

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

Dear Volunteers:

The long days of summer provide us with an excellent opportunity to take stock of our volunteer needs at AACY. One of our goals is to increase the number of mentors with the M.A.C.Y. (Mentor a Caregiving Youth) program with a target of 25 successful matches. We currently have 23 matches, several of which are entering their third year. Mentors spend four hours each month with their mentees, providing a trusting, caring relationship and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee. Fun participatory activities are provided by AACY including picnics and bowling parties.

Our caregiving youth have enjoyed a number of special events this Spring including cooking classes at Boca Helping Hands and Greenacres Community Center, Cake Wars and Camp Treasure at Gold Coast Camp in Lake Worth. A graduation party for our seniors was held the end of May. We are so appreciative of the volunteer drivers who helped to transport our students to many of the events.

As another "season" comes to an end, I would like to remind you that all of our volunteer opportunities are year-round. If you know of someone who would like to join AACY as a volunteer, please have that person contact me.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer, and return *renewed, refreshed* and *ready* to continue your valuable work at AACY.

Marcy Bezark
Volunteer Manager



Volunteers at 2019 graduation party



CYP Cake wars



Spring Camp Treasure

MORE ON MENTORING

Marilynn Weintraub, our June “Personality”, shared a recent New York Times article with me entitled “Want to Leave a Legacy? Be a Mentor: How to make a positive impact that would keep you alive in the memories and lives of others.”

The article’s author quoted Marc Freedman, the founder of Encore.org and co-founder of Experience Corps, both dedicated to helping older adults find purpose later in life. When asked what it takes to be a mentor, he replied, “Showing up and shutting up: Being consistent and listening. You don’t have to be a charismatic superhero. You don’t need an advanced degree. It’s more about the relationship than imparting sage advice. **The key is not being interesting. The real key is being interested**-being present and paying attention.”

Mr. Freedman feels that older people are uniquely suited for a mentoring role. The critical skills for nurturing relationships such as empathy grow as we age. And retired volunteers will generally have more time to devote to younger people.

Jane Brody, the article’s writer, refers to major long-term studies that demonstrate how social engagement, especially when invested in the well-being of the next generation, will enrich a senior citizen physically, mentally and socially. Another outcome of having better social connections is living longer!

The Traveling Teddy Award (what else, a cuddly stuffed teddy bear) 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. Our new Activities Manager, Emily Kilgore, works tirelessly to ensure that our events for caregiving youth run smoothly with the help of our volunteers. Congratulations, Emily!

PERSONALITY PROFILE



MARILYNN WEINTRAUB

Volunteers find their way to AACY in a variety of ways – through internet searches, United Way, VolunteerMatch.com, volunteer fairs and word of mouth. Marilyn’s route to our agency was a little unconventional. Full disclosure: Marilyn had volunteered for two programs that I coordinated at Jewish Family Services – as a Parachaplain and a Story Circle facilitator at Heartland Health Care and Rehab Center in Boca Raton for over 10 years. One Sunday, three years ago, she noticed a Sun Sentinel in her driveway. Although she didn’t subscribe to the paper, she brought it in and saw an article about AACY and my involvement as Volunteer Manager. Initially she just wanted to re-connect with me, but soon became interested in the M.A.C.Y. program.

Marilynn was matched with Lyric, an eighth grader living with her grandparents. Her grandmother said that Lyric really needed someone to encourage her to study. Marilyn, having taught for 35 years in elementary, reading and special education, was a perfect fit. Marilyn explained that initially Lyric was hard to connect with and not very open about her family and her feelings. But over the years, she has really opened up. They generally get together on Monday afternoons.

I asked Marilyn what activities the two of them do together. She said that on their first visit, they went to Starbucks and Lyric brought one of her assignments with her. They talked a lot and Lyric expressed interest in learning how to knit and learning cursive writing, both of which they attempted. They’ve gone to Wakodahatchee Nature Preserve to see the birds and alligators, an Orchid show, shopping at Ultra and the group picnics sponsored by AACY. “We also go out for a bite to eat and we talk about the future, what she would like to do, healthy relationships and boys.” She continued, “I also tell her stories. She loves to hear them. They are reminiscent of her grandmother and she can identify. I try to tell her stories to give her a ‘moral anchor’.”

Since Marilyn goes to the Jersey shore during the summer, I asked her how she and Lyric stay in touch. “I write letters to her so she knows that I haven’t forgotten her and I’m thinking about her.”

It has been more than three years and the relationship continues to grow. “She’s open, she’s friendly and she wants the friendship.” Marilyn concluded by saying that being a mentor is “not a big chunk of your time. You get so much more back.”

“If you want to touch the past, touch a rock. If you want to touch the present, touch a flower. If you want to touch the future, touch a life.” Author Unknown