

e-Beat

**December
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Dear Friend,

Unless it brings snow, I dislike the cold and darkness of winter. I have no evidence to back me up on it, but I suspect a majority of people share that dislike. I suspect that fear of the cold and dark is what lead to light being so important in the celebration of Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa.

I think about light and dark this time of year, when I'm bundled up against the cold and walking in the dark night toward home. I think about an old proverb about lighting a candle rather than cursing the darkness. The candle I light each night in winter warms my spirit, even as it fills my home with a bright softness quite different from electric light.

I think that all of us involved in e-Buddies are consciously choosing to bring light to others. Your participation in e-Buddies creates light in the world, the light of hope and connection and optimism.

May the light of friendship be with you at the holidays and in the new year.

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



The holidays are almost upon us! For many of us, this is the time of year that we look forward to most.

It's a time for traveling - many of us will be hitting the road to visit relatives or friends; or in some cases, to enjoy a well-deserved vacation.

It's a time for gifts - we all hope we get what we want, but it's also time to find the perfect gift for a loved one, to show them how much they mean to you.

It's a time for festiveness - many of us will spend a great deal of time decorating our homes and workplaces, trying to create the right atmosphere for the season. There will be many a holiday party, where we can all celebrate the season (and eat far too much in the process).

But most of all, the holidays are a time to gather with family and friends, to celebrate the end of another great year together, and the coming of another.

Why not share the holiday spirit with your e-Buddy?

You could ask:

What are your plans for the holidays? Who will you be spending the holidays with? Are you going out of town? How will you be traveling? 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 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 Danyetta, an e-Buddies participant from Tennessee.

e-Beat: How long have you been an e-Buddy?

Danyetta: I have been an e-Buddy for about 1 year.

e-Beat: Why did you want to be an e-Buddy?

Danyetta: I became an e-buddy to enlarge my circle of friends. I also wanted to connect with people who normally would not have access to an online friend. I support two wonderful gentlemen with intellectual disabilities. So, I know, first hand, the importance of having a circle of friends **outside** of those who are contracted to work with people with intellectual disabilities.

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

Danyetta: e-Buddies sharpen computer and internet skills of persons who would not otherwise have the opportunity. e-Buddies can inspire, motivate, encourage, and accept others for who they are. e-buddies show a genuine interest in the lives of others.

e-Beat: How has e-Buddies made a difference in your life?

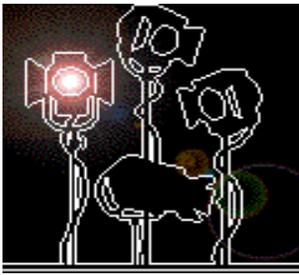
Danyetta: e-Buddies has made a tremendous difference in my life. The small act of sending a weekly email to someone enables me to focus on someone else's well being.

e-Beat: How often do you get online?

Danyetta: As a graduate student who takes courses online, I am ALWAYS on the internet. It's easy for me to keep in touch with my e-Buddy because I check my email just about everyday.

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

Danyetta: Easy, Fulfilling, Friendships



Best Buddies Spot-

Winter Wonderland with e-Buddies!

By Carolyn Downes,
e-Buddies Program Manager, Massachusetts

Brrr! It is getting chilly outside! So, grab a cup of hot cocoa and let's meet Katie and Tommy. Katie and Tommy are from Winter Wonderland, USA and have been a part of e-Buddies since 1999, when the program first began. They have had a magnificent time talking with their online friends and look forward to checking their email every week.

Last week, our two fearsome heroes had to beat a nasty virus from their computer. But now, they feel safe sending and receiving emails from their e-Buddies and other friends!

However, Katie has just received a new email from her e-Buddy, Mary Beth. Katie reads the email aloud "Hi Katie, I have just started a new job. I am very excited. My email address has changed, so you can email me at mary_beth@newjob.com. Great talking to you!"

Katie looks to Tommy with a puzzled look and says, "That seems awful nice of Mary Beth to send me her new email address but I think I remember my program manager saying that we are not suppose to exchange any personnel information."

Tommy turns away from his computer screen and says, "Katie, you are absolutely right. The Code of Conduct that we agreed to when signing up for e-Buddies explicitly state that we are only allowed to send emails to ebuddy@ebuddies.org and the e-Buddies system will forward it to our e-Buddy. By using this single email address, e-Buddies is even safer for everyone."

Katie thinks for a minute, and realizes that her friend is correct. "I am going to write Mary Beth back right now. I will say to her that it was very nice that she gave me her work email but we are going to have to stick to the rules by writing to each other at ebuddy@ebuddies.org" Katie says with a smile.

Tommy has another idea! "Don't forget to tell your e-buddy that she should change her email address on the official e-Buddies website, www.ebuddies.org"

"Thanks, Tommy. That is a good plan." Katie continues, "I will definitely remind Mary Beth!"

Tommy and Katie enjoy the rest of their afternoon sending emails and playing games on the internet!

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