

BUDDIES & BURGERS

GETTING TO KNOW OUR
BEST BUDDIES BETTER

Being a part of Best Buddies is more than just being in a club. It's being a part of a loving community and building relationships for students in the special education program. For senior Jacob Piotrowski, it's the little things that make him happy like hamburgers from In-N-Out or getting to hang out with his buddy Lucas Rahm. In Best Buddies, strong relationships are built and memories that will last a lifetime.

For senior Mari Boekes, it was a very important relationship from her childhood that sparked her interest.

"I started Best Buddies freshman year because one of my best friends from elementary school is special needs. I've known them my whole life and we hang out all the time. I thought it was really cool and I wanted to be more involved than only being able to see her and hang out with her," said Boekes.

Best Buddies also presents a chance for special needs students to connect with other students and build relationships inside and outside of school.

"Best Buddies has fostered really good friendships and helped out everyone in a way I didn't realize it could. For example, even just playing a game brings so much joy to the SSN Students," said junior Petyon Rettmer.

The programs and structure of Best Buddies is great from an activities standpoint, but more importantly it can create special friendships that exist inside as well as outside of the walls of Castle View.

"Best Buddies makes it really easy for us to hang out inside and outside of school. Their parents are pretty involved as well, so we can do a lot with them in our free time," Rahm said.

Piotrowski's favorite part of Best Buddies is hanging out with his buddy Rahm and going out to his favorite fast food restaurants. He often expresses his love for going to In-N-Out with Rahm.

"My favorite place is In-N-Out Burger," Piotrowski said.

He went on to explain that he orders "a big, giant juicy burger. It is an amazing juicy Fat Place to order my big fat burger." In addition, he completes that with "Fries and a coke."

He loves that the fries are cheesy.

"They're really yummy," Piotrowski said.

While In-N-Out may be one of his favorites he made sure to tell me Chick-Fil-A is also a favorite.

When asked, Piotrowski stated "Well, I might say Chick-Fil-A!"

Regardless of the restaurant, it is obvious that these outings are a highlight for both Piotrowski and Rahm.

For Boekes, the Best Buddies Gala is an amazing keystone event in the program.

"The Best Buddies Gala was a champion of the year Gala. So, CV's Champion was Jacob Piotrowski... it's where all the champions from all of the different participating schools nominate SSN students, that raise money for Best Buddies that goes back to the programs and to help raise awareness as well as support the program. It's a really fancy event where they go over inclusion and what inclusion means to everyone. They go through the different champions from each school and talk about the money they raised and the things they did this year for their individual programs. Then, they pick an overall champion of the year. Piotrowski showed a lot of interest and hard work in being a champion this year and his parents helped a lot too," said Boekes.

Another one of the keystones of Best Buddies is Unified Sports. Some of Piotrowski's favorite sports in the program include basketball, kickball and soccer.

"Best Buddies had gotten me involved in sports and stuff, basketball...sometimes kickball sometimes soccer," Piotrowski said.

When asked what his favorite sport was, he emphasized, "BASKETBALL!"

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As Best Buddies gets ready to compete in Showdown, senior Jacob Piotrowski strikes poses. Piotrowski loved all the parties Best Buddies threw this year. "I love to dance and I like country music," Piotrowski said.

written and photo by Sophi Pinello