



# Among Friends

Winter 2017 / 5778 Issue

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## Friendship Circle Art Show

Each year we are thrilled to host 3 marquee community events inviting guests to come together to celebrate openness, inclusion and to support each other. The art show is one of these special events... without a specific fundraising goal. We spend this



time to appreciate the creativity of our FC Youth. Each year we choose an art medium to work on at our Sunday Circle art sessions. We bring in experts to facilitate our classes under the guided supervision of our amazing art directors. We started 4 years ago with a breakout album and moved to mixed media, photography and this year CLAY. These mediums level the playing field and allow us all to approach the unique project with our own perspective and create pieces

that speak to each of us. This year we are focusing on pottery and have partnered with some great artisans at the Clay Studio and Expressive Hands who bring specialized techniques and materials into our programs. We have learned about making pottery, how it's fired, glazed and finished. Bowls, plates, tiles, Chamsas and more made in these sessions will be on display at the art show this January, and they will all be for sale at reasonable prices. Seeing our artists share their art with everyone is an uplifting experience. One child shared, "I want to surprise people by putting a heart in the bottom." Another told us, "I took the little pieces we made on the table and incorporated them into the design. I think it will make the bowl a memorable piece." The reception is spectacular, and we hope you will join us to hear more amazing stories from our artists. This show is made possible by a generous gift from the Bear Givers, an organization that recognizes the beauty and creativity in art and supports this art program. As we see the final show coming together, we have jitters looking at the final gallery, completing the story for each piece of art and adding the finishing touches of what will undoubtedly be an amazing event. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Join us!



January 14, 2017  
2:00-4:30PM

# MVP 2.0

Engaging teens means meeting them where they are, it's true for all children. Last spring we piloted a cutting edge MVP program for our 6th and 7th graders, typically Bar/Bat Mitzvah students. We've made our class more accessible by creating a hybrid curriculum taking place at our Sunday programs and in online video conference calls. We are able to use this exciting new space with chat features, screenshares, video links and more to connect and

have meaningful dialogue. We discuss communication and open mindedness through the unique lens of Judaism and special needs awareness. At Sunday Circle, we welcome MVP parents with their children to plug in, enjoy the activities and witness the magic. Ask any of the parents, it's something that just can't be described, you have to witness it to experience the true awesomeness of what we are facilitating. We have been able to double the number of sessions with this new platform, reaching more teens in our community, and we are thrilled the program has had such great acceptance. We are currently in our second session of the year with a full class already enrolled this coming winter. We are excited to see this program grow and are looking at new ways to improve with higher quality meetings and by offering more sessions. As always, we are looking to build new partnerships, so please reach out if you think you can help. Our team can not wait to see where this program will take us... the sky's the limit.

Follow us!



@phillyfriendship



We'd call this section "Meet Aubrey" but if you're familiar with Friendship Circle, you probably already know her. From handing out shirts and cutting the ribbon at the Walk, to serving as a teen chair at the 2017 Gala, Aubrey is no stranger to Friendship Circle events and activities. When distance made it difficult for Aubrey and Amanda to meet at one of their houses, they began meeting at a local mall. Aubrey and Amanda grew close, and their own friendship circle grew as friends from school joined them on their weekly shopping adventures. Amanda has moved away to college and Aubrey has begun new adventures of her own. When she isn't working at a thrift store, figure skating, or attending the teen orientation at Sunday Circle, you can find Aubrey managing her busy calendar and coordinating her schedule including her new Friends@Home hangouts. We don't know how Aubrey does it all but we love seeing her walk into our programs every time with a smile on her face.

**Friends@Home**

# Spotlight

# More Than A Walk: A Celebration of Friendship

This year we held our 10th Annual Philly Friendship Walk. We welcomed over 650 people at the event in October and raised over \$100,000 in one of the most successful campaigns to date. With help from friends at the Jewish Federation, JBHA, JChai and Cheder who hosted our event at the Bryn Mawr campus, we were able to use a new, accessible route, enjoying more of the beautiful grounds surrounded by nature. Hashem answered our prayers and made sure the weather was spectacular and the event went off without a hitch. During these campaigns, we are blown away as we watch our community mobilize through individual peer-to-peer fundraising pages. Hearing the stories of our teens, parents and families is so lovely to read. One mother highlights a wonderful success and growth story about her son. She writes:

"Over the past 6 years, we have had so many wonderful doctors, therapists and other professionals lend their expertise to help us give our children every opportunity to understand and succeed in a world that doesn't always make sense to them. I got a call from my son's teacher last fall.

During a group discussion, the question was "What is the one thing you don't have that you really, really want?" Answers ranged from "a pony" and "every Pokémon card" to "gummy bears". My son's answer was "friends". I called Philly Friendship Circle the next day. 10 days later we went to a Sunday Circle and 2 hours later he walked out talking about all of his new friends. Several months later we started play dates with his friends from school. He loves playing with his friends and his play dates are fun for everyone involved. He did a lot of work to get here, and Philly Friendship Circle was with us the whole way. All of a sudden there is a place where they can go and be themselves and yet still gain many of the skills they need to succeed. Moreover, as a parent to kids with special needs, life can often be isolating. Philly Friendship Circle gives me a place to meet new friends, learn more about opportunities for my family -

sometimes just take a break on a long Sunday."

The walk is a day to celebrate these accomplishments and join together in an environment that makes sure all of our community members can have fun. From Kashrut, to curb cuts, allergies and more we try to think of it all. It's a process, and we are getting there, but that will never stop us from bringing everyone together for this great cause. As we look forward to the Gala this spring, we are already beginning to plan our Walk for 2018. Thank you for our continued participation in our programs, your support and most of all your friendship.



Add us!



@phillyfriend



## 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.

While creating inclusive friendships, our youth cultivate understanding, kindness, and responsibility while ensuring a caring and accepting community.

### Our Staff

Rabbi Zev Baram \* Chani Baram \* Jared Rosenbloom  
\* Jared Pashko \* Alexa Hinds \* Haley Johnson

### Board of Directors

Rebecca Cohen \* Jaime Gordon \* Tracy Gordon \*  
Leza Raffel \* Josh Rosen \* Jonathan Seltzer



13th annual  
**Join Our Circle**  
Gala

**Save the Date**  
April 15, 2018

## make an impact

Join our Chai Club and donate monthly

Consider establishing a legacy gift

Donate for a loved one  
In honor of ★ In memory of

Support FC when you shop online  
AMAZONSMILE - Friendship Circle Philadelphia Region, Inc  
GOODSHOP - Philly Friendship Circle

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United Way Donations (44542) ★ Stock Donations

