FACILITATOR’S GUIDE TO
INTRODUCTION TO FRIENDS

Resources for Helping
Establish Relationships Between People With and Without Disabilities

Widening the Circle is a partnership between The Arc of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services
WELCOME

This 2-hour training has been developed as part of the DDS-funded “Widening the Circle Project” through The Arc of Massachusetts. The GOAL of this training is to help people with and without disabilities, their families and supporters to better understand the importance of friendships between people with and without disabilities. Specific OBJECTIVES include:

1. Participants will be able to define “friendship”.
2. Participants will be able to list specific benefits that friendships bring into everyone’s’ lives.
3. Participants will be able to identify and explain obstacles to the development of friendships.
4. Participants will be able to access resources to help them further explore opportunities for friendships.

The training is designed so that it can be presented to one audience with an interest in a wide variety of ages, or it can be used as a series for audiences specifically interested in resources for Kids, Transition-Aged Youth or Adults. Even though the primary purpose of Widening the Circle is to examine approaches that bring people with and without disabilities together, this introductory training includes other approaches as well. Ideally this training would be conducted by a pair or small team of facilitators, with and without disabilities.

Typical audiences will be adults who may be parents/other family members, human services staff, people with disabilities or other interested parties. Understanding adult learning principles is the key to a successful training that engages participants and facilitates learning. Adults respond best to learning that is:

• Active
• Experience-based
• Recognizing the learner as an expert
• Independent
• Real-life centered
• Task-centered
• Problem-centered
• Solution-driven
• Self-directing
• Internally and externally motivated

Some helpful adult learning concepts you can practice include:
• Dialogue - interaction between learners and instructors.
• Supportive atmosphere - a comfortable environment facilitates learning along with a nurturing instructor.
• Encouragement of cooperative communication - clear opportunities for discussion between learners and instructors and learners amongst each other.

Material/Equipment Needed:
- Easel
- Wallpaper
- Colored Markers
- Masking Tape
- Digital Projector
- Screen
- CD/“Flashdrive”/Laptop device with Powerpoint

“Widening the Circle” Handouts:
- Sign-In Sheet (optional for trainers)
- Maximizing Community Connections Activity Sheet
- “A Tale of Two Bridges”
- “Every Chipmunk is a Horseback Rider”
- Evaluation Form/Request for Local Programs & Resources (optional)

This “Facilitator’s Guide” is intended to be used with an accompanying PowerPoint slide show.

**Facilitator Tip:** Depending on the time of the training and the composition of the group, you may want to consider ways to keep some participants more engaged. Asking for volunteers to operate the slide show and to assist with writing on the wall-paper for certain activities has proven effective.
Advance Preparation:
Arrive early and...

- Be sure that all equipment for displaying slides is working properly.
- Prepare headings for the 4 activities using wall-paper.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Where you Live</th>
<th>Work/Volunteer</th>
<th>Favorite Thing to Do</th>
<th>What Does “Friend” Mean to You?</th>
<th>What are Some Benefits to Having Friends?</th>
<th>What are Some Obstacles to Having Friends?</th>
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- Put out “Sign-In Sheet” (Optional) and pen for participants.

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INTRODUCTION TO FRIENDS
SIGN-IN SHEET
DATE
LOCATION

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- Lay out Handouts for Participants

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Handout #1
INTRODUCTION TO FRIENDS
MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
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Handout #2
A Tale of Two Bridges
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Handout #3
Every Chipmunk is a Horseback Rider
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Greet participants and when all have arrived, begin!
I. **(Slides #1-#2) Introductions (10 minutes)**

Have Slide #1 on screen as participants are entering and seating themselves. Very briefly give “credits” by reading Slide #2 (“Purpose”).

