

National Institute  
on Aging ■ ◆ ★ ✨  
Alzheimer's Disease Center Collaboration



**THE BUDDY PROGRAM™**  
Northwestern University

**THE *PAIRS* PROGRAM**  
Boston University



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# Buddy Program Timeline

CNADC

THE BUDDY  
PROGRAM



*Sponsored by the  
COGNITIVE NEUROLOGY AND  
ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE CENTER  
of the Northwestern University Feinberg  
School of Medicine*

- *Spring/Summer 1997* – The Buddy Program approved by the NUFSM as volunteer activity for 1<sup>st</sup> year students
- ***Fall 1997*** – **launched inaugural year with 11 students**
- *Fall 2004* – program opened to pre/post doctoral research scientists
- *Spring 2004* – Received MindAlert Award
- *Summer 2006* – article published – *Dementia: The International Journal of Social Research and Practice*
- ***Fall 2007*** – **Boston ADC replication - PAIRS**
- *Fall 2008* – Received funding from the Glen and Wendy Miller Family Foundation

# *Program Objectives*

1. Educate students about AD and related cognitive impairment
2. Familiarize students with care and support-related issues encountered by patients with AD and their families
3. Improve students communication skills and patterns when interacting with older adults and cognitively impaired patients
4. Introduce students to research and career opportunities in neurology, geriatrics, and related fields
5. Provide individuals with AD with an opportunity to mentor a medical student and influence their future clinical practice



2009-2010 *PAIRS* Program Class



# Program Structure

**Summer & ongoing** – Patient Recruitment

**August** – Student Recruitment (Activities Fair)

**September** - Program introduction, student application and interviews

**October** – Student orientation  
**Match Day**

**November – May**

4 hours/month in activity

Student journals

Monthly student group meetings

**February** – mid-year evaluation with patients/families

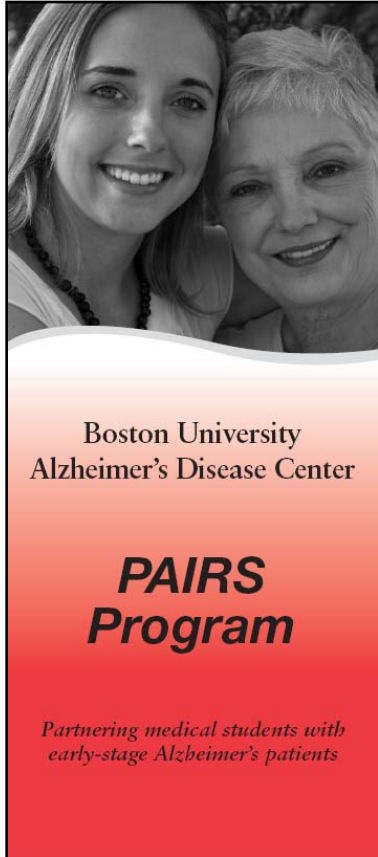
**May** –End of the year Appreciation Lunch

**Third Year** – Follow-up Assessment



Buddy Program Match Day 2009

# *PAIRS Program* – Timeline



April '07 – *PAIRS* approved as elective in BUSM curriculum

August '07 - received 2-year grant from *Kenneth B. Schwartz Center*; student recruitment limited to Student Activities Fair

September '07 - launched inaugural year with n=7 students

July '08 - received funding from *Arnold P. Gold Foundation*

August '08 - recruited students through formal program presentation at mandatory BUSM first-year student orientation (much improved recruitment method)

September '08 - kicked off 2<sup>nd</sup> year with n=15 students

September '09 - kicked off 3<sup>rd</sup> year with n=11 students (ideal class size)

# *PAIRS Program* – Timeline

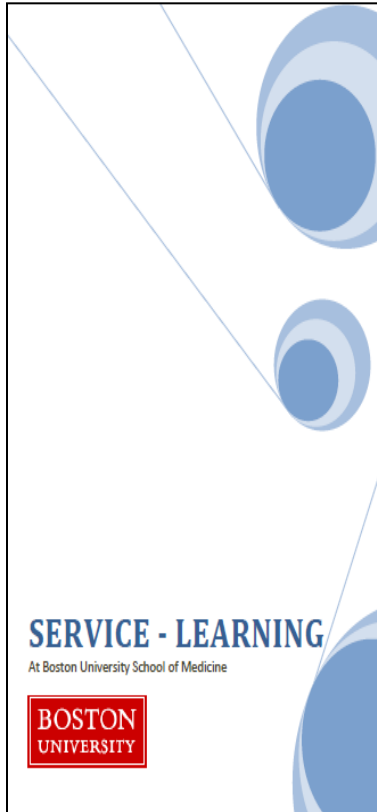
Oct '09 - selected by BUSM Office of Student Activities as one of 10 featured Service Learning Opportunities, increasing program visibility on campus

