as staff members as to why Best Buddies programs are superior to other friendship and jobs programs, and what advantages they hold over alternative programs or models in existence. No matter who you interact with, what you say is essential.

Below are some key messages, or ideas, that you can use to convey our mission. These messages are separated by audience, but you will notice consistency in the themes.

Overall message:

Why Best Buddies?

- People with IDD are often excluded from social and employment opportunities. Best Buddies seeks to break these stereotypes and the cycle of isolation by establishing and facilitating friendships between people with IDD and their peers.
- People with IDD can become productive, contributing members of society who attend schools, hold jobs, pay taxes, raise families, and live independently. Through their friendships, people with IDD learn invaluable social and life skills which allows them to learn, grow, and succeed in society.
- People with IDD account for 200 million people around the world. Whether they attend school with our children, work alongside us, or are isolated from our communities by living in group homes and large facilities, all of our neighbors with IDD are in need of the tools and skills to allow them to succeed on their own. Best Buddies provides that opportunity to gain skills for independent living through our friendship, jobs and leadership development programs.

It is helpful to know specific statistics and trends relevant to your local country or geographic area. Many of the statistics related to people with IDD (i.e. unemployment, social opportunities, etc.) are impactful, and can serve to emphasize the need for Best Buddies programs in your area.

- We want people with IDD to develop leadership skills, be able to have new experience, and contribute to their campus and community.

Why One-to-One?

- We are distinct from other friendship programs that create social opportunities for special education students because we recognize and promote the value of one-to-one friendships.
- Research has shown that it is through one-to-one friendships that real connections are made when two people are sitting across from one another sharing their hopes, dreams, and challenges; that is the type of friendship we wish to foster among our participants.

- These types of friendships are often difficult for our Buddies to form and we are able to provide a structure and a model for quality friendships to be developed within a chapter.

Why Ambassadors?

- People with IDD are historically not provided opportunities to speak their minds and advocate for themselves. By conducting an Ambassadors training, you are training our volunteers with IDD to open doors and experience new leadership roles in their communities, schools and workplaces.
- Ambassadors can be the best salespeople for our mission. Whether they speak at a chapter meeting, one-on-one with potential sponsors, or at your Best Buddies events, Ambassadors can express the importance of our mission in ways staff members cannot.
- Ambassador trainings are an ideal setting for volunteers with and without IDD to get more involved in our programs and discover new challenges. Best Buddies Ambassadors is the next step in the disability rights movement - teaching people with IDD the skills needed to successfully self-advocate and active agents of change.

Student Leaders:

- You are in a unique position to make a real change in your community by joining a growing movement of students around the world.
- There is a substantial need for this service among people with IDD and our goal is simple: establish friendships. By simply being a friend, you will help a person with IDD learn and grow.
- This is an opportunity for you to develop valuable skills that you can use in college or the working world.
- Best Buddies chapters are run by the student leaders with support from faculty members and a professional in the field, but you are the leader.
- Chapter leaders receive materials and resources from Best Buddies to assist them in areas of recruitment, meeting planning, group activities, one-to-one activities and troubleshooting.

Administrators and Faculty:

- Best Buddies PMs work with a specific group of schools and provide materials, resources, and ongoing support throughout each academic year.
- Best Buddies is a prestigious, internationally recognized organization that has a dramatic impact on the lives of thousands of students each year. Best Buddies allows your school to show a long-term commitment to the community and outreach to a segment of the population traditionally secluded from society.
- Increasingly, students involved in Best Buddies in high school are choosing colleges based on the existence and quality of a Best Buddies chapter on campus.
- Our chapters are unique in that they are student-run and require little, if any, financial commitment from the school. However, donations to Best Buddies are what keep our chapters open, so it is always encouraged and appreciated for participants/chapters to become supporters of Best Buddies with their time, energy, and financial contributions.

