

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 Monica Bernal, Family Specialist. Monica is the link between our mentors and our mentees’ families and has facilitated many matches. Congratulations, Monica!

Dear Volunteers:

Another “season” is coming to an end, and I would like to share some highlights with you:

- Our M.A.C.Y. (Mentor a Caregiving Youth) program is close to reaching its goal of 25 matches. Several of our current mentors have referred prospective volunteers to our program. We are delighted that they are enjoying their experience and spreading the word! This season we provided two activities – a pot luck picnic and movie passes – for mentors to attend with their mentees.
- Our mentor Danny Polen was nominated for the annual Men with Caring Hearts award. For 17 years, Florence Fuller Child Development Centers has honored outstanding men who make this community a better place through their commitment to improving the lives of those who need it most. A well-deserved recognition! Danny recently joined the board of AACY.
- Another outstanding volunteer, Debralyn Bellitieri, was nominated and selected as a Woman of Grace. Bethesda Hospital Foundation, sponsor of the award, honors women volunteers whose outstanding service inspires and enriches our community. Congratulations, Debralyn!
- Liz Arnold, our “jack of all trades” volunteer, was nominated for the Women of Distinction award for Soroptimist International 2017 and won in her category – Education.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer. To our “snowbird” volunteers, we look forward to your return in the Fall.

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

Marcy Bezark
Volunteer Manager



CPR class at Camp Treasure



“Dream It Be It” Yiphtah and her treasure box.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF MENTORING

You're donating your valuable time, so it's important that you enjoy and benefit from your volunteering. To make sure that your volunteer position is a good fit:

Ask questions. You want to make sure that the experience is right for your skills, your goals and the time you want to spend. Sample questions to the volunteer manager might address your time commitment, if there is any training involved, who you will be working with and what to do if you have questions during your experience.

Make sure you know what is expected. You should be comfortable with the organization and understand the time commitment. Consider starting small so that you don't over commit yourself at first. Give yourself some flexibility to change your focus if needed.

Don't be afraid to make a change. Don't force yourself into a bad fit or feel compelled to stick with a volunteer role you dislike. Talk to the Volunteer Manager about changing your focus.

Enjoy yourself! The best volunteer experiences benefit both the volunteer and the organization. If you are not enjoying yourself, ask yourself why. Is it the tasks you are performing? The people you are working with? Or are you uncomfortable simply because the situation is new? Pinpointing what is bothering you can help you decide how to proceed.

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PERSONALITY PROFILE

DENISE CEPARANO

"I went in to be a teacher, but I'm the student. Alyssa is impacting my life because her world is something I've only seen on television."

Denise began her mentoring experience at AACY one year ago. She told me, "I wanted to make a difference, to give back and hopefully give the benefit of my own experience to a young person." She had heard about our program from her friend Donna Drucker, an adjunct professor at FAU. The young person with whom she is matched is a caregiver for her twin sister, who has spina bifida. Her younger brother is also matched with a male mentor. Denise continued, "I came from New York and thought I was pretty savvy. Sometimes Alyssa tells me things, not for shock value but this is her world. I try to get advice from my own girls. Teenage girls can be tough."

The two spend time together each week. Their activities are varied. They've gone biking, gleaned, have taken in a museum, shared a picnic lunch and have gone out to restaurants. "Alyssa had sushi for the first time!"

Denise is very involved with her church, Christ Fellowship. "We have 4th Saturday Serve where we go into the community and do some kind of project." Her mentee, Alyssa, accompanies Denise each time. "Last time we laid mulch at one of the high schools. We do beautification projects." Her mentee had never volunteered before and now this is an ongoing event for the two of them.

Volunteerism was not always on Denise's radar when she was growing up. She had four other siblings and her parents had a household to run. She did some volunteer work at Fort Hamilton Veterans Hospital prior to getting married. She read to the veterans and provided emotional support by listening to them. "I really started volunteering when I became a mom." Denise has two adult daughters, who live in the Jupiter area. "I was a Girl Scout leader and I chaperoned Lutheran Youth Group activities."

Her community involvement has continued since those early years, especially since she retired from teaching four years ago. She volunteered at Boca Helping Hands for a year and is an usher at the Wick Theatre. One of her current activities is with the Boca Raton Garden Club. "We do a lot more than gardening. Our group offers Garden Therapy at the FAU Memory and Wellness Center. Once a month we make floral arrangements with the clients. Utilizing flowers can trigger memories. The Club also holds a variety of fundraisers throughout the year and then we give college scholarships to students who are already in college and in a science related program."

Denise told me that mentoring is "a learning and growing experience. Alyssa opens up a lot with me. I would tell anyone who asked to just do it. You can make a difference."

QUOTE: To give without any reward, or any notice, has a special quality of its own. *Anne Morrow Lindbergh*