



Club Profile: Best Buddies

Namratha Kamath
Managing Editor

Location: Room 314
Meeting days: Every other Monday
Meeting Time: 2:10pm
Key words: Service, fun, friendship

Best Buddies is the world's largest organization dedicated to ending the social, physical, and economic isolation of 200 million people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD).

At Westhill's own Best Buddies division, students get together and complete fun activities. In these activities, all students work together and create new friendships along the way. Sometimes, students will have a buddy to work with. By working with their buddy, they can form stronger connections.

"We try to include everyone as much as we can and...do activities that we like with everyone together," co-president Duco Dijkema ('27) said.

The main purpose of Best Buddies is to create a strong community between all students through exciting meetings. On November 18th, Best Buddies held Friendsgiving. There, everyone feasted on sweet treats and salty snacks while having a great time.

"After a Best Buddies meeting, I feel like it makes me feel good as a person because we're helping those who have special abilities and I feel like coming together, making them feel welcomed in a cause [*sic*] that they're able to feel free to express themselves," Eva Palacios ('27) said.

"It makes me happy, honestly, because I think it's a great way to get everyone together. And, all of our friends come and stay and it's just everyone hanging out and pretty chill," co-president Camilia Amezzane ('27) said.

Karthik Nayyar ('27), a member of the club, says "I feel very helpful, like I help the environment. I feel proud."

Best Buddies is a feel-good club that can help students make meaningful, lifelong relationships. It is a way to gain confidence and have new experiences. It can help students develop skills for dealing with diverse groups of people throughout their whole life – not just in high school.

Stamford's Vision For Zero Traffic Fatalities: A look at the Vision Zero Project

Scarlett Palma
Reporter

Stamford's government is committed to eliminating traffic fatalities and serious accidents in the city by 2025.

Although Stamford has a good record of traffic safety compared to other cities in Connecticut, mayor Caroline Simmons hopes to make the city's record spotless, aiming to eliminate road fatalities entirely through the launching of the Vision Zero Project in 2022. Downtown plans on educating the community regarding this project with public engagement.

Vision Zero takes a people-first approach to transportation, since many trips in Stamford are made by foot, bike, or transit. Everyone, including drivers, will benefit from a safer road transportation system.

A plan will commence next April 2025, including "Feet on the Street," which are a series of pop-up events throughout the city.

For a safer transportation system, Stamford plans on establishing

brighter lights, crisper pavement markings, and reduced speed limits. A reduced speed limit of 20 mph will be introduced to schools and pedestrian-heavy areas.

With the project rolling out, they'll also implement "bump outs" in many city intersections to slow down traffic and make it safer for pedestrians to cross. This could benefit many members of the community and could impact the students of Westhill. Samantha Passero ('25) said, "I would feel much safer on the road knowing these regulations are in place."

Adopting a safer transportation system will also benefit local bus drivers who travel from one place to another.

Without the stress of traffic, one could travel quicker from one place to another. Traffic could cause delays to students and faculty workers.

However, there are doubts about the Vision Zero Project. For example, Stamford government plans to add LED lights to

brighten the roads when one's driving. Madeline Rosenhaft ('25), who has astigmatism, said, "The increase of brighter lights may be a bit difficult, not just for people visually-impaired, but also the elderly too."

She is one of many with this diagnosis, and despite brighter lights helping our roads visibility, it wouldn't be beneficial for many Westhill students who get blinded by the lights.

The Westword attempted to reach out to the people behind the Vision Zero Project but received no response.

Downtown hopes the Vision Zero project will eliminate traffic accidents and fatalities in Stamford, preventing deaths and enabling citizens to feel safe on the streets.

It will ensure that students of Stamford are safe when traveling by foot, bike, or bus. The project is still in development and will be fully adopted by the summer of 2025.

YOUR AD HERE

ADVERTISE WITH US! Your business will support independent student journalism.

westwordwhs@gmail.com

Subject line: Advertisement inquiry