- Best Buddies is an important experience for students because it demonstrates and teaches the importance of giving, service, and inclusion.
- Best Buddies student leaders are well-equipped to enter the workforce or continue their education. They have enjoyed a new experience, solved problems, conquered obstacles and developed the skills to become leaders.
- Best Buddies is volunteer run.
- Many countries are requiring increased integration for students with IDD. Best Buddies helps your students mainstream by forming a support network of friends.
- We provide liability insurance to the operations of our chapters.

Host Site Coordinators:

- Best Buddies strives to break the stereotypes and social isolation experienced by people with IDD by establishing friendships between your residents, clients, consumers, and college students, high school students or community volunteers in your area.
- These friendships help your consumers learn social skills and become more confident in themselves and their abilities.
- Best Buddies may or may not ask for financial commitment from the host site. We ask that a member of the staff help train the volunteers and select and monitor the friendships.
- This is an additional service you can provide to your consumers.
- Best Buddies, with our chapter systems and group outings, increases awareness of the abilities of people with IDD in the community at large.

Caregivers and Family Members:

- Best Buddies is respected among professionals in the field of IDD. We strive to ensure our chapters, staff and volunteers meet a high level of quality and service.
- These friendships will assist your family member to learn social skills and become more confident in themselves and their abilities.
- Best Buddies is a non-profit organization and our services are funded by individuals, corporations, government agencies, and foundations.
- Each volunteer and buddy is expected to pay their own way for activities they do as friends, such as dinner and movies.
- Best Buddies closely monitors the quality of the matches and operations of the chapters.
- Best Buddies helps people with IDD become more independent by giving them the opportunity to experience their community and gain confidence in social settings.
- Best Buddies staff monitor friendships, conduct group outings, and provide trainings.

Community Volunteers:

- This population is desperately underserved, yet account for nearly 200 million people around the world. By simply being a friend or employing someone with an IDD, you can help a person develop tremendously both socially and emotionally.

- Best Buddies volunteers find the friendship is mutual and they learn a lot about friendship themselves. The volunteers also discover the needs and abilities of people with IDD.
- Best Buddies conducts several group outings a year, providing you the opportunity to meet and network with other volunteers and buddies in a group social setting.

Potential Jobs Employers:

- A Best Buddies employment consultant will work with the employee in mastering their job until both the participant and employer are comfortable. This saves you time and gives you the opportunity to give an employee extra support.
- Best Buddies Jobs ensures that the employer is satisfied with the participant that they employ.
- Employees with IDD have shown to be more punctual and miss less time than individuals without IDD.
- Consumers have a more positive perception of companies that employ individuals with IDD than ones that do not and are more likely to support those companies.
- Employing a person with an IDD may qualify you for tax benefits.
- It can lift staff morale when employees know that they are working for a company that cares about others and diversifying the workforce.

e-Buddies®

- e-Buddies seeks to fulfill the mission of BBI by facilitating e-mail friendships between people with and without IDD.
- e-Buddies is a great way to introduce people with IDD to e-mail and the Internet.
- e-Buddies is a safe program.
- e-Buddies offers participants an opportunity to develop friendships while learning much needed computer skills.

Ambassadors:

- Best Buddies Ambassadors is the next step in the disability rights movement - teaching people with IDD the skills needed to successfully self-advocate and become active agents of change.
- People with IDD have historically relied upon those without disabilities to advocate for them due to lack of opportunities and training to do so for themselves. By participating in a Best Buddies Ambassadors workshop, you are opening doors and experiencing new leadership roles in your community, school and workplace.
- Ambassadors are the best spokespeople for our mission. Whether you speak at a chapter meeting, one-on-one with potential sponsors, or at BBI events, you can express the importance of our programs in ways staff members cannot.
- Ambassador trainings are an ideal setting for you to express yourself and discover proper ways to advocate become more engaged in Best Buddies programs.

Potential Advisory Board Members:

- Best Buddies is the world's largest program dedicated to ending the social, physical and economic isolation for people with IDD.

- The advisory board serves as the implementation structure and system for delivering these designated priority programs, services and fundraising activities.
- Advisory board members use their expertise to carry out the mission and purpose of Best Buddies International.

Internal Communication

Keeping and maintaining lines of open communication is critical to our success. There are many ways to ensure communication is clear and constant. This section will highlight some methods of effective internal communication.

