



## A Message From Our Co-founders

It's been wonderful to greet friends we have known for many years and welcome all the new faces who joined the FC family. We come together and help one another feel a sense of belonging to something greater and the freedom to discover our individuality. We need each other to shine in our own unique ways - only then is our community complete. Together we are building friendships, celebrating one another and continuing to enjoy FC- where we all belong.

In gratitude and friendship,  
Chani & Zev Baram



## Stepping Stones Through FC



Teens take the first step and join FC as young as middle school through MVP (Mitzvah Volunteer Program), and over the years have so many opportunities to learn and grow on their FC journey.

Middle schoolers get an intro into the FC world with the comfort of their peers and parents who join them for their first experiences meeting new friends and being a part of an inclusive environment. Aaron has been enjoying Sunday afternoons at FC for the past few years with his older brother, and is now old enough to join MVP and participate in his new role as a friend and role model to other youth and siblings in the program.



“ When I decided to join the MPV program, I wanted to bring the same energy and enthusiasm the older kids gave me. I can tell that my friends are having a great experience at FC through their joy and energy! ” - **Aaron Silber**



## Stepping Stones: The Next Step

As our teens get older they can take a larger leap in their commitment to FC by joining the Teen Leadership Board. FC staff are here as a guide to develop and enhance leadership skills while teens experience behind the scenes of FC and learn what makes a program and organization successful. We work to create a safe and loving space where all of us are comfortable to get to know ourselves, and enhance our communication, delegation, and teamwork skills.

“ MVP taught me the beginnings to what I now know about inclusion, compassion, empathy, and patience. Six years later, I still use the skills I learned to continue forming meaningful relationships with my FC friends and staff, while using my leadership roles to help share my knowledge and love for the organization with others around me. ” - **Ben Miller**

## Hey, Are You Two Sisters?



Yup, Jordyn and Stella get that a lot whenever they are out on the town. You know how it is when you hang out with someone so much, you kind of start to look and act alike.

At first Stella was nervous because Jordyn is nonverbal, for the most part, but after just two times together Stella could see how much this relationship would mean to both of them. They understand one another even without words and know how to read each other's emotions. As soon as Stella arrives to Jordyn's house, it's obvious how excited Jordyn is and how super ready they both are to hang out.

These two are a part of FC's Friends@Home program where they get together on a weekly basis. They became fast friends and find themselves spending lots of time together going out for cookies (Jordyn's favorite thing in the world), enjoying the Nutcracker, and having their own girl time at the recent FC Walk.



### Philly Friendship Walk 2019



crew



alum



families



co-chairs

# People Who Just Get It Supporting FC Parents

“ I talk a lot about how FC has helped my kids but to be honest, I think it has helped me most of all. Being a stay-at-home mom to special needs kids in a city where we knew almost no one was isolating. But I found my tribe at FC, and I could not be more grateful for the love, understanding, and comfort. ” - FC Mom

While their children are busy having fun and building friendships, parents have a chance to connect with a community who share similar experiences and can support one another.

This year, in partnership with Whole Community Inclusion, we piloted a Parent Seminar where parents have the chance to connect and attend workshops focused on self-care, planning for successful sensory-friendly family outings, and discussing the transition to adulthood. One parent shared: **“Thanks for encouraging me to come today. I thought the parent program was great! Very informative and nice to be with people who get it.”**



## Stepping Stones: Raffi Steps Up

This year we are putting special emphasis on the Friends@Home program by forming a committee of FC leaders focused solely on those friendships that are built at home through weekly visits.

One leader, Raffi Stein-Klotz, has valuable perspective as he enjoyed many Friends@Home teens coming to hang out with him when he was younger - it was his favorite program!

As he grew older he transitioned to helping out at many FC programs and events and now sits on this committee. Raffi is a natural leader who always welcomes people at FC. Joining the leadership board means virtual hour-long committee meetings where Raffi shares that he is proud of how he is learning a lot, especially how to listen. His parents reflect that they have seen him grow in listening, processing, taking initiative, and stepping forward - all important leadership skills.

# Support Inclusive Friendships

REMEMBER US IN YOUR END-OF-YEAR GIVING

- Recurring monthly donations
- Lifecycle events: in honor or memory of a loved one
- Online shopping: Amazon Smile (Friendship Circle Philadelphia region, Inc.) & Goodshop (Philly Friendship Circle)
- United Way donations (44542)
- Matching gifts

## inquire about:

- Endowment & naming opportunities
- Corporate matches
- Event sponsorship
- Donations of stock or security
- Legacy gifts



## board of directors

Julie Axelrod, Rebecca Cohen, Jaime Gordon, Tracy Gordon, Howard Levin, Jonathan Seltzer, Kami Verne, Ben Miller (Teen Board Liaison)

## staff

**Chani Baram**, Co-Founder

**Zev Baram**, Executive Director & Co-Founder

**Cait Gilmartin**, Lead Behavioral Consultant

**Alexa Hinds**, Development & Executive Coordinator

**Lee Senderowitsch**, Outreach & Engagement Coordinator

**Jess Shapiro**, Program & Curriculum Coordinator

**Shachar Watemberg**, Director of Operations



**the philly friendship circle** connects teens and young adults to youth with special needs and their families through a full range of social offerings. Inspired by the power of genuine friendships, our youth cultivate understanding, kindness and responsibility while ensuring a caring and inclusive community.



## FC in Israel



airport goodbye



day at the shuk



donkey riding



desert camel adventure



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