CELEBRATE CAREGIVERS!

KIDS + CARE = CAREGIVING YOUTH
A Part of the Equation, A Part of the Solution

With special thanks and appreciation to all of the current funders of the Caregiving Youth Pilot Project in Palm Beach County,
and especially to the program initiators,
The Schmidt Family Foundation and The Toppel Family Foundation
All around the world, families care for each other in many ways every day. Everyone has a part. We show love when we care. Sometimes a family health situation causes someone to need more help and care than usual. Sometimes this is for a short time, like in the case of a broken bone. Sometimes it can be for life, like in the case of a birth defect.

While every person is different, there are basic living skills that are the same. We all eat, sleep, and communicate. We also have personal hygiene and other daily life responsibilities.

Sometimes for a variety of reasons, a person is no longer able to do basic living skills, never learned to do the tasks, or needs help to do them. Who usually helps? Family members and friends assist! They are “caregivers,” and the job they do is “caregiving”.

Often children and adolescents are caregivers or assist others with caregiving. Sometimes they are the only family available.

Whatever a caregiver’s age, it can be a lonely and a difficult job. It can have consequences. It can also be a life-changing and rewarding experience. No one should do it alone…it takes a team!

The Caregiving Youth Project recognizes, supports, and promotes the awareness of young people who have a dual role: students at school and caregivers within their families.

Our goal is for caregiving youth to be emotionally and physically healthy, to receive the education they deserve, to do their homework, to participate in activities, and to enjoy the many benefits a good education and life affords.

We hope you enjoy learning more about caregiving…it is a family affair!

Thank you students, families and community members for caring for each other!

**Connie Siskowski, RN, PhD**  
**Founder & President, Volunteers for the Homebound & Family Caregivers**

Boca Raton, FL is the home of the first U.S. Caregiving Youth Project (CYP) and the American Association of Caregiving Youth (www.aacy.org). The CYP is a program of Volunteers for the Homebound and Family Caregivers (VHFC), a 501(c)(3) non-profit agency which has been serving the community by providing education and support services through Boca Respite Volunteers (www.boca-respite.org) since 1998. The VHFC mission is to promote independence and dignity for homebound persons and family caregivers of all ages. The Caregiving Youth Pilot Project began in July 2006 to build a replicable model and support program beginning in middle schools.

The mission of the Caregiving Youth Project is to recognize, support and promote the awareness of dual-role young people who are both students and caregivers within their families. Some of the services of the Caregiving Youth Pilot Project, the first in the United States, include: in-school meetings, counseling, sponsored fun activities, recognition, family date nights, in-home help, lunch-and-learns, and retreats.

The American Association for Caregiving Youth (AACY) strives to address the needs of pre-teens, teens, families and professionals through education and awareness, research, and direct services in cooperation with social, education, health care, government and community corporations, organizations and agencies on a local, regional and national level. AACY seeks to accomplish its mission through the development of its website resources and caregiving youth projects throughout the United States.

For more information call  
Dr. Connie Siskowski at 561-391-7401  
or e-mail Connie@boca-respite.org
DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO.....

THEN YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT NEED HELP!

Who in your family might have a health condition that requires them to need help?
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

What types of help might they need?
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

How do you help?
_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

ACTIVITY:

1. Use a variety of resources (such as the Sun-Sentinel, the Internet, the library, and by asking some experts) to research articles, stories and information about youth caregivers and caregiver programs. Report back to your class about your findings. What did your research reveal to you? Did any information you found surprise you? Explain.

2. For several weeks, look through the Sun-Sentinel or go online at www.sun-sentinel.com for an article about a youth caregiver. Write down the facts of the article, using the 5 w's: who, what, when, where and why.

3. Send your report by December 15, 2006 with the form for the CYP (page 7) to help others learn. Be eligible to win a $100 prize to be awarded on December 21, 2006 for the best report.

