The national resource for the support of children who are caring for chronically ill, injured, elderly, or disabled family members.

AACY Annual Holiday Party

On December 19th, the Safe Schools Institute was the scene of the annual AACY Holiday Celebration. Our Youth and their families enjoyed the festivities, food & surprises and gifts. Even though we had to make some last minute changes to our plans, our volunteers and staff rallied together to make sure we could still have as much fun as possible, complete with food to take home and Good Humor ice cream. Thanks to all who made this possible including the Broken Sound Club, photographer Bob, PepsiCo and many other contributors. We are looking forward to a wonderful new year in 2022 and many more opportunities to celebrate with our Caregiving Youth.
AACY has joined the Hidden Helpers Coalition - below are the findings from new research.

When compared with Caregiving Youth studies among the general population, except for the military nuances, there seems to be little difference in impact.

Perhaps these children are most fortunate that there are now resources being developed that are especially for them. Perhaps this now opens the door (which we must open wide) for resources for ALL Caregiving Youth!

**Key Headlines From Study:**
- First time evidence-based quantification of hidden helpers: There are approximately 2.3 million children under the age 18 living with a disabled veteran.
- Military and veteran families experiencing high levels of disruption because of injury were more likely to report high levels of child distress; this distress can severely impact the emotional and psychological development of children. Often, attention to children’s needs is crowded out by caregiving needs.
- Hidden helpers were more likely to experience isolation and have fewer opportunities to interact with peers; have difficulties expressing emotion and learning in school; have more health problems such as stress, burnout, and fatigue. According to data analysis, children from military caregiving homes are more likely than children in non-caregiving homes to have high levels of anxiety and depression.

**Study Recommendations:**
- National: Increase Access – Partner with federal and local agencies, including private organizations, to enhance the social safety net of comprehensive services focused on supporting children and their families.
- Community: Raise Awareness – Develop national campaigns and resources to improve understanding of care recipients’ visible and invisible injuries and illnesses and their impact on children and families.
- Families: Invest – Fund, promote, and create supports that are holistic and targets children and their families.
- Children: Create & Scale – Quality programs and interventions that support children from caregiving families focused on peer support, mental health, and age-appropriate developmental opportunities.

Please stress the importance of recognizing ALL Caregiving Youth.

We continue to work with the legislative offices of US Reps Lois Frankel and Barbara Lee to develop policy on behalf of all Caregiving Youth.
As part of its ongoing, continuous mission to recognize, champion, and support caregiving youth, AACY held its first ever VIRTUAL Caregiving Youth Institute (CYI) Conference on Thursday, April 22, 2021. This virtual conference featured national and international experts in the areas of Caregiving Youth as it relates to the Institute’s four tenets of C.A.R.E.: Connection, Advocacy, Research and Education. More than 100 people registered to attend.

Dr. Ann Faraone, AACY’s Director of Education Services organized and facilitated the conference with AACY President & Founder Dr. Connie Siskowski.

“Thanks to the support of presenting sponsors AvalonBay Communities and Schmidt Family Foundation, we were able to host a virtual conference that reached participants in three other countries, in addition to the dozens of national attendees,” Dr. Siskowski said.

Expert presenters, in order of their virtual conference presentations:

- Jodi O’Donnell-Ames, Hope Loves Company
- Hannah Hutler-Boyd, Camp Corral
- Family Specialist Cinthia Joas, MSW, RCSWI of AACY
- Dr. Richard Lindsay, University of Virginia
- Legislative Aide Abby Ross from Senator Lori Berman’s Office
- Felicia Goldstein, J.D., District Chief of Staff for Congresswoman Lois Frankel's Office
- Dr. Julia Belkowitz, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
- Dr. Betsy Olson, UNC-Chapel Hill
- Dr. Melinda Kavanaugh, University of Wisconsin
- Dr. Mary Claire Mucenic, School District of Palm Beach County
- Tiffane Evans, Florida Department of Adolescent Health
- Kaylin Jean-Louis, a 10th grade Caregiving Youth from Tallahassee who founded Kaylin’s Caring Konnection

During the conference it was also announced that AACY, along with Camp Corral, Hope Loves Company, Kaylin’s Caring Konnection, Inc. and Kids Are Caregivers Too, would host their First Annual USA Caregiving Youth Connect via Zoom on Friday, May 7.

USA Caregivers Youth Connect allowed us to connect youth from all over the country, and with one another so they can share their stories and

The theme of this breakfast is "recognizing those who care for our community." AACY Board Member Dominique Renaud is the Event Chair.

