

Citizen Buddy Handbook

BEST BUDDIES[®]



MARYLAND

“SomeBuddy needs you...”

You can be matched in a one-to-one friendship
with a person with an intellectual disability
and experience the wonderful joy of helping another just
by being a friend.

Making a Difference

Best Buddies is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment.

Best Buddies began in 1987 when Founder and Chairman Anthony K. Shriver realized the lack of opportunity people with intellectual disabilities had to socialize with others. Anthony knew that students had the energy and commitment to positively transform their communities. His inspiration to bring people with intellectual disabilities together with college volunteers created Best Buddies.

Since our incorporation in 1989, Best Buddies has touched the lives of more than 300,000 volunteers and people with intellectual disabilities in hundreds of communities across the United States, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, England, Germany, Ghana, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, and the United Arab Emirates. Today, Best Buddies offers six programs: Best Buddies Citizens, Best Buddies Colleges, Best Buddies High Schools, Best Buddies Middle Schools, Best Buddies Jobs and e-Buddies.

Vision

Best Buddies envisions a world where people with disabilities are so successfully integrated into our schools, workplaces and communities that our services will no longer be necessary. Until that day, our vision is to educate students in middle school, high school, and college, as well as employers and our communities about the abilities and needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

Best Buddies Citizens

Best Buddies Citizens pairs adult individuals with intellectual disabilities in one-to-one friendships with adult volunteers from their communities. Friends and family are the foundation that help each of us become successful. Without love, support and friends, our lives would be empty; a life people with intellectual disabilities were forced to live not long ago. Today, volunteers are making a difference by sharing their time with a new friend.

Who's Who?

The Buddy is an individual with an intellectual disability who is paired in a one-to-one friendship with a volunteer from the community (Citizen Buddy).

The Citizen Buddy is a volunteer from the community who is paired in a one-to-one friendship with a person with an intellectual disability (Buddy).

The Sponsor is a person who knows the Buddy very well. He or she will be able to answer questions and address any concerns the Citizen Buddy may have about the Buddy. The sponsor is a liaison between the Buddy and the Citizen Buddy.

The Program Manager is a member of the Best Buddies staff who oversees the daily management and development of all aspects of the Best Buddies Citizens program.



How to Become a Citizen Buddy

Step One: Application Process

Complete the Application Form
Sign the release of liability form
Hand out the two reference forms and follow up to ensure they have been returned to Best Buddies.

Step Two: Home Visit

Your Program Manager will schedule a home visit at your convenience. The purpose of the visit is for Best Buddies to become more familiar with you. This will enable Best Buddies to make the best match possible. During this visit, your Program Manager may need to collect a small fee for a required background check. Check with your Program Manager to see if this applies to you.

Step Three: Background Check

All applicants must complete a criminal background check, social security number trace, and national sex offender database search. Your Program Manager can answer any questions you have about our background check process.

Step Four: Matching

After the completion of the application and screening process, matches will be made by the Program Manager pairing individuals with similar interests who live within 10-15 miles of each other. Please be patient while your Program Manager selects a suitable Buddy for you.

Step Five: Introductions

The introduction meeting allows the Citizen Buddy, Buddy and Sponsor to become acquainted with each other and determine if you feel compatible with each other. If the meeting goes well then a Best Buddies friendship is made. If not, Best Buddies will work to find someone else to match you with.

This is an important aspect of Best Buddies, because it gives you and your Buddy complete control over the matching process. This aspect also gives Best Buddies the best opportunity to create a friendship that will last.

Step Six: Your Best Buddy

How your friendship develops is up to you and your Buddy. Once you are paired, Best Buddies lets you develop your friendship independently at your own pace, keeping in mind the requirements of the program. Get to know your Buddy to see what you will enjoy doing together. Have fun discovering all the wonders your new friendship has to offer.

One-to-One Outings

By far, the most important aspect of Best Buddies is the one-to-one outings; when you and your Buddy spend time together. What you choose to do will depend largely upon the types of activities the two of you are interested in.

