



INFO PACK

Providing support to people with learning disabilities to be
a part of Australia's live music and events culture



WHO ARE GIG BUDDIES SYDNEY?

Gig Buddies Sydney is an initiative of ACL Disability Services. We are a project that pairs an adult with a mild to moderate learning disability (and/or autism) with a volunteer, both of whom share a mutual interest and, in turn, end up going to events together.

Checking out bands, cheering on your team or sampling cultural activities is part of everyday life for the vast majority. If you have a learning disability however you may require assistance to do the things most of us take for granted, and with supporter workers tending to finish shifts before 9pm, many people with learning disabilities are deprived the opportunity to lead full and active social lives.

We believe that people with learning disabilities have the right to stay up late and have some fun.

HOW DOES GIG BUDDIES WORK?

Gig Buddies Sydney is a project that pairs up adults with and without learning disabilities to be friends and to go to events together.

We're always looking to recruit new volunteers to buddy up with a person who has a learning disability.

If you have a mild to moderate learning disability and/or autism and would like to go to more events, join Gig Buddies Sydney! (See contact details on the back page)

Once an application form has been submitted via our website, www.gigbuddiessydney.org, a Gig Buddies Sydney team member will be in contact.



As per Gig Buddies Sydney policies and procedures, your buddy will submit a police check along with two personal references. They will also receive a day's volunteer training.



Five simple steps to getting involved...

1

REGISTER

Go to
www.gigbuddiessydney.org
and fill out an application form.

2

CHECKS & TRAINING

Volunteers submit a police check and two personal references. Once we have a potential pairing in mind, volunteers undertake a day's training.

3

PAIRING

A gig buddy and volunteer are paired! We take into consideration gender, age, location, music taste and life experience.

4

MEETING

A meeting is arranged for the volunteer and gig buddy to meet each other. Someone from the GBS team will also be present.

5

GO TO GIGS!

The gig buddy participant and volunteer will meet up and attend gigs or social events together!



FAQS (Frequently Asked Questions)

WHAT IS GIG BUDDIES?



It's a volunteer befriending initiative for adults with mild to moderate learning disabilities and/or autism, matching them with a volunteer who shares similar interests.

DO YOU ONLY SUPPORT ADULTS?

Yes – anyone 18+

WHO IS THE INITIATIVE AIMED AT?

In line with ACL Disability Services' expertise, the initiative is aimed at people with mild to moderate learning disabilities and autism. Please keep in mind Gig Buddies Sydney is a volunteer based buddying program, not a substitute for paid support.

DO VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE TRAINING?

Yes – all volunteers go through our training program (1 full day session which cover areas such as an introduction to learning disabilities, communication, safeguarding and 'what to do if' scenarios).

All volunteers also complete police checks and submit two personal references.

CAN YOU PROVIDE A VOLUNTEER FOR A ONE-OFF GIG?

No. Gig Buddies Sydney is all about developing friendships and expanding an individual's social circles and informal support networks. Therefore, our matched buddies and volunteers are encouraged to catch up for a gig or event at least once a month.

WHO DECIDES ON THE BUDDY?

The team at Gig Buddies Sydney interviews everyone who gets involved in the scheme. This enables us to make an informed decision about who to match with who. Music tastes, hobbies, personal interests, age, gender and locality are just some of the factors we take into consideration when matching buddies with volunteers.

YOU'VE FOUND ME A BUDDY...WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The participant and volunteer will then be introduced to each other, after which a staff member from the Gig Buddies Sydney team will join them on their first gig.

Participants and volunteers are also offered ongoing support and advice from the Gig Buddies Sydney team.

WHAT IF THE PAIRING DOESN'T WORK OUT?

That's totally fine. If it doesn't work out we'll offer support to see if there's something we can do - and that may include finding a new buddy.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Gig Buddies is a free service but we would expect participants to pay for their respective tickets and travel costs.

Participants can also incorporate Gig Buddies Sydney into their NDIS plans.

We rely on funding to keep going so appreciate any offers of support.



IS IT ALL ABOUT MUSIC?

No. We encourage people to state what their 'gig' is. That could be playing or watching sport, bush walking, going to the theatre or checking out local eateries. Whatever someone's interest is, we'll aim to find a match.

HOW LONG BEFORE I GET A GIG BUDDY?

Gig Buddies Sydney prides itself on being a high quality service where we take time to get to know everyone. As we have limited resources and the fact that we pair people based on a number of factors, we never stipulate a timescale when it comes to making a pairing.

Unfortunately, Gig Buddies Sydney cannot guarantee that we will find you a gig buddy.

ARE YOU A USER-LED ORGANISATION?

Yes. All participants are invited to connect with our advisory team, *Soul Fly Band*, who advises on the initiative and provides strategic direction for the project.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Call Gig Buddies Sydney (02 9419 6951) or go to our website, www.gigbuddiessydney.org where you'll find links to both the volunteer and gig buddy (person with a disability) forms.

DO YOU ORGANISE GIGS?

We do organise occasional fundraisers and regular Gig Buddies Sydney social events where buddies and volunteers can meet up and share their experiences. However, the Gig Buddies initiative is all about our buddies getting involved in mainstream community life.



