

Volunteers for the Homebound & Family Caregivers News

Caring for the invisible: homebound persons and family caregivers.
December 2009

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VHFC Becomes AACY

By Connie Siskowski, RN, PhD — Founder and President

It is with many mixed emotions that we begin a new chapter in our non-profit life of service.

I will never forget how my heart ached when in 1996, during a house call with a physician from MD to YOU that I met “Mary”, who lived across from Boca’s City Hall. Mary’s only relative was her niece in California. By telephone, Mary was “fine”, but her refrigerator was empty and her toilet was clogged.

And, I will never forget my thoughts as I waited to go into a meeting at the offices of the National Council on Aging in Washington, DC in 1997. “This is what Boca needs!” I realized as I read the pamphlet about “Faith in Action” that I had picked up from the table beside me...a volunteer support program that could not only help people in our community such as Mary, but also could receive seed funding to do this from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation!

Thanks to the help and support of many since our first organizational meeting in August of 1997 in the old Fellowship Hall at First United Methodist Church, Boca Raton Interfaith in Action was born. In August 2005, we changed our name to **Volunteers for the Homebound & Family Caregivers (VHFC)** since the word “Interfaith” seemed controversial to some.

During these 11 years, we have promoted the dignity and independence of countless individuals through our direct and indirect services that, for many families, extended over years of service. Not only have those who are home alone been blessed through VHFC caring service, but our volunteers, who have shared precious time, talents and personal resources, have enjoyed purposed service and a connection to others that can never be experienced except by giving of one’s self.



Paula Alderson, President & CEO of Hospice by the Sea, and Fred Galland, Chairman of VHFC/AACY, signing the transition documents while Connie Siskowski watches.

Now, effective January 1, 2010, VHFC will take on a new name – the **American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY)**. And, while this change denotes an alternate direction for future activities, we have not abandoned our original constituency. **Aloesea**, a non-hospice program under the auspices of Hospice by the Sea (HBTS), will continue the VHFC free respite and support services for those who have been in our care, along with their volunteers.

According to Paula Alderson, President and CEO of HBTS, “We feel privileged to continue the significant contribution that VHFC has provided to the greater Boca community over the past 11 years. Our Aloesea Caregiver Program already includes the delivery of respite care and will be able to offer additional caregiver support services to existing VHFC clients. We welcome our new extended family of homebound individuals, caregiving families and volunteers and are grateful for this opportunity to expand our care in the community.”

As our new name indicates, AACY will focus on issues related to youth caregivers. Due to the growth of the Caregiving Youth Project we started in 2006 the VHFC Board determined to focus its energy in the expansion of the youth program to a national level through the official transformation of its AACY program to a non-profit organization. It is the first organization in our nation that identifies, recognizes and supports this growing hidden youth population who provide assistance to family members with an illness, the effects of aging or a disability.

Please join with us in celebration of this transition and our focus on youth caregiving. We continue to need you to invest donations of your time, talent and treasure (any amount is welcome) in youth caregiving families in our greater community and our nation. Share in the continuing service and success of AACY!

Connie Siskowski Awarded 2009 Purpose Prize

Connie's Own Caregiving Youth Story

In my early "tween" years I cared for my grandfather while his health steadily declined. Later in my life I learned that there were longer-term consequences as a result of this role I had as a child.

As a grandmother I returned to school to have a larger voice for family caregivers. My doctoral research uncovered a large number of kids in Palm Beach County who are caring for ill, aging, or disabled family members. They bear adult-sized responsibilities such as bathing, dressing, assisting with walking, giving medications, as well as helping with oxygen and other medical equipment for a family member. This work has a profound effect on the health, education and overall development of these youth.

While with our eyes we can see people who are homeless, hungry and who need clothing, our eyes cannot see behind closed doors into the work and lives of America's more than 1.3 million youth caregivers.

The Caregiving Youth Project works in partnership with the school district and offers youth support throughout their caregiving years. The more than 260 youth caregivers from seven middle schools and fifteen high schools and their families now experience, as caregiving youth mom Renee Anise writes to us, "I now know we are no longer alone."

Our broad goal is that no youth caregiver should drop out of school because of his or her role in family caregiving responsibilities. Although a few of our kids have moved away, we are in touch with the majority...and...they are still in school!

We have much yet to accomplish! Caregiving youth are a part of our community; their success and future productivity is important not only for them, but also for you and for me. Our arms are wide open to welcome the help of others to turnaround and transform lives – these young lives may well be our leaders of tomorrow!

Please visit our new website at www.aacy.org and join with us in this valuable work!



Connie Siskowski with Marc Freedman CEO & Founder of Civic Ventures at the Purpose Prize Award Ceremony in Woodside, California; October, 2009.



Kadniel with his grandmother.

Caregiving Youth Featured in Video

Kadniel Blackwood who cares for his grandmother and Ginelle Rodriguez who cares for her mom are the two youth caregivers featured in the Purpose Prize video filmed by NJ based Talking Eyes Media on behalf of Civic Ventures. Pictured is Kadniel with his grandmother. It is through the courage of these students and their families that professionals and the public is beginning to understand how special youth caregivers are to their family and to society.

