Greetings!

Recently I read something that, paraphrased said, "When you write your story, don't allow anyone else to use your pen." You own your story! It is unlike anyone else's in the whole world! Your story is filled with your life choices, your challenges and how you have overcome them. It's almost time to enter 2019 - make your story the best it can be - for yourself, your family and our greater community!

HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

What a beautiful Holiday Celebration we had on December 16th! We must first thank all of our community partners! Thank you to each and everyone one of you that helped make this celebration a success. Donations for the Holiday Shoppe, donations of presents, donations of wrapping paper, donations of food, donations of decorations, the location and of course ALL the volunteers for the day of the party. Caregiving youth, the community sees you and knows how important and valuable you are. We are so grateful for you and for their love and support!

This year we were fortunate to hold two seatings at the Celebration. From the minute you walked into the door there was a special sense of spirit. We love this Party which includes: family portraits, a personal shopper to helping you select that special item for a loved one, music by a DJ, lucky drawings of special prizes, crafting with your siblings, enjoying a nice meal with your loved ones and new table friends, indulging in a tasty treat from the Good Humor man or a Kona shaved ice, plus each youth caregiver and a sibling received their own gifts.

We hope you all have a wonderful holiday Season! Enjoy your time.
In their 411 series, this is the latest book to help teens who are hidden heroes as they take on adult roles to provide caregiving for ill or disabled family. Dr. Connie wrote the foreward to I Am A Teen Caregiver: Now What? by Avery Elizabeth Hurt. Available on Amazon now or ask your school librarian.

LET'S GET SOCIAL

Join the CYP Instagram account and Facebook group! Connect with each other, learn, build new friendships and strong bonds. Be sure to follow us, comment, like, and re-share our posts! Join us at Instagram @cyphearts and on Facebook at our private Caregiving Youth Project Group.

ARE THERE ANY VETERANS IN YOUR FAMILY?

Palm Beach County has services that might be of assistance to your family. Learn more here.

CAREGIVING YOUTH PROJECT

MIDDLE SCHOOL

December’s Lunch and Learn sessions focused on Mental Health and Addiction related topics. Youth caregivers have expressed feeling anxious and overwhelmed at times in their caregiving roles. Worrying about what is going on at home while trying to concentrate in school can be difficult. Feelings of depression have also been expressed when youth caregivers feel alone and they are not able to
Another resource is VeteranAid.org that offers detailed information on a Veteran’s pension benefit called Aid and Attendance (A&A). If Veterans require assisted living care in a community or at home, A&A gives the information they need to apply for the A&A benefit themselves for free. Senior veterans and spouses use this benefit to help them afford quality home care.

### FREE SUPPORT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS, 24/7

**Crisis Text Line** serves anyone, in any type of crisis, providing access to free, 24/7 support and information via the medium people already use and trust: text. Here’s how it works:

1. Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the USA, anytime, about any type of crisis.
2. A Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds quickly.
3. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.

**Cost** - the service is completely free, but messaging rates apply if you’re NOT on Verizon, Sprint, AT&T, or T-Mobile.

[Check it out](#)

### CONTINUING CARE

On January 4th we will be having a workshop at Palm Beach State College to discuss local scholarship opportunities and help students complete FASFA. This event is only for SENIORS. If you are interested please RSVP to Brenna at 561.391.7401.

### THIS MONTH’S SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

AACY likes to thank and recognize people at our schools that go above and beyond to assist in making the Caregiving Youth Project a success. Students who are supported in their caregiving roles are more likely to attend school, get good grades, know they are not alone and most importantly, graduate!

The following staff members at Loggers’ Run Middle School played a big role with the continued success of the Caregiving Youth Project: Ms. Balais (School Counselor), Carol (Secretary) and Sam (Maintenance). These staff members are very welcoming and are always willing to give a helping hand to our Family Specialist whenever there is a need. These individuals have a very rapport with their students and are very knowledgeable about them. They assist with organizing group meetings, Lunch and Learn setup, scheduling group locations, student referrals to our program and connecting our Family Specialist with the appropriate school personnel. These school staff along with the principal, assistant principal, teachers and others at Loggers’ Run Middle School are true supporters of AACY. The American Association of Caregiving Youth would like to extend our most sincere gratitude for your support and especially for all that you do for your students.

### MICHELLE’S CAREGIVING TIPS

[United Way](http://unitedwaypbc.org)

Discuss their feelings with anyone. If you ever experience thoughts or feelings of anxiety, depression, or don’t know how to handle your stress in healthy ways, please seek guidance from your Family Specialist or a supportive adult in your life. You are NOT alone!
Hi CYP Members,

The holidays can be such a busy time, and even more so when you’re caregiving. We can all fall into bad habits when life becomes hectic so I am here to remind you of the importance of staying happy and healthy!

For me, the holidays bring on all sorts of unhealthy eating. It can be hard to say no when you are tired, busy, and it is what’s available. So how can you limit yourself while still enjoying everything this season has to offer? Try to keep yourself accountable; don’t forget what you have eaten throughout the day. There is a free app called “Lose It” among many others, in which you can log your meals to make sure you are getting a healthy amount of carbs and proteins.

What about holiday stress? Holiday stress is increased when you are caring for a loved one who is ill. There are so many things to think about. How am I going to make it to the Holiday event if Grandma is not feeling well? Will we be able to provide gifts for my younger siblings when we have so many of medical bills? Will I remember everything on my to-do list with so many other things to going on?

The most important thing to know is you are not alone in how you are feeling, and you are not alone in working through your priorities and feelings. Reach out to your Family Specialist to see what types of support can be given. Check in with your CYP group members to see if they are struggling with some of the same stressors. Connect with us on Social Media!

Sincerely,
Gerry Fallon
Editor
American Association of Caregiving Youth

HAPPY NEW YEAR!