



Circle

Winter 2014



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE REFLECTIONS: Moms Know Best



Aviv and her Friends@Home buddy, Fay.

Anat Caspi (Mother of Aviv, 3)

Q: How long have you been involved with FC?

A: Since May of 2013

Q: How did you hear about the organization?

A: We were new to Seattle, so I was searching online for special needs resources.

Q: Would you say FC helped ease your transition into Seattle?

A: It definitely helped ease our transition. It was nice being able to meet other local families who also have children with different abilities.

Q: In which programs are you and Aviv currently involved?

A: Friends@Home, FC Summer Camp, and we like to come to Sunday Circle when we can.

Q: How did you come to know Fay, Aviv's Friends@Home buddy?

A: We met Fay at camp, and she was immediately very good at understanding Aviv's needs. She knew to bring things into her field of view, and approach her as any other child, because she is cognitively aware. We also met Fay's sister, Dina, at camp, so it was really great to make that family connection.

Q: What does FC mean to you and your family?

A: A lot! It's a community. It provides Aviv with socialization and the chance to interact with other kids in a comfortable and familiar environment. Camp offered Aviv an opportunity she doesn't usually have — not only interaction, but interaction with caring kids who are trained in the ways to guide her. She doesn't have older siblings, so it was a great introduction to a group of older kids who are compassionate and helpful.

Q: What message would you like to send to our volunteers?

A: Keep up the good work! Approach every child with new eyes and be open to learning. A kid with different abilities just means they have other abilities. Interacting with them is an opportunity to learn new ways of communication. Whether they are nonverbal, or just communicate in an atypical fashion, you can often decipher their message by remaining attuned to their body language and unique facial expressions or gesticulations. Learning how to "listen" with parts of your body other than your ears is a lifelong skill.

Q: What are you looking forward to in years to come with FC?

A: Continuing friendship and mutual growth.

A kid with different abilities just means they have other abilities.

Turn the page for more Friendship Circle Reflections >

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE REFLECTIONS: Moms Know Best

Nancy Gordon (Mother of Josh, 13)

Q: How has FC impacted Josh?

A: The Friendship Circle has had a huge impact on Josh. We were one of the first families to benefit from FC's services, and when we started Josh was only three years old. It helped him learn to socialize better, develop play and people skills, and experience true friendship.

Q: How has FC impacted your family?

A: We began our FC journey with Friends@Home, which was incredibly valuable for me, because it gave me a chance to catch my breath and take some time for myself once a week while the volunteers played with Josh and Emily. Ten years later, the impact has greatly increased. Emily is now on the Volunteer Leadership Board, so she is able to give back, and Josh has been lucky enough to have many buddies over the years who have treated him like a friend and not an obligation.

Q: What level of consistency has FC provided for you and your family?

A: We know we always have something to look forward to — a safe, loving environment that has been so critical for Josh, therapeutically and socially.

Q: How have you seen FC evolve since you first started?

A: I've seen it grow tremendously. Initially it was only one program, and now it has evolved into so many quality programs: Teen Scene, Sib Shops, Holiday Programs, etc. It has evolved into a full-fledged community, and one of the biggest perks is that you can utilize everything it has to offer, or you can pick and choose and establish a level of involvement that works for you. The best part is knowing that no matter your level of involvement, FC is like a second home. We can't always take Josh everywhere we want to go, but we are always welcome at Friendship Circle.

And it's not only the programming for children with special needs that has grown. The volunteer training program has advanced each year in terms of what they're teaching the kids. They are creating good citizens and better people, helping them be more tolerant and accepting, and teaching them to see the child, not the disability.



Q: What would you say to a family who is considering enrolling their child in FC?

A: It's really a no-brainer. Your child will meet new friends, participate in beneficial activities (Kung Fu, art and music therapy), and experience unique opportunities to build social skills. On top of that, you as a parent gain respite and have a chance to socialize with families who are in a similar situation to your own.

Q: What would you say to a family whose teen is interested in volunteering?

A: There are not many programs that build compassionate leaders from such a young age. Friendship Circle creates lifelong leaders who are inclusive of all regardless of differences. The skills they gain are incredibly important as the number of special needs diagnoses increase, and they will take them so far in life.

Josh has been lucky enough to have many buddies over the years who have treated him like a friend and not an obligation.

