

# Caregiving Youth Project (CYP)

*“I have learned I am no longer alone...”*

The CYP is the first U.S. comprehensive program to address the challenges faced by children who sacrifice their education, health, well-being and childhood to provide care for family members who are chronically ill, injured, elderly or disabled. The CYP seeks solutions as it promotes social and system change by integrating healthcare (body), education (mind), and the community (spirit) to create a solid foundation of support services for this silent, hidden and deserving youth population.

**The Issue:** The stressors and responsibilities of caregiving have profound effects on the education, health, well-being and childhood; all youth deserve the opportunity to learn and complete school, experience childhood and become productive adults.

**The Reasons:** Learning, a child’s job, requires focus and occurs at school, at home and at play:

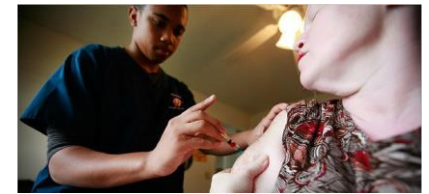
- ♥ Focus in school for the student is tough; family comes first - health conditions requiring caregiving add extra tasks and stress to a student’s day; typically they feel they are the only ones doing this resulting in frustration and anger
- ♥ Family caregiving is typically an adult responsibility; adults are not always available, thus thrusting children into this role
- ♥ More than a million young people – ages 8-18 years bathe, dress, feed, assist with walking, give medications and do many other supportive tasks of daily living for family members, leaving little time for play.

**The Services:** The CYP reduces barriers to learning and provides needs–driven direct services:

- ♥ In School – Skills-Building/support groups from grade 6 – 12; regular Lunch & Learn sessions
- ♥ At Home - resource links for families, respite, computers, tutoring and solutions for special needs
- ♥ Out of School - overnight camp, picnics, cooking, mentoring, educational and fun activities.

**The Result:** Integrated CYP services strengthen students, families, schools and communities:

- ♥ As of June 30, 2015, more than 990 youth caregivers plus their families entered the CYP through middle schools, self and community referrals in Palm Beach County, FL; others are in various stages of program processing
- ♥ Youth caregivers elect to remain with the CYP into high school – and they do – they also graduate at a rate of 98% (five year average) with >90% going on to post-secondary education or the military!
- ♥ Caregiving youth report that CYP has helped them with grades, attendance, confidence, skills, family life, communication, friendships, and managing anger and stress.



He’s giving his mom her injection.



CYP family walks to end heart disease.



The Caregiving Youth Project is a program of the American Association of Caregiving Youth®  
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