

e-Beat

**February
2003**

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Dear Friend,

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Letter from the Director	1
Ask Emerson	2
Conversation Starters	3
Online with...	4
Best Buddies Spotlight	5
Contact Information	6

Last month, the mother of one of our participants with an intellectual disability wrote me:

"I know he enjoyed hearing from Laura, because he talked about it a lot, and felt very important."

What a terrific reminder of the difference each one of us can make, simply by reaching out with a caring word through e-mail. In the midst of worries about the economy and war, we still have the ability to connect with each other, bringing joy to each other and our ourselves.

Thank you for being part of e-Buddies.

Best,

Lisa Derx
e-Buddies Director

The e-Beat is published online monthly at www.ebuddies.org.
We welcome your contributions.
Please send them to eBuddiesComments@bestbuddies.org.



Ask Emerson

All of your e-Buddies questions answered here!

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “The only way to have a friend is to be one.” In the spirit of those inspiring words, Ask Emerson is a feature designed to help you be the best friend you can be. Each month, we will select a question or two for responses. Send your questions to eBuddiesComments@bestbuddies.org.

Dear Emerson,

I've been writing my e-Buddy regularly, but I sometimes get e-mails from the e-Buddies staff, reminding me to write to my e-Buddy! What's going on?

Signed,

Paul in Pennsylvania

Dear Paul,

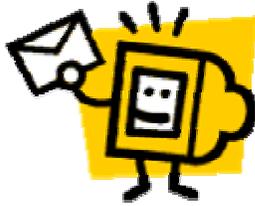
I can certainly understand your confusion. Here at e-Buddies Headquarters, we've recently started a new system that allows us to track when e-mails are being sent. Based on that information, we've been sending “reminder e-mails” automatically, when we notice an e-Buddy hasn't written in a certain amount of time.

However, we are still working out the kinks in the system. Some people are getting reminders when they have been writing their e-Buddy regularly. Please bear with us as we work to solve these problems and get the reminders going only to people who need reminding!

Signing off,

Emerson

Conversation Starters



When sending your e-Buddy an e-mail, it is important to understand how your e-Buddy has access to e-mail. We all have different schedules and levels of computer knowledge.

Some of our e-Buddies are new to the online world. They may only have access to the computer and e-mail once or twice a week while they attend computer classes.

Others are professional e-mailers, who have access to their e-mail all day, every day. There are also those of us that have access to e-mail all day, but may only have time to e-mail once or twice a day.

Especially when you are first getting to know each other, it's fun to find out about a new friend's computer access and ability.

You could ask:

How long have you been using e-mail? Where is the computer that you use for e-mail? How often do you have access to e-mail? How did you learn to use the computer? Do you ever need help using the computer? Who helps you?

Have you had a great conversation with your e-Buddy about something? Have some ideas for questions that get the talk going? Send you ideas for Conversation Starters to Bill Maurer at BillMaurer@bestbuddies.org

Online with...



This month the e-Beat interviews Aisa Pinto, a special education teacher at Southwest Miami High School in Miami, Florida.

e-Beat: How long have your students been a part of e-Buddies?

Aisa Pinto: My students have been a part of e-Buddies for about two months and they are really enjoying it.

e-Beat: Why did you want your students to be part of e-Buddies?

Aisa Pinto: For my students, a main focus both in and out of the classroom is the importance of good social skills. I wanted my students to be a part of e-Buddies so that they may have the opportunity to build their social skills by communicating with other students their age and building new friendships.

e-Beat: How do you think e-Buddies makes a difference in the lives of others?

Aisa Pinto: The skills my students build through participation in e-Buddies are life skills they will need in order to become productive members of our society. The relationships the students form build confidence and self-esteem. E-Buddies makes a difference in the lives of everyone involved, including teachers. I have watched my students communicate with their e-Buddy and I experience the excitement and happiness with them.

e-Beat: Do your students have any goals for 2003?

Aisa Pinto: Many of my students have goals that are quite similar. They all wish to be a part of something big and have many accomplishments both in and out of the school community. They also hope, like every student does, to finish the school year successfully and participate in as many activities as possible.

e-Beat: How often do they get on-line?

Because there is only one computer in the classroom, my students take turns checking their e-mail once a week, or whenever possible.

e-Beat: What three words would you use to describe e-Buddies?

Aisa Pinto: The three words I would use to describe this wonderful program are: INCLUSIVE, BENEFICIAL, and FULFILLING



Best Buddies

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

*By Lauren Taintor,
e-Buddies Program Manager, Pennsylvania*

It's that time of year once again...card and candy sales increase, the flower industry flourishes, and teddy bears are in demand! You guessed it: Valentine's Day is fast approaching! February 14th is synonymous with celebrating love; love of family, love of friends, and romantic love. Throughout the country, Best Buddies Chapters are demonstrating the ever-so-important relationship between friends through events inspired by Valentine's Day. Let's see what they're up to!

In Maryland, members of the Best Buddies chapters at Sherwood High School and Seneca Valley High School will begin constructing Valentine's Day cards and crafts in early February. Around the 14th, the students will deliver their hand-made goods to local nursing homes. These efforts are part of a collaborative project with JVS-youthAbility, which seeks to involve more individuals with intellectual disabilities in community service. What a wonderful way for the Best Buddies members to not only celebrate friendship within the chapter, but to also reach out to a much larger audience!

In Iowa, Waukee High School will celebrate Valentine's Day with an after school party on the 14th. In addition, the chapter will also be selling baked goods at the basketball game later that night as a fundraiser. Sounds like a fun-filled day! Urbandale High School will begin the fun a few days early on the 12th with a good, old-fashioned pizza party...with a twist! Chapter members will not only make Valentine's cards, but also Valentine's boxes. The individual who designs the coolest, most creative box will win a prize. Let the games begin!

At the University of Pennsylvania, in similar fashion to the chapters in Maryland, the members will also be creating Valentine's cards and delivering them to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Last year, this activity was highly successful, and there is no doubt that this year will yield the same results. The chapter at Elizabethtown is making Valentine's cards that will be given to each Buddy's parents. Chapters throughout Pennsylvania will also be celebrating the holiday at the Friendship Frolic, an event held at a local community college that includes country line dancing, karaoke, food, and arts and crafts. Now that sounds like a celebration of friendship!

At Best Buddies, we truly understand how very important the love between friends is. Who would we be if not for our friends? Although friendship should be celebrated every single day, Valentine's Day serves as a nice reminder to stop and take the time to fully appreciate the friends that are such an important part of our life. The holiday is also a wonderful excuse to party with your chapter! Take full advantage, and have a blast! Happy Valentine's Day to all!

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