

## **“BUDDY TRAINING”**

Spring 2025



Our Southwest Michigan Miracle League (SMML) community would not be possible without the help and support of our community and volunteers. Our volunteer “buddies” are paired together with our players each week one-on-one to provide safety, assist them in the game and help them have fun. No previous knowledge of baseball is required.

SMML is looking for youth/adults who enjoy working with children with unique needs and/or who enjoy baseball and/or helping others.

Our “**Buddy Training**” defines the responsibilities of a buddy and outlines our expectations and guidelines for volunteering to work with our SMML Players.

### **Responsibilities of a Southwest Michigan Miracle League Buddy:**

- **Arrive on Time: Check in** at least 20 minutes before each game.
  - You’ll be assigned a buddy at that time and will meet them and stay with them.
- **Protect the Player:** Ensure the player's safety from balls, bats, falls, hazards, etc. Take cues & direction from coaches and buddy coaches.
- **Assist** with Batting and Running Bases: Help the player get to first base, and run the bases. Don’t worry if you don’t know baseball well, there will be plenty of others there to guide you.
- **Be a Friend:** Provide encouragement, support, and a positive experience for the player.
- **Focus on Abilities:** Focus on the player's strengths and abilities, not limitations.
- **Stay with the Player:** Remain with the player when in the field and in the dugout. Direct them where to go and when. Provide physical support, when needed.
- **Stay Engaged:** Visit, talk with the player. Engage with them and talk with them. Help them have fun.
- **Follow Guidelines:** Be aware of the specific guidelines of SMML to which you agreed during online volunteer registration.
- **Return Player to Guardian:** After the game, ensure the player is returned to their parent or guardian at the field exit.

### **Additional Tips**



- **Be Patient and Understanding:** Players may have varying needs and abilities, so be patient and understanding.

- Have Fun: The most important thing is to have fun and make a positive impact on the players' lives. Be positive and encouraging.
- Communicate with the Player's Family: Use information provided from the family to best support their child's needs and abilities.
- Be a Role Model: Demonstrate good sportsmanship, respect, and positive behavior both on and off the field.
- Always be ready to protect the player from falls or flying balls / bats.
- Hold the player's hand, give them a high five, or a hug.... If they want and/or if you're comfortable.
- **When in doubt, ask a coach or SMML team member.**
  - **Buddies will never be alone with their players.**

❖ Register to be a volunteer or buddy online: [link here](http://Leagues.bluesombrero.com/swmml)  
[Leagues.bluesombrero.com/swmml](http://Leagues.bluesombrero.com/swmml)



**Buddy Training Video** [link here](#) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVG1GkGfwc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TVG1GkGfwc)

Please watch this short (5 min) Miracle League video regarding general buddy training.

Thank you for volunteering to make the game of baseball fun and safe for our players.

Feel free to reach out to us before your scheduled game for any questions or concerns.

Kim Olson: Board Member / League Operations Chair  
[kimkolson@hotmail.com](mailto:kimkolson@hotmail.com) 269.341.1783

Laurie Kreg: Executive Director  
[lauriekreg@gmail.com](mailto:lauriekreg@gmail.com) 269.270.1483

Amy DiMaggio: Board Member / League Operations /  
 Parent of a SMML Player  
[adimaggio@portageps.org](mailto:adimaggio@portageps.org) 269.720.5792



Southwest Michigan Miracle League field is located in Schoolcraft, MI.  
 12935 N US Highway 131, Schoolcraft, MI, United States, 49087



# BUDDY EXPECTATIONS / GUIDELINES



- Arrive on time: Check in 20 min before game time. Buddies will be assigned to players at check-in.
- Protect the Player: keep player safe at all times.
- Assist: help with batting, running bases. .
- Be a Friend: Encourage the player and have fun
- Attend a brief buddy meeting prior to each game, on the field, led by Buddy Coaches.
- Focus on Abilities: Foster independence in the player.
- Stay with & Engage with Player: Remain with the player at all times.
  - On defense: help player field, throw, catch.
  - On offense: help player at the plate- along with the buddy coach.
- Use information provided to best support the player and family.
- Remain with player from start to end- ensuring player is with a guardian/family member before leaving the player.
- SMML team members & coaches will be there for support.
- Thank you for volunteering!