Sunshine State Standards:
L.A.A.1.3; L.A.A.2.3; L.A.C.1.3; L.A.C.3.3; L.A.B.1.3; L.A.B.2.3
Children & teens help grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters and neighbors with special care.

Around the world...
The average age of a “young carer” in England is 12 years and in Australia it is 13 years. (Young Carers in the U.K., 2004; Carers Australia, 2001)

Across America...
More than 1.3 million young people ages 8-18 assist others! (Young Caregivers in the U.S., 2005)

And in Palm Beach County...
Thousands of children and teens provide special care.

Caregiving Youth are among all cultures and in all middle and high school grades and even younger!

Both boys and girls help...for some boys, the caregiving journey is a little tougher than it is for some girls...

Siskowski, C. (2006) created from What Works Survey results of 2002 conducted by Palm Beach Atlantic University and the School District of Palm Beach County. Not all students completed the demographic section so the total numbers for both the racial and the gender categories are different.

Help Shower & Bathe
Help Prepare Meals & Special Food
Help Give Medicines
Help Read Mail & Other Papers
Help Take to Bathroom
Help Assist Walking

FAMILY CAREGIVERS HELP OTHERS

Being There...
Companion
Get In & Out of Bed
Brush Teeth & Hair
Wash & Fold and Put Away Clothes
Translate to Professionals

CAREGIVING IS IMPORTANT WORK!

More than 50 million adult Americans participate in family caregiving...it is unpaid labor that has a value of more than $306 billion annually to society. (Economic Value of Informal Caregiving... Dr. Peter Arno...2006).
Caregivers and the person needing care are part of a team including doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, home-health care and respite workers.

Respite means taking a break from caregiving, and it is one of the most important things that you can do to keep yourself healthy. Only when you are healthy can you be the best caregiving youth that you can be!

**Caregiving can be DIFFICULT:**
- Feeling alone, angry
- Tough to concentrate
- Missing school, homework
- Being tired
- Getting injured from big and sometimes heavy tasks
- Little time with friends
- Being bullied
- Not eating properly
- Few if any breaks
- Not having help

**Caregiving can be REWARDING:**
- Develop special relationship with person helped
- Learn life skills
- Build values-based friendships
- Extend resiliency
- Contribute to family & society
- Increase self-confidence
- Meet others who help
- Prepared for future responsibilities
- Learn importance of health and avoiding risk behaviors

Q. WHAT DOES A CAREGIVING YOUTH NEED TO BE HEALTHY?
A. ALL THE PIECES IN THIS PUZZLE!

Q. WHERE CAN A CAREGIVING YOUTH FIND THE PIECES?
A. THROUGH THE CAREGIVING YOUTH PILOT PROJECT!

**Activity:**
Using the *Sun-Sentinel*, cut out each letter of the word “caregiver.” Paste them vertically on a separate piece of paper. Create an acrostic using each letter, to tell what qualities a caregiver might have.

*Sunshine State Standards: LA.B.2.3*
Caregivers Who Count!

William Robin, Age 13
Lake Worth Middle

Traits William exemplifies the most:
Caring and Responsibility

William’s younger brother suffers from juvenile diabetes, a disease that must be monitored daily. Each day William checks his brother’s blood-sugar levels and gives him the insulin he needs. William also is supportive of his mom, who works long hours as a nurse, by helping with many household chores. When his brother ended up in the hospital, William went to see the counselor there to see how he could better help when his brother was allowed to come home.

Orlando Lombard, Age 10
Palm Springs Elementary

Traits Orlando exemplifies the most:
Caring, Trustworthiness, Responsibility

Orlando Lombard is a caregiver for his mom. He fixes her breakfast, cooks her dinner, cleans the house, reads the mail, speaks to his mom’s doctors, orders her prescriptions and pushes her wheelchair. Orlando’s guidance counselor says, "Orlando has become his mother’s hands, feet and ears...".

Caregiving Scholarship Winners!