Ask people to give their name, where they live, if they work or volunteer anywhere and what their favorite activity is. List these on a sheet of wallpaper on which headings have been written ahead of time. This information will be used in a closing activity (VII below).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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II. **(Slides #3-#5) What Does “Friend” Mean to You? (10 minutes)**

Ask people what words or phrases come to mind when they think of what “Friend” or “Friendship” means to them. List these on the sheet of wallpaper that you already prepared. After listing the participants responses compare it to the list below to be sure that you have captured key points:

**What Does “Friend” Mean to You?**

- Freely Given
- Reciprocal (but not necessarily “equal”)
- Evolves over time.
- Grow with Practice.
- Tendency to desire what is best for the other
- Sympathy/ Empathy
- Mutual understanding and compassion, “Friends ‘get’ you!”
- Enjoyment of company, Affection
- Ability to be ones’ self and express ones’ feelings
- Make mistakes without fear of judgment
- Trust & Loyalty
- Bond born of similar (or at least compatible) interests and values
- Of some duration
(Show Slide #4 to prompt brief discussion about virtual vs “real” friends.)
(Show Slide #5 with one definition of “Friendship”.)

III. (Slides #6 & 7) What are the Benefits of Friendships? (20 minutes)
Ask participants to “shout out” benefits of friendships. (Depending on your audience, you may want to concentrate on a specific age-group for this activity.) List these on the sheet of wallpaper that you already prepared. After listing the participants responses compare it to the list below to be sure that you have captured key points:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>What are Some Benefits to Having Friends?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Benefits for KIDS</td>
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<td>B. Benefits for TRANSITION-AGED YOUTH</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Friendships might lead to a job!</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Can lead to deep, intimate relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Benefits for ADULTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Friendships might lead to a job!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can lead to deep, intimate relationships, including marriage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Benefits for ALL AGE GROUPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Happier: increased happiness, sense of self-worth</td>
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<td>2. Healthier: better emotional and physical health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Safer: providing safeguards against abuse &amp; neglect happening and prompt recognition if abuse &amp; neglect does occur.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. increased social skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. a sense of belonging and acceptance; someone to be yourself with.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. more confidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. more support, someone to depend on, someone to trust.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. reduced isolation and the negative effects associated with it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. creation of a variety of other opportunities in peoples’ lives.</td>
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<td>10. Gives purpose to skill training already in progress</td>
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with people. (meaning, for example, I have been learning a lot about cooking but it makes it all the better that I can cook for a friend I invite over to dinner.)  
11. Learning—by both parties—from role-modeling by the other!  
12. stronger communities.  
13. more inclusive societies; enriches everyone’s lives.  
14. better connected families.  

E. Friendships between peers with and without disabilities can result in **additional beneficial outcomes** that include:  
   1. a greater understanding and appreciation of individual differences by the “typical” peers  
   2. development of age-appropriate social skills  
   3. expanded friendship networks  
   4. improved quality of life for both participants.  

IV. (Slide #8) **What are the Obstacles to Friendships?** (20 minutes)  
Ask participants to spend a few minutes thinking of the barriers/obstacles/fears they may encounter in trying to establish relationships/friendships. List their thoughts on the sheet of wallpaper that you already prepared. After listing the participants responses compare it to the list below to be sure that you have captured key points:  

**What are Some Obstacles to Having Friends?**  

A. **Obstacles for KIDS.**  
   1. Children in segregated classrooms or with intrusively hovering aides in regular classrooms.  

B. **Obstacles for TRANSITION-AGED YOUTH.**  
   1. Youth in segregated classrooms or with intrusively hovering aides in regular classrooms.  
   2. Fear of intimacy & sexual relations.  

