Best**Buddies**® **Program Overview**

Best Buddies offers members socialization and leadership opportunities, as well as job coaching, thereby providing the necessary tools for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to become more independent and more included in the community.

Below is a list of programs offered by Best Buddies to fulfill our mission:

**Elementary Schools:** Best Buddies Elementary Schools work to enhance the concept of inclusion to students with and without disabilities at a young age. Students participating in the elementary school program are not matched in a one to one friendship, rather the chapter functions as a promoter’s chapter.

**Middle Schools:** Best Buddies Middle Schools fosters one-to-one friendships between students with and without IDD. Students with IDD are often isolated and left out of social activities. Best Buddies Middle Schools helps to create an inclusive school climate for students early on in their educational development.

**High Schools:** Best Buddies High Schools fosters one-to-one friendships between students with and without IDD. The high school years are a time of heightened social and emotional development and can be difficult even for those without IDD. Best Buddies High Schools helps break through social barriers at an important time in a young person’s life.

**Colleges:** Best Buddies Colleges fosters one-to-one friendships between college students and adults with IDD and college students without IDD. Historically, adults with IDD have been isolated in home or work environments. Best Buddies Colleges is changing this by providing the opportunity for people with IDD to be involved in campus and community life.

**Promoters:** Best Buddies Promoters empowers youth who attend schools without a special education department to become advocates for people with IDD. This is accomplished through organizing and attending special events that promote advocacy and bring awareness about the disability rights movement.

Schools that take part in Best Buddies Promoters will have, by the end of the school year, successfully introduced the disability rights movement to a new population.

**Citizens:** Best Buddies Citizens fosters one-to-one friendships between adults with and without IDD in corporate and civic communities. Many people with IDD have fewer chances for social interactions after they leave school.

This program helps people with IDD become part of mainstream society and creates an inclusive and diverse community for all.

**e-buddies:** e-Buddies provides a safe place online to develop one-to-one friendships between people with and without IDD. Technology is an integral part of society and by participating in e-Buddies, participants can develop the skills necessary to be able to communicate using a variety of sources.

By joining e-Buddies and becoming comfortable with communicating online, participants are more equipped to stay social in the future