

MISSION STATEMENT

Vision- that every youth caring for a chronically 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

TRAVELING TEDDY Award

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 Marcella Martinez, Family Specialist. Marcella has helped co-facilitate multiple training sessions for our mentors. Congratulations, Marcella!

Dear Volunteers:

The New Year got off to a great start with our Fun in the Sun pot luck picnic at Sugar Sand Park in Boca Raton. Despite a very rainy start to the event, we were eventually able to get out on to the field for an egg toss and kickball game. Mentors and their mentees enjoyed the activities, socializing and, of course, the food! A community service group from FAU planned and led the activities. January also marked the beginning of National Mentoring Month which we were able to celebrate at the event. According to MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, National Mentoring Month is the largest-scale mentoring campaign nationwide. The entire month reflects on the growth of the mentoring movement, recognizes successful real-life mentoring relationships, and offers another opportunity to thank the mentors who have inspired all of us.

Congratulations are in order for several of our amazing volunteers. Eliot Popper has been nominated for this year's Men with Caring Hearts award, Kirsten Blazek has been nominated for The Breakers Be Our Guest award celebrating those who serve others, and Felix Alfred graduated from Chamberlain University with a BS in Nursing. Felix's mentee attended his graduation.

In other news, Soroptimist International sponsored its third "Dream It, Be It" event for our high school girls. The half day workshop included the following topics: Discovering Your Dreams, Exploring Careers, Creating Achievable Goals, Rising Above Obstacles, Turning Failure Into Success, Balancing Stress and Putting Dreams Into Action. We are so appreciative of the support our program receives from Soroptimist International of Boca Raton and Deerfield Beach.

Marcy Bezark

Volunteer Manager

Enjoying the Pot Luck Picnic at Sugar Sand Park



Chrisbe and her mentor
Michele



Ashanti and her mentee Yva



Jon at his mentor's
graduation

NOTEWORTHY NEWS

This year AACY held back to back Holiday Parties at SAFE SCHOOLS INSTITUTE for our caregiving youth and their family members. Almost 400 guests enjoyed all the festivities including a delicious chicken dinner, family photo booth, crafts table, a DJ, a re-giftable shop for our caregivers to “shop” for family members and, of course, gifts for each caregiving youth and their siblings.

This year we had over 100 volunteers helping to make this such a successful day. Volunteers greeted and registered the 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, 29 volunteers spent all day Friday before the event wrapping the gifts for the caregiving youth and setting up the re-giftable shop.

Thank you to Jan Dymtrow for assembling her amazing group of volunteers for party number one!

Also, thank you to Shari Dragos who volunteered at our second party and donated holiday gift bags and homemade cookies.

A special “Thank You” to our community partners who went above and beyond to make the celebrations so successful – Sam’s Club, Broken Sound, STRIKES, Boca Raton Regional Hospital and John and Arline McNally.



PERSONALITY PROFILE – MATT CHANIN



Volunteerism has always been a part of Matt’s life. “My mother was a social activist and was involved in many different causes. I learned that there is a role in becoming a responsible adult.” Matt has been a mentor with the M.A.C.Y. (Mentor a Caregiving Youth) program for two years.

He explained that being a mentor with AACY is similar to what he did when he lived in New Jersey. Through his position in private investments at Prudential for 35 years, he was asked to serve on the Board at United Way.

Integrity House, a residential drug rehabilitation program, was partially funded by United Way and Matt became one of their mentors. “There were five of us from diverse backgrounds and we served as role models to the boys who were there, offering different paths to success. We also took the boys on outings to hockey games, bowling and picnics.”

I asked Matt how he became involved with AACY. He answered, “I gave a check. I saw your agency listed on Extraordinary Charities and thought it was a worthwhile cause. Then you contacted me about volunteering.” Matt was initially matched with David, but the family moved out of the area after a few months. He has been re-matched with Alex, a middle school student, for over a year.

Alex’s mom told Matt that Alex spent a lot of time in his room. Dad was out of the picture and Alex really needed a male role model. There are two other siblings in the household, older twin girls. One has spina bifida. “Alex does his share to help out. Coupled with limited economic circumstances, it is tough on everybody.”

Matt said that by his own admission, Alex is not very athletic. So Matt started taking him to a driving range to hit golf balls. Over this past summer, Matt arranged for Alex to have some golf lessons. They’ve also gone to Green Cay, movies, Starbucks and even the theatre. Since Matt goes up North in the summer, he and Alex will text and email each other. When he comes down to Florida for short visits over the summer, Matt makes a point to see Alex.

One of Matt’s goals for Alex is to encourage good study habits. “Alex has the grades, but he does struggle with math. He was able to get tutoring help through his math teacher at school.”

Matt explained why he is committed to the mentoring program. “If the relationship is working, you will see that the mentee is getting more out of life. It’s a step. For the few hours that I’m spending each week, it is time well spent.” He ended by saying, “You can’t control their home and school life, but you can have a positive influence on a young person.”

“You will find as you look back upon your life, that the moments that stand out are the moments when you have done things for others.” *Source Unknown*

