



BE A “BUDDY” TO AN INTERNATIONAL TEAM!

The Buddy team program provides an opportunity for teams from the United States and Canada to make friends and assist international teams during World Finals. Many international teams do not speak or read English and Buddy Teams help them get around campus, shop for supplies, support them when they perform, and share the World Finals experience. Being a Buddy Team will enhance your team’s World Finals experience.

Competing in a World Championship is intimidating. Not understanding the local language and customs makes it even more stressful. Our Buddy Team program helps provide international teams with a warm welcome and ongoing support. And the international teams support their Buddy Team as well.

You will have a great time exploring campus together and talking about your solutions! How much time you spend together varies but the international students will be excited to learn about where you live, what your school is like, the music you listen to, and even the clothes you wear. You will also learn from them to see how different, and more interestingly, how similar you are. If you get a chance to eat meals together you can talk about what you think they eat and tell them about your favorites (and least favorites). You can explore campus and take advantage of recreational opportunities, go to the Creativity Festival, or just hang out together. They may need your help finding their way around campus, going to get materials and tools for last minute repairs, or even trying to trade pins with others.

We work hard to match up Buddy teams. Many variables are taken into consideration such as: Problem and division of the teams, ages and gender of team members, and duration of time on campus. This year we will be looking for Buddy Teams that can arrive on campus on Tuesday or early Wednesday.

Buddy Teams find the experience highly rewarding. Here are some comments from coaches and team members after previous World Finals experiences:

Mike, a coach, wrote, “It was an amazing experience. While the team was from half way around the world and a culture that might be considered very different, we could not have been drawn closer thanks to Odyssey. I asked my kids what they enjoyed most about their trip to World Finals and every single one of them said “Buddy Team.” Not one said pin trading or finishing in fourth place. I know as a parent and coach that this provides an experience for my child and our team that will forever change their lives and perceptions of people and cultures.”

Marci, also a coach, wrote, “Having a Buddy Team was one of the highlights of our World Finals experience. What we enjoyed the most was that it gave us the opportunity to meet kids from a totally different background with whom we share this common interest. I don't know that my kids would have gone outside their “comfort zone” otherwise, to meet another team, if it hadn't been assigned to us.”

When asked if he would recommend the program, Trey, a team member, responded “We had an absolute blast with our Buddy Team from Berlin. Would I recommend this program to other teams attending World Finals in the future? With 100% of my being! It just made the whole trip even BETTER! Thank you so much for the opportunity to meet such an awesome group and share something so wonderful like Odyssey with a team from another country...all I can say is WOW!”

To qualify as a Buddy Team, your team must be competing at World Finals, registered on time, and you must be in Odyssey of the Mind team housing. Complete the Buddy Team application online by May 1st, 2020 at: www.odysseyofthemind.com/wf2020.

(Note: Most Buddy Teams and international teams exchange small gifts with each other. We suggest these items be representative of your area of the country such as post cards, pins, or T-shirts.)