



# Programs FAQ

## Best Buddies International

### Messaging the Mission

Sometimes it can feel like Best Buddies has a lot of requirements when our number one priority is just to have fun! Our work should first and foremost provide inclusive, fun opportunities for people to make new friends and develop new skills. In order to make sure we have the right resources and are directing our efforts in the best way possible to make the magic happen, we do need to have a few ground rules. These ground rules keep people safe and make sure we can continue to grow.

When you are messaging the Best Buddies program to volunteers, it's important to start with why we do this: to have fun making new friends! And the expectations we enforce all go into making sure our friends have fun in a safe, sustainable, inclusive way. Here are some ways to address some common questions we often receive.

#### Why one-to-one matches?

Best Buddies is committed to equity; we want each friendship opportunity to be enriching and fun for individuals with and without disabilities. This means that the friendship must have equal parts people with and without intellectual disabilities. According to a study\* by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 50% of those surveyed with IDD report feeling lonely. However, research indicates that a friend can 'give you a sense of being connected' and help individuals from feeling isolated\*\*. Best Buddies works to eliminate the seclusion of people with disabilities – and friendship is a proven factor in combating this – elevating the value of our one-to-one friendships.

*\* AAIDD Report , October 2013 \*\* Marilyn Barnicke Belleghem, May 2011*

#### Why monthly friendship updates?

Buddy pairs are encouraged to share pictures with quick captions of their time spent with their buddy using the Best Buddies Mobile App at least once per month; this is the easiest way for chapter leaders to see the friendship progress and celebrate program success. However, if a chapter chooses to report on a less frequent basis, they can as long as chapter leadership is aware of each pair's progress and is able to provide support when needed.

#### Why do I have to use BBO?

Best Buddies Online is our greatest resource in seeing the success of the mission in action, sharing program advancements quickly and with a great number of staff supports, collects applications for safety and liability purposes, tracks events to meet program funding requirements, and gathers feedback to improve our program.

#### Why is Best Buddies University important?

BBU is every resource, tool, training video, and best practice tip sheet in one place. If you notice something that it isn't on the site that would be helpful, don't hesitate to let us know and we'll add it; just email

[bbuniversity@bestbuddies.org](mailto:bbuniversity@bestbuddies.org).

#### Why do adults have to pass a background check?

Adults in our community programs with and without IDD participate in citizen pair outings which may sometimes include times when the pairs might be alone, be driving one another, or other situations where safety is paramount. Background checks ensure that that pairs who are matched through our citizens programs are the right people for making friends and having fun!



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### **Why do our chapter leaders have to attend LC?**

We find that chapter leaders who attend LC are better connected, more invested in the success of the mission on their campus, and are more prepared to create opportunities and navigate challenges than those that do not attend. They have better knowledge of available resources and information to guide their success and have the tools to better develop and empower officers to support the chapter's growth.

### **Why does my chapter need officers?**

"If you want to do great things and make a big impact, learn to delegate." – John C. Maxwell

Officers help the chapter operate with ease while still achieving great things; officers help manage multiple projects so that the chapter can impact friendship in addition to fundraising, community awareness, events, etc. Officers also help chapter presidents to delegate and officers create a team structure, all of which is critical to professional development and leadership skill building.

### **Why does my chapter need an advisor?**

Advisors serve as a liaison between student leaders and the school administration, a point of contact at the school who can help coordinate meeting space, parent communication, and has knowledge of the members participating in the chapter is necessary for chapter success. Additionally advisors help transition between student leaders each year and have historical knowledge of what makes the chapter successful.

### **What is the point of chapter dues?**

The annual payment of the \$350 covers use of our online tools and training materials, grants access to all chapter members to the school's individualized online portal which tracks membership and lists events, covers all members under Best Buddies general liability insurance for safety purposes, and admission to Best Buddies Leadership Conference, held annually at Indiana University each July. This conference provides all attendees with hands on leadership training, presentations, workshop and seminars, and professional development to be the best leader possible for chapter success!