

is a diverse group of young leaders of all abilities who work to **bridge the gap** between the student perspective and staff experience for Best Buddies International initiatives. Comprised of members from all 50 United States and Canada, individuals conceptualize, design, and execute projects that address the needs of students with intellectual disabilities. From job shadowing and leadership development, through targeted outreach and development, and collaboration, the council synthesizes feedback to present and develop **student-driven ideas** and see them through to completion. The YLC is dedicated to the **education, engagement, and empowerment of student leaders** in Best Buddies through peer-to-peer support and innovation.



**YLC**  
YOUNG LEADERS COUNCIL

WE ENCOURAGE  
ALL CHAPTER  
LEADERS TO  
APPLY!

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# MISSION STATEMENT:

The Young Leaders Council (YLC) is a diverse group of young leaders of all abilities who bridge the gap between the student perspective and staff experience for Best Buddies International initiatives. Individuals conceptualize, design, and execute unique initiatives that apply to all aspects of the Best Buddies ecosystem: Friendship, Leadership, Jobs, and Inclusive Living. The YLC is dedicated to student leaders' education, engagement, and empowerment in Best Buddies through peer-to-peer support and innovation.

## EXPECTATIONS:

- Annual In-person meeting at Leadership Conference (tentative to local guidelines regarding COVID-19)
- Responsible for the goals and initiatives set forth by council
- Continuous leadership development
- Members serve a 2-year term

## QUALIFICATIONS:

- Chapter leader in Best Buddies High School, College Chapter, and/or a State/National/Global Ambassador
- Strong commitment to the Best Buddies mission
- Proven leadership, communication, and organizational skills
- Ability to attend Leadership Conference

### International Applicants:

- Able to speak and write in English
- \*General availability between 12:00 am UTC - 3:30 am UTC

\*For inquiries pertaining to availability please email the YLC

## COMMUNICATION:

- Email: [ylc@bestbuddies.org](mailto:ylc@bestbuddies.org)
- Linktree: <https://linktr.ee/bestbuddiesylc>
- Follow us on social media



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# HOW TO ACCESS YLC RESOURCES:

- Chapter Leaders: (Google Folder)  
[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KiMR6OgSu34r1jqjp\\_9COJvK4mO2vskyY?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1KiMR6OgSu34r1jqjp_9COJvK4mO2vskyY?usp=sharing)



- Program Managers: (Share Point)  
<https://bestbuddiesinternational.sharepoint.com/sites/Programs/SitePages/YLC.aspx>



## HELPFUL YLC LINKS:

- YLC YouTube Channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmO4lChdGJeYqXu-3jjpEXw>
- YLC Blogs: <https://bestbuddiesylcblogs.blogspot.com/>
- To subscribe to the YLC Newsletter:  
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc86RPpkXk9-lu5Wuk-wTLXnybTbfKN9n-SXSH3OxsZKW1OQ/viewform>



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# APPLICATION PROCESS:



The YLC reviews applications once per year. Applications open annually on **February 1st.**

1

## **PAPER APPLICATION:**

All applicants applying for the YLC will need to fill out a paper application, that will have a wide-ranging of questions allowing the council to assess the leadership skills and the type of advocate each applicant is. Once the application window closes (**February 1st - March 1st**), the YLC members will score the applications. At this point, applicants will be notified if they will advance to the next round.

2

## **PHONE INTERVIEW:**

YLC members will coordinate with applicants to schedule a phone interview. These interviews serve as a way for the YLC to better understand an applicant's goals, background, and overall fit for the council. The interviews will be two on one (two YLC members and one applicant).

Following the final round of the application, members of the YLC will aggregate the scores from each round and will notify applicants of their acceptance status. Once new members have been selected, their term will officially begin at the first training, Council Camp.



## 2021-2022

## 2021-2022

**Asma Basith (Illinois, USA)**



**Hannah Flynn (Rhode Island, USA)**

Jacob Pasternack (Florida, USA)

**Katie Mayo (California, USA)**

**Kelly Cotter (Washington, USA)**



Margo Meley (Connecticut, USA)