May '10 - implemented first “End of Year” Appreciation luncheon for students and buddies/families

July '10 - received renewed funding from *Kenneth B. Schwartz Center*

August '10 - mandatory BUSM first-year student orientation adds a formal BUSM Service Learning Opportunities Session, which includes *PAIRS Program*; results in 2-fold increase in applications (n=33 applicants)

September '10 - program interviews to be completed on 9/14; will kick off 4<sup>th</sup> year with a targeted class between n=11 and n=13 students



# Student Characteristics

	NU-ADC 1997-2010	BU-ADC 2007-2010
Applicants		48
Students enrolled (total)	144	33
Age	21-29	24±3
Sex, % female	54	55
Race, % White	55	58



# Program Evaluation

- Pre/Post Dementia Knowledge Test (NU, 2001; BU, 2008)
- Patient and family program evaluations
- Analysis of student activity journals
- Reflection paper (BU, 2007; NU, 2009)
- Determination of impact on student's specialization choices



# Pre/Post Knowledge Test

	ADC	Pre-Program	Post-Program	p-value
Buddy Program™ Dementia Knowledge Test n=102 (2001-2010)	NU	81%	89%	
Buddy Program™ Dementia Knowledge Test n=33 (2007-2010)	BU	26.2±2.5 79%	28.6±1.7 88%	0.0001

# *PAIRS Program* – Reflective Essays

The *PAIRS Program* includes an end-of-the-year reflective essay as an evaluation tool. At the end of each program year, students are asked to write an essay addressing the following topics:

1. What did you know about AD before beginning *PAIRS*?
2. What did you learn during the *PAIRS Program*?
3. How will the *PAIRS* experience influence your future work as a physician?

N=33 essays from first 3 program years (2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010) were qualitatively analyzed to identify emergent themes using Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) strategies.

12 themes emerged, which are consistent with *PAIRS Program* student objectives



# *PAIRS Program* Essay Themes

1. Reasons for joining program
2. Previous scientific knowledge of AD
3. Previous personal experience with AD patient
4. Initial impressions of buddy
5. Observation of AD symptoms
6. Greater understanding of AD
7. Care partner burden
8. **Human side of AD**
9. Buddy and care partner's hopeful outlook toward having AD
10. **Educational value of monthly program luncheons/meetings**
11. Program impact on clinical practice
12. **Influence on medical specialization**

# Human Side of AD

*“Having a close relationship with my buddy allowed me to see Alzheimer’s through his eyes. This has allowed me to better understand his difficulties, frustrations and concerns. “*

*“Medical students don’t always get such personal experiences or accounts, yet such experiences enrich our understanding in such a way that we remember for future patients to look out for the person as well as the disease, a concept that despite our best intentions sometimes is lost.”*



# Monthly Program Meetings

## Educational

*“Discussing and sharing stories about our buddies...has enlightened me on how each individual with AD experiences the symptoms in unique ways and how AD affects family members in different ways depending on...their situation and relationship with the patient.”*

# Influence on Medical Specialization

- Confirmation of interest
  - *“I began this program with an interest in geriatrics, and my participation in PAIRS has strengthened that interest”*
  - *“I entered the program with a slight interest in neurology, but I leave it with a significant one.”*
- Increased Confidence with older adults
  - *“The PAIRS Program...has certainly made me more comfortable working with older adults”*
  - *“I had never really worked with older adults before, but I can say that I certainly have a stronger interest in that patient population as a result of the program. I used to have this perception that it would be very difficult to work with older patients, especially those with dementia, but I realize now that although it takes a bit more effort, it is more than worthwhile.”*



