



# The Circle

• Together, we can perform miracles • Together, we can perform miracles • Together, we can perform miracles •

## Teen Scene Friendship Circle Expands

This year I had the opportunity to get involved with The Friendship Circle and be a part of a program that is making a difference in the lives of countless people in our Seattle community. As a Repair the World intern at Hillel UW, I worked with Chana and Esther to create a monthly Teen Scene program, bringing together high school and college aged volunteers to plan and run activities with our friends at The Friendship Circle. Each month we would come together at Hillel for an evening of fun games, arts and crafts, and dinner all while building new friendships.

Our programs created a more inclusive environment for our friends with special needs and an opportunity for our volunteers to be a part of an experience that made a positive impact on everyone involved. At the conclusion of each program, our friends would share their favorite activity of the night and



leave the building smiling and looking forward to our next Teen Scene. Each Teen Scene served as both a learning experience and an incredible example of the powerful impact we can have on each other through the gift of friendship.

Participating in Teen Scene was an enriching experience and a great way to become involved with an incredible community. The work of the Friendship Circle helps our friends with special needs bloom as they enter their teenage years and gain the confidence to develop their talents and skills. Our social activities paired with our enthusiastic volunteers helped to decrease barriers and create a more including environment for fun, learning, and friendship. Together with thoughtfulness and caring, we built friendships and lasting memories for everyone involved.

- David Weingarten, Teen Scene Volunteer



## Summer Fun! Camp FC

Plans for The Friendship Circle's Summer Camp are heating up! The Friendship Circle's second annual Summer Camp, held August 19-22 at Temple Beth Am in North Seattle, will feature all kinds of summertime adventures including trips to the Seattle Children's Museum, fun at the park, and awesome therapeutic activities.



The Friendship Circle is so excited to provide a typical camp experience for children of all abilities and is looking forward to **having some fun in the sun with our kids and volunteers!**



### INSIDE

Feeling the Miracles  
Dinner Pictures

2 MVP - Changing Today's Youth  
2 Special Thanks

3  
3

JOIN US - OCT. 13TH, 2013  
Walk With Friendship

# Feeling the Miracles

## Dinner 2013



### Reflections of a first-time dinner attendee by Elizabeth Davis

Full disclosure: my husband, Rob Jacobs, and daughter, Sophie Rittenberg, have attended the annual Friendship Circle dinner for the past several years. Each time they've come home and told me what a wonderful evening I'd missed. The space was "cool," the food was good, there was time to catch up with friends and of course, that they were there to support a tremendous organization goes without saying. I'd wanted to go but with my teen and in-house babysitter otherwise engaged, I missed out.

Initially I hadn't planned to attend this year but my daughter implored, "Eema, I'm going to be in the video so you have to come see it." So I did.

Now I can honestly say two things: **I should have come years before and "Wow!" I'm so impressed by what Friendship Circle accomplishes.** I'm kvelling over the many teens that devote themselves to supporting and engaging with this organization.

Yes, the event itself is tremendous. The site was hip, the feeling in the room was energetic, the fleishigs were yummy and the schmooze time was fun. Yes, I got to connect with friends and acquaintances who come from across Seattle's spectrum and are all gathered together in one place in support of one cause.

What I wasn't really prepared for was that moment when the teen volunteers walked into the room. They kept coming and coming and coming – so many teens walked into the room. So many of our community's best and brightest hopes for our future smiled as they were welcomed with thunderous applause. They really deserved the ovation. These young volunteers set an example for all to follow. They inherently understand what



Hillel meant when he said, "if not now, when?" They're making a difference right now.

Over the past school year, my daughter Sophie

has served as a Friends@Home volunteer. I know she's loved getting to know Sage. I knew she would take her commitment seriously. What I didn't fully anticipate was seeing how she blossomed and grew from her volunteering experience.

Whether it's seeing the emerging empowerment or maturation or just *mentschlikeit*, I've loved how the Sophie-Sage relationship has developed. I've also been pleased to see that Sophie's involvement with Friendship Circle has spilled over into other areas of her life – her burgeoning patience, her willingness to step up, the pride she expresses in sharing her Jewish identity with a special friend.

I know it's not just my daughter who's had a positive experience with Friendship Circle. Each teen I've spoken with has shared similar feelings about how they've gained by their connection with this great organization. Each teen has taken to heart a statement made by Winston Churchill: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

I realize the annual Friendship Circle dinner may be the only opportunity some have to experience all that this organization does. Until I attended this year's dinner, I, too, was one of those people. I didn't fully appreciate the entirety and impact that Friendship Circle has on volunteers, parents – and of course children.