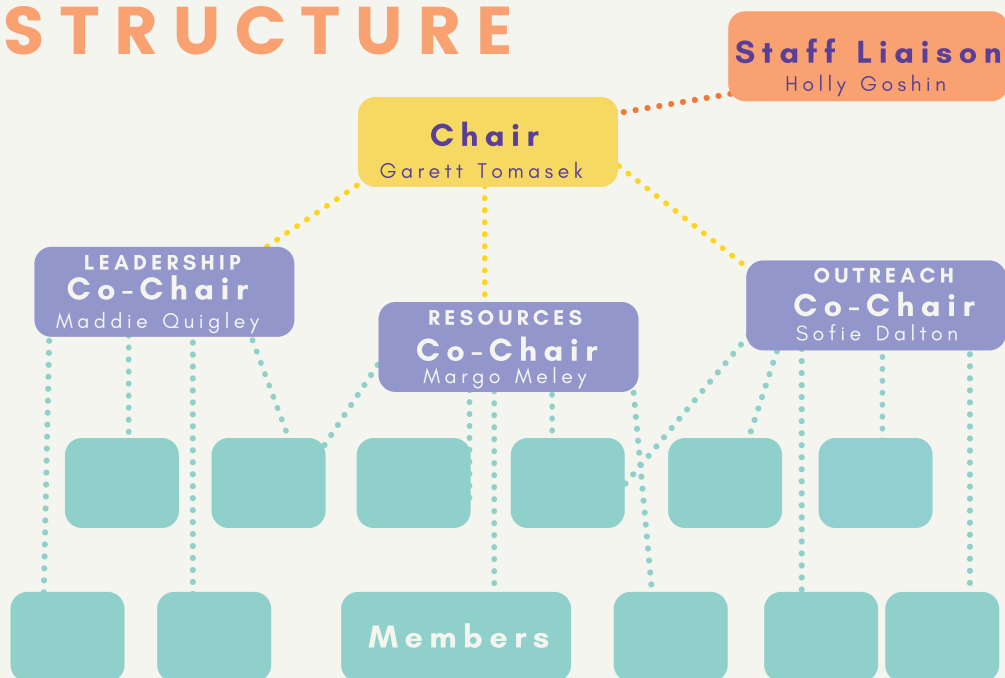


Zach Siegel (Texas, USA)



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# COUNCIL STRUCTURE



The staff liaison serves as the bridge between the Young Leaders Council (YLC) and Best Buddies International (BBI) Headquarters to work collaboratively on BBI related initiatives.

As the student representative on Best Buddies International Boards of Directors, the chair of the council is responsible for providing support to co-chairs and members relaying their student drive ideas to headquarters.

Each co-chair leads a unique cohort: cohorts include leadership, resources, and outreach. Each cohort has a set of initiatives that are designed to further develop Best Buddies International programs.

Each member will work on or lead an initiative(s) based on their personal strengths and passions. The placement of member assignments will be determined by the YLC Chair, Co-Chair, and the staff liaison. The initiatives and their respective purposes are to be determined and defined by the members of the YLC.

# INITIATIVE COHORTS

## LEADERSHIP

Initiatives:

- Student Advisory Boards (SAB)
- Ambassador
- Special Olympics Collaboration
- Diversity & Equity



## RESOURCES

Initiatives:

- Mental Health & Wellness
- Expansion Chapter and Underserved Community Support
- Jobs Program
- Resource Toolkit



## OUTREACH:

Initiatives:

- Social Media (Instagram, Twitter, & LinkedIn)
- YouTube
- Alumni Network
- YLC Blogs



## WHAT IS AN INITIATIVE?

A project that YLC members work collectively on to conceptualize, design, and execute ideas that further develop the mission of Best Buddies International. Through targeted outreach, material development, and collaboration, members combine feedback to make these developed ideas a reality.



# LEADERSHIP



## STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD (SAB)

The purpose of the Best Buddies Student Advisory Board (SAB) is to bridge the gap between the staff perspective and student experience for local/state Best Buddies initiatives. Members of the SAB will work together to conceptualize unique initiatives dedicated to the education, and empowerment for Best Buddies.



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Best Buddies and Special Olympics are already intertwined within participants' schedule, so why aren't our leadership programs also intertwined? Our goal is to develop our relationship with Special Olympics on a student-leader basis.

## AMBASSADOR

Best Buddies Ambassadors is a program that provides training for participants with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in areas of speech writing, public speaking, and self-advocacy. The YLC generates resources to improve the training, networking and advocacy aspects of the ambassador experience.



## DIVERSITY & EQUITY

The YLC is having the needed conversation on how to further diversify Best Buddies' ecosystem focusing on, but not limited to race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and ability. The council is not limiting its actions with a conversation but providing resources to further educate participants on the multiple realms of diverse inclusion.



