

Volunteers for the Homebound & Family Caregivers News

Caring for the invisible: homebound persons and family caregivers.

Fall 2008

Inside This Issue

Camp Treasure IV	2
Boca Respite	3
New Board Member	3
Plan Ahead	4



VHFC Celebration of a Decade



The Honorees- Standing: Rev. Ken Roughton, John Boden, Bob Drogowitz, Gary Siskowski, Fred Galland, Richard Spencer. Seated: Leslee Drogowitz, & Connie Siskowski
Photo by Melissa Korman

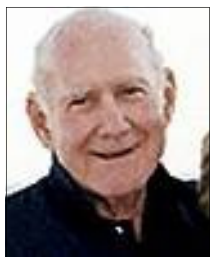
In August 1997 Connie Siskowski organized twenty Boca Raton faith and community leaders in a meeting at the First United Methodist Church to design a program for volunteer support services for homebound individuals and family caregivers. The newly formed group was awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, received a 501(c)(3) non profit designation and by 1998 operated as BRIA (Boca Raton Interfaith in Action.) By 2005 the organization was renamed as Volunteers for the Homebound and Family Caregivers.

Thanks to the help of many along with Connie's, passion and leadership, VHFC has been the recipient of generous donations of cash, time, materials and services from the local community. Grants from the BOMAR, Hermanowski, Lattner, Mattfolk, Schmidt and Toppel Family Foundations; BankAtlantic, City of Boca Raton, P.L. Dodge, Hands on Tzedakah, HSBC, John W. Henry, Palm Health-care, Quantum, Gertrude E. Skelly, and The Jim Moran Foundations, along with substantial funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and significant in-kind donations, VHFC has been able to improve the quality of life for many hundreds of homebound persons and family caregivers of all ages.

To celebrate ten years of service to the community, VHFC invited friends and guests to a luncheon at Carmen's on Top of the Bridge Hotel on November 6, 2008 to honor those people who have given beyond the norm to the success of VHFC. In addition to those honorees pictured with Connie in the photo, these people were also recognized for their contribution: Victor Vacarro, Esq., Sullen & Larry Caplan; Bill Hartmann; Tom Head, Richard Schmidt, and Mark Gensheimer. Special thanks to Summer Faerman, Manager of Boca Respite Volunteers, for Chairing our Celebration of a Decade which raised nearly \$15,000. VHFC is also most grateful to event sponsors including Paula Alderson, Eye Associates of Boca Raton, Robin and Sally Hardy, Lee Ross, Carole Rutherford Stevenson and The Gardens. ♥



Remembering Two Great Men



Harold Toppel passed away on October 16 at the age of 84. In 1997, he and his wife, Patricia, founded The Toppel Family Foundation. VHFC has been a recipient of funding from The Toppel Family Foundation for the Caregiving Youth Project, one of the many legacies he leaves. ♥



Connie Siskowski and Jim Helsel

We celebrate the life of **Jim Helsel** - VHFC's longest care receiver - first as a caregiver for his wife and then as a person who was home alone - we supported him in various ways for 118 months! Jim passed away October 22, 2008 at the age of 92. ♥



Families First Award

At the 2nd Annual Families First Children's Day Award Luncheon VHFC President, Connie Siskowski was one of four Palm Beach County residents honored for their commitment and hard work with families and children. ♥



Nominees: Joyce Laird, Danielle Hickox Moore, Executive Director Julie Swindler, Award recipient Alan Mentser, Family First Board President, Sandra Fleming & nominee Connie Siskowski.

VHFC's Volunteer Assistance & Services Programs

AACY—American Association of Caregiving Youth

BRV—Boca Respite Volunteers ♥ CYP—Caregiving Youth Project



Caregiving Youth Project

Camp Treasure IV

Thirteen local middle school students, who are participants of the Caregiving Youth Project (CYP), recently enjoyed an overnight respite from their caregiving responsibilities at CYP's "Camp Treasure".

According to Connie Siskowski, VHFC founder and president, "It is vitally important to recognize and support the children who have assumed a caregiving role in their family. They need a break from time to time. Camp Treasure allows them some time away from their responsibilities at a place where they can enjoy and share activities, ideas and experiences with their peers."