Interpersonal Communication

Meeting with staff members and volunteers in person is vital to developing strong relationships. Best Buddies encourages supervisors to meet one-to-one with their staff once a week and conduct group staff meetings at a minimum of once a month.

Providing Information

Some ways you can keep your staff engaged and aware of what is happening in the whole organization:

- Utilize message boards and a master calendar in a central office space to provide an opportunity for staff to share their own upcoming dates and activities, along with their success stories.
- Hold regular staff meetings
- Have staff write/email updates
- Post/share weekly schedules and sharing Outlook calendars among staff
- Create a staff newsletter

Communicating Effectively via Email

- A first impression is lasting: Your business e-mail comes from Best Buddies and is a representation of our organization and mission. Your signature line should be limited to your office contact information, a tagline from BBI, and one line about a country event.
- Reply quickly: During the business week 24 to 48 hours turnaround time is standard. If you are out of the office or unable to check e-mail for more than 48 hours, please activate the automatic reply feature on your Outlook.
- Pay attention to the characters in your email: Plain text within the body of an e-mail comes across as flat and hard to read. (Use bold, asterisk, and quotes to help emphasize and express tone.) Be aware though, using all CAPS LOOKS LIKE YOU ARE YELLING, and may convey a tone you are not intending.
- Pay attention to attachments: Ask your recipients what format works best for their attachments. Also, attachments are often used to send viruses or spam, and many are

not allowed by security software so be sure to double check that the recipient has received the attachment.

- **Respect Cultural Differences:** Make sure you understand and respect the cultural differences in language and tone. Your professional e-mails should always be formal, until you are confident that it is appropriate to adopt a more casual tone.
- **Don't e-mail when you are frustrated:** The plain text of emails is very flat and people often misinterpret the "tone" of a message. If you receive an email that upsets you, wait 24 hours before responding. If you are really concerned about the tone of the e-mail, pick up the phone or schedule a face to face or phone meeting with the sender.
- Remember to keep all emails brief and professional

Conference/Webinar Call Etiquette

Best Buddies has the unique benefit of having employees across the country and the world working towards our mission. While the physical location of our office allows us to provide the highest quality of service across the world, it does pose a challenge to internal communication.

Here are some tips to help you maximize your conference calls:

Basic Do's and Don'ts

- **Keep Things Quiet** - Conference calls can be noisy enough without having lots of distracting background noises.
- **No Guessing Games** - Identify yourself every time you speak.
- **Wait for your turn to talk** - Some conference bridges or speaker phones will only allow one person to talk - if you jump in to start talking while someone else has the floor, you may unknowingly cut him or her off in mid-sentence.
- **Stick to the Agenda** – and remember to send it out before the meeting via e-mail.
- **Don't Leave the Door Wide Open** - If you want a response to the last thing you have said, try not to say, "Any comments?" Better to ask for people to respond in sequence, e.g., "Can I hear first from Bill, then from Elaine and Joe?"
- **Use Good Equipment**

The IP HQ Team offers a New Hire Webinar once a month as well as an educational webinar for our global staff every 6 weeks. We also arrange meetings and webinars as needed for individual country offices or regions. These are run through GoTo Meeting and GoTo Webinar. The HQ Team also communicates regularly with field staff through Skype.

Headquarters e-mail Communications

Helpful Clues from HQ

This email is sent by the International Programs department to each of the country programs around the world. It offers ideas, suggestions, or general information pertinent to our

international programs. Please read and then distribute to your staff and volunteers as appropriate.

Conference and Forum Invitations

These emails will be sent from the International Programs department or the Training and Education department. They will give a general overview of the event, instructions for applying for an entry visa, and registration directions. All staff are invited to attend all Best Buddies International conferences and forums, but please seek guidance from the international programs department on which conference or forum may be best for your country.

Policy or Program Changes

This email will be sent directly from the Chairman and CEO or the international programs department. It will explain any changes to the Best Buddies International policies or regulations, additions to the program structure, announcement of new initiatives, or any other defining change.