



Among Friends

17

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754 South 9th Street • Philadelphia, PA 19147
www.phillyfriendship.com • (215) 574-1765

KICK OFF THE YEAR



WITH THE PHILLY FRIENDSHIP WALK, OCT 9TH, 2016

The 9th Annual Philly Friendship Walk will take place on Sunday, October 9th from 1:00 to 3:30 PM. Over 850 people from across the Greater Philadelphia area will come together for an exciting afternoon of food, fun and friendship at this community event! This amazing event raises crucial funds for the Philly Friendship Circle and awareness for children, teens and young adults with special needs.



As one Friendship Circle mom, Jaime Gordon, shares, "While I had often posted online about special needs and autism, I had never actually posted that my son had autism, even though he had just turned six and he was diagnosed at two. So while many of our friends and family were aware, a large group were not. I was overwhelmed by the many responses I received after posting my link to my Philly Friendship Walk page. So many people reached out, donated or just sent

heartwarming notes. My heart was filled with hope from those near and far. The day of the walk last October, we again felt so loved by our family, friends and acquaintances that came out to support Dylan's team."

"It is important for the community to know about our children and what families like mine go through. ***It is also important for the community to know there is a place called Friendship Circle where all are free to be who they are with no judgment.*** Donating to the walk is a way for our community to support children like mine while also helping to support an organization that means so much to families like ours."

PLEASE JOIN US IN WALKING, DONATING OR FUNDRAISING TO HELP SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMS.

For more information and to register for the Walk (It's free!), visit www.phillyfriendshipwalk.com or call (215) 574-1765.



MEET CELINE

"I love The Friendship Circle - it is an amazing place. It feels like another family."

One of the greatest joys of being involved in Friendship Circle is watching our youth grow into stronger, more confident individuals. We are so proud of Celine Heffron-Perro, who joined FC just over a year ago. Within the past 12 months, she has become a regular at our Teen and Young Adult Division programs and a trusted member of FC who helps out at our events and now volunteers on a regular basis.

Celine first heard about FC when she came across our website. One of her first experiences with FC was as a participant on our Birthright trip to Israel, and she has continued coming to events ever since.



At Sunday Circle, Celine enjoys art and cooking, as well as helping out wherever she is needed. Happily volunteering her time, Celine has shown over and over that she loves helping out with the younger children and interacting with all the different people who come to FC.

She sums up her FC experience best: *"When I first came to FC I was shy and I didn't really know how to interact and as time went on, I could see that it didn't matter who you were, you just needed to be yourself and that's how I decided FC is the place for me."*

Gala Recap

A Revolutionary EVENING

On Sunday, April 3rd, friends, family and supporters of the Philly Friendship Circle gathered together to *Start A Friendship Revolution* at the annual *Join Our Circle* gala! The Revolution began at the Philadelphia Hilton spearheaded by Friendship Revolutionary Sandy Cozen, who rallied the community behind her to support this year's event like never before. The evening also served to honor the incredible work of FC Super Mensch Emanuel Korn and our teens and young adults.

The evening began with a video made by Jon Sherman of Video City Productions, showcasing FC's programs and many teen and young adult volunteers. Following the video was a ceremony; many of those who have worked so hard to make our organization what it is today were honored.

And what evening would be complete without food, drinks and merriment? Following the ceremony, gala attendees enjoyed food and drinks from numerous food stations and kosher wine bar while enjoying the smooth sounds provided by The Jazz Sanctuary. Guests were all smiles as friends and family posed for pictures by Donna Connor Photography. It was truly a night to remember!

We would like to thank our Gala sponsors once again for their generous contributions. Many of our sponsors also attended the Gala. We truly appreciate your show of support and look forward to many more years of friendship together.

Sponsors

Friendship Revolutionary:

Sandy & Steve Cozen

Best Friends Forever:

Vicki & Gary Erlbaum

Reva Golub & Dan Benau

Cherished Chavim:

Assured Guaranty

The Connelly Foundation

Cozen O'Connor

Samuel D. Cozen Memorial Fund

Flyers Charities

Paul & Susie Lichtman

Perfect Pals:

Campus Apartments

Nancy & Martin Black

Amy & Steven Erlbaum

Jill & Mark Fishman

Ken Gamble

Lauren & Michael Heller

Marie & Patrick O'Connor

Sheri & Ken Resnik

Lyn M. Ross

Marcia & Ronald Rubin

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Paula & Bill Glazer

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Michele & Robert Levin

Gail & Elliot Nory



SPOTLIGHT ON A RELATIONSHIP



MEET KATE & HANNAH!

Kate and Hannah's friendship began two years ago through our Friends at Home Program. At their first meeting, Kate thought that Hannah was cute and energetic, and was excited that they both liked a lot of the same things.

Kate says, "I didn't expect us to be so similar. She's starting to take theatre, and she's a girl scout and really likes art and reading - really similar to how I was at her age. So we bonded really, really quickly."

As Hannah's mom, Erica, puts it: "I really appreciate the level of care that goes into pairing the friends to ensure a good match. This clearly was not just a random match of two girls."

The girls spend time at their weekly visits talking about books, playing board games, eating ice cream, going to the playground, or just talking, as all friends do. One of their favorite days spent together was the time that Hannah planned a surprise tea party for Kate and had prepared a picnic of hot chocolate (instead of tea) and cookies, as well as a menu she made herself. They also fondly recall a sleepover they had in the Poconos as one of their favorite memories together.

Hannah's family has also embraced Kate and has enjoyed watching the girls form a powerful friendship. Hannah's mom, Erica, says, "I wasn't surprised that Kate was able to provide Hannah with the sense of having an older sibling without really having one, but I was surprised it went the other way."