Held at the Gold Coast Christian Camp in Lake Worth, the overnight Camp Treasure respite included a variety of fun activities designed to increase confidence, teamwork, trust and camaraderie. AmeriCorps Members along with a masters student intern served as counselors, two guitar-strumming St. Vincent de Paul seminarians entertained at the campfire, the American Red Cross provided a life guard and an educational class on the safe use of medical assistance equipment, and volunteer art therapist Kerry DeBay assisted the participants in the creation of personally stylized "treasure boxes".

"We hold two Camp Treasure excursions each year plus a reunion camp," explained Karen Harwood, CYP Care Coordinator, "and it is our hope that, in time, we will be able to expand the opportunity so that all participants in our program will be able to attend."

Currently there are more than 170 active youth and their families enrolled in the CYP; the number is expected to double by the end of this school year with CYP expansion from three to five middle schools. The five middle schools include: Boca Raton, Congress in Boynton Beach, Lantana, Palm Springs in West Palm Beach and Okeechelie in Greenacres.♥



CYP and Project Linus



Our Caregiving Youth at Congress Middle School received blankets made by the members of Project Linus. "My son sleeps with his blanket every night" one mom told Karen Harwood, CYP Care Coordinator. ♥



The Padilla family: Stephanie, Saray (holding Sugar), Natasha, Meagan and Ana Sofia. The girls are wearing new party dresses Mom bought to celebrate their graduations.

Devotion

CYP youth caregivers, Natasha and Stephanie Padilla, are featured in the summer quarter's issue of Heart Insight Magazine, the national consumer publication of the American Heart Association. The article discusses the girls' devotion to their grandmother, the challenges they have faced and the support the family has received from CYP. ♥

"Great things are done by a smaller series of things coming together."
Van Gogh





MAY YOUR HOLIDAY SEASON BE FILLED WITH LOVE, JOY, PEACE AND GOOD FORTUNE THAT LASTS ALL THROUGH THE COMING NEW YEAR.

Happy



Holidays

The VHFC Board of Directors

Charles Brown, Robin Hardy, Consuelo Inestrosa, Paula Alderson, Connie Siskowski, Jeanie McGuire Tennant, Gail Eagle, Andrea D'Addario, Tom Tift, Fred Galland. Not pictured—Carole Rutherford-Stevenson and Shelby Linton. Photo by Melissa Korman



VHFC Spiritual Care Referral Services - A care receiver, caregiver or anyone for that matter, may have thoughts about hope, the meaning of life, belief in God, and relief from loneliness and fear. These are normal feelings, but often are not verbalized. Each of us has our own style or manner in which we face life.

If you or someone you know needs assistance in contacting a spiritual care giver, please call the VHFC offices at 561-391-7401. ♥

Volunteering for VHFC

YOU can help those in need in our community through our Boca Respite and Caregiving Youth programs.

- ♥ Your skills, talents and/or expertise can help a neighbor stay independent.
- ♥ You can choose to help youth, seniors, and/or both.

For more information CALL **561-391-7401** and say you want to know more about being a VHFC Volunteer or you can visit **www.boca-respite.org**, click on "Volunteering" and then "Volunteer Application". We look forward to meeting you! ♥

VHFC Newsletter Editor— Jeanie McGuire Tennant
mcguirejl@mindspring.com 561-945-9097

VHFC Advisory Board

- Suellen Caplan
- Scott Ellington
- Rabbi Goldstein
- April Leavy
- Steve Mulder
- Carl Schiefer
- Carol Walters
- Joanne Weppner

VHFC Staff

- Millie Barber, M.D.
- Jen Craven*
- Cynthia Cummings
- Lynn Durbin, LMHC
- Marcel Ellis**
- Summer Faerman
- Karen Harwood, MSW
- Connie Siskowski, RN, PhD
- Mary Jo Tarrien, RN

*AmeriCorps Member
**Shared employee with Urban League

Volunteers for the Homebound and Family Caregivers

Established 1997

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

1515 N. Federal Hwy. #214
Boca Raton, FL 33432
561- 391-7401(phone)
561-416-7213 (fax)

info@boca-respite.org
www.boca-respite.org
www.aacy.org

"People of All Ages Helping People of All Ages"