



Best Buddies College Programs

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Best Buddies?

A: Best Buddies is an international 501c3 non-profit organization established in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver. The mission of Best Buddies is to establish a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development and inclusive living for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Best Buddies School Friendship Programs create social opportunities for people with and without IDD.



Q: How does membership work?

A: By joining a Best Buddies college chapter, students and individuals with disabilities from the local community are united with the common purpose of ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to have a friend. Members are invited to group activities planned by the chapter leadership team. Some examples of activities include holiday parties, dances, movie nights, sporting events and other on campus and community based activities determined by the chapter.

Q: What does it mean to be “matched”?

A: A buddy pair is a college student (peer buddy) and an individual with an intellectual or developmental disability (buddy) who are matched with each other based on common interests and schedules. They make a commitment to contact each other once a week, whether by phone, text, email or social media as well as to meet in person at least twice a month. The purpose of the one to one friendship is to foster authentic relationships that have the potential to last a lifetime. To ensure the quality of the match, buddy pairs are asked to complete a monthly friendship update which details their interactions for the month. The minimum requirement for a match is one year. If a chapter member is unable to commit to a match, they may still participate in chapter activities as an associate member.

Q: Who provides support for the Chapter?

A: A Best Buddies Program Manager as well a Faculty Advisor from the college, assist student leaders in managing the chapter and ensuring that quality friendships develop. College chapters also partner with one or more community organizations that serve individuals with disabilities, known as a Host Sites, which are the source of buddies for the chapter. Host Site Coordinators are the main contacts at these organizations who can assist by referring buddies for the program and making recommendations for matching as well as helping to coordinate the buddies' involvement in activities. In order for a buddy to participate in a college chapter, they must be affiliated with an organization that agrees to serve as a Host Site.

Q: Does it cost anything to have a Best Buddies program?

A: Each college chapter pays \$350 in Chapter Dues annually which covers the cost of the Chapter President's registration fee for the Best Buddies Leadership Conference as well as the resources and supports provided by the Best Buddies state office. Some chapter activities may require a fee to participate but most are offered free of charge and paid for through chapter fundraising efforts or financial support of the college administration.

Q: How do I join Best Buddies?

A: To participate in a chapter, all members must complete a Best Buddies membership application. To apply, visit bestbuddiesonline.org and complete the online membership application. Once the application is approved, members will be able to access the chapter's online portal where they can submit their Friendship Updates, view upcoming events and access Best Buddies resources.

Still have questions? Contact us at 888-604-7376 or paprograms@bestbuddies.org.