Kate has taught Hannah that it's okay to be yourself and not to let other people pressure you into being something you are not. Kate has learned a lot from Hannah, as well. She says, "As much as it gives me an opportunity to teach her things as the older friend, she teaches me stuff about being a good person."

Both Kate and Hannah look forward to many more years of friendship together.

THANK YOU, HEATHER



Heather began her Friendship Circle journey in 2011 and dedicated herself each year to helping the organization grow and improve. Through her kind and compassionate

personality, Heather created personal connections with so many families, participants, and volunteers - not to mention our staff. Thank you, Heather, for all of the hard work and dedication you have put into The Friendship Circle for the past four years! We wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavors!

Behind the Scenes

with our High School Interns



Our 3 senior interns/rockstars: Allison and Kevin with Jory (who interned earlier in the year). Thanks for all your hard work!

ANNIE BARSON

How did you get involved in FC?

I first learned about FC when my mom's friend told us about how his two sons with autism benefited so much from Friends at Home visits each week. I looked up FC online and thought it was the perfect way for me to get involved!

What impact has the Friendship Circle had on your everyday life?

I truly feel that FC has helped me to connect to more people in a way I would never have been able to before. I've become a much more accepting person thanks to FC and have grown to care so much about those in the special needs community.

Do you feel that working as an intern has impacted your work ethic, communication and collaboration skills?

Yes, this experience has been very valuable, especially helping me to strengthen my collaboration skills as I worked with Allison to get our projects done and help FC. I hope to become involved in similar organizations throughout college and intend to intern during my college years, too.

ALLISON OBLON

You've had a "behind the scenes" look at how Sunday Circles and other events come together. What can you take away from working so closely with the Friendship Circle team?

Collaboration is stressed at the FC office. Working as a team fosters an open and creative environment that I felt every day. Throughout our internship, everyone in the office encouraged us to participate in group meetings and give our opinion about ways to improve FC. Interning at FC has given us a taste of what a typical day in the office might look like in our future.

Is there one moment you feel was the "highlight" of your Friendship Circle experience?

During a Leadership League my sophomore year at Chani and Zev's house, I saw FC's (then) headquarters - a small room upstairs. When I walked into the new FC office a few weeks ago, my jaw dropped. I was so proud to see first-hand how much FC has grown, how many new volunteers are participating, and how much of a positive impact FC has on families' lives.

How has working as an intern culminated your Friendship Circle experience?

Interning has given me insight as to how FC events come together from the initial planning stages to the recap meeting after, and a greater appreciation for all of the hard work the staff puts in every day. Since I had only seen the volunteer side of FC, I really enjoyed this different perspective. I hope to continue working with organizations like FC in college.

MIAMI RECAP: TEAM FRIENDSHIP TAKES SOUTH BEACH

This past winter, supporters of the Philly Friendship Circle participated in the Miami bike-a-thon and marathon through Team Friendship. The athletes walked or ran both half and full marathon routes (13.1 or 26.2 miles), while the bikers rode from Miami Beach to Key West.



Sherrill Neff, who biked in Miami, recounts, "The ride was long, the weather hot, and the task difficult, but with the support and friendship of so many, our bikers were able to ride and our runners stride, for an important cause."



Neff's wife, Alicia Felton, finished the half marathon in honor of her son, Michael, despite fighting lower leg injuries. She recalls, "My Michael wakes up every morning with a smile on his face ready to greet the day, despite his challenges. He inspired me to do the same - it was truly a beautiful day."

We are so proud of Sherrill, Alicia and all the members of Team Friendship.



The next Miami marathon is on January 29, 2017, while Bike Miami will be held February 19, 2017, in order to participate, bikers and runners must fundraise for the cause. A 2-night stay at a high-end hotel resort, round trip airfare to the race destination, coached training, a custom Team Friendship jersey, post-race celebration and fundraising resources are included. Visit TeamFriendship.org to learn more or to see other ways to get involved through various endurance events including runs and bike-a-thons as well as hikes.

THIS JUST ADDED!!! BIKE DOWN THE SHORE WITH FC!!!

The Philly Friendship Circle will be hopping on the last leg of **Bike For Friendship's Bike Across America** on **August 28, 2016**. This leg stretches from **Philadelphia to Atlantic City**. Come out and ride with the cyclists as they approach the end of their cross country journey.

Contact info@phillyfriendship.com for more details.

Who we are:

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.



The Philly Friendship Circle
754 South 9th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
www.phillyfriendship.com

Executive Board:

REBECCA COHEN **JONATHAN SELTZER**
LEZA RAFFEL **GAIL SIMON**

Our Staff:

Rabbi Zev Baram, Executive Director
Chani Baram, Community Engagement
Victoria Branca, Administrative and Marketing Coordinator
Emily Coplon, Accounting
Jared Pashko, Outreach and Friends @ Home Coordinator
Jared Rosenbloom, Program and Curriculum Coordinator
Marsha Stamm, Director of Operations

ENJOY OUR NEWSLETTER!

Read on for highlights from a wonderful year of friendship.



End of year color run with our new MVP volunteers



Friends stay in touch! Alumna Avigail with her buddy Adina



The community enjoying our art show



An artist explains his work at our art show



Our artists at work; getting ready for the show



Jammin' at Sunday Circle



Some of Fellowship Award recipients at the end of year ceremony



Friends spending time at Haverford Circle



Friends at play at Sunday Circle



Leadership League gets crazy at our annual gala



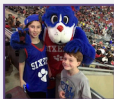
Friends making their own matzah



Ambassadors and their Friends at Home buddies making Purim packages



See more of Ryan's photos on our Instagram using #HumansoffC



Enjoying our Chanukah present from the 76'ers



Happy Sukkot from our teen and young adult division