HOW DO BUDDIES ARRANGE GIGS?

Buddies are encouraged to meet up for a coffee once a month and look through gig listings together. We are also on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter so Gig Buddies Sydney participants and volunteers can see what other gigs and events people are attending. We also have a "Gig Guide" page on our website linking buddies and volunteers to events and music news websites.

HOW CAN FAMILY MEMBERS, CARERS AND SUPPORT WORKERS HELP?

One of our biggest challenges is that it's sometimes difficult to make sure there's good communication between volunteers and buddies. When buddies meet for the first time contact details are exchanged; from time to time we call on family members and/or support staff to assist with any logistics when it comes to communicating or planning around attending a gig.

HOW ARE VOLUNTEERS RECRUITED?

We've solicitors, chartered accountants, students, diesel mechanics, retired teachers, sports coaches and tree loppers (amongst many trades) on our books – the majority of which were recruited via social media or by word of mouth.



HOW CAN WE HELP?

Can't find the answer you are looking for?

Please send your questions to

info@gigbuddiessydney.org or call us at the office on 02 9419 6951 and we'll provide you with an answer as soon as possible.

MEET A GIG BUDDY: NATHAN BASHA

"You don't know until you try it!"

Nathan Basha, 24, is an office assistant and motivational speaker. He is a film and television enthusiast and also enjoys listening to AC/DC, Panic at the Disco, Justin Timberlake and Kings Of Leon. He likes to be social, but is generally a homebody who enjoys routine.



Nathan has Down syndrome. He heard about Gig Buddies Sydney through family and since joining he feels he is more social, and being part of the project has had a positive impact on his confidence. He has been able to meet other volunteers and gig buddies and broaden his network of friends. He says it is a good opportunity to dance and socialise. Nathan's advice to people interested in joining Gig Buddies is that: "You don't know until you try it".

MEET A VOLUNTEER: KATIE BARCLAY

"It's giving back but I don't feel like it's giving back. For me Nathan is my friend, and it's just like going out on a Saturday night with a mate..."

Katie Barclay, 35, works in HR. She found out about Gig Buddies Sydney through a friend on social media, who thought the opportunity would interest Katie due to her love of music and passion for people. As part of the process, Nathan and Katie first had a meet and greet to get to know each other and to talk about their interests. Their first outing together was with the Gig Buddies Sydney group in the city.

Katie understands that the pairing up of a volunteer with gig buddy can take a while as it's based on interest, location and other factors, but she feels lucky to be paired with Nathan, who she considers a great friend.

The two meet up once a month and keep in contact about what they would like to do. Katie says: "As a volunteer you will get so much out of it and learn so much. It's giving back but I don't feel like it's giving back. For me Nathan is my friend, and it's just like going out on a Saturday night with a mate, and that's cool for me to have that social outing as well. It's just as important for me as it is for Nathan. It's about going out and having a good time and meeting new people."

SUCCESS STORIES...

AUDREY AND MARISSA

Being a gig buddy volunteer can take you places you may have never imagined as Marissa found out when she guest starred in the opening sequence of "Speed of Life", a play by the "Rukus" theatre group with her gig buddy, Audrey. Audrey and her colleagues then went on to woo the audience with their artistic and moving play based on their life experiences and achievements.



When she's not on stage or in rehearsals, Audrey loves to catch up with her buddy Marissa to go bowling, karaoke or catch a movie.

KELSEY AND HEEJUNG

Kelsey (gig buddy) and Heejung (volunteer) have been "buddied up" for a few months now and recently went to a Stephen K Amos comedy show for the Sydney Comedy Festival at The Concourse in Chatswood.



We love hearing from our gig buddies and volunteers, and we were rapt when Heejung emailed us after the show:

"Just a quick hello to let you all know Kelsey and I had an awesome time tonight. We couldn't stop laughing from all the jokes, the "you had to be there to see it" moments and just enjoying each other's company! (We were) laughing all the way home.... Thanks for pairing us and we can't wait for our next catch up ;)"

STAVROS AND JESS

Our "heavy metal" buddies Jess and Stavros met at one of our regular social events in 2015. Jess noticed the heavy metal badges on Stavros' jacket and, next thing they knew, they were comparing notes about all the bands they loved and were talking metal and music.

Gig Buddies Sydney fast tracked Jess into the next volunteer training session and now Jess and Stavros catch up regularly to catch gigs and rock-out together.

Clutch and Iron Maiden are just a couple of the amazing gigs they have been to since their meeting at the Gig Buddies Sydney event.

The Gig Buddies Sydney team look forward to hearing about more hard rocking gigs from our metal buddies!

Rock-on Jess and Stavros!



YOU CAN FIND US ON:

FACEBOOK - WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GIGBUDDIESSYDNEYNSW

TWITTER - WWW.TWITTER.COM/GIGBUDSYDNEY - @gigbudsydney

INSTAGRAM - WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/GIG_BUDDIES_SYDNEY - @gig_buddies_sydney

#gigbudsydney



CONTACT US!

Email: info@gigbuddiessydney.org

Phone: (02) 9419 6951

Address: 125 Blues Point Road, McMahons Point, NSW, 2060.

www.gigbuddiessydney.org

Gig Buddies Sydney is an initiative of

