

The e-Beat

**December
2002**

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to order
your limited
edition
e-Buddies
Holiday Pin!

Visit

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Dear Friend,

Among other celebrations this month, December marks my three-year anniversary directing e-Buddies. What a privilege it is for me to hold this position, working with an amazing team of people to accomplish good things.

When we started e-Buddies, I thought it would be hard to recruit volunteers. How wrong I was! Volunteers have enrolled in high numbers, and I am so grateful to each one for choosing e-Buddies as their way to support persons with intellectual disabilities.

I think what has surprised me the most about e-Buddies is how strong an e-mail friendship can be. We hear over and over that writing and reading e-mail provides a powerful connection between people who have many differences, but share the ability to give and receive the gift of friendship.

Thank you for making e-Buddies a success. Happy holidays from all of us on the e-Buddies team.

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 eBuddiesNews@aol.com.



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'd like to send my e-Buddy a holiday present. Can I do that?

Signed,

Generous George

Dear George,

That's nice that you want to send a present to your e-Buddy. Please send the gift, unwrapped, to the e-Buddies Headquarters, at 401 Ninth St., NW, Suite 750, Washington DC, 20004.

Make sure you include your name, and your e-Buddy's name. We will forward the present along.

By the way, have you seen the limited edition e-Buddies Holiday Pin? These pins make great gifts. Check out the e-Buddies home page at www.ebuddies.org for information on ordering.

Signing off,

Emerson

Conversation Starters



It's that time of year again!

It's time to brave the crowds of holiday shoppers in search of the perfect gift. It's also time to curl up in front of the fire with a warm cup of your favorite holiday beverage to watch your favorite holiday movie. It's time to bake cookies, prepare great feasts, and eat far more than is advisable.

Whatever the holiday season brings you, this is the time for us all to let the ones we love know how much they mean to us. Help spread the spirit of friendship and wish your e-Buddy a happy holidays!

You could ask:

Have you done all of your holiday shopping? Do you have any good gift ideas? What gifts are you hoping to get? Is it busy at your house this time of year? Do you decorate for the holidays? What holiday do you celebrate? What are your plans? Are you going out of town? How are you traveling? Who will you be spending the holidays with? What holiday foods do you like best? Do you have a favorite holiday movie?

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 Celeste Sadler, who is using e-Buddies with her class at Southwest Miami High School in Miami, Florida.

e-Buddies: How did you find out about the e-Buddies program?

Mrs. Sadler: I found out through Best Buddies newsletters. I have always loved computers in the classroom and I was "on the ground floor" when they first came in to the classrooms. When I saw this new program I jumped at the opportunity.

e-Buddies: Why did you decide that the e-Buddies was the right program for your students?

Mrs. Sadler: My students are always asking to go on the internet. Some of them have internet connections at home but are not allowed to use it. They see how much I love them and use them everyday. Most people are "afraid" of computers but I feel comfortable with them and use them all the time. I show them how much fun they can be.

e-Buddies: How has e-Buddies helped your students?

Mrs. Sadler: For my lower ability students it has helped them pick out individual letters and see the spaces between the words. They feel connected, adult (they are 21 and 22 years of age) and part of the world outside when they send and receive email. My higher level students are almost completely independent on it and are beginning to use some of the acronyms I taught them like ASAP and LOL. I was so surprised when one of my students sent me an email at home and his mother didn't even know he could do that! I was so proud of him.

Online with..(continued)



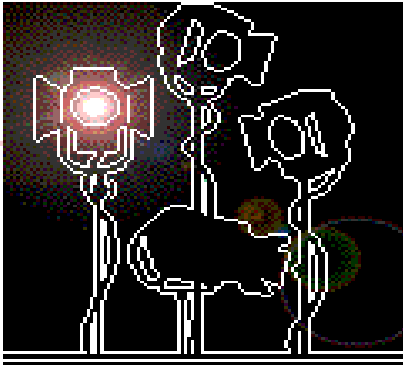
This month the e-Beat interviews Celeste Sadler, who is using e-Buddies with her class at Southwest Miami High School in Miami, Florida.

e-Buddies: What is the best thing about e-Buddies?

Mrs. Sadler: The best thing about e-Buddies is the future I see for it. My students are all graduating seniors. I hope they will continue to use this service and continue to make contact with the outside world. In our curriculum we stress community living and working. E-Buddies gives them a window to the world outside if they are stuck in the home all day. It's recreational and safe to do.

e-Buddies: What would you say to a teacher who is wondering if e-Buddies would be a good program for his/her students with developmental disabilities?

