Gustie Buddies Strategic Plan

**Goal 1-** Encourage growth in understanding of self and increase social skills through reflection, activities and programs.

**Objective 1.1:** Offer programming that allows an opportunity to learn social skills through a positive, fun, and safe environment.

- **Initiative 1.1.1:** Create programs that encourage teamwork, interaction, and value building between participants and volunteers.

- **Initiative 1.1.2:** Ensure that we have activities that are fun and appropriate for the wide variety of ages and disabilities in the program.

- **Initiative 1.1.3:** Train volunteers to understand their buddies’ disabilities to be able to recognize opportunities for growth or challenge; plan individual weeks accordingly.

- **Initiative 1.1.4:** Establish a partnership with an outside organization for the volunteers and participants to engage in a service project.

**Objective 1.2:** Provide opportunities to reflect that will encourage everyone involved to examine what they have learned and to institute it into their lives.

- **Initiative 1.2.1:** Host a reflection event for all participants at the end of each semester to identify skills gained, share program stories, share ideas, identify problems, and to add meaning to the experience.

- **Initiative 1.2.2:** Establish goals for the buddies between parents/guardians and the volunteers in the beginning of the semester to reflect upon their progress throughout the year.

**Goal 2-** Foster mentoring, compassionate, and affirmative relationships through activities and programs, training and orientation, and reflection.

**Objectives 2.1:** To offer youth an environment where they feel comfortable and are able to experience maximum growth.

- **Initiative 2.1.1:** At the beginning of the year create an evaluation system to determine the interests of participants and buddies to pair up accordingly, leading to a comfortable relationship.

- **Initiative 2.1.2:** Establish opportunities for partners to pair up with another group on individual weeks to increase interaction between buddies.

- **Initiative 2.1.3:** Develop activities to challenge buddies beyond their current comfort levels to encourage character development.
Objective 2.2: To provide volunteers with the critical tools and opportunities necessary to become capable mentors.

Initiative 2.2.1: Bring in an expert (social worker, Special Olympics coordinator, etc) at orientation to educate volunteers on disabilities and relationships with developmentally delayed youth.

Initiative 2.2.2: Encourage volunteers to create and document the purpose of their individual events (learning something new, growth in a certain area, etc.)

Goal 3: Inspire volunteers through intentional recruitment, communication, and enhanced relationships between coordinators and volunteers to raise the level of commitment.

Objective 3.1: To develop and sustain a strong volunteer base and recognize volunteers as the core of the program.

Initiative 3.1.1: Hold social functions outside of group programs to build stronger relationships between volunteers and coordinators at least once a semester.

Initiative 3.1.2: Work the previous and current volunteers to identify recruitment strategies.

Objective 3.2: Increase communication by sharing program stories in order to promote awareness of the program.

Initiative 3.2.1: Update website by making it more relevant and accessible to viewers and encourage people to use it.

Initiative 3.2.2: Utilize website to communicate from coordinators to volunteers.

Initiative 3.2.3: Contact appropriate forms of media to promote Gustie Buddies on campus and throughout the community.