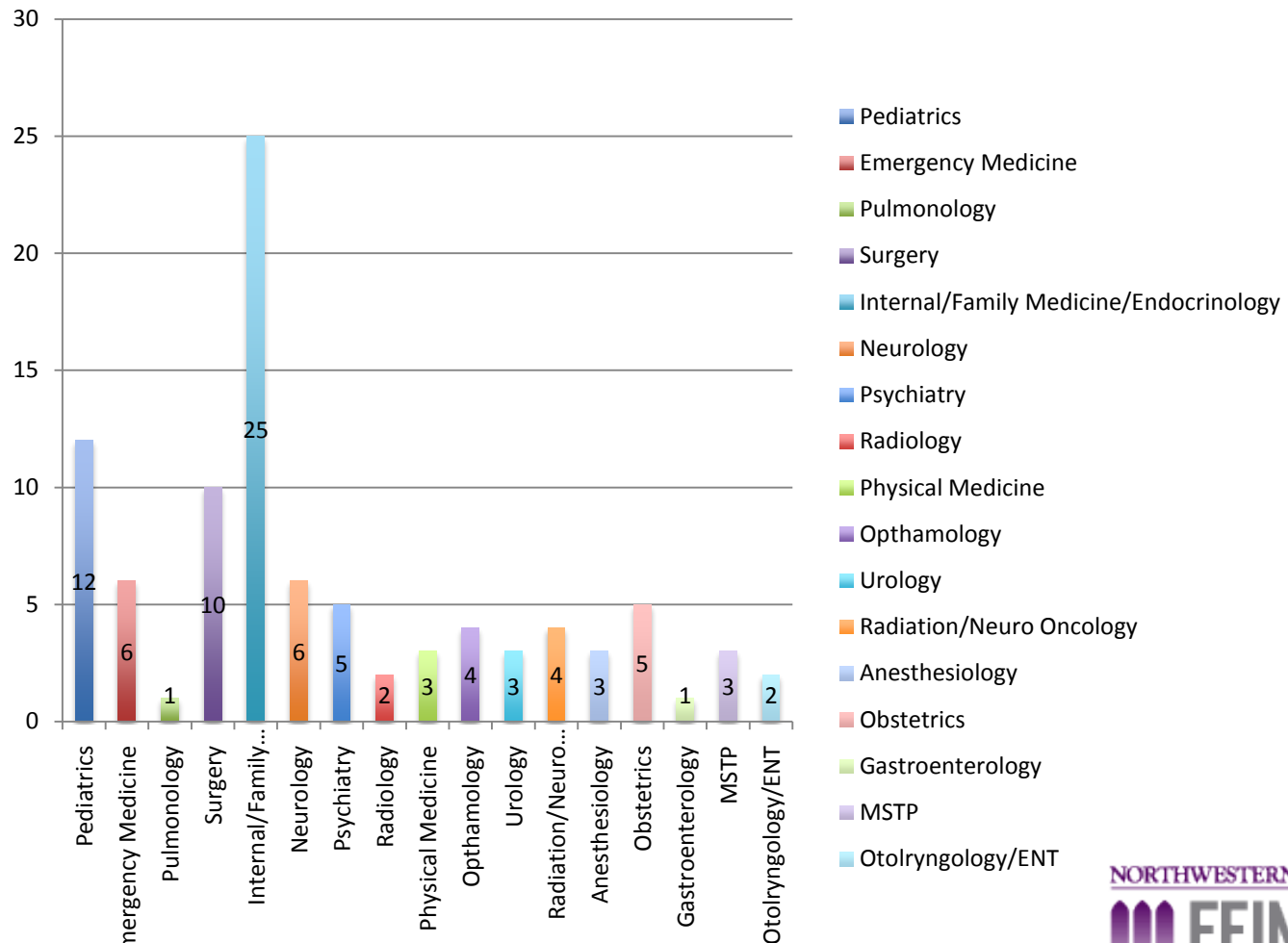
# Third Year Assessment

*“It was a great program and a highlight to my first year. Even though I am not pursuing geriatrics or neuro the lessons I learned with my Buddy will serve me well in pediatrics. Basically, the importance of listening and appreciating a person as a multidimensional being. It is so important to know not just the medical but all of the psychosocial factors that impact a patient’s illness and quality of life.”*

*“Before participating in the buddy program I was more interested in a career centered entirely on basic science research. Now I am certain that clinical medicine will have an important role in my career.”*

*“I learned that I liked working with the family and all the issues surrounding an illness such as Alzheimer’s. I have decided to go into family practice and experiences such as the buddy program helped me to see that part of myself.”*

# The Buddy Program™ Specialty Choice 1997-2006 N=95





# Medical Student Specialty Choice 1997-2006 n=95

- Procedural – 26%
  - Anesthesiology (3)
  - Otolaryngology/ENT (2)
  - Radiation/NeuroOncology(4)
  - Radiology (3)
  - Surgery (10)
  - Urology (3)
- Patient Care – 70%
  - Emergency Medicine (6)
  - Endocrinology (1)
  - Internal / Family Medicine (24)
  - Gastroenterology (3)
  - Neurology (6)
  - Obstetrics (5)
  - Pediatrics (12)
  - Psychiatry (5)
- Research – 3%
  - Medical Science Training Program (3)

# Conclusions & Future Plans

- Findings show that PAIRS program and The Buddy Program is successful in strengthening the dementia knowledge base of 1st year students.
- Supports the reproducibility of The Buddy Program™ in other medical schools.
- NU and BU ADCs will present Buddy and PAIRS program at the Jeanne Anderson Alzheimer's Conference – Dartmouth Medical School – October 2010



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Northwestern – ADC

## Funding Sources

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## Buddy Program Team

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Boston – ADC

## Funding Sources

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Alzheimer's Disease Core Center

The Kenneth B. Schwartz Center

The Arnold P. Gold Foundation

## PAIRS Program Team

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Medicine)

Students and Buddy Participants