



Best Buddies Club

Presentation to the Board of Education

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What is Best Buddies?

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).

Best Buddies' eight formal programs – *Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges, Citizens, e-Buddies®*, *Jobs, Ambassadors*, and *Promoters* – positively impact nearly 900,000 individuals with and without disabilities worldwide.





Best Buddies- High Schools

- Since 1995, *Best Buddies High Schools* has paired students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in one-to-one friendships with high school students. In the past, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have not had the same opportunities to have friends outside of their own special education classroom. By introducing Best Buddies into public and private high schools, participants are crossing the invisible line that too often separates those with disabilities from those without.

Best Buddies High Schools also offers students a unique opportunity to develop leadership skills. With the support of school faculty and Best Buddies staff, students lead and direct the chapters in their schools.

Best Buddies in Depth:

- **An Opportunity for Enrichment:** The vision behind Best Buddies is to maximize social opportunities for students in mainstream and special education classes by matching them in one-to-one friendships. The goal is to establish foundations for genuine friendships, thus enriching the lives of both participants.
- **An Opportunity for Socialization:** A significant part of the school experience is developing social relationships with peers. Individuals in special education classes are often socially isolated from mainstream students and benefit from positive peer relationships in the following ways: higher self-esteem, greater self-confidence, and stronger communication skills.
- **An Opportunity for Awareness:** Peer Buddies who commit to being paired in one-to-one friendships with Buddies can gain the following: a heightened awareness of issues with disabilities experience; an opportunity to see behind labels society often places on individuals with disabilities, and the ability to make a difference in someone else's life and their own.



Faculty Structure:

The Best Buddies Club Has Co-Advisors:

- **Faculty Advisor:** Individual who acts as a liaison between the school administration and chapter members who provides guidance to the chapter by working closely with the Special Education Advisor, Chapter President, and Best Buddies Staff. May provide support to the chapter president and officers by assisting with recruitment, paperwork collection, planning activities, securing space for meetings, and managing club finances.
- **Special Education Faculty Advisor:** Individual who acts as a liaison between Buddies and Peer Buddies who provides guidance to the chapter by working closely with the Faculty Advisor, Chapter President and Best Buddies Staff.



Student Structure:

- **Buddy:** A student with disabilities who is matched in a one-to-one friendship with a Peer Buddy for at least one academic year. A Buddy must see his/her Peer Buddy twice a month and make contact once a week.
- **Associate Member:** A student who is not matched with in a one-to-one friendship due to personal reasons or lack of membership availability in a chapter, but is required to attend group activities and participate in fundraiser.
- **Peer Buddy:** A student who is matched with a Buddy in a one-to-one friendship for at least one academic year. A Peer Buddy must see his/her Buddy twice a month and make contact once a week.
- **Chapter President:** Works to fulfill the mission of Best Buddies.
- **Buddy Director:** A student with a disability who serves as the leader and representative of the Best Buddies chapter. Works alongside the Chapter President and advisor in ensuring success of the chapter.
- **Other Key Players include:** Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.



What Kind of Club Activities Occur?

- Local, School-based Activities: Bowling, Movies, and other social activities.
- Fundraising
- Best Buddies Signature Events:
 - Friendship Ball
 - Leadership Conference & Training
 - Friendship Walk
 - Benefit Concert at Carnegie Hall





NY Best Buddies at 2015
Annual Leadership
Conference

Oceanside Best Buddies at
Microsoft Store





Long Island Friendship Walk
at Marjorie Post Park



Friendship Ball- Oceanside

LONG ISLAND
 Saturday, 03.07.15 | Oceanside High School
 3160 Skillman Avenue
 Oceanside, NY 11572
 5PM-7PM
 For More Information, please contact Megan Kelly at
 MeganKelly@BestBuddies.org

NEW YORK CITY
 Saturday, 03.07.15 | Riverdale Country School
 5250 Fieldston Road
 Bronx, New York 10471
 1PM-4PM
 For More Information, please contact Leah Burgess at
 LeahBurgess@BestBuddies.org

Why Best Buddies?

- Best Buddies fills a need that we currently have by providing social opportunities for students with disabilities. As we have expanded our special education programs, we also need to ensure that our students have similar opportunities for extracurricular programming as our general education population.



Why now?



- Best Buddies International is a distinguished organization that only works with a handful of schools at this time.
- Participation in Best Buddies International is limited and we do not want to miss an exciting opportunity for the students of the Plainedge community. We have been invited to join at this time, but if we do not join now other districts will be offered our invitation.

Other Nassau Chapters:

- Garden City
- Levittown
- Manhasset
- Massapequa
- New Hyde Park
- Oceanside
- Plainview/Old Bethpage
- Rockville Centre
- Seaford



Costs:

- Advisor Stipends:
 - \$1805 for each advisor
- Best Buddies Annual Chapter Dues:
 - \$350
- Other Costs:
 - Activity fees can be covered through fundraising opportunities just as other clubs.



Recommendation:

- Creation of the Best Buddies Club at Plainedge High School for the 2015-2016 school year.



Questions?