C. **Obstacles for ADULTS.**  
   1. Adults segregated in Day Habs, workshops, group homes
that scream “Different!”.

2. Fear of intimacy & sexual relations.
3. Many people have fewer opportunities as they age.

D. Obstacles for **ALL AGE GROUPS**
1. looking differently (physical characteristics, dress, adaptive equipment, etc.)
2. acting differently (tics, autistic “behaviors”, perseveration in actions/comments, assaultive, etc.)
3. Dual diagnosis, especially DD/MH.
4. difficulty communicating in easily understood ways.
5. Cost of activities to individuals/families likely financially strapped.
6. Living in homes that are clearly designed as different than the neighborhood.
7. Using vehicles that are only ID’d as “Handicapped” vans.
8. Groups of people with disabilities being shepherded by staff on community outings.
9. Having few or no interests which can be shared with others.
10. Transportation to get places.
11. Accessibility of places, including friends’ homes.
12. Family members having too little time and issues of timing.
13. Staff who don’t recognize the importance, or don’t have time.
14. Funders who do not value “relationships” as a core need for individuals.

**BREAK (10 MINUTES)**
V. **(Slide #9) Opportunities to Connect: Activities for People With and Without Disabilities.** Activities in which people with and without disabilities can participate, together, are limited only by peoples’ interests and imagination. (Let people know there is a list of activities, complete with links, on the Real Friends website).

A. **(Slide #10)** Opportunities can occur wherever people **LIVE, LEARN, WORK and PLAY**:

1. **(Slide #11)** Celebrating birthday parties together where you live.
2. **(Slide #12)** Participating together in school-related activities at all levels, from kindergarten through college!
3. **(Slide #13)** People with and without disabilities can work together, side by side.
4. **(Slide #14)** There are thousands of recreational and social activities that people with and without disabilities can enjoy together.
5. **(Slide #15)** Dance to Your Music.

B. **(Slide #16)** “**Maximizing Community Connections**” **Activity (15 minutes)**  
Distribute **Handout #1 (“Maximizing Community Connections”)** and read/clarify instructions. Give the audience about 5 minutes to complete on their own and then discuss responses as a group. This activity encourages the audience to think of ways to be sure that efforts will have the most impact.

C. **(Slide #17)** “But Sometimes Things are Not as Good as You May Think They Are.” Brainstorm ways this situation could be “fixed” and who could/should take responsibility

**But just being connected may not be enough for relationships and friendships to form…**
VI. (Slide #18) “Preparing” People for Relationships (If there’s time, have a participant read “A Tale of Two Bridges”/Handout #2).

A. (Slide #19) “Preparing” People with Disabilities; Social Skills training.
   1. Facilitator Tip: Your participants may have had personal experience with Social Skills groups. Ask for their opinions.

B. (Slide #20) “Preparing” People Without Disabilities
   1. Review the 3 (dis)Ability Awareness Programs.
      b. Kids on the Block: Puppet show.
      c. Understanding our Differences: Volunteer speakers.
      d. Facilitator Tip: Your participants may have had personal experience with (dis)Ability Awareness Programs. Ask for their opinions.

C. (Slide #21) “Everyone Needs Friends NOW!” If there’s time, have a participant Read “Every Chipmunk is a Horseback Rider”/Handout #3) No one should have to pass some sort of “test” before they are “eligible” to be supported to meet others and establish relationships.

But being connected and being prepared may still not be enough for relationships and friendships to form...
(Slide #22)
VII. Approaches to supporting friendships between people with and without disabilities. (Tell your audience that “How-To...” factsheets for some of the information you are about to share is available on the Real Friends website.)

A. (Slide #23) Some approaches use forms of Person Centered Planning and Circles of Support to better insure that relationships will occur:

2. (Slide #25) Building Futures at The Nemasket Group uses person-centered planning—with a heavy emphasis on relationships-- when helping with transition planning.
3. (Slide #26) As a Project grantee, The Nemasket Group also conducts the Intentional Friends Project, using person centered planning to help people lead very inclusive lives.

