

# Friendship and best buddies essay sample

[Life](#), [Friendship](#)



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## Abstract

Friendship is universal. It can bridge societal gaps of gender, race, social class, and differences in abilities. College is a time of personal growth, and friendships have a tremendous impact on the development and experiences of an individual. Through Best Buddies, college students and adults in the community with disabilities have the opportunity to share friendships. These relationships bring people of all abilities, interests, and talents together, as equals and as friends. I chose to look at these friendships and to compare them to a typical friendship between people to define and show how friendship can bridge societal gaps to have a remarkable and lasting impact on the individuals involved.

## Acknowledgements

- I would like to thank Dr. Nina Yssel for being my advisor throughout the planning and development of this project. As our faculty advisor for the Best Buddies chapter on campus, I thought it only fitting to have her help me with this thesis. Her insight and support has been extremely beneficial and encouraging to me during this entire process.
- I would also like to thank the members of the Ball State Best Buddies chapter for their willingness to let me use our many shared experiences for this project, and for offering their input, ideas, pictures, and comments to me so enthusiastically. To the officers especially, I want to share my undying gratitude and appreciation for their dedication to making Best Buddies such a wonderful group to be a part of. Their support in every aspect of this

project has been amazing and I have to credit all the wonderful officers, students, and buddies for inspiring me to do this project.

- Thanks also go out to all of the individuals involved in LDM Handycamp (Lutheran Disabilities Ministries) and Camp Lakeview who have inspired me through their friendship and love over the years.

## Analysis

Friendship is something needed by everyone in some capacity. People are made to be relational and in community with each other. This fact does not change for people who happen to have different physical, mental, or emotional characteristics or variations from what is considered “normal” in our society. Throughout my time at Ball State, I have been working with the goal in mind that I want to work with people who have disabilities. I declared a Special Education major and have spent the past several summers volunteering and working at camps for people with disabilities of all ages. The impact people who are considered to be “disabled” have had on my life is inexplicable and priceless- having shown me that perhaps they are not the ones with disabilities; but rather it is those of us considered to be in the “normal” category who often forget the small things in life that go unappreciated, but can bring such profound joy. Friendships create an opportunity for us to connect with people who are different than us in various ways and, in the particular case of Best Buddies, allow college students like myself the opportunity to see life in a different way and celebrate diversity and companionship.

With the upcoming completion of my college career, I am faced with the decision of what I want to do with the rest of my life. The many experiences I have had make it clear to me that providing an environment conducive to creating and sustaining meaningful friendships across abilities and talents will be at the center of my focus. Best Buddies is an organization that pairs students with peers and people from the community who have intellectual disabilities. A few friends of mine and I have worked very hard to get our Ball State chapter started, growing, and successfully running over the past three years.

Through this project, I wanted to produce something that can show the impact that Best Buddies and all of the individuals involved in it have made on others and myself in the organization and the community. By taking these stories and pictures and putting them in a cohesive format, I hope to pass something on to our organization and on our campus as I graduate that will continue to remind others not only of the work that has gone into this organization, but more importantly, the incredible friendships and experiences that have resulted and far outweighed any obstacles. I chose to create a project using pictures and music to portray the friendships in Best Buddies, compiling this information into a brief, concise, and highly visual arrangement that can be used to explain and depict for others what words cannot always

do justice to. The goal is to describe the friendships formed between people from what could be considered two very different worlds, and the influence these friendships have had on the many individuals involved. As I began the

planning process for my thesis, I was overwhelmed with the possibilities of what I could do or wanted to do and which direction I should go. I eventually decided to do a creative project looking specifically at Best Buddies, but more generally at friendship, as something to summarize my career and all I have learned in my time at Ball State through the Special Education and Honors College programs that I have been a part of. The anticipated implications of this project were to represent the relationships that have affected students on campus through friendships with people who have disabilities. I wanted to sum up the impact Best Buddies, and more importantly, the relationships built through it, have had on my peers and me. This project may be used to explain our organization/chapter in the future here at Ball State for those interested in getting involved.

I want others to be able to see and learn about the positive effects of these friendships, not only for Ball State students, but also for the individuals affected from the community. Because I am simultaneously completing my student teaching requirements as I have developed and completed my thesis, the format and content have undergone various shifts and changes throughout the process this semester. I initially wanted to include a more interview based video to depict the actual relationships of our buddy pairs by having them answer questions or share stories of their experiences themselves; then however, I later chose to use pictures I have taken at different activities our chapter has hosted.

I also had hoped to include either spoken or typed comments from the members as audio or visual aspects of the video, but upon completing parts

of the project, chose to compile the information I attained from the college students and their buddies and to condense and simplify what they said into single words or phrases to stick to the theme of what friendship is. I felt this change was not something I necessarily wanted to do, but after putting the pieces of the project together more, was very satisfied with it and feel that this format complements the idea of the creative project better than I had planned in the beginning. It is possible that as I put the finishing touches on the slide-show that I will look for ways to incorporate the lengthier quotes from the members, but I do not feel that it will take away from the overall effect if this element is left out.