Andrew Goodwin, Andrew Schrager, and Brian Kopstein epitomize what it means to be a youth caregiver. Each of these young men has been assisting a parent with a disability. Andrew Goodwin has also helped to care for his younger brother, who has a rare disorder. All have managed to maintain consistently good grades at the same time.

To honor their work, each student was a recipient of a Caregiving Youth Scholarship. According to Dr. Connie Siskowski, who is also the Florida representative of the National Family Caregivers Association, this is the first U.S. award in which caregiving responsibilities substituted for an employment requirement of the scholarship fund.

Caregiving Kids Speak...

"I love my grandma and it’s my joy to help her..." (Sarah)

"My mother made sure I could take care of my father...looking for and preventing bedsores...getting him in and out of bed with the Hoyer lift, taking care of his feeding tube and catheter...I am the man of the house..." (John)

"Dad is in constant pain and can barely use his hands. He is wheelchair bound and cannot get around independently...when I am responsible for him, I have to help him in all aspects of his life." (Andrew)

"I do everything from brushing her hair to changing the TV channel...I have often wondered what it would be like to have a healthy mother...it's difficult for me to see mothers and daughters at the mall..." (Christine)

Activity:
Do you know a youth caregiver - someone at your school or place of worship or in your neighborhood? With their permission, interview that person to find out what it is like to be a caregiver. Make a list of questions you would ask. After the interview, write a short article about what you have learned from the caregiver. Use direct quotes in your article. Send your article with the form on page 7 to the CYP.

Sunshine State Standards:
LA.C.1.3; LA.B. 2.3; LA.B.1.3
Resources

American Association for Caregiving Youth (AACY) - newly forming to provide information, education and resources for pre-teens, teens, families and professionals about dual role student-caregivers.
1-561-391-7401    www.aacy.org

Children of Aging Parents (CAPS) - the oldest US caregiving organization offering information and referrals, support groups, educational outreach, speaker’s bureau and publications as it seeks to heighten public awareness that the health of the family caregivers is essential to ensure quality care of the nation’s growing elderly population.
1-800-227-7294    www.caps4caregivers.org

Family Caregiver Alliance - a public voice that supports and sustains caregivers throughout the country with information, education, services, research and advocacy.
1-800-445-8106    www.caregiver.org

National Alliance for Caregiving - an organization created in support of family caregivers and the professionals who assist them; and to increase public awareness of issues facing caregiving families.
1-301-718-8444    www.caregiving.org

National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA) - offers free membership for all family caregivers and benefits including information, education, publications and advocacy.
1-800-896-3650    www.thefamilycaregiver.org

Well Spouse Foundation - “When one is sick...two need help” is the slogan of the international support organization for wives, husbands and partners of the chronically ill and/or disabled.
1-800-838-0879    www.wellspouse.org

Internet Support:
www.caregiver.com
www.caregivershome.com
www.care-giving.com
www.caregiving.com
www.strengthforcaring.com
www.youngcarers.net
www.youngcarers.net.au

MAIL THIS FORM TO:
Caregiving Youth Project
VOLUNTEERS FOR THE HOMEBOUND & FAMILY CAREGIVERS, INC.
3998 FAU Blvd. #307, Boca Raton, FL 33431

___ YES! I need more information. Please contact me.
___ YES! I want to be added to your mailing list for updates on the Caregiving Youth Project.
___ YES! I want to volunteer to help caregivers. Please contact me.
___ YES! I want to make a donation in honor of a caregiver. Enclosed is my donation.
___ YES! I have written about youth caregiving. My article/report is enclosed.

Name ____________________________________________ E-mail Address ____________________________________________
Address: Street ____________________________________________________________________________________________
City ____________________________________________ State_________________ ZIP _______________
Telephone ___________________________________ School & Grade (or Business) ______________________________________
Or e-mail to info@aacy.org
DEDICATION is not what others expect of you, it is what you can give to others.

BankAtlantic is a proud supporter of the Sun-Sentinel’s News in Education and the Palm Beach County Caregiving Youth Pilot Project.