B. (Slide 27) Some approaches use groups and associations to help relationships begin:

1. (Slide #28) Hull High School, another Project grantee, started an after school club, Real Pirate Pride, for students with and without disabilities. Individual friendships that go beyond the school premises and school day develop from the connections made there.
2. (Slide #29) Best Buddies is a large organization with programs in Middle & High Schools & Colleges. Many other organizations have developed Best Buddy-like programs.
   Facilitator Tip: Ask your audience what experience, if any, they’ve had with Best Buddies. (If there is time, and especially if there are youth in the audience, and if there is on-line access, you may want to show this clip from Belchertown Buddies: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zC89jpkdGg)
3. (Slide 30) Cultivating Friendships Through Horticulture, another Project grantee, uses an interest/passion in
specific area of horticulture to bring people together. Individual friendships can (and do) emerge from this approach, with the right support. This approach can be used for any interest: dog lovers, bird watchers, sports fans, etc.

4. (Slide 31) **Bridges to Faith** and **Interfaith Connections** use a network of faith organizations committed to including people with and without disabilities in their congregations. Individual friendships often develop from that.

5. (Slide 32) Another well-known and wide-spread opportunity for groups of people with and without disabilities is **Unified Sports** within Special Olympics. Many long-term friendships have emerged between people who first met as teammates. **Facilitator Tip:** Ask your audience what experience, if any, they’ve had with Unified Sports.

6. (Slide 33) **Club 21**, a program through Alternatives Unlimited, Inc. (another Project Grantee) brings people with and without disabilities together as a group for regularly scheduled events. Individual relationships spring from those encounters and participants are expected to do things together outside of the group events.

C. (Slide 34) Some approaches begin with 1-to-1 matches to establish friendships.

1. (Slide #35) **Big Brother-Big Sister Programs** Another approach will match young people with disabilities to older mentors based primarily on interests. Most of these matches are between young people with disabilities and adults without disabilities.

2. (Slide #36) **Partners for Youth with Disabilities** In some cases, a young person with a disability may be matched with an adult who has dealt successfully in his/her life with a similar disability (they may also share some common interests!). This
can be a very valuable way for a young person to learn to better cope with their own disability.

3. (Slide 37) **Citizen Advocacy** (Friendship plus increasing valued social roles in the community)

4. (Slide 38) Beta Community Partnerships, Inc. operates the **Community of Friends**.

**VIII. (Slide #39-#40) How to Find or Create a Program Near You (10 minutes)**

To speak with someone who may be able to help you or a family member locate resources to help establish valued relationships you can utilize your local Arcs, DDS-funded Family Support and Autism Support Centers and a nearby member of the MA Network of Information Providers. If you’re comfortable doing on-line searches yourself, The Arc of Massachusetts (http://www.arcmass.org/ProgramsatTheArc/RealFriends.aspx) and the Department of Developmental Services (www.mass.gov/dds) have a web page posted which includes resources specifically around developing friendships (consultants or groups who are focused specifically on this goal). In a joint venture with MA Department of Developmental Services and Widening the Circle of The Arc of Massachusetts, “INDEX” has added to their taxonomy so that people can search for programs that support “Relationships” and “Friendships”.

The “Index” database will also let you search for “Consultants” who may be able to help you figure out how to establish a formal or informal effort to promote relationships in your area. (If possible, go on-line to demonstrate a search at https://www.disabilityinfo.org/.)

**IX. Personal Connections (10 minutes)**

Finish with this activity. Ask everyone to think back to how they introduced themselves (I. above).
Ask them how they might be able to use the brief information they gave to informally help someone with a disability get connected in a relationship with someone else. Encourage everyone to “Try this at home/work/church/office/school/etc”.

Give “taste” of what to do (what are family member’s interests, what’s in community, who can help. Encourage people to invite trainers for the “How Tos”.

X. **Complete Evaluations (Optional: 5 minutes)**

![Evaluation Form]

The following pages contain copies of:

- Sign-In Sheet
- Handout #1: Maximizing Community Connections
- Handout #2: “A Tale of Two Bridges”
- Handout #3: “Every Chipmunk is a Horseback Rider”
- Evaluation Form
INTRODUCTION TO FRIENDS
SIGN-IN SHEET
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LOCATION

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MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Instructions: First, identify each place listed below with a 1 - low, 2 - Medium, or 3 - high probability for increasing one’s network of relationships. Then, briefly write what, if anything, could be done in each situation to enhance the chances of developing relationships.

