Big Buddies

Buddies are terrific for all ages. Older youth are empowered by being teachers and role models and younger kids develop confidence from the positive attention.

**Age Appropriateness:**
5-8, 9-12, 13 and up

**Key Topics:**
Mentorship, Role-Models, Anti-Bullying

**Skills:**
Writing, Critical Thinking, Illustrating, Interviewing, Collaboration

**Materials:**
Books and art supplies

**Action Time:**
1-2hrs. Per Week

**Resources:**
Kids Write Right: What You Need to be a Writing Powerhouse by: Jan Venolia
http://www.wikihow.com/

**OBJECTIVES**

- To teach the youth the value of being a positive role model and mentor and the importance and diversity of all people.
- To practice writing and interviewing skills.
- To develop peer relationships that will help prevent bullying.

**Discussion**

Pre-assign buddy pairs, try to put youth together who have no previous relationship. Before holding a Buddy Naming Ceremony, speak to each age group separately. What is a mentor? What makes a good role-model? What do you expect from your buddy and from being a buddy? Set expectations and appropriate behavior ahead of time. There are many activities that can be done with the buddies in place.

**Action**

1. **Interview:** Have the older students interview their younger buddy with the intention that they will be writing a story based on the interests and information expressed by their buddy in the interview.

2. **Write:** After gathering information from their buddies, the older students should synthesize the information, map out a story, and begin to write. Students should be given an hour a day for two weeks to write and illustrate their stories.

3. **Share:** Two weeks after the interview activity, have the older youth host a sharing event for the younger kids to attend. Have the buddies partner up again and ask the storywriters to share their buddy-inspired stories.

**Reflection**

Ask the older youth to share what they valued in learning about their younger buddy. Did they feel any extra responsibility to be a good role-model? How did this change their behavior?

Have the younger youth make thank-you cards to send to their buddies. Ask them what they learned about their older buddy, even though they didn’t interview them. What made these older buddies good role-models or mentors?