

MISSION STATEMENT

Vision- that every youth caring for an ill, injured, elderly or disabled family member will achieve success in school and life.

Mission- to increase awareness and provide support services for youth caregivers and their families by connecting healthcare, education and community resources.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers are matched according to their skills, interests and abilities.

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Community Outreach
- Clerical Assistance
- Fundraising
- Social Networking
- Video Experts
- Writers
- Public Relations
- Basic Computer Skills

TRAVEL TEDDY Award at AACY

The Traveling Teddy Award is presented every three months at a staff meeting to an employee who exemplifies "excellence in utilizing and contributing to volunteer programs." The continuing success of our volunteer program requires a supportive working relationship between staff and volunteers. The recipient of this "coveted" award is Amoy Gordon, Family Specialist. Amoy is the link between our mentors and our mentees' families as well as a mentor training facilitator. Congratulations, Amoy!

Dear Volunteers:

Our annual Holiday Party for our caregiving youth and their family members was a huge success. Almost 300 guests enjoyed all the festivities including a delicious chicken dinner, family photo booth, crafts table, music provided by a DJ, a re-giftable shop for our caregivers to "shop" for family members and, of course, gifts for each caregiving youth and their sibling(s).

This event would not have been possible without the help of over 90 volunteers who greeted and registered our guests, staffed the photo booth, crafts table and re-giftable room, "shopped" with each caregiving youth, wrapped the family gifts and served the meal. In addition, 22 volunteers spent all day Friday before the event wrapping the gifts for the caregiving youth and setting up the re-giftable shop. A BIG thank you to Debralyn Belletieri and her amazing friends who made all the centerpieces. She also provided a Hospitality area for volunteers to mingle and enjoy some refreshments.

Our first M.A.C.Y. event of the season for mentors and their mentees was held in early January at Sugar Sand Park in Boca Raton. There are some pictures on page 2. Everyone who attended had a great time! A special thanks goes to Giving & Living, a non-profit organization created for kids who want to give back to their communities, for organizing some awesome games for our group.

And finally, a special "Thank you" to one of our long-time volunteers, Cliff Saslow, who has moved with his family to Gainesville. Cliff was the first volunteer I met and interviewed for this newsletter. He was always available to help us provide rides so that our caregiving youth could enjoy all of our sponsored events. Best wishes, Cliff! We will miss you.

Marcy Bezark
Volunteer Manager

Thanks to a group of volunteers from Ordyx, a software company located in Boca Raton, all of our families received Beanie Babies at the conclusion of our Holiday Party. The volunteers packaged 300 of them in advance of the event. The Beanie Babies put a smile on everyone's face!



MENTOR HIGHLIGHTS

National Mentoring Month January, 2018

National Mentoring Month is the largest-scale mentoring campaign nationwide, culminating each year with the National Mentoring Summit. This year will reflect on the incredible growth of the mentoring movement, recognize the real life mentoring relationships that form and thrive each day, and offer opportunities to thank the mentors who inspire us.

We currently have 23 amazing mentors in our M.A.C.Y. program. Our mentors are matched one on one with a caregiving youth who could benefit from having a caring adult to be a friend, a resource, an advisor or coach or just be someone a child can talk to and ask questions when they need guidance or advice.

If you are interested in learning more about the M.A.C.Y. (Mentor a Caregiving Youth) program, please contact me by email at marcy@acy.org. We welcome new mentors!

PERSONALITY PROFILE – MIMI KINSLER

Anyone who has ever attended an event sponsored by AACY has been impressed by the beautiful centerpieces and decorations created by Mimi Kinsler. She told me, "I just love arts and crafts. When I was in high school I used to design and sew most of my clothes. I guess I have a little flair for it." Her decorations have been displayed at AACY conferences, the annual Holiday Party and our galas.



I asked Mimi how she initially became involved with our organization. She told me that she had met Debralyn Belletieri at Strikes and they played on the same bowling league. Mimi had been involved with a local charitable organization that helped fundraise for a variety of non-profits. Debralyn invited Mimi to one of our galas and the rest is history. "It was spectacular. And I loved the fact that they (AACY) were helping children because I went through the same thing. I was a caregiver not only for my father, but for my husband as well. And when I worked for heart surgeons in Broward County, I was a liaison for all the patients in the office, showing compassion and giving them hope when they were devastated."

Mimi has lived in South Florida since 1972. She and her husband moved here to escape the cold climate of Michigan. She worked in the medical field for over 35 years and raised two children, now adults, who live in the area. When she is not running after her two grandchildren, she volunteers for AACY. In addition to designing the centerpieces, pictured below, Mimi is also one of our volunteer drivers. "I drove twin girls to Camp Treasure one time." One of the girls told Mimi that she bought a bikini and she couldn't wait to go in the swimming pool, no matter how cold it was. It was an activity that she never gets a chance to do. Another time, she drove two middle school students to a cooking class sponsored by Boca Helping Hands. Although the students were very quiet on the way to the class, they were exuberant on the way back. They learned how to make meatloaf and were given a crock pot to prepare future meals. "They were so excited. That made me happy. You try to do things with these kids and wonder if it is worth it. It is!"

Mimi explained, "I love to help people who help people. I just think it's nice to touch a person's heart even if it is just a hug. Sometimes it's the small things that mean a lot to them. We all have our cross to bear. We just keep going and try to be happy because life keeps changing. When you are weak, AACY is strong. AACY turns hopeless into hope!"

MENTORING FUN AT SUGAR SAND



KAYLA & ALLIE



MICHAEL & DAVID

QUOTE: "Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart!" Elizabeth Andrew