__ Working out twice a week at a local Fitness Center

__ Volunteering to walk dogs 2x’s per week at the local Kennel

__ Becoming an active member of the local Outdoor Club

__ Participating in the United Way’s “Day of Caring” in your community

__ Buying a season’s ticket at your local Community Theater

__ Donating blood at the American Red Cross

__ Delivering “Meals on Wheels” in your town

__ Having coffee every morning at a local Diner

__ Joining a monthly book club at the local Public Library

__ Attending services at your local place of worship
Handout #2

A Tale of Two Bridges

The railroad bridge across the St. Lawrence River at Quebec, when it was built in the early years of the twentieth century, was the longest cantilever bridge in the world (that is the type of bridge formed from a series of triangular steel girders, a big black framework above the roadbed). Remarkably, an early moving picture was being filmed of its construction, and as it was being filmed the bridge collapsed into the river, carrying to their deaths dozens of ironworkers. In the film it can be seen that the bridge was being built out from one pier or support, out across the river to reach the opposite pier. The builders started from one side and had gotten more than halfway across, when the bridge collapsed. The bridge was rebuilt, lessons were learned, and it still carries the railroad across the St. Lawrence River.

The original bridge across the Niagara Gorge, built about 1846 where the Rainbow Bridge is today, was built by civil engineers John Roebling and Charles Ellet with an entirely different design. It is a suspension bridge, the archetypal bridge design with the sweeping curve of cable above the roadbed, the cable hung from two high supporting towers, the roadbed hung from the cable. The Niagara bridge, built to carry the railroad between Canada and the US, was one of the first major suspension bridges, and the challenge of construction at that site made it a model with world-wide impact.

The biggest challenge was to get the cable, which would carry all the weight, across the gorge. In building a suspension bridge, that's the first step in linking the two sides. To build the Brooklyn Bridge, for instance, the first thing Roebling had to do after the two support towers were under way, was to get the cable across the East River. For the Brooklyn Bridge, that was easy: carry it on the ferry. But for the Niagara bridge, given the steep cliffs and the huge volume of swirling waters, a boat could not cross. It was this difficulty which led many engineers to doubt whether any bridge could be built there.

Ellet solved the problem in this way: he held a kite-flying contest. The winner, a boy from Niagara Falls, Ontario, won the opportunity to fly a kite across the gorge on a long, silk thread. Given a strong west wind, that part was easy. The real skill came, then, in getting the kite to come down into the arms of Ellet and his colleagues waiting in Niagara Falls, New York. The work crew in New York then tied strong twine to the thread and gave a signal. The work crew in Ontario pulled the doubled line back across the gorge. The Ontario crew then tied a single strand of steel wire to the twine, signaled, and saw the wire pulled back across to New York. The process was repeated thousands of times until the silk thread had become a steel cable strong enough to carry the roadbed and two railroads across the Niagara Gorge.

We support people who have been segregated and isolated. We see that there is a gulf separating the people who live in service systems from other people in their communities. A major part of our work must be building bridges across that chasm. Our work, in other words, is civil engineering. In that mission we need to remember that it may be ineffective, perhaps even foolish, to try to build a bridge out from only one side of the river. We will need to build foundations and supports on both sides, to recruit people on the other side who are willing to catch the kites we fly, and to know that, where the chasm is deep and the waters turbulent, we can only work toward trainloads of people by beginning with an individual thread of connection.

Jack Yates

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Several years ago I visited a summer day camp near Albany, New York. It was a typical day camp in many ways. About three hundred campers came each day, and they were organized into age groups. The ten-year-old boys were the Woodchucks, the eight-year-old boys were the Bison, the nine-year-old girls were the Dolphins, the twelve-year-old girls were the Chipmunks. Through the day, campers in their groups engaged in activities typical of a day camp: swimming, canoeing, crafts, nature groups, horseback riding, and so on.

