



# e-Beat

October  
2003

Dear Friend,

My best friend in fourth grade was Andrea Auth. When her family moved away that year, I missed her terribly. Although I can't recall all these years later what we did together, I remember clearly how upset I was when she moved and end our friendship.

INSIDE  
ISSUE:

THIS

<b>Letter from the Director</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Ask Emerson</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Conversation Starters</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Online with...</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>BB Spotlight</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Contact Information</b>	<b>6</b>

Looking back on your life, I bet you can remember similar instances. Forming connections with other people that last a lifetime or just a short time is part of life for most of us. We learn that we will survive the loss of a friend, and go on to make new friends. What is common for most of us, though, is not at all common for persons with disabilities, who are still socially segregated.

I thought about that recently, when the mother of a child with intellectual disabilities e-mailed me. She was upset that her son's e-Buddy had stopped e-mailing him. He was disappointed, she said. Hoping to spare him further disappointment, she wanted him taken out of the program. Sorry as I am when any of our e-Buddies relationships ends, I do think the rewards of participating outweigh the risk of disappointment.

Best Buddies believes that every individual is enriched by an inclusive society. Yes, there are risks involved in opening our hearts. People can and will disappoint us. Yet, if we close ourselves off to avoid disappointment, we will also miss the delight others can bring to our lives.

Feeling connected to another person is worth the risk.

Best,

Lisa Derx  
e-Buddies Director



# 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](mailto:eBuddiesComments@bestbuddies.org).

Dear Emerson,

I signed up for e-Buddies ages ago! I still don't have an e-Buddy, and I don't understand what's taking so long. I'm a freshman in college, and I'm really excited about the program, but I'm getting impatient. What's the hold-up?

Signed,  
Tired of waiting

*Dear Tired,*

*I can understand why you're frustrated! e-Buddies is in the unique situation of having a waiting list of volunteers. What that means is that we have more people without intellectual disabilities signed up for e-Buddies than people with intellectual disabilities. We particularly have a lot of volunteers aged 16-22.*

*While you're waiting for your e-Buddy, I encourage you to find other ways to volunteer on behalf of people with intellectual disabilities in your community. Visit [www.bestbuddies.org](http://www.bestbuddies.org) to see if there is a Best Buddies chapter at your college. If you have a friend or family member with intellectual disabilities, help them learn to use the computer, if they don't already know how, and sign them up for e-Buddies, if they're interested.*

*Thanks for being patient. Your e-Buddies relationship will be well worth the wait!*

*Signing off,*

*Emerson*

# Conversation Starters

The fall is upon us! The weather has gotten cooler, and the days are getting shorter and shorter. But before the winter blues set in, there is still plenty to look forward to.



The weather is cool, but it's not too cold yet. There is still time to get out and enjoy the outdoors. Soon enough, the leaves will change colors; a spectacular sight if you can make it out into the countryside.

For all you sports fans, October is one of the most exciting months of the year! Baseball is getting ready for the World Series, football is in full swing, and basketball and hockey are about to get going.

And who could forget that Halloween is just around the corner!

There is so much going on this month, why not share your plans with your e-Buddy?

## You could ask:

How is the weather where you are? Is it getting cold? Are the leaves changing colors near you? Are you a sports fan? Do you think that the Red Sox or Cubs will win the World Series this year? Which football team is your early favorite to win the Super Bowl? Are you excited for hockey / basketball season? What are you doing for Halloween? Will you be dressing up? What will you be this year? Did you have any good costumes from past years?



## Online With...

This week, we are talking with Ruben Lebron, who coordinates the e-Buddies program at the MacDonald Center in Florida.

**e-Beat:** How long have your participants been e-Buddies?

**Ruben Lebron:** Most have been with e-Buddies since Sept., 2002.

**e-Beat:** Why did you want them to be a part of e-Buddies?

**Ruben Lebron:** When I first learned of e-Buddies, I thought what a great opportunity this would be for consumers to meet new people in other parts of the country. They could exchange ideas, compare lifestyles and share interests.

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

**Ruben Lebron:** Pretty much the same way it has affected the lives of my consumers. They have taken an interest in the lives of the consumers they correspond with. They ask about boyfriends/girlfriends. They share their tragedies, comedies and personal situations with them. Read on.

**e-Beat:** How do you think e-Buddies has made a difference in your participants lives?

**Ruben Lebron:** It gives them something to look forward to. Most consumers eagerly ask, almost on a daily basis, if they have received e-mail. Some share common interests with their e-Buddies like music, TV programs, sports, etc. It has also given them an understanding of what commitment is all about. Since day one, all of the consumers who signed up have stuck with it. Above all, they have been treated with dignity and respect by their e-Buddies.

**e-Beat:** How often do your participants get on-line?

**Ruben Lebron:** It depends on their activity schedule and what we're doing during a particular activity. Not very often except for those who have computers at home.

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

**Ruben Lebron:** Fun, fulfilling, rewarding.

Would you like to be interviewed for the e-Beat? Contact Meghan Crary at [MeghanCrary@bestbuddies.org](mailto:MeghanCrary@bestbuddies.org)



# Best Buddies Spotlight

## Make a Difference Day

By Carolyn Downes, *e-Buddies Program Manager, Massachusetts*

Thank you so much for being a part of Best Buddies and e-Buddies. I hope everyone is having an uplifting experience.

In addition to being part of Best Buddies, many of us wish that we can do more for our community but we just do not know where to begin. This is why USA Weekend Magazine has made October 25, 2003 **Make A Difference Day**, a national day for volunteering. USA Weekend, which is a national magazine many of us read with our local Sunday paper, is sponsoring the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual event, where everyone is invited to pitch in. On this 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month, millions of parents, children, and neighbors will come together to simply make a difference. You are welcome to volunteer as with a group or by yourself.

### **How can you get involved?**

There are numerous possibilities for Make a Difference Day. Just take a look around you. Maybe you could organize a group to rake the leaves on the lawn of a local church or synagogue. Another possibility would be to clean out your closet and donate your clothes that are still in good condition but you just do not wear anymore. Perhaps you know someone that is part of a Special Olympics team, who has an event that week, and you can go cheer him or her on to victory. Or, you can take a few minutes to send your *e-Buddy* an electronic greeting card to brighten his or her day.

### **Where can you find out more information?**

Check out the website for Make A Difference Day at [www.makeadifferenceday.com](http://www.makeadifferenceday.com) to learn more. On the website, you can find out how you can register your good deed in order to be counted as a participant. Also, you will be able to read about more opportunities for volunteering. And if you need assist, you can take the *Idea Generator* for a spin. By answering a few short questions about yourself and your interests, the Idea Generator will create almost a dozen different volunteer opportunities for you. Don't forget, you may involve classmates or coworkers by asking if they have some first-rate suggestions for you.

I hope everyone will take advantage of this day. If you are not able to help out on the 25<sup>th</sup>, you can volunteer on Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup> instead. Do not feel you have to make this a once in year event; please feel free to volunteer your time through out the year in order to make a difference!

# BEST BUDDIES®



e-Buddies Headquarters

401 9th Street, N.W.

Suite 750

Washington, D.C. 20004

Phone: 202.266.2275

Fax: 202.266.2260

Email: [eBuddiesComments@bestbuddies.org](mailto:eBuddiesComments@bestbuddies.org)

We're on the web!

[www.ebuddies.org](http://www.ebuddies.org)