# RESOURCES



## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

Initiative focused on creating a dialogue around mental health & wellness. Mental health has a history of having a negative stigma. The YLC is inspired to create resources for chapter leaders, equipping them with knowledge on how to best approach Best Buddies participants struggling with mental health.



## EXPANSION CHAPTER SUPPORT & UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY

Designed to pair a YLC member one-to-one with an underserved chapter to serve as a mentor to them further, developing conversation around the needs of chapter leaders, specifically expansion and how Best Buddies can better expand in areas that are deemed underserved.

## JOBS PROGRAM

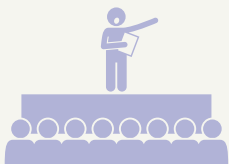
To further develop resources intended to educate about the Best Buddies Jobs program while having a conversation about employment barriers that individuals with IDD face.



## TOOL KIT

This multifaceted initiative allows our student leaders to create resources for all chapter needs. Past toolkits have included toolkits for voter engagement, fundraising, and friendship development. This is a complex and diverse initiative compiling resources for a variety of ideas targeted towards chapter leaders. Examples: voting, fundraising and friendship walk.

# OUTREACH



## SOCIAL MEDIA

The initiative utilizes social media platforms (Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn) to highlight members of the YLC members, their initiatives; social media also highlights Best Buddies chapters, programs and participants.



## YOUTUBE

The YouTube channel serves to highlight Best Buddies participants, advocates, and content from initiatives. Our series include YLC Chats (interview series), Buddy Breakdowns, and videos made by different initiatives such as Online Ambassador Trainings.



## ALUMNI NETWORK

This initiative serves to create a formal network for YLC alumni to continue to network and further develop relationships over different YLC classes. It will also work to assist Best Buddies International in connecting high school and college participants earn more about the diverse programs offered.

## YLC BLOGS

Our blog serves to create content and resources for leaders throughout Best Buddies. Blog posts include various leadership-related topics and interviews of Best Buddies leadership. To read the YLC Blog posting, click on the link in our LinkTree.



# CHAIR INITIATIVES

## HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES (HBCU)

In early May 2021, David Quillen, Senior Vice President, requested the Young Leaders Council (YLC) to design an initiative with the intent of increasing Best Buddies participation particularly at Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCU's). We believe this is a great step to expanding the Best Buddies' mission of inclusion and providing opportunities for leaders with and without disabilities, however, the YLC is limited in its capacity to tangibly open Best Buddies chapters across states. We plan this to be a collaborative effort between Best Buddies staff and the YLC, utilizing the resources Best Buddies already has.

## GRASSROOTS

This initiative will provide members on the council the opportunity to increase the council's interaction with local leaders and staff to further strengthen our relationship.

If you are a Best Buddies staff member that is having an event (in-person/virtual) in the near future and would like the YLC attendance, please contact us via email, [ylc@bestbuddies.org](mailto:ylc@bestbuddies.org). We would be honored to attend.

## MODEL UN

MUN Impact is a global organization dedicated to providing youth with Model United Nations learning opportunities and the skills to take action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The YLC will be facilitating the new partnership between Best Buddies International and Model UN. The YLC attended and presented at a 3-day, 'Earth, Economy, Equity Summit' hosted by Model UN. Model UN and the YLC plan to grow the partnership providing opportunities to both organizations.



# Why

## SHOULD YOU APPLY?



The YLC provides leaders throughout the organization the opportunity to transform their real-world skillsets, through research, survey data analysis, graphic design, designing policy proposals for Best Buddies International and so much more!

As long as you are self-driven, you will be able to push your limits beyond what you could imagine. The YLC allows our members to have professional conversations with Best Buddies staff members for support and guidance on their initiatives and ideas.

The only skills you need prior to applying:

- Self-motivation
- Strong Communication Skills



# A day in the life...

The YLC provides the opportunity to network with leaders across the international Best Buddies community, learn the essentials of professional etiquette and decorum as members demonstrate themselves as both leaders and individuals with exceptional character at Best Buddies International.

## TASKS:

MEMBERS TASKS INCLUDE BUT NOT LIMITED TO; NOR DO ALL MEMBERS WORK ON THE FOLLOWING TASKS

-  Writing professional emails to Best Buddies staff and fellow YLC colleagues
-  Attending video calls with Best Buddies staff and YLC members
  - Researching information needed for resources
  - Collection and analysis of data needed for resource creation
  - Developing and generating resources
  - Graphic design/video editing
  - Attending "Council Hangouts"
-  Attendance at yearly training calls, "Council Camp"
-  Attendance at Leadership Development council calls
  - Members provide initiative progress with an open floor on idea suggestion
  - Component of skill set improvement (Ex: Teamwork/ Self-care /Time management)
- Time commitment:
  - Can vary throughout a member's term
  - Factors that can increase an individual's time commitment:
    - The number of initiatives one signs up for (average is 2-3)
    - The length of time to produce their product (i.e, resources/videos/posts)
    - How often a product is needed to be made.