There was one thing about the camp, however, that was not so typical. Its owner and director, Ben Becker, decided that it would be a good learning experience for everyone concerned to have a number of campers who were children with physical or mental impairments. So he set up an informal quota system to ensure that five or ten percent of the campers in any given week were children with such impairments, and he gave out scholarships as necessary to implement that plan. Thus, when the Chipmunks went horseback riding, not every Chipmunk could just jump on a horse and ride; and not every Chipmunk could learn as quickly or as easily as every other Chipmunk.

For instance, in the group of thirty Chipmunks with whom I spent some time, one was a girl who was blind. So when she went horseback riding with the other Chipmunks, another girl rode on another horse next to her, to call over instructions and encouragement. Another of the Chipmunks was a girl with intellectual impairment and with cerebral palsy, and she had limited control especially on one side of her body. So when she went horseback riding with the other Chipmunks, she had a more secure type of belt as well as another girl riding at her side on another horse, and sometimes at a curve one of the counselors would run along at the other side of the horse, like a spotter in gymnastics. Another of the Chipmunks was a girl who really had no effective use of her legs. So when she went horseback riding with the other Chipmunks, one of the bigger girls who was already a good rider would ride in back of her in the saddle, holding her shoulders to make sure she would stay on the horse.

We human service visitors on a PASS assessment team were very impressed with Ben Becker’s camp, but it was only looking back on it that I realized that his camp operated under a rule: every Chipmunk is a horseback rider. They did not state it as a rule, but that was the principle which guided the camp every day.

Now I have worked for over thirty years in human services to people with impairments. Back in the bad old days, we operated under a different rule, essentially that some people are horseback riders and some are not. It’s a shame, really, since horseback riding is such a fine experience, but some people just don’t have it in them to be horseback riders. In services in these more progressive days, we most often have a more enlightened rule. We have high expectations for all of our campers, so our rule now is that every Chipmunk will be a horseback rider some day. In the meantime, we’ll hire the best teachers and the gentlest horses for our special group of future horseback riders, working with them patiently and intensively until, some day (I know it will come!), they will be able to become horseback riders and rejoin the Chipmunks.

Doesn’t sound so bad. But at Ben Becker’s camp, they had a different rule. Every Chipmunk is a horseback rider, now, today. What varies is not who is a horseback rider and who isn’t; every Chipmunk is a horseback rider. And what varies is not when someone will attain horseback riderhood; every Chipmunk is a horseback rider. The only thing that varies is what help a person needs to stay in the saddle.

Jack Yates

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“INTRODUCTION TO FRIENDS”

Evaluation Form

Please help us continue to improve both the content and “process” of this training. We can all learn from each other.

My primary interest is ___Kids, ____Transition-Aged Youth, ____Adults (check all that apply)

Over all, using a scale from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent), how do you score this training?: ____

1. As a result of this training, do you feel more encouraged about the possibilities of friendships occurring between people with and without disabilities?
   If yes, why?
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   If no, why?
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________

2. As a result of this training, are there steps that you will try to take to support friendships between people with and without disabilities? Please share if you wish to.
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________

3. Are there barriers that you think you could help minimize or remove?
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________

4. Was the resource section of this presentation helpful?
   _Yes, I learned about new resources.
   _Yes, I learned new way to access resources.
   _Yes, other ___________________________
   Not really. What I am really looking for is:
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________

5. Was the presentation well organized and easy to follow?
   ______________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________

(page 1 of 2)
6. Was the presenter(s) knowledgeable and engaging?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

7. What changes or additions would you suggest for this training?

______________________________________________________________________________

We invite you to share any information you have about programs or resources that consciously address Relationships and Friendships for people with and without disabilities. Please use the space below.

THANK YOU!