



Award with Friends: Buddy and Award Mentor System

Overview of the Award with Friends System

Here, you'll find an overview of the Buddy System and the Award Mentor System, two initiatives designed to support participants throughout their Award experience – from Start-up to completion. The Buddy System pairs participants with peers of the same Award level to foster mutual growth and practical assistance, while the Award Mentor System connects younger participants with experienced Award participants to guide them through the process. These systems aim to build friendships, boost confidence, and ensure a smooth integration into the school community.

What is the Buddy Program?

The Buddy Program pairs participants with a fellow participant, creating a supportive partnership that encourages mutual growth and development through their Award experience. This Buddy Program is designed to provide participants with both friendly peer support and practical assistance throughout their Award experience.

What is the Award Mentor Program?

The Award Mentor Program connects younger participants, particularly at the Bronze Award level, with older participants who have already been through the Bronze Award process and are now pursuing their Silver or Gold Awards. These Mentors have a wealth of experience and knowledge that they are eager to share, helping new Bronze Award participants to navigate the challenges and maximize the opportunities of their Bronze Award experience.

For the Award Mentors – this is a great opportunity for them to get their Voluntary Service section done! Whether they're at the Silver or Gold Award, mentoring a new Award participant is a great way to pass it forwards and help someone new to the program. Award Mentors develop leadership, mentorship, communication skills, and more! What's more, this could even count towards their community involvement requirements to graduate from school!

Benefits of the Buddy Program

1. **Building Friendships:** For participants who are new to the school, having a Buddy means they instantly have someone to connect with. This can ease the anxiety of entering a new environment and help build lasting friendships.
2. **Fostering a Sense of Belonging:** A Buddy can help participants feel more integrated into the school community. Whether it's navigating the campus or understanding school traditions, Buddies are there to help.
3. **Boosting Confidence:** Having someone to share experiences with can boost participant confidence. They'll have a partner to discuss challenges, celebrate successes, and provide encouragement.

Benefits of the Award Mentor Program

1. **Guided Integration:** For those new to the school, a mentor can help participants feel more at ease by offering insights and tips about school life, helping you find your way around, and introducing you to new people.
2. **Building Connections:** Mentors can help you build a network of friends and acquaintances, making the transition into the new school environment smoother and more enjoyable.
3. **Confidence Boost:** Knowing that participants have a reliable and experienced mentor to turn to can significantly boost their confidence, enabling them to tackle challenges with a positive mindset.
4. **Expert Guidance:** Mentors who have successfully completed their Bronze Award and are now pursuing higher levels have valuable insights into the process. They can provide practical advice on how to approach each section of the award.
5. **Motivation and Encouragement:** Mentors can be a source of continuous motivation and encouragement. They understand the journey and can help keep new participants be inspired and focused on their goals.
6. **Community Involvement for Graduation:** Being a Mentor may also count towards their community involvement requirements for graduation and your Silver/Gold Award – as long as they meet the elements of the Award Canada Way!

Tip: Looking for an example SMART Goal for an Award Mentor? Check out the Award with Friends library here!

How to set up a Buddy program

Step 1. Finalize Bronze participant list

Once registration has been completed, finalize the participant list so you can begin grouping participants into the Buddy System. You can use the Online Record Book to download a list of participants in a specific cohort by doing the following:

1. Log in to your Award Leader ORB account.
2. Click on the Participants tab.
3. Filter the participants by the cohort label i.e. Bronze Fall 2024.
4. Once ORB has filtered for the specific cohort, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Export Table. This will download an Excel sheet you can use.

Aim to have the participant registrations completed by the Information Session so you can introduce the participants to their Buddy!

2. Pairing

Pair up your participants – if there are odd numbers, create a group of three! Some ideas on how to group up participants could be:

1. Hobbies and interests
2. Participation in school teams/clubs
3. Existing friends
4. Personalities

3. Buddy Introduction

The end of the Information Session is a great time to introduce the participants to their Buddy – it's an exciting way to build a community and get them going on their Award!

Ways to introduce them include:

1. During the Information Session
2. During class time
3. Lunch time or after school
4. An email through school server with a list of Buddies
5. Office hours

An Excel or Google Sheets document is a great way to keep track of the Buddy pairings as you make them. You can share this with your participant through an email to let them know who their buddy is too.

Check out the end of this resource if you need an email template along with a participant introduction template!

How to set up an Award Mentor program

Step 1. Open applications for Award Mentors

In May, open applications for participants completing their Bronze or Silver Awards to become Award Mentors the next school year. Encourage everyone eligible to apply – reach out via email, school announcements, classroom announcements, etc.

Applications can be done via Google Forms, school internal websites, in-person drop-ins, etc. Being an Award Mentor can be a great way to complete the Voluntary Service section!

Step 2. Finalize Bronze participant list in the new school year

Once registration for the new cohort has been completed, finalize the participant list so you can begin grouping participants into the Buddy System. You can use the Online Record Book to download a list of participants in a specific cohort by doing the following:

1. Log in to your Award Leader ORB account.
2. Click on the Participants tab.
3. Filter the participants by the cohort label i.e. Bronze Fall 2024.
4. Once ORB has filtered for the specific cohort, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on Export Table. This will download an Excel sheet you can use.

Aim to have the participant registrations completed by the Information Session so you can introduce the participants to their Award Mentor!

3. Pairing


Pair up your Bronze participants to their Award Mentor – if there are odd numbers, create a group of three! Some ideas on how to pair up Award Mentors with Mentees could be:

1. Hobbies and interests
2. Participation in school teams/clubs
3. Existing friends
4. Personalities

Award Mentors can be a great guide for their Mentees on how to do the Award, choosing activities, logging, etc. Their knowledge and experience is invaluable for each Mentee!

4. Award Mentor Introduction


The end of the Information Session is a great time to introduce the participants to their Award Mentor – they get to meet new people, get guidance and support on how to do their Bronze Award, and feel a sense of community as they begin their Award!



Ways to introduce them include:

1. During the Information Session
2. During class time
3. Lunch time or after school
4. An email through school server with a list of Mentor and Mentee
5. Office hours

An Excel or Google Sheets document is a great way to keep track of the Mentor – Mentee pairings as you make them. You can share this with your participant through an email to let them know who their Mentor or Mentee is too.



Email template

Subject: Meet Your Buddy!