Ideas for One-to-One Outings

<i>Lunch/Dinner</i>	<i>Hiking/Walking</i>
<i>Picnics</i>	<i>Rollerblading</i>
<i>Dancing</i>	<i>Golfing</i>
<i>Swimming</i>	<i>Beach</i>
<i>Bowling</i>	<i>Exercising</i>
<i>Museums</i>	<i>Movies</i>
<i>Concerts/Plays</i>	<i>Fishing</i>

Group Outings

Group outings bring the members of the organization together for a shared experience. You can meet and interact with other individuals involved with Best Buddies. Several outings occur annually.



Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Question: How does Best Buddies Citizens make the right match?

Answer: The program attempts to match individuals who are of the same gender, have common interests, live close in proximity and are of similar ages.

Question: How often do the Citizen Buddy and the Buddy meet?

Answer: The amount of time spent together will vary according to each individual's schedule. Best Buddies requires meeting at least twice per month and maintaining weekly contact by phone, mail, or e-mail.

Question: How long will it take to be matched with my Buddy?

Answer: The entire process, from start to finish, usually happens within a month. The process may take longer if you are looking to be matched with a specific type of person.

Question: Who is required to pay for expenses?

Answer: The friendship is just like any other. Each person is responsible for paying his/her own share.

Question: What are the participation requirements needed to volunteer for the Best Buddies Citizens Program?

Answer: Anyone over the age of 18 is welcome to be a part of Best Buddies Citizens. We require that you submit a completed application, schedule a home visit with your Program Manager, complete a background check successfully and, most importantly, have an interest in forming a new friendship.

Question: Whom should I contact if I have a question regarding my Buddy?

Answer: Contact your Buddy's Sponsor. They can address any concerns that may arise. They are aware that it is their role to provide guidance for the friendship to be successful.

Question: How does Best Buddies find my Buddy?

Answer: Buddies are referred to us through various sources. These may include parents, caseworkers, job coaches, group home staff members and other Buddies, to name just a few.

Best Buddies Citizens Fact Sheet

Best Buddies Citizens

- A friendship program
- Matches individuals with intellectual disabilities in one-to-one friendships with other individuals from the community
- Volunteers are making a difference by sharing their time with a new friend

Commitment

We recommend:

- A one year or six month commitment to the friendship
- Seeing each other twice a month
- Maintaining weekly contacts by telephone, mail or e-mail
- Participation in group activities

Benefits

The Buddy Pairs discover wondrous things about each other. By spending time with one another, the lives of both individuals are greatly enhanced. Everyone involved is learning to see things from a whole new perspective, thus becoming more understanding, patient and accepting of others within society.

Participation Requirements

We require that you:

- Submit a completed application
- Schedule an interview session with a program manager
- Complete our background check process
- Show proof of insurance if you plan on using an automobile
- Most importantly, have an interest in forming a new friendship

Matches

The program attempts to match individuals who:

- Are the same gender
- Have common interests
- Live in close proximity
- Have similar ages

Expenses

A Best Buddies friendship is just like any other. Each person is responsible for paying his or her own share of the activity expenses.

Intellectual Disabilities

People with intellectual disabilities may have:

- A slower rate of learning and a limited capacity to learn
- A difficult time managing ordinary activities of daily living, understanding the behavior of others, and determining their own appropriate social responses

An intellectual disability is not a disease nor should it be confused with mental illness.

Children with intellectual disabilities become adults with intellectual disabilities. They do not remain children.

Other Best Buddies Programs

Best Buddies Colleges
Best Buddies High Schools
Best Buddies Middle Schools
e-Buddies
Best Buddies Jobs

“The only way to have a friend is to be one.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Best Buddies International

Best Buddies is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment. By joining Best Buddies International, you become part of a growing movement of people with and without intellectual disabilities dedicated to ensuring everyone has the opportunity to have a friend. Socialization is one of the simplest, but most often underestimated, solutions to the pattern of exclusion that people with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, have faced for decades.

