Vanessa's Mission:

help teens with special needs

Too many teens with disabilities are still treated like outcasts. Vanessa Hudgens wants to change that!

Why It Matters

"Friendship is such an important part of everyone's life—that's why I'm so passionate about Best Buddies. The organization pairs you up with a Buddy your age who has an intellectual disability, to hang out with and get to know. It will be fun for you—and you'll make a difference by helping your Buddy fit in and adapt to everyday life. I got involved through a friend—and you and your friends can join together too, at bestbuddies.org."

—Vanessa Hudgens

Make it Your Mission!

Ban the R-Word

Using the word retarded as an insult or even to describe people with intellectual disabilities is cruel (and totally old-fashioned anyway). Make a pledge to ban it from your lips at r-word.org, then forward the pledge to all your friends!

Text for Friendship

Join Best Buddies' Facebook or MySpace at bestbuddies.org/social-networking to raise awareness about ways you can get involved. And if you sign up for their mobile network by texting BEST to 23000, you'll be entered to win amazing prizes!

How I Made It My Mission!

"When my friend suggested I join Best Buddies, I had no idea I'd love it so much. But I've been a member for five years now, and I am the president of my college chapter. When you're paired up with a Buddy, you do the same things you do with any friend: My Buddies and I go shopping and out to eat, and we are so close. A lot of people are afraid of people with disabilities because they seem 'different.' But everyone is different, so who cares if it's a disability or something else that sets you apart? Now I don't see Best Buddies as 'volunteering'—it's just being a friend to someone."

—Ashly, 21, Omaha, NE

Special thanks to Dosomething.org, a source for finding volunteer opportunities in your community. Check out the Celebs Gone Good blog to read about what your favorite stars are doing!