Friends@Home, Sunday Circle, Sib Circle, Mom's Night Out, Teen Scene, holiday programming – the calendar is always full. With all of their activities – crafts to celebrations, music to mitzvot – Friendship Circle is more than just the sum of its parts. While I know it may be a little soon to be thinking about the next Friendship Circle annual dinner on May 25th, 2014, it's already on my calendar.

## Our Programs:

Friends @ Home  
Sunday Circle  
Teen Scene  
Volunteer Club  
Summer Camp  
Leadership Club  
MVP  
FC Wraps  
Sib Circle  
Holiday Programs  
JLI Teens  
Mom's Night Out  
Family Programs

## Our Staff:

**Rabbi Elazar Bogomilsky**  
Executive Director

**Esther Bogomilsky**  
Program Director

**Ali Blum**  
Development Assistant

**Chana Kornfeld**  
Volunteer Coordinator

**Meghan Sissom**  
Movement Specialist

**Wendy Zieve**  
Musical Therapist

**Erin Katz**  
Behavioral Advisor

**Jacob Lunon**  
Kung Fu Master

This past school year, The Friendship Circle welcomed two classes of seventh and eighth grade MVP graduates as full-fledged Friendship Circle volunteers! MVP is one of the newest Friendship Circle programs and it has been an **amazing success at teaching middle school aged youth about working with children with special needs** and the importance of volunteerism and community involvement.

After completing the four week training series, graduates and their parents organized two awesome events- a beach party and sports carnival! Here is what parents and MVP participants had to say:



I started volunteering at The Friendship Circle **with four of my best friends**. We all did the special MVP training sessions and now we started volunteering at Sunday Circle. I have just started doing home visits with the most darling girl whose name is Brady and **I love doing it. I love being with the kids at The Friendship Circle** and I look forward to continuing for a long time.

- Jordi Goldberg, MVP graduate and Friendship Circle volunteer

My son Jake was involved in the MVP program this year and **I can honestly say it was one of the best things that has ever happened to him**. The program showed Jake that we are all human beings with feelings and emotions who just want to be loved and have friends no matter what our differences may be. His heart was full when he spent time with his "buddy" Silas and he talks about him and misses him all the time. **The Friendship Circle has made a huge impact on all of our lives**. It has taught us that everyone deserves a friend, everyone deserves to be loved and treated with kindness and respect.

- Kris Baruch - MVP MOM



## Special Thank You!

1.

**Seniors:** The Friendship Circle wants to give a huge congratulations to all of its graduating seniors! **Victoria Anderson, Zev Behar, Sophie Cohanim, Talia Etsekson, John Gallagher, David Kintzer, Benjamin Zawadzki, Jonathan Zawadzki**. All of our seniors have been amazing volunteers and we have been honored to watch them grow into compassionate, generous young adults. We are so proud of all that they have achieved thus far and we wish them the best of luck as they begin a new chapter in their lives! Thank you so much for your dedication to your community.



2.

**FC Dinner:** Thank you so much to our supporters, dinner chairs **Helene Behar and Lori Gamel**, honorees **Talia Etsekson and her parents Don and Deanne**, and all of our volunteers for all you did to make this dinner a success. We are so grateful for your support, solidarity, and generosity.

3.

**Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle:** Thank you for your ongoing partnership. We are so honored to be receiving support for Sunday Circle, Friends@Home, and Summer Camp in 2014. Your past and present support has had an incredible impact on our organization and so many families, children and teens with special needs. Thank you!



## The Friendship Circle

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[www.FriendshipCircleWA.org](http://www.FriendshipCircleWA.org)



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### WHAT IS THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE?

The Friendship Circle is a unique organization with a refreshing approach to helping families of children with special needs. Our innovative programming and creative activities are designed to foster a relationship between community teenagers and the children by drawing on the love, boundless energy and dynamism of our teenage population.

**MVP**

**Teen Scene**

**Sunday Circle**

**Summer Camp**

**Sib Circle**

**Leadership Club**

**Friends@Home**

**Volunteer Club**

**Mom's Night Out**

**Holiday Programs**



# WALK WITH FRIENDSHIP

Walk with your **Heart**  
and help Families with Special Needs Children & Teens

October 13th, 2013

**1K & 5K**

[www.WalkWithFriendship.org](http://www.WalkWithFriendship.org)

**206-374-3637**