You will be joining an organization that has over 60,000 volunteers this year and has positively affected more than 300,000 people this year. Best Buddies accomplishes its mission through six unique programs: Best Buddies Middle Schools, Best Buddies High Schools, Best Buddies Colleges, Best Buddies Citizens, Best Buddies Jobs, and e-Buddies®. Best Buddies High Schools, Colleges, and Middle Schools are the foundation of the organization with chapters at more than 1200 chapters in each of the 50 United States, and operates accredited international programs in Australia, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Ghana, Hong Kong, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Scotland, Sweden and the United Arab Emirates; with additional country programs in various phases of development. Best Buddies Citizens matches adults with and without intellectual disabilities in California, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Best Buddies Jobs, our supported employment program, helps people with intellectual disabilities find and keep well paying jobs in Miami, Florida; Los Angeles, California; and Boston, Massachusetts. e-Buddies seeks to match individuals with and without intellectual disabilities in online friendships.

We encourage you to learn more about Best Buddies by visiting our website: www.bestbuddies.org, and on behalf of the 300,000 participants in Best Buddies, we thank you for your support.

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PARTICIPANT CONSENT

I, _____, give consent to participate in Best Buddies
(Print Name)

International, Inc., as a participant in the Citizens Program.

- I understand that I will be matched in a one-to-one friendship that includes seeing my Buddy twice a month and contacting him/her weekly, attending group activities, and participating in Best Buddies events.
- I give permission to be photographed and/or filmed at any Best Buddies activity, and I understand that any photograph or videotape may be used at the discretion of Best Buddies for publicity purposes.
- Prior to the commencement of my participation, I will furnish Best Buddies with any medical information that may be necessary in treating me in the case of an emergency.
- I consent to Best Buddies use and the disclosure of such medical information to medical professionals that may need the information in order to treat me in the case of an emergency.

In consideration of the benefits and opportunities afforded to me through participation in the Best Buddies organization, the undersigned participant states as follows:

1. I hereby agree to release Best Buddies International, Inc., from any liability for any accident, injury, or illness suffered at, during, or in connection with any Best Buddies activities, except for any accident, injury, or illness which results from gross misconduct by Best Buddies International, Inc., or its staff.
2. I authorize Best Buddies International, Inc., to obtain medical treatment in the event of injury or illness in connection with a Best Buddies activity and agree to pay any expense incurred for treatment.
3. I understand that, in connection with any Best Buddies activity, if I am riding in a private passenger automobile which is involved in an accident, I may be primarily covered for bodily injury under my family automobile policy, and I agree to submit any medical bills incurred to my insurance company for payment. If my policy has been issued with a deductible clause relative to the personal injury protection, I understand that I have assumed that deductible on primary coverage.
4. If I am being transported in a commercial carrier or other leased or rented vehicles in connection with a Best Buddies activity and an injury occurs, I understand that I shall look to the commercial carrier or owner of the leased or rented vehicle to pay any medical bills incurred as a result of such injury.

NOTE: The undersigned agrees to assume all risk of accident, injury, or illness that may occur at, during, or in connection with any Best Buddies activity.

Participant Name (Please Print)

Signature of Participant

Date

If the participant is under the age of 18 or a guardian signature is necessary, please sign below

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Reference Letter Citizen Buddy Volunteer

_____ has expressed a desire to volunteer with Best Buddies. We require two references for our volunteers, and appreciate your assistance.

How long have you known the volunteer named above?

_____ Years _____ Months

What is your experience with the candidate?

(E.g. Business, Civic, Social, Church, etc.)

To your knowledge, is there any reason why the candidate should not be allowed to volunteer with adults with intellectual disabilities?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please explain:

Does the candidate display qualities of integrity and commitment?

_____ Yes _____ No

Please explain, and cite examples if possible:

Would you recommend the candidate to volunteer with Best Buddies?

_____ Yes _____ No

Thank you for your timely response to this request.

Your Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Please mail or fax this form to:

Ms. Courtney Doyle
3500 Boston Street, MS-47
Suite 210
Baltimore, MD 21224
Phone: (410) 327-9812, ext. 23
Fax: (410) 327-9816

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