How FC Stacks Up



"Don't walk in front of me;
I may not follow...
Don't walk behind me;
I may not lead...
Just walk beside me
and be my friend."



12

Programs and Growing!

497

Children and Families Served

674

Volunteers Since 2004

28,346

Service Hours to Date

37

Public and Private Schools Represented



BALLARD HIGH BELLEVUE COLLEGE BELLEVUE HIGH SCHOOL CASCADE PARENT PARTNERSHIP EASTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL
ECKSTEIN MIDDLE SCHOOL HAMILTON INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL INGLEMOOR HIGH SCHOOL INGRAHAM HIGH SCHOOL
INTERLAKE HIGH SCHOOL ISLANDER HIGH SCHOOL ISLANDER MIDDLE SCHOOL ISSAQUAH HIGH SCHOOL ISSAQUAH MIDDLE SCHOOL
JEWISH DAY SCHOOL JUANITA HIGH SCHOOL LAKE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL MERCER ISLAND HIGH SCHOOL
MMSC DAY SCHOOL NATHAN HALE HIGH SCHOOL NEWPORT HIGH SCHOOL NYHS NORTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OPEN WINDOW SCHOOL OVERLAKE SCHOOL PINE LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL REDMOND HIGH SCHOOL REDMOND MIDDLE SCHOOL
ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL SEATTLE ACADEMY OF THE ARTS & SCIENCES SEATTLE GIRLS' SCHOOL SEATTLE HEBREW ACADEMY
THE BUSH SCHOOL UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY PREP WOODINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

WALK WITH FRIENDSHIP

2014

“None of us is complete unless all of us are included”

“Invest in friendship”

Around 400 people gathered at Luther Burbank Park on Sunday, September 21, for our **Third Annual Walk With Friendship**.

Shellie Hart of Warm 106.9 and Angela Russell of Kiro 7 emceed this year’s event, and other notable community sponsors including Swedish Medical Center, Seattle Children’s and Naked Juice were in attendance. The Mariner Moose stopped by for photo ops and helped lead the group warm up, under the direction of Dana Azose. Jacob Lunon’s talented crew from Macabee Martial Arts gave an exciting performance, and the event culminated in a Daddy Dunk Tank, which was the perfect end to the toasty day’s festivities.

A huge thank you to Billy Poll, Robbie Cape, Willie Stump, Sean Adelman, and Ilan Kantor for getting wet for the cause. Your generosity was so infectious that several of those in attendance volunteered to get dunked on the spot! Even Rabbi Bogomilsky agreed to brave the water after the crowd pledged an additional \$1,000 to see him get dunked!



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE IN ACTION:

TEEN SCENE SUMMER OUTING >



> FC SUMMER CAMP





“He who finds a friend, finds a treasure”

Thanks to everyone who joined a team, sponsored a walker, and came out to support us in our efforts to raise awareness and funds for our amazing families. It was a spectacular event and we are already looking forward to next year!



MVP >



SUNDAY CIRCLE >



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:

Leadership Board



Aliya Korch

This is my fifth year volunteering with The Friendship Circle! I'm really excited about being on Leadership Board, because it gives me the chance to not only be a role model, but take on more responsibility and help plan some of the programs and events. For my senior project, I would like to organize a focus group for FC parents, where they can discuss

their hopes and fears about what their children will face at school, and ultimately provide the schools with suggestions.

My time with Friendship Circle has taught me understanding, patience, and how to interact with different kinds of people. I continue to volunteer because I love it! You get to meet great people — but it's not just about getting something out of it — it's about helping the community and lessening the gap between typical and special needs individuals. I've learned how to communicate more effectively with a broader range of people, and it has definitely had an effect on my desire to work in early education, possibly in a special education context. I think more people my age should participate. It opens your eyes to the needs of others and it's a very real way that our generation can help and give back.

It's a very real way that our generation can help and give back.

Josh Granaada

I originally came to know The Friendship Circle because I was their intern this summer. Working at FC Summer Camp was my favorite experience of my internship, because I finally got to work with the kids and see what I was helping to build. After that I knew I wanted to volunteer. I'm excited about Leadership Board because it allows me to continue learning about the behind the scenes action of the organization.

