

STUDENTS LIVING **CARDINAL, GOLD & GREEN**

In this season so closely connected to gratitude and giving, this month's contribution to Students Living Cardinal, Gold and Green celebrates the commitment and dedication by student organizations at Iowa State University in giving back and paying forward. Two organizations, Best Buddies and Pay it Forward, are highlighted this month – each offering a unique and significant approach to nurturing support and cultivating gratitude.

BEST BUDDIES

Best Buddies is a global volunteer movement created to provide opportunities for one-to-one friendships, employment opportunities, leadership development and inclusive living for individuals with a variety of disabilities. The Iowa State University Best Buddies Chapter, specifically focuses on offering opportunities for student volunteers to be matched in mutually enriching friendships with persons with intellectual disabilities through activities and experiences.

Best Buddies fosters gratitude on campus by encouraging club members to support one another and be thankful for the unique and diversified opportunities the organization provides. Whether hanging out and participating in social activities or volunteering together and creating positive impact – organization members and persons with disabilities connect to unite campus and community and be the difference they want to see in the world.

When asked about what Best Buddies is grateful they have achieved this semester, Marketing Manager Kevin McMonagle, recounted that attendance was very low at the beginning of the semester but through a diligent effort, the club is back up to having 50 active members and over 30 members participating in one-on-one friendships.

"When people come together with the goal of uniting and helping each other out, anything is possible," McMonagle noted.

Best Buddies finds itself supporting a sustainable future through empowering club members and the community to support social sustainability, through focus on human rights and community equity, by supporting and giving back to the community. Specifically this year the student organization hosted a canned food drive to support a local food pantry and look forward to working with and volunteering for Special Olympics in 2022.

The ISU Best Buddies chapter is always excited to welcome new members. To make contact and get involved, visit the ISU Student Engagement Student Organization website. Those interested to learn more and stay connected can sign up to receive emails about meeting and volunteering opportunities, as well as having access to an event calendar with all upcoming events.

For more information about Best Buddies International, visit their webpage, sign up for the newsletter or connect with them on social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube).

PAY IT FORWARD

Pay It Forward is a student organization on Iowa State's campus that brings together students from all majors, backgrounds and experiences to make a difference and foster gratitude through completing service projects locally and across the country.



Photos courtesy of ISU Best Buddies Chapter



Photos Courtesy of ISU Pay It Forward

Throughout the school year, Pay It Forward completes several service projects on campus, around the city of Ames and in the Des Moines area. They also host an annual spring break “Pay It Forward Tour” and travel to seven different cities where members complete multiple service projects to assist communities.

In addition to supporting sustainability needs, environmentally, economically or socially, members are offered a purposeful opportunity to reveal their leadership through service, relationship and action. On campus, Pay It Forward commits time and enthusiasm through small (and larger) actions that create a ripple effect across campus and throughout the community. Whether picking up litter or serving meals at local food pantries, club members feel gratitude through giving of their time, energy and talents, and grateful for the opportunity to positively impact others and their community.

As well as promoting a sustainable future through participating in service projects, a primary focus of the organization is coordinating opportunities. This is accomplished through a variety of community projects including cleanups, creating community gardens and assisting food banks in reducing hunger.



This coordination also extends to service in assisting with natural disasters, including the derecho that impacted the Midwest in 2020. The club gives dedicated focus in ensuring a sustainable future by encouraging members to carefully consider the impact of choosing their actions, as well as the completion of those actions. This deep and sustained commitment to paying forward was officially recognized in the club receiving the 2020 Outstanding Commitment to Service Award from the ISU Student Engagement Office.

Pay It Forward has many things to be grateful for this semester, but when asked to choose, President Jacob Vos said that hosting the club’s first ever “Day of Service” event on campus was the highlight. The event hosted over 60 volunteers, distributed throughout eight different volunteer sites, and providing service to multiple community organizations. Among a multitude of tasks accomplished, event volunteers moved nine tons of rock and gravel, collected over 100 pounds of garbage and removed 34 bags of leaves from neighborhood lawns.

New members are always welcome to join Pay It Forward. Students



interested in connecting and learn more about community initiatives and how to get involved with the organization, are invited to email the club at pif@iastate.edu, check out their [Student Organization webpage](#) or stay connected through their [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) social media platforms.

The work, initiatives and accomplishments of this month’s highlighted organizations reminds us all that each decision we make and action we take is a building block of the world that we leave to the generations that follow us. No act is too small, and no decision disconnected in the journey toward an agile, resilient and sustainable future.

These are only two of over 200 student organizations at Iowa State University exhibiting and furthering gratitude through environmental, economic or social sustainability missions, goals and action items. Finding connection to gratitude through giving is not the same for everyone. Visit the [Live Green! website](#) or the [ISU Student Engagement Student Organizations webpage](#) to learn more about the diversity of opportunities to create and nurture gratitude and find a resonating connection.