

To Whom It May Concern:

Best Buddies at Brooks has the opportunity to send 2 students and one chapter advisor to the Best Buddies International Leadership conference this summer. It is located in Bloomington Indiana on July 22nd until July 25th, 2016. The cost per person is \$350, and \$100 per person for transportation. We plan on paying for the cost of the trip out of money collected from our intense fundraising efforts. The weekend is an amazing opportunity. We will have two students, one with, and one without a disability attend. There will also be one teacher advisor, Mrs. Hoyer. Both student families have been contacted, and are overjoyed to have their child chosen to attend. All individuals will be provided with housing in the dorms on campus, and every meal will be provided.

Some highlights taken from the website

<https://bestbuddies.org/leadershipconference/what-to-expect/are>:

- Conference kick-off by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, founder and Chairman of Best Buddies International
- Opening and Closing Ceremony events, featuring speakers and performers with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Leadership development classes and roundtable sessions with global leaders
- Educational panels comprised of professionals engaged in the disability rights community
- Outstanding Chapter Awards for 2015-2016 Overall Outstanding Chapters and the Spirit of Courage Award
- Making new friends from around the world
- [Connecting with experienced student leaders](#) to share tools and techniques for success.
- Learning about the disabilities rights movement

On the following pages I have provided information as to what specifically the focus will be for middle school, and advisors during the weekend. We hope to be able to confirm with Best Buddies IL our intent to attend as soon as possible.

Thank you,
Susan Hoyer
GBMS Special Ed Teacher
Best Buddies Advisor

Middle Schools

Middle school chapter presidents and officers will participate in a specialized training designed specifically for their unique leadership role. Middle school students with and without disabilities engage in activities to learn about their management style, develop tools for communication and delegation, and establish best practices for working with advisors and Best Buddies staff to manage their programs at home.

The majority of the middle school training will be offered in a classroom setting with other middle school leaders and led by designated senior Best Buddies program staff. The curriculum will focus on communication, delegation, working with advisors and Best Buddies staff, building leadership skills, and exploring one's own leadership style. All MS attendees will have opportunities to attend large-group sessions and learn with Best Buddies ambassadors and guest speakers. Training styles will vary in setting. Training settings include:

Classroom

Chapter management and program expectations will be reviewed with chapter leaders in a lecture style with personal, hands-on training from experienced Best Buddies staff members. Chapter presidents and officers will participate in these classroom breakouts with middle school peers from across the country and be taught by a range of staff, professional speakers, and senior student leaders, ambassadors, and advisors. Middle school participants will also be provided classroom opportunities to connect with their middle school chapter advisors in small teams to learn together the best practices, resources, and online supports that are available to their chapter throughout the year.

BBLC Talks Forum

On Saturday, July 23rd, students will participate in a TED Talks-esque forum; the audience will be comprised of all youth leaders with and without disabilities. The BBLC Talks speakers will be comprised of global disability rights advocates, professionals in the disabilities field, and experienced Best Buddies volunteers and staff who will share their expertise, best practices, and engage the audience to craft their leadership in the movement. The goal of the forum will be to showcase our progress in the movement, discuss the goals of our mission and tools for success, and provide awareness and networking opportunities for attendees. Additionally, speakers will evaluate how Best Buddies and the larger disabilities community can partner to ensure inclusion, employment, leadership and social opportunities are available to people with and without disabilities across the globe.

Roundtable

Student leaders will participate in roundtable discussions to cultivate the specific skill development needed to be a leader on their campus. The discussions' predetermined topics will focus on student based experience and be led based on needs and goals of the student participants. Student leaders should come to Leadership Conference prepared to participate and share their experience in addition to seeking out answers, suggestions, and resources to support their own chapter goals. Roundtables provide a unique opportunity for student networking and peer-to-peer learning.

Advisors

Advisors from middle school, high school, and college chapters are invited to participate in specialized trainings designed specifically for their unique leadership role and based on their program involvement. Advisors from each school program will attend trainings both as a large group and will also participate in specific discussions for their school program. Sessions will be led by experienced senior Best Buddies staff – with the support of veteran Best Buddies advisors – and will focus on the advisor role at large: managing student leaders, supporting the program on their campuses, engaging parents, and sharing Best Buddies' progress and opportunities with administration. Advisors will also have the opportunity to participate in program breakouts with their chapter leaders which will be led by their state or regional program staff.

Best Buddies strives to empower our advisors to develop the training track that best suits their needs. While specific trainings will be offered in small group forums for all advisors, we also invite advisors to participate in workshops, large group panel discussions, and World Café roundtables with their chapter leaders, or connect peer-to-peer to network and build resources.

What to Expect:

Workshops: Senior Best Buddies staff, guest speakers, performers, and outstanding young leaders will facilitate a host of different training topics specific to the needs of our Best Buddies chapter leaders. Topics range from communication best practices, the disability rights movement, event planning, and advocacy training. Workshops will be offered in rotating 50 minute blocks for three separate sessions on Saturday afternoon. Participants are encouraged to select the training topics that best meet their training needs and register prior to attending conference.

Panel Discussions: Experienced leaders, parents, advisors, young leaders, and professionals in the disabilities field will host a forum to share best practices and answer questions from the audience. Participants are encouraged to engage in the discussion and learn from the trained speakers to develop successful skills for sharing the mission in their community.

World Cafe: Participants from all over the world will be separated randomly into small groups in a large setting to participate in a roundtable discussion based on conference themes. The groups – which will be comprised of youth and adult global leaders – will be facilitated by Best Buddies senior staff, though attendees are encouraged to drive the discussion to learn from each other and shape tools and techniques to succeed back home.