New Caregiving Research Results

Caregiving is still mostly a woman's job and many women are putting their career and financial futures on hold as they juggle part-time caregiving and full-time job requirements. This is the reality reported in *Caregiving in the U.S. 2009*, the most comprehensive examination to date of caregiving in America. The first national profile of caregivers, [Family Caregiving in the U.S.](#) was published in 1997, and an updated version of the study, [Caregiving in the U.S.](#), was reported in 2004.

The sweeping 2009 study of the legions of people caring for younger adults, older adults, and children with special needs reveals that 29 percent of the U.S. adult population, or 65.7 million people, are caregivers, including 31 percent of all households. **Of these 37% also have children under the age of 18 years at home.** These caregivers provide an average of 20 hours of care per week. The 2009 reports also begin to trend the findings from all three waves of the study.

The study, funded by [MetLife Foundation](#) and conducted for the [National Alliance for Caregiving](#) in collaboration with [AARP](#) by [Mathew Greenwald & Associates](#), is the result of interviews with 1,480 caregivers chosen at random. The research was designed to replicate similar studies conducted in 2004 and 1997 and includes, for the first time, a sampling of those caring for children as well as those caring for adults over the age of 18.



VHFC Welcomes Two New Board Members



Jeffrey R. Firestone, of Boca Raton, Florida, and graduate of the University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida is the Founder and president of ChariTEES® Group serving the 501(C)3 not-for-profit community with fundraising tee shirts and promotional products. He is founder and president of Lib-erTEES®, establishing independent businesses for USA veterans and President of the Exportrade® Corporation, an international buying and consultancy firm. Jeff established and funded the In Good Company Scholarship program at the Adams School of Entrepreneurship at Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida and established and funded the Take Note Scholarship at the School of Music at FAU.

Scott A. Walters, CPA is a Partner in the Audit & Accounting Services Department of Daszkal Bolton, LLC. He is an expert on matters related to GAAP, SEC and Sarbanes-Oxley compliance. Scott's concentration has been on serving the investment banking, corporate, capital market, and real estate industries. He has worked with the SEC in Washington, D.C., Deutsche Telekom, AG in Bonn, Germany, KPMG and Arthur Andersen. Scott earned his MBA from the University of Miami and his Bachelor of Science degree from New York University. He is a member of the American and Florida Institutes of Certified Public Accounting, as well as the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts.



VHFC Thanks Three Former Board Members

A special thank you to Robin Hardy, Jeanie McGuire Tennant and Victor Vaccaro for their leadership and service as members of the VHFC Board of Directors. Jeanie also served as its first Board Chair. VHFC is grateful for their talents and help which carried VHFC through to the point of transition to AACY. Jeanie and Robin will continue as Volunteer Caregivers with Alosea. Robin was given a Volunteer Extraordinaire Award for 10 years dedicated service to many clients as well as the VHFC Board. Robin is pictured above with Summer Faerman on his left and Connie Siskowski on his right.



The Caregiving Youth Project is part of the Spirit of Giving Network (SOGN). Mary Redman and Kristen Petersen are at the SOGN table at the Boca Raton Holiday Tree Lighting event at Mizner Park on Black Friday (11/27/09). It is through this network that youth caregivers receive back to school supplies and holiday gifts.

VHFC Volunteers are Special People!



Carol Walters, Summer Faerman and Cynthia Cummings

VHFC volunteers are special people! They are people other people can count on! When they say they are going to do something or help someone, they do it. VHFC volunteers make a difference in our community. And, they do it in many ways, including helping us share our stories. This has been the great contribution of Carol Walters, who has spent several years and a multitude of hours helping us write and re-write articles, letters, and press releases. For her efforts, VHFC nominated her for this year's Soroptimist Woman of Distinction award. Also nominated was Summer Faerman who, in addition to her work and volunteer time with VHFC, she has donated her time and talents to Boca Helping Hands. Summer was selected as a co-winner among volunteers in the 2009 Soroptimist Woman of Distinction Award Breakfast held at Boca West Country Club. Both Connie Siskowski and

Cynthia Cummings, pictured above with Carol and Summer of VHFC are members in the leadership of Soroptimist International of Boca Raton/Deerfield Beach.



You are Invited! Kick-off Reception!



Mark Hansen, Chair

Thursday, February 4, 2010 from 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Broken Sound Club
2401 Willow Springs Drive, Boca Raton, Florida

\$35.00 per person

Join us to recognize:

Youth Caregivers with Courage Awards
(Children who care for ill, aging or disabled family members)

Connie Siskowski, RN, PhD

2009 Purpose Prize Winner & Lifetime Ashoka Fellow

Ann Faraone, PhD, Retiring Director

Student Intervention Services, Palm Beach County Schools

Special Keynote by Frank McKinsey &
Participation by Area Dignitaries!

A youth caregiver speaks,

"The program has given me courage and lets me know I am not alone."



Youth Caregivers at Seaside House



Kabir and Grandma

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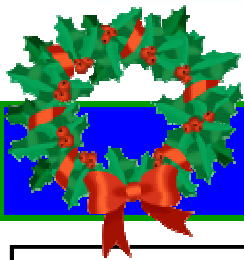
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Newsletter

Jeanie Tennant



Happy Holidays

Volunteers for the Homebound and Family Caregivers

Established 1997

*Boca Respite Volunteers
American Association of Caregiving Youth
Caregiving Youth Project*

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"People of All Ages Helping People of All Ages"