 COUNCIL-WIDE PARTICIPATION. ALL YLC MEMBERS WILL PARTICIPATE IN THESE TASKS



Asma Basith • Illinois, USA • 2nd Year Member



"Being on the YLC has been a great experience, especially when we get to enact tangible change within Best Buddies. Sometimes, it can get overwhelming to juggle, so I always make sure to add all of my events and meetings on my personal calendar and planner so I can keep track of both YLC and my personal activities. I also think it's important to always communicate with what you're able to handle and not add too much on your plate and take some time each week for yourself.

I just graduated from University of Illinois at Chicago with a Bachelor's in Bioengineering and a concentration in cell and tissue engineering. In the fall I'll be starting my Master's at Northwestern University. While in college, I started the Best Buddies chapter there in 2018, where I served as chapter president for three years. Outside of Best Buddies and YLC, I'm an active member of an organization called MUHSEN, which advocates for Muslims with disabilities. "

## YLC INVOLVMENT:



Diversity & Equity



Expansion chapter support & underserved community support



Jobs programs



Tool Kit

# HISTORY

FOUNDED IN 2012



(2019) FIRST TIME A YLC CHAIR SPEAKS AT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AND EXPANDS THE COUNCIL 23

(2018) 12 TOTAL COUNCIL MEMBERS



(2020) THE YLC LEAD & HELP ORGANIZE SESSIONS AT THE FIRST VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

(2019) THE YLC LEADS BREAKOUT SESSIONS AT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

(2021) THE YLC EXPANDS INTERNATIONALLY, ADDING TWO CANADIAN MEMBERS.



(2021) MODEL UN IMPACT AND BEST BUDDIES OFFICIALLY FORM A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP, FACILITATED BY THE YLC



(2022) THE YLC EXPANDS FULLY INTERNATIONALLY





# Quotes

## FROM THE YLC



Vanessa Ocana  
California, USA  
1st Year Member

"Being a member of the YLC has provided me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills even further. As a person with cerebral palsy who uses both a walker and wheelchair my goal is to improve the Best Buddies experience for individuals with physical disabilities. The support I have received from the YLC every step of the way has given me a new sense of hope. "



Tania Swani  
Texas, USA  
2nd Year Member

"The YLC means the world to me. It is such a joy to be able to collaborate with leaders as passionate about Best Buddies as I am, leaders from different parts of the country and the world! Even with the pandemic changing events such as Leadership Conference, the YLC has truly not only persevered but thrived, quickly switching to leading online roundtable sessions and creating virtual resources. Most importantly, everyone's opinions and ideas are valued, and it's definitely the most inclusive environment ever!!!"



Kierra Giarrusso (Right)  
Rhode Island, USA  
YLC Alumni

"Being a member of the Best Buddies Young Leaders Council was a formative experience that gave me the opportunity to grow into a strong, confident leader. The skills that I learned through my time on the YLC have not only shaped my leadership skills within Best Buddies, but have also given me a competitive advantage in job interviews and similar settings. I would not be where I am today without the Best Buddies YLC. "



Chair &  
Board of Directors Member

## Garett Tomasek

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"The YLC is a unique opportunity that I encourage all to apply to! You are constantly improving your networking, problem-solving and innovative skill-sets. It's an experience like no other, all while further improving the programs of Best Buddies."



Staff Liasion

## Holly Goshin

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"Without question, one of the most fulfilling and validating parts of my role at BBI is having the opportunity to serve as a guide, support, and liaison for the YLC. This truly outstanding group of young leaders inspires me every single day."



Founder, Chairman & CEO

## Anthony Kennedy Shriver

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"The YLC was created to showcase the incredible diverse young leaders that volunteer their time and talent to help make the Best Buddies mission come to life. We are truly fortunate to have them."



Senior Vice President, Global  
Mission, State Development  
and Operations

## David Quilleon

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"I am always incredibly impressed by the Young Leaders Council and their leadership to advance the mission of Best Buddies. The contributions and impact of their work can be seen throughout the organization, and I am thrilled to have them at the forefront of our programs setting the example for a world of inclusion."