The process of putting the video together has been one with many small details that have added up to make this long progression and development something that is only appropriate for the subject that it is embracing. Just as no friendship or relationship can succeed without work and attention to the small things, this project has proven to be no different. I have spent several hours and days editing individual pictures, configuring the timing of slides, selecting and adjusting music to accompany the pictures, determining sequences and order, choosing transitions, text, and effects to go along with certain images, and many other details in order to create a finished project that is organized, unified, consistent, and truly exemplifies the impact Best Buddies has had on those of us blessed to be involved. In the planning stages and while working to get my initial proposal approved, I completed the tutorial for the Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams and was certified through the online course. After contacting the Institutional Review Board on campus to see what level of paperwork I would

need to complete, I was in contact with one of the staff members who looked at my project outline and details.

She informed me that it was not necessary to have my project approved through them based on the format and elements my thesis would entail. From this point, I began the task of searching through my hundreds of pictures for those that stood out to me most in fitting with my vision for this video. In choosing the pictures, I selected those that represented a wide range of activities our chapter has done in this past year, as well as working to include as many members and aspects of friendship that I wanted to use to follow the theme of the project. Once I had a good collection of photos to use, I began looking through my personal library for music that would best complement the theme lyrically and melodically. I first came across “ I’ve Always Loved You” by Third Day.

This song is one that I have often heard in the context of summer camp, so it reminds me of the people I have met and the bond that has been formed through that time together. I felt the style of guitar playing and the words relayed and enhanced the feeling that I was looking for, so I chose to use this song. Wanting the video as a whole to be a reasonable length- short enough to hold attention, but lasting long enough to get the desired point across, I decided that I wanted to go with two songs for the project. The second song I was finally able to narrow my list down to was “ Better Together” by Jack Johnson. This song had a similar acoustic sound to it that I felt worked in combination with the first song and would be fairly simple to blend. Again, I felt this song emitted a laid-back feeling of friendship and closeness, with the

obvious lyrics of people being "better together- a huge portion of what I wanted to relay about the friendships built through Best Buddies. With the two songs chosen, I began work blending them together so that the transition from one to the other was smooth and natural.

The next portion of the project I focused on was the words and phrases to be used along with certain photos in the video. I sorted through the responses I got from Best Buddies members and tried to compile an assortment of words, phrases, and themes that were evident throughout the statements. I also went beyond the membership of our chapter and enlisted help from other friends of mine in giving me the first things that came to mind when they thought of friendship and what it meant to them. Once I had a good amount of definitions, I went through each picture and the sequences to find which to pair with each description. I tried to find pictures that best represented what the definition coupled with it was saying whenever possible, and also worked to space the words/phrases evenly throughout the video. Here are a few of the comments selected from members and officers of the Best Buddies chapter regarding what their friendship and buddy have meant to them: “ Best Buddies has helped me understand how important it is to stay patient in a friendship. If we are patient the bonds formed through friendship will eventually become strong enough to call someone your life long friend. ” -Dan “ My friendship with Ric has definitely grown in a better understanding of those with disabilities.

Too often we avoid interaction for fear of doing something wrong or incorrect. My experiences with Ric, both in public and at campus events,



have opened my eyes to what a true friendship is. We know we can count on each other to talk about any issue we are having and knowing that they genuinely care. It is great to see how friendly Ric is and will warmly say hello to “strangers.” It makes me rethink of how I can become a better person and how we really affect those around us although many times we believe they are strangers. Ric always wants to know how my roommates and siblings are doing; he is caring of those who are around me although he might not know them. I guess simply put Ric is helping me become a better person and better friend. I can only hope that I have the slightest bit affect on him in a similar way!” -Nicole “I believe that best buddies has taught me how to live life to the fullest. It has showed me to enjoy simplicity and to never take the small things in life for granted. Ien and I have made this amazing bond that is not fleeting, but rather dependable and loving! I am sad to be leaving her this year, but am sure that we will continue have many more wonderful memories together.” -Megsn

Once these aspects were roughly in place, I began to edit any details I was not quite satisfied with in the pictures, sequencing, text, sound, etc. From here, I began to add and modify the transition effects between slides in order to give the show a better flow from picture to picture. I also felt this small detail gave the video a much more polished look overall. In incorporating the transitions, I attempted to use a variety to keep it interesting. I watched the show several times to determine areas I was not quite satisfied with in order to make any changes or adjustments necessary. Editing these details, I felt I was better able to achieve the best look as a whole and finished project. At the end of the video, I added a slide with the text “what is friendship?” again

to restate the purpose of the slideshow and to bring the project full circle. The show ends with the Best Buddies logo and summarizing the theme of friendship with one word: love.

I added credits for the songs used at the completion of the video and decided to end on the black screen the show started with and fade the music out. Taken as a whole, I feel the completed project depicts friendship, as it is defined by a range of diverse people and relationships, and how it relates specifically to the entire purpose of Best Buddies. This assignment has helped me to summarize into a visual project what my years at Ball State and in the community have taught me- everyone needs a friend, regardless of abilities. I hope to carry that message with me as I continue on my journey after graduation and into a character-driven and education-based life.