Mrs. Sadler: Computers are becoming more and more important in our lives. It's even more important for people with disabilities to learn to keep up with society. Some of the biggest mistakes our students make are not so much academic, but social. Have a Peer Buddy or another regular student help them check their mail if you don't have time or don't understand computers well enough. Young people seem to learn these skills a lot quicker than us older people. All of our students with disabilities can do this with varying levels of support as long as they have a thought they want to communicate. It would help them put their thoughts into words that others from far away can understand and respond to. Since eighty percent of intelligence testing is language, it seems exercising the language muscle would have to help.



Best Buddies Spotlight

Best Buddies Offices Unwrap the Gift of Friendship

By Lauren Taintor

The holidays are quickly approaching! As you feast on turkey, wrap your presents, sing carols, and drink hot chocolate, it is important not to lose sight of the true meaning of the holidays. It is a time to celebrate, to surround yourself with the ones you love, to be thankful for what you have, and to practice goodwill toward others. At Best Buddies, we are continuously demonstrating such ideals. We are so fortunate to have the ability to give the gift of friendship not only in times of celebration, but every single day, all year round.

Best Buddies is a collective effort of staff members, volunteers, and buddies. It is because of this teamwork that we are able to facilitate friendships and make remarkable differences in the lives of individuals with disabilities. This month, we would like to spotlight creative ways that Best Buddies staff are working together in an effort to help others and provide the gift of friendship.

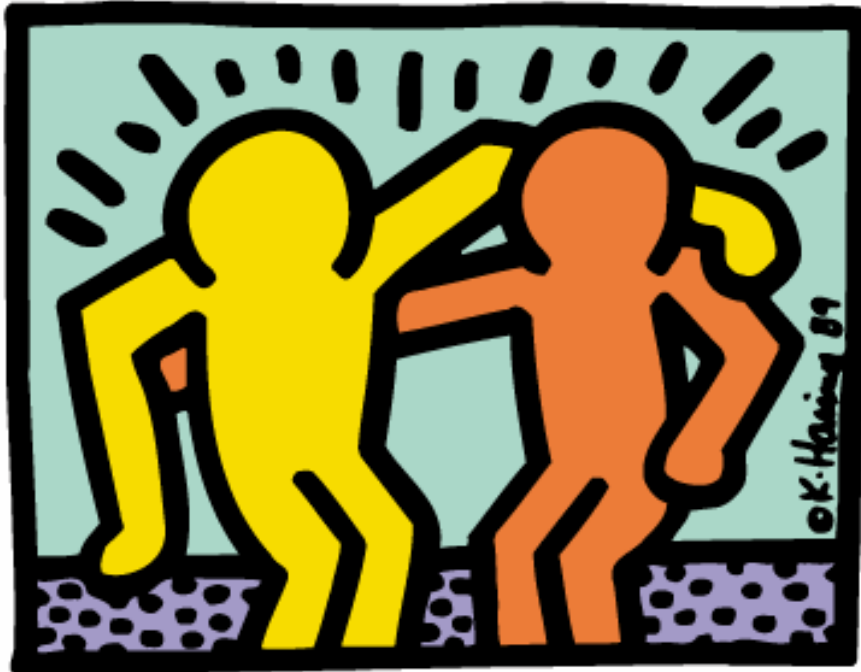
In Florida, in order to increase e-Buddies enrollment and to create more friendships, the staff have engaged in a healthy competition known as Derby Days. Audrey Katz, the program supervisor for the Broward and Dade offices, developed the concept for this statewide contest. The premise of Derby Days is this: the sixteen Florida Best Buddies staff members are divided into teams of two. Each pair is responsible for signing up new e-Buddies. The racetrack is two miles in length, and every e-Buddy that a pair signs up moves them forward a quarter of a mile. Signing up eight individuals equals one trip around the track. The Orlando office gets very creative...they have a Derby Days racetrack on the wall, and they move the horses forward when they sign up a new e-Buddy!

The idea behind Derby Days is that Best Buddies programs can support each other, and that staff should play a role in recruiting e-Buddies. Leslie Quarles, a Best Buddies Colleges program manager, believes that “e-Buddies naturally complements other Best Buddies programs. It is not an extra element, but rather one of our friendship programs, and should be incorporated wherever and whenever possible.” Here at e-Buddies, we couldn’t agree more!

In similar fashion to Derby Days in Florida, Best Buddies staff in Illinois are competing in the Eco-Challenge. Each program manager is to recruit 10 e-Buddies by December 31, 2002. According to Brian Young, the e-Buddies program manager, “the program staff here in Illinois have really stepped up to the challenge of signing participants up by themselves.” Pennsylvania also hopes to start a competition between college and high school chapters that encourages members to sign up e-Buddies.

Here at e-Buddies, we would like to take the time to thank everyone who assists in making the program a success. As a Best Buddies team, we are all working together to fulfill the same mission which, simply stated, is to make friendships happen. Match-by-match, we are making this world a better place in which to live. Now that is something to celebrate! HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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We're on the web!

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