Volunteer Viewpoint
June 2020

A Newsletter for Friends and Volunteers of the Agency

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.

FROM THE VOLUNTEER MANAGER

Dear Volunteers:

I hope this newsletter finds you well. We are certainly living in unprecedented times. With many people now working remotely and some with more time on their hands, we have fortunately seen an increased interest in volunteering.

I want to thank our volunteers for their kindness and help with our socially distanced and virtual volunteering opportunities. The caregivers we support are in need during these challenging times and the efforts our volunteers put forth make a huge impact.

During this pandemic, some volunteer roles have changed, as has the needs for some families. Deliveries of food and other items has become the new normal for our organization. For each Hearty Italian meal donated by Stallone's Italian Kitchen in Boca Raton, there was a volunteer ready and willing to deliver to our families.

CYP Graduation which usually takes place in person with a celebration, instead became Project Graduation- a mobile graduation with signs and gifts, including personalized blankets, delivered the day of each student's graduation. Graduation pictures for our seniors are being taken by volunteers so that our students have these special moments captured in a photograph. Cap and gowns were purchased by a gracious volunteer to wear for these photos.

We hosted a very fun and creative virtual activity, Sip, Paint and Smile, for both our middle and high school aged caregiving youth. This event was a success because of the behind the scenes work of our volunteers. Paints, canvases and instructor led class were underwritten. In addition, drivers picked up the supplies and delivered them to each teen. We hope to increase the number of participants for our future virtual events.

Our M.A.C.Y. (Mentor a Caregiving Youth) program has also gone virtual. Our matches now meet through different chat methods and practice social distancing when they do get together in person. Mentors have been trained over Zoom and then "meet" with their mentee for a virtual introduction. Having a mentor’s support and guidance through this pandemic is extremely important and we are so thankful for our growing group of mentors.

Wishing you and your families a healthy and happy Summer!
With gratitude,
Amanda Levine
Volunteer Manager

Volunteer Spotlight:
DANIEL POLEN

Volunteerism has been an important part of Daniel’s life for many years. From dog walking at the Tri-County Humane Society to serving as an Associate Member for both The Volunteer LINK and Empowered Youth USA at University of Miami to his current volunteer role with AACY, Daniel is a role model for giving back to his community.

“I had a debilitating disease when I was younger and so did my father, who succumbed to cancer in 2012, so I know what it is like to be sick for a long period of time and to have an ill parent. I was constantly worrying about him and myself and anxious about what others would think, and what to say to them. I wish I had a mentor when growing up.”

Daniel has been a mentor with our M.A.C.Y. program (Mentor a Caregiving Youth) for over four years. AACY assists youth who are caregivers of a relative, to restore their role as children and to help them succeed academically, socially, psychologically and developmentally. Mentoring is a large and important component of the Caregiving Youth Project and offers a structured and caring...
Daniel has mentored several mentees since starting in the program and has even taken on the responsibility of two mentees at once, since matching male mentees with a mentor has always been a challenge to fulfill. One of his mentees recently graduated from high school and is continuing onto college in the Fall. Daniel will be matched with a new mentee, who he will meet with virtually next month.

Daniel has said that he was dealt the worst case scenario and had to climb back up to where he didn’t think he would ever be. His life is now about sharing joy and optimism through his volunteer work. He has even recruited several friends to become part of the M.A.C.Y. program and joined our Board of Directors.

In addition to Daniel’s strong commitment to improving the life of one of our caregiving youth, he also is actively involved with the V. Foundation to Cure Cancer.

“We ourselves must be full of life if we are going to make life fuller for others.” — David Sawyer

Image from the Sip, Paint and Smile - artwork created by our CYP participants in their virtual art event.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Food Donations:
We are in need of individuality wrapped snacks and drinks for our caregiving youth to have when they go back to
school. Here’s a list of items requested:

- Little Bites
- Capri Sun Drink Packs
- Chips
- Candy (non-chocolate)

**On-going Volunteers Needed For:**

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Event Transporting
- Community Outreach
- Clerical Assistance
- Fundraising
- Social Networking
- Video/Photography
- Writers
- Public Relations
- Basic Computer Skills

Want to make a difference in the lives of caregiving youth?

Contact me today!

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