The breakfast will honor Dr. Julie Belkowitz, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine; Comcast; and Stallone's Italian Kitchen of Boca Raton, for all of their contributions to AACY and our greater communities.

For more information on this very special event, please visit aacy.org!

New National Advisory Council Member & Additional Updates

AACY would like to announce the newest member to join our National Advisory Council: Dr. P Boerger. We are thrilled to have you join our cause and offer your expertise to our National Advisory Council, and we look forward to a productive year in 2022 with your assistance.

AACY would also like to give a shoutout to one of our other newer National Advisory Council Members, Diana Cose of Lorenzo’s House in Illinois. Lorenzo's House is a wonderful organization and they have just secured a million-dollar donation to continue their work helping to empower loved ones and their families living with younger-onset Alzheimer’s. Congratulations Diana and Lorenzo’s House!

Senior Justice Law Firm Supports AACY with Casino Night Fundraiser

AACY is grateful to announce that our friends over at Senior Justice Law Firm reached out hoping to include us in their Casino Night fundraiser. We were delighted to have been chosen and the event was a resounding success! Over 50 people attended the first annual Senior Justice Law Firm Casino Night in support of Alzheimer’s Community Care, American Association of Caregiving Youth, Meals on Wheels, Honor Flight Network, Alliance for Aging, Inc. and Long Term Care Community Coalition. Through generous donations, guests enjoyed playing popular casino games like craps,
Support each other.

Stay tuned for more information on our next Caregivers Youth Connect event on November 3rd that will kick off National Family Caregivers’ Month. It will be moderated by AZ high school senior and co-author of “Basic Training for Caregivers,” Daniela Castro Martinez.

AACY has officially partnered with DisposeRX. DisposeRX is an organization committed to facilitating medication management behavior change and eradicating the misuse of unused medications. To date, they have donated packets to 419 Community Partners in 50 states plus the District of Columbia, including AACY, addiction support organizations, civic groups, churches, foundations, health departments, law enforcement agencies and many others. AACY is thankful to have the opportunity to work with DisposeRX, as managing and disposing of medications can often be a difficult task for the Caregiving Youth we serve. This is one less thing they have to worry about when they have a means of managing the disposal, and it helps keep potentially dangerous medications from being abused and/or falling into the wrong hands.

Ongoing Support

Here are a few ways you can support AACY!

- Sponsor a Caregiving Youth for $100/month or $1,200 a year. Please contact Stephanie Valery: stephanie@aacy.org for more information.
- Attend our upcoming events
- Become a corporate sponsor
- Share AACY News with your legislators and representatives
- Invite the AACY team to educate others in your life and/or work
- Shop on Amazon! Please consider signing up for the American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY) when you shop on Amazon! Select AACY as your charitable organization and Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases. Sign up today at smile.amazon.com
- Donate HERE

In November and December, Strikes Cigar Lounge hosted two separate successful charity poker nights with AACY as the beneficiary and we could not have been happier to be chosen! Debralyn and Ron Belletieri put together two wonderful events and brought in a lot of local Cigar and Poker aficionados to donate their winnings to Caregiving Youth and their families. For the second poker event in December, all the competitors also brought toys and regiftables from our holiday lists for us to give to our youth and their families at our Holiday Celebration. Together, both charity tournaments raised a combined total of $3,600!

We are so grateful to community partners like Strikes for all the work they do to support Caregiving Youth and their Families.

AACY in the News

Roulette, blackjack, poker, and slot machines. Fake casino chips were redeemed for raffle tickets, and ten prizes were raffled off to lucky winners.

The inaugural event helped raise nearly $1800 for the American Association of Caregiving Youth. On behalf of our staff and the families we serve, we can’t thank you enough Senior Justice Law Firm! We are looking forward to another great year working together in 2022.
We are so grateful for the recent coverage we have received from several different news outlets! See our most up-to-date AACY News, articles, coverage, etc. on our NEW website!

Planning for the Year Ahead

- Thanks to funding partners, we continue to directly serve Caregiving Youth in 33 Palm Beach County middle and high schools, in addition to students in 23 other local middle and high schools where the Caregiving Youth Project (CYP) has yet to expand to!

- Further the four pillars of the Caregiving Youth Institute (CYI): Connect, Advocate, Research and Educate

- Educate legislators to include Caregiving Youth in legislation and policy

- Support child caregivers in military families

- Develop the AACY Network of national partnerships & affiliates

- Create recurring revenue streams to support sustainability

This is just a few of the many tasks we are working on. We are excited to continue our work for AACY and all of the children and families we serve.

We Are Most Grateful to Our Funding & Supporting Partners: