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AACY CONNECTS

American Association of Caregiving Youth Stakeholder Newsletter

Q4 2024 In Review

A NOTE FROM DR. CONNIE

Connie Siskowski, RN, PhD, President & Founder, AACY

Dear Caregiving Youth Stakeholders and Friends,

As we reflect on an exciting and transformative few months, I am filled with gratitude and anticipation for all the milestones we have reached and the ones still ahead. From Rhode Island becoming the first state to officially recognize Caregiving Youth, to the inspiring work being done through partnerships with universities and community groups, the awareness and support for Caregiving Youth continues to grow.

We are particularly excited about our ongoing advocacy efforts at both the state and federal levels, where we're working on upcoming legislation that will further protect and empower these young people. With each new initiative—from community forums to federal resolutions like National Caregiving Youth Week—we are not only amplifying the voices of Caregiving Youth but also opening the door for meaningful, long-lasting change in their future.

As we enter a season filled with more exciting events and opportunities, we remain committed to supporting these resilient young people who balance caregiving with their education, health, and well-being. I am so proud of the work we've done together and incredibly excited for the work yet to come.

Together, we continue to make a difference for Caregiving Youth across the nation.

Thank you for your investment in those we serve and AACY.
Let's make 2025 become the year of the Caregiving Youth!

Sincerely,

Dr. Currie

AACY NEWS & UPDATES



Rhode Island Becomes the First State to Officially Recognize Caregiving Youth

In a groundbreaking move, Governor Daniel J. McKee has proclaimed November 2024 as National Family Caregivers Month in Rhode Island, with a special focus on caregiving youth—students under 18 who balance their education and aspirations while providing essential care for family members. This makes Rhode Island the first state in the U.S. to officially recognize Caregiving Youth through a proclamation.

[Read The Press Alert](#)



University of Miami Highlights Research on Caregiving Youth

The University of Miami Miller School of Medicine featured medical student Aidan Scagel, M.P.H. '25, for his capstone research on the challenges faced by Caregiving Youth—children balancing school and caregiving for family members.

Guided by Dr. Julia Belkowitz, M.D., M.P.H., and in collaboration with the American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY), the research highlighted the emotional, social, and academic impacts of caregiving and pathways for better support. This collaboration reflects growing recognition of Caregiving Youth in healthcare and public health conversations.

[Read The Article](#)



Colorado Alliance for Caregiving Youth (CACY) Hosts Inaugural “Exploring Caregiving Youth Empowerment” Community Forum

The Colorado Alliance for Caregiving Youth (CACY), an affiliate of the American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY), held its inaugural “Exploring Caregiving Youth Empowerment” Community Forum. The event provided an engaging platform to raise awareness about the hidden struggles of Caregiving Youth and to discuss actionable solutions for supporting their unique needs.

[Read The Press Alert](#)

Reps. Frankel, Salazar, and Lee Introduce Bipartisan Resolution Recognizing National Caregiving Youth Week

Representatives Lois Frankel (D-FL-22), María Elvira Salazar (R-FL-27), and Barbara Lee (D-CA-12) introduced a bipartisan resolution to designate November 11-17, 2024, as National Caregiving Youth Week. This resolution aims to honor the significant contributions of youth under 18 who provide essential care to family members in need.

Supported by the American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY), this resolution highlights the unique challenges faced by over 5.4 million caregiving youth across the U.S.

[Read The Press Release](#)



Feylyn Lewis, PhD, Awarded Funding for Tennessee's First Youth Caregivers Peer Support Group

We are thrilled to share that Feylyn Lewis, AACY National Advisory Council member and Caregiving Youth Research Collaborative member, has been awarded funding for an exciting new initiative. Feylyn is leading the first-ever youth caregivers peer support group for Tennessee, thanks to the Vanderbilt Community Engagement Collaboration program. The support group will focus on the well-being of adolescents who care for family members with health challenges, addressing their mental health needs and promoting social development. Feylyn’s collaboration with the Tennessee Caregiver Coalition and Vanderbilt University is a monumental step forward for Tennessee's youth caregivers. We’re proud of Feylyn's fantastic work and dedication to supporting young caregivers!

[Read The Announcement](#)



City of Doral Issues Proclamation for Youth Caregiver Awareness Day

We're thrilled to announce that the City of Doral has officially issued a proclamation recognizing Youth Caregiver Awareness Day. This special honor celebrates the resilience and vital contributions of Caregiving Youth—young individuals under 18 who provide essential care for family members with chronic illness, disabilities, or age-related needs.

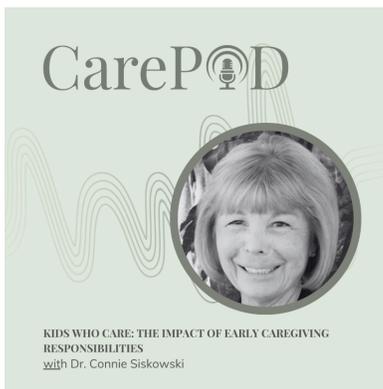
[Read The Press Alert](#)



How a Boca Raton organization is recognizing youth caregivers | WPTV Highlights Caregiving Youth and AACY's Mission

WPTV recently featured a story spotlighting the incredible work of the American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY) in recognizing and supporting students who are caregiving. The segment emphasized the challenges faced by over 5 million caregiving youth nationwide, including 290,000 in Florida, and highlighted AACY's efforts to provide vital resources through its programs.

[Watch | AACY On WPTV](#)



Impactful Caregiving® Launches CarePOD: Exploring the Impact of Early Caregiving Responsibilities with Dr. Connie Siskowski

CarePOD, hosted by Dr. Kiplee Bell, features a compelling conversation with Dr. Connie Siskowski, RN, PhD, a nationally recognized advocate for caregiving youth. In this episode, Dr. Siskowski shares insights from her pioneering work with the American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY), highlighting the hidden challenges faced by young caregivers and the transformative power of support.

[Listen to the Podcast](#)

AACY Attends Caregiver Nation Summit: Advocating for Caregiving Youth and Policy Change



AACY attended the Caregiver Nation Summit in Washington, DC, hosted by the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC). The event brought together caregivers, advocates, and policymakers to address the critical challenges faced by family caregivers and explore potential solutions.

During the summit, AACY had the opportunity to connect with several influential individuals in the caregiving community, including some who were met in person for the first time.

Pictured are:

- **Brian Duke**, Co-Chair of the AACY National Advisory Council and former Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging
- **Fawn A. Cothran**, PhD, RN, GCNS-BC, FGSA, Hunt Research Director at NAC
- **Maria Miranda**, LMSW, Social Worker and AACY National Advisory Council Member
- **Maggie Ornstein**, PhD, MPH, MA, from Sarah Lawrence College and member of the Caregiving Youth Research Collaborative
- **Sharon Hamill**, PhD, Executive Director of CSU Shiley Haynes Institute for Palliative Care, California State University, San Marcos, also part of the Caregiving Youth Research Collaborative
- **Sara Poole**, National Advisory Council Co-Chair, U.S. Development, AACY

The summit highlighted key issues, including the rising costs of eldercare, workforce challenges, and policy solutions such as caregiver tax credits, Medicaid expansion, and Medicare-reimbursed caregiver training. These discussions were especially meaningful during National Family Caregivers Month, as

attention continues to grow around the 5.4 million Caregiving Youth under 18 who are integral to the caregiving ecosystem.

A special thanks to Jason Resendez, President and CEO of the National Alliance for Caregiving, and the NAC team, sponsors, and speakers who made the event possible. The connections made and the work being done at the summit will continue to inspire efforts to support caregivers of all ages.



CAREGIVING YOUTH PROJECT

AACY Holiday Party 2024: A Global Celebration of Culture, Fun, and Community!





The AACY 2024 Holiday Party was a huge success, and it was wonderful to see so many smiling faces! This year's theme, Holiday Around the World, brought a touch of global culture to the festivities. As families moved through the party, they enjoyed activities inspired by different cultures, from learning to play African drums to making bracelets that represent various traditions.

Guests had a great time taking photos at the themed backdrops, savoring Caribbean food, selecting items from the boutique, crafting, participating in raffles, dancing to music, and much more! It was truly a memorable experience filled with joy and community spirit.

A big thank you to our donors, staff, and volunteers who helped make this event special!



A Perfect Day on the Water: Kayaking with Caregiving Youth



We were thrilled to see so many of our Caregiving Students join us for a fun-filled kayaking trip at Okechee Park! It was a beautiful day to take a well-deserved break from caregiving responsibilities, relax on the water, and enjoy the sunshine and fresh air.

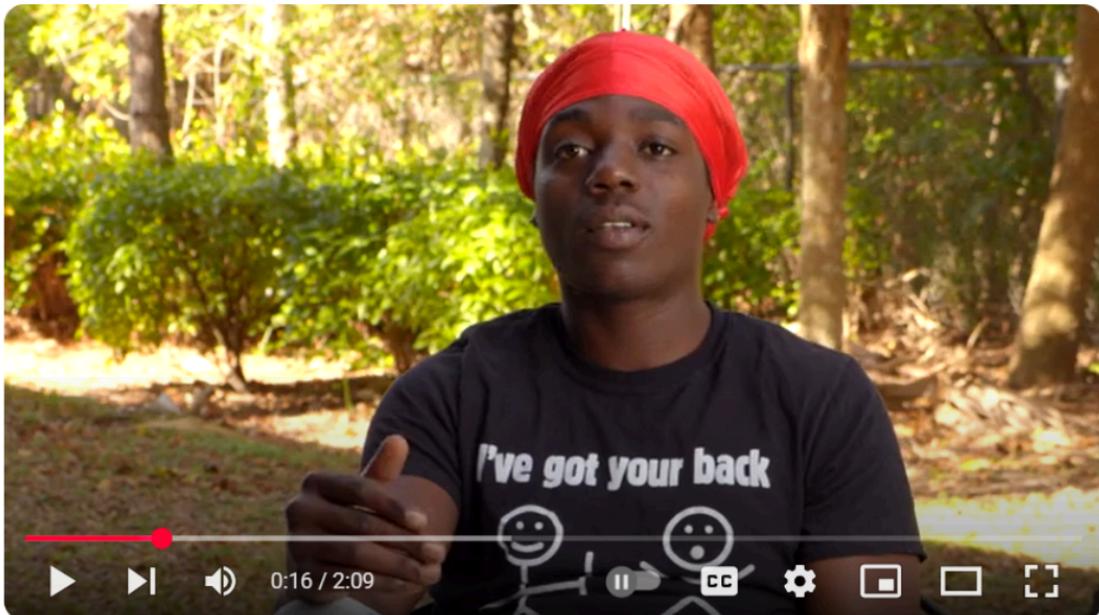


From 6th Grade to Adulthood: The Power of Mentorship



☰  Premium

Marc Charles talks about his experience with AACY's Caregiving Youth Project



At our recent AACY Community Caregiver Brunch, we had the privilege of hearing Marc Charles share his inspiring story. Marc started with AACY in 6th grade and stayed involved through high school, crediting AACY for helping him grow into the person he is today. Even more inspiring was the presence of his mentor, Eliot Popper, who has been by his side for all these years. Now, post-graduation, Marc is giving back as a volunteer, continuing the cycle of support. Their enduring bond highlights the lasting impact mentorship can have—changing lives and even families for the better.



"But it made you stronger"

I was a child.

I didn't need to be stronger.

I needed to be safe.



UNKNOWN

"We're not advocating that children should do this or be in this position, but they are. So we want to make it as safe as possible and arm them with the knowledge base that they need." - Dr. Connie Siskowski - Founder AACY - CNN 2012

AACY UPCOMING EVENTS



CAREGIVING YOUTH INSTITUTE CONFERENCE



RESEARCH



POLICY



PRACTICE



Putting Caregiving Youth on the Map: Thursday, April 3, 2025

Save the Date for AACY's Caregiving Youth Institute Conference

Putting Caregiving Youth on the Map: Research, Policy, and Practice

Join us in person or virtually for this pivotal event as we bring together educators, healthcare professionals, social workers, policymakers, researchers, advocates, and community leaders to showcase research, shape policy, and share practical strategies to better support Caregiving Youth across the United States.

Registration Opens: February 15, 2025

Event Date: Thursday, April 3, 2025, Boca Raton, FL.

Format: In-Person & Virtual

Stay tuned for more updates and registration details!

For inquiries or to express interest in attending or presenting, contact:
Milka Santos, AACY Community Educator: milka@aacymilka.org

American Association of Caregiving Youth |
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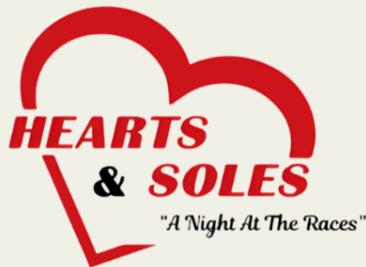


American Association of Caregiving Youth
Hearts and "Soles"

A Night At The Races



Friday, March 14, 2025, 7pm to 11pm
Royal Palm Yacht & Country Club, Boca Raton



Honorary Chairs:

John and Arline McNally

Chairs:

Ronnie and Debralyn Belletieri

Tickets and Sponsorships:

aacy.org



Tickets Coming Soon! [Sponsorships Available Here!](#)



CALLS TO ACTION

You Can Make a Difference!

| Here Are a Few Ways You Can Support Caregiving Youth!

- Commit to a Monthly Donation
- Attend a Fundraising Event (Locally)
- Become a Business/Corporate Sponsor
- Donate to honor a loved one and put their name on the American Association of Caregiving Youth Wall of Recognition - great present!
- Speaking Engagements – connect the AACY team to local or national events where we can educate audiences on Caregiving Youth.
- Volunteer to support our students and programs
- Follow us on social media – like, share, and comment on AACY's LinkedIn, Facebook, X, YouTube, and Instagram posts.
- Shop AACY Gear





The Voice for kids in the United States. **CAREGIVING YOUTH INSTITUTE**

AACY is a leader in Caregiving Youth issues in the United States. The Caregiving Youth Institute (CYI) seeks to raise awareness of the multi-system needs of all caregiving youth and provide national solutions, align with international efforts, and support this huge, hidden population through the multiple initiatives of Connection, Advocacy, Research, and Education (C.A.R.E.). We connect people who care with each other.



5.4 MILLION KIDS

In the US, over 5.4 million middle and HS students aged 18 or younger provide significant assistance or care to a family member with a chronic illness, disability, mental health condition, or frailty due to aging.



\$8.5 BILLION

A 2012 article estimates the economic value from Caregiving Youth is around \$8.5 Billion. The estimate today would be much higher. 74% care for their parents and/or grandparents. 11% care for their siblings or others.



ONLY .ORG IN US

AACY is the only organization in the United States that focuses on the needs of young people who are caregivers. They work to identify Caregiving Youth, provide them with support, and advocate for their rights on all levels.



AACY SERVICES

AACY offers direct services to middle and high school students in Palm Beach County through the Caregiving Youth Project (CYP) and leads national outreach through the Caregiving Youth Institute (CYI)



WE SERVE ALL

AACY inclusively serves Caregiving Youth and their families of all ethnicities, countries of origin, income levels, gender identification, health conditions, disability, sexual orientation, marital status and religions.



CORE VALUES

We respect and demonstrate equality along with racial and social equity as we honor human dignity that is exemplified by our Core Values of Collaboration, Compassion, Empowerment, Innovation, and Responsiveness.



WORLDWIDE

Caregiving for a loved one is among the most demanding, challenging, and rewarding human activities. Although children are commonly thought of as the recipients of care – rather than the givers – children all over the world participate actively in caregiving every day.



CYP SERVICES

Caregiver coaching, skills-building, lunch & learn sessions, community service hour awards for caregiving work, respite fun, peer/friendship connections, home visits, resource support, tutoring, camps, holiday parties, recognition, personal development opportunities and more.



AACY MISSION & VISION

Vision of AACY – we envision a nation in which there is understanding, appreciation, and celebration of the lives of Caregiving Youth on their individual path to life’s dreams and opportunities.

Mission of AACY – we champion youth who provide care for chronically ill, injured, elderly, and/or disabled family members. We support their role as caregiver and guide their success in school and life.

DONATE TO AACY

Caregiving Youth are a largely hidden population. **Without support - these youth are at heightened risk for academic, social, and emotional difficulties.**

Many thanks to our Donors, Team, Volunteers, Research Collaborative, Board, National Advisory Board, Parents, Teachers, Counselors, School Administrators, and all who champion Caregiving Youth.

You make a difference.



CONNECT WITH US!

www.aacy.org



WATCH AACY ON THE TODAY SHOW 

Child Caregivers Shine Light on Heavy Task of Tending to Sick Parents

Many Thanks to Our Partners:



The American Association of Caregiving Youth (AACY) is a Florida 501 (c) (3) corporation.

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