I'm not always known as a patient person, but through Friendship Circle, I've learned to keep calm and be patient with the kids, because when you experience those moments where you and your buddy are enjoying each other's company, it's so worth it. Silas, my Friends@Home buddy, is so energetic and fun, and most of the time I'm just trying to keep up! I'm really looking forward to steadily building my relationship with him through our weekly visits. That's what makes FC so unique, it's not about a cause, it's about a connection. To anyone thinking about volunteering, I would tell them to come to one Sunday Circle. If you're skeptical — about the time commitment or difficulty you might face — you won't be anymore.



It's not about a cause, it's about a connection.



**FC Wraps
4th Annual Toy Drive**
Benefitting children
throughout
Washington State

**DONATION
RECIPIENTS:**



Seattle Children's
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION



What The Friendship Circle Taught me About Giving

Steven Greenstein

Both of our daughters volunteered with The Friendship Circle for three years. It is clear that FC volunteers have an urge to give, a sensitivity and understanding of giving without making the recipient feel like a receiver. These such volunteers are real partners; partners in the greatest civilization of all — a community.

The Friendship Circle is not a one-sided charity. It covers many angles and there are many different people who prosper, learn, and develop. It is not only about the children, who are receiving friendship, but also the teens who are learning the importance of giving, the parents who witness the positive changes in their children, and ultimately the whole community benefits.

My interaction with the organization made me look at myself, my children, and my community differently. It made me aware of what other people go through, and how even though I may deal with hardships every day, there are other people who experience more hardships and deal with them more gracefully. It fostered a lot of personal growth.

My children learned to see beyond their own perspective. They grew to understand the plight of others and the importance of giving their time, which they are still doing to this day. There is no greater reward for a parent than seeing their children give of themselves, and that comes from being taught by a caring community like The Friendship Circle.

This is so much more than a local organization. I was introduced to FC in Seattle, and so it will always have a special place in my heart, but it taught me to give and see other people's lives and how they cope, which are lessons that stretch far beyond a single community. The Bogomilskys have kept in touch with us, which is proof positive of the caring and learning network The Friendship Circle provides.



Supporting FC is not only a financial exercise, although that is very important. Being a true supporter means being active in The Friendship Circle. It's about giving not just money, but also time. Individuals who step inside the circle and see children growing and teens thinking outside of their own needs will experience the true reward that comes from supporting The Friendship Circle.

This is so much more than a local organization.

What
Will Your
LEGACY
Be?

There are many ways you can help complete the seamless circle of friendship! Cash, Stocks, Real Estate, Automobiles, Employee Matching Gifts, and Planned Giving.

Whatever inspires you, whatever drives you — you can make a difference by supporting The Friendship Circle with a bequest directed to any purpose or program. By including the Friendship Circle in your estate plans, you will help to promote inclusion and create the next generation of leaders, thinkers and doers, benefitting our way of life here in our community and beyond.

We'd be happy to discuss your options with you or your financial adviser. For more information or to schedule a meeting, please call us at **206-FRIENDS** or email us at donate@friendshipcirlewa.org



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FC ALUMNI: Where Are They Now?

Ariel Greene

Q: How long did you volunteer with FC?

A: Four years

Q: In which programs were you involved?

A: Just about everything. Friends@Home, Sunday Circle, planning and setting up events. Basically if it was happening at Friendship Circle, I was a part of it.

Q: What lessons did you take away from your time with FC?

A: I learned how to deal with all different kinds of people in a multitude of different situations. Each kid is unique and so they teach you something unique about social interaction.

Q: How did volunteering with FC shape you into the person you are today?

A: Volunteering with The Friendship Circle taught me how to be respectful of people who are different and to always find the bright side of things.

Q: Does your time with FC still have an impact on your life?

A: Absolutely. I still visit my buddy Zusha once a week.

Q: As someone who is busy studying at UW and working, why has visiting Zusha remained a priority?

A: Over the years we spent together as Friends@Home buddies, we built a real friendship. I didn't want to let that go.

Q: What would you say to a teen who is considering volunteering with FC?

A: Definitely do it! It's the best volunteer opportunity out there. It's a chance to make good friends and it's an experience you won't get anywhere else.



Left: Ariel in 2007
Below: Ariel in 2014



“
**It's the best
volunteer
opportunity
out there.**”

GIVE THE GIFT EVERY CHILD WANTS ON THEIR BIRTHDAY:

A Party with All Their Friends!

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