

# Bridge to Citizens Guide

Best Buddies International



## The Best Buddies Lifecycle

Best Buddies offers life-long opportunities to engage in inclusive friendships through our school-based and adult friendship programs. At the college level, as members near graduation or reach an age that makes matching with a student less compatible, a great way to keep their friendships going strong is to join Best Buddies Citizens.

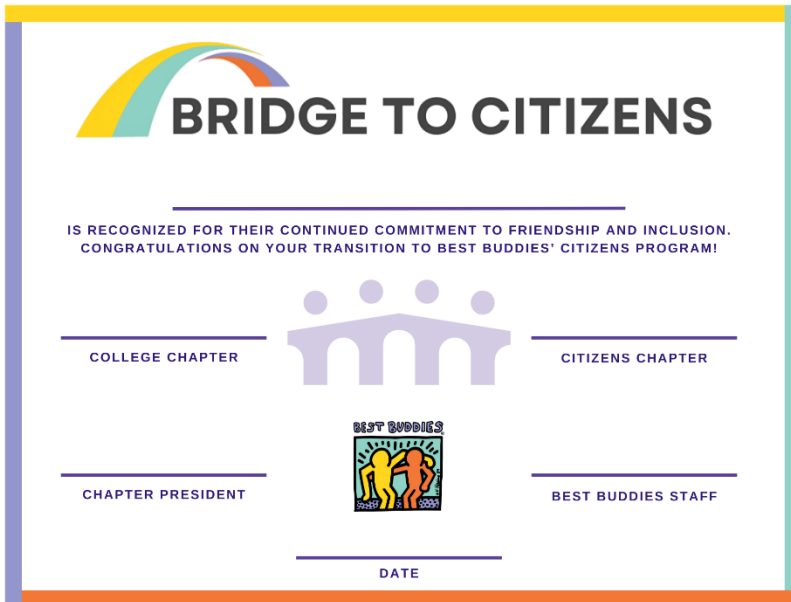
## Why Join Citizens

Best Buddies Citizens creates connections for adults with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities and helps to build a sense of community and belonging for its members. Much like our school chapters, Citizens members have the opportunity to participate in group activities as well as one to one friendships with a peer of a similar age.



## Bridging to Citizens

Share information about the Citizens program with your members so they are aware of the opportunities that exist beyond your chapter. If you've identified members who are a good fit for Citizens, help them connect with Best Buddies staff to learn more about it. Once they're ready to make the change, you can set a positive tone for the transition by hosting a **bridging ceremony** to mark the milestone and thank them for all of their contributions to your chapter. This event can be as simple or elaborate as your imagination and budget will allow but here are a few suggestions to help make it a formal affair:



- Invite all chapter members to participate in the celebratory send off.
- Announce those you'll be recognizing in your invitation to the event.
- Coordinate a speaker or two who can share some meaningful words about the members' participation and extend well wishes on the next leg of their journey with Best Buddies.
- Provide certificates to mark the occasion.
- Consider serving refreshments and providing some entertainment to make the party more festive.
- Add a meaningful activity like signing a card or t-shirt that can be gifted to the guest of honor.
- Post photos of the ceremony on social media to recognize honorees.