

Creating space for every student voice

By Valentina Toro
Features Editor

In a campus environment where connection can be difficult, Best Buddies is building a community centered on inclusion and the belief that every student has value.

Best Buddies works to bring together students with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, fostering friendships and building a more inclusive campus community. The organization aims to ensure that no student feels left out.

“It’s an organization where we take people that have mental and physical disabilities, and what we aim to do is get the community integrated,” special education major Quinn Eyrich, a junior and president of the organization, said.

The organization serves a wide range of students both on campus and in the surrounding community, including adults from Chapel Haven, welcoming anyone interested in building meaningful connections.

Eyrich said one of the most impactful aspects of Best Buddies is how it shifts perspectives.

Before joining, he said he was primarily focused on his own goals

and experiences without considering how his actions affected others.

Through his involvement, however, Eyrich began to understand the importance of collaboration and empathy.

“When you blend everybody’s ideas together, everybody’s opinions, that’s when you can really function as a great part of society, and you can really help your community grow,” Eyrich said.

Beyond its broader mission, Best Buddies also creates deeply personal connections. For Eyrich, his friendship with his “best buddy,” Matty Biles, a student at Chapel Haven, stands out as one of his most meaningful experiences.

Eyrich said he was proud to introduce Biles to his fraternity, Tau Kappa Epsilon, where Biles later became a member. Seeing him welcomed into another community, Eyrich said, reinforced the organization’s message of inclusion.

Biles’ determination and positive outlook left a lasting impression.

Eyrich described him as hardworking and resilient, someone who consistently proves that limitations do not define a person’s potential.

“He’s one of the hardest

working people I know, and it’s his ability to fight and tell everybody that he can do whatever he sets his mind to that really keeps him going,” Eyrich said.

Experiences like these reflect how Best Buddies extends beyond organized meetings or events.

The relationships built through the program often carry into other areas of campus life, helping to break down social barriers and challenge assumptions.

Looking ahead, Eyrich said one of his main goals for the organization is to increase awareness and ensure that more students feel encouraged to get involved.

Eyrich wants to make sure that people of all abilities know they have a place within the campus community.

He emphasized that inclusion is not just about participation but about creating spaces where individuals feel genuinely accepted and valued.

For him, that message is at the core of everything Best Buddies represents.

“Our biggest message is everybody’s welcome,” Eyrich said. “Nobody should feel out of place here, and that’s what I love about this place. Everybody’s accepted, and everybody can have fun.”



PHOTOS | VALENTINA TORO

Students at Chapel Haven gather for a Best Buddies board game night.



A board game spread across a table during a Best Buddies event.

The art behind fashion photography

By Jay’Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

Fashion has long been dismissed as something superficial, reduced to the simple idea of what someone wears. For many, it begins and ends with clothing, fabric, brands and trends. But that narrow view misses what actually gives fashion its cultural weight.

The truth is, fashion does not become meaningful until it is seen, and photography is what makes that possible.

Clothing on its own is just material. To me, clothing becomes fashion when it is framed, styled and presented to an audience. That

transformation happens through photography.

Without it, even the most innovative designs would struggle to leave a lasting impression beyond the people physically present to see them.

Photography does not just document fashion; it defines it. A single image can shape how an entire collection is perceived.

Lighting can make a look feel dramatic or subdued.

Composition can suggest power, intimacy or rebellion. The setting can shift a garment from everyday wear to high art.

Ultimately, in this way, photography gives fashion its voice, turning silent pieces of clothing into visual statements.

For decades, most fashion magazines have shaped cultural taste and industry standards.

Publications like Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar did not become influential simply because of the designers they featured.

Their power came from the images they produced. Photographers such as Richard Avedon and Annie Leibovitz elevated fashion photography into an art form, creating visuals that people remember long after the specific garments fade from memory.

In many cases, it is the photograph, not the clothing, that defines an era.

When people think of past fashion movements,

they often recall iconic images rather than specific pieces.

Photography freezes fleeting trends in time, giving them permanence and cultural significance. Without it, fashion would be far more transient, existing only in the moment it is worn.

Photography’s role in fashion has only expanded in the digital age. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok have turned fashion into constant visual conversation.

In this environment, what matters is not just what is worn but how it is presented. A well-composed photo can elevate a simple outfit, while a poorly executed one can

diminish even the most expensive or thoughtfully designed look.

This shift has blurred the line between fashion and image-making.

Today, styling an outfit and capturing it are often inseparable acts. The photograph is no longer just a record of fashion, it is the final product.

Brands understand this, which is why so much emphasis is placed on campaign imagery and visual identity.

The success of a collection often depends as much on how it is photographed as on the design itself.

At the same time, this visual dominance introduces tension.

Photography has the

power to shape perception in ways that are not always realistic.

Highly curated and edited images can create unattainable standards, reinforcing that fashion exists in a polished, idealized world.

Thus, in that sense, photography does not just elevate fashion; it can also distort it.

Still, its importance cannot be overstated.

Photography has also made fashion more accessible. It allows emerging designers, photographers and everyday individuals to share their work with a global audience.

A single compelling image can spark a trend or redefine how people think about style.

Owls Decide: Staying in or going out?

By Valentina Toro
Features Editor



PHOTOS | LILY RAND

“I prefer going out. I like the sunshine.”
-Business administration major Francisco Cortes, a freshman



“Going out because I like exploring new environments.”
-Nursing major Joseph Izquierdo, a freshman



“Staying in because I’m always tired.”
-Healthcare studies major Shanell Thompson, a junior



“Staying in because it’s just comfy.”
-Healthcare studies major Ana Sophia Echeverri, a senior



“Staying in because I have games at home. It’s expensive to go out.”
-Computer science major Joe Youn, a senior



“Going out if the weather is nice out.”
-Political science major Tariq Bilal, a junior