

PHILLY FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

2015-16

# YEAR IN REVIEW

## THANK YOU!

We are excited to share our annual report with you. Due to your generosity, this year we were able to form more friendships than ever before. Teens and young adults from throughout the Greater Philadelphia region were connected to youth with special needs and their families. Together, they enjoyed mutually rewarding experiences such as one-on-one weekly play dates, Jewish holiday celebrations and creative arts group activities. Inspired by the power of genuine friendship, our youth cultivated understanding, kindness and responsibility while ensuring a caring and inclusive community.



“My friendship with Adam can sometimes be viewed as ‘charity’ or ‘volunteering,’ but I know our friendship is just as real as any other. Unlike what many people think, I get as much out of our weekly visits as he does. So, what I enjoy most about The Friendship Circle is the emphasis that friendship is not a one-way street. Everyone, however different, has something valuable to give.”

Jay, Teen Volunteer



“I feel part of a larger, special community. I went to my first event with my son a few weeks ago and realized that I knew other parents who were also members of the Friendship Circle! It made me feel closer to them and lucky that I found out about this organization!”

Nancy, Mom of child with special needs & new to FC



ENGAGED IN INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING

# A LOOK BACK

This year, we inspired the community to *Do Amazing Things* and *Start A Friendship Revolution*.

## OUR FUNDRAISERS & FINANCES

We successfully hosted the largest Philly Friendship Walk to date with 850 participants in attendance. The Join Our Circle gala brought together 550 guests and took our fundraising to a new level.

## UNPRECEDENTED ATTENDANCE AND DEMAND FOR PROGRAMS

The largest Sunday Circle ever was held in February with 62 volunteers and 45 participants. Our Friends at Home program is in high demand with a current waiting list of 20 youth.

## MORE COMMUNITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

We put a focus on strengthening our FC community outside of our regular programming. Events included our Friendship Circle Art Show, Phillies and Sixers games, a trip to The Philadelphia Museum of Art, a program at the YMCA, and our year-end trip to Haverford Reserve. In addition, we collaborated with Whole Community Inclusion and Beth Am Israel for inclusive family mitzvah projects.

## LOVING OUR NEW OFFICE!

The Philly FC has come a long way, even outgrowing its original office in the Baram's home. The 2015-2016 year was our first in our new office space, and it has been a physical manifestation of the strides we have made.



# PLANNING AHEAD

*We spent considerable energy this year on strategic analysis and planning, resulting in key changes to our organization that will improve our programming in the coming years.*

## RESTRUCTURING OF STAFF

Our Program and Curriculum Coordinator will now oversee all FC events with the goal of infusing fun components and new energy into the curriculum. Our Outreach Coordinator will oversee Friends at Home and will be the key staff person in communication with families and teens. We believe that these redefined roles and areas of responsibility will best utilize our talents and allow us to apply a more holistic approach to our work.

## LEADERSHIP

Building on the success of our teen leadership

program, and with guidance from our executive and teen leadership boards, we created a plan that incorporates greater collaboration among the three programs. We will also put a special focus on customized education and leadership goals within each program and increased mentoring opportunities.

## CORE PROGRAMS

After taking a hard look at our successes and the feedback from our community, we are redirecting our efforts toward a stronger focus on our core programs: Friends at Home and Sunday Circle. With both in high demand, we are looking forward to continuing to take these programs to a higher level of excellence and to strengthening opportunities for friendships for more participants.



## REDEFINING OUR CORE VALUES:

*A focus on each of us...one at a time!*

Throughout our strategic planning process, we returned time and again to our core value of an authentic, one-on-one approach. The success of FC hinges on the investment we make in each individual, the personal approach to communication and the value the experience brings to each member of our family. We have rewritten our core values statement to clearly communicate this message.

## I Belong at Friendship Circle Because...

"I feel that this is exactly where I am supposed to be."

*Hannah, Teen volunteer*

"This was truly the first place that she really wanted to be."

*Rebecca, Mom of adult with special needs*

"When I first came to The Friendship Circle, I was shy and I didn't really know how to interact. As time went on, I could see that it didn't matter who you were, you just needed to be yourself."

*Celine, Birthright alum with special needs who became a volunteer*



## What has the Friends at Home program meant for your family?

"This friendship provided our son with a unique opportunity to express his feelings and develop the kind of emotional and social exchange that cannot be taught by adults, but exists naturally between peers. Because what his buddy thought of him mattered, he worked harder to rein in inappropriate language and behaviors, and pushed himself to develop more socially acceptable strategies. He grew in so many ways, bringing benefits to his grateful family, community, and school."

*Marissa, Mom of son with special needs*



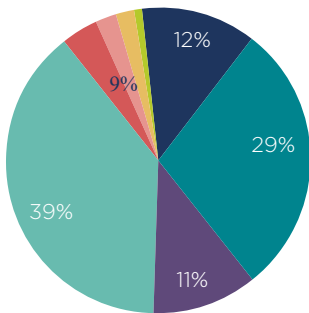


## A CLOSER LOOK

### SUNDAY CIRCLE: \$1900

*A Closer Look at Sunday Circle, one of our flagship programs.*

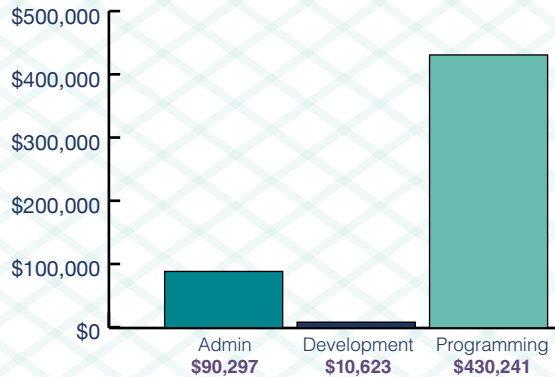
Beyond all the behind the scenes work, we have significant "day of" expenses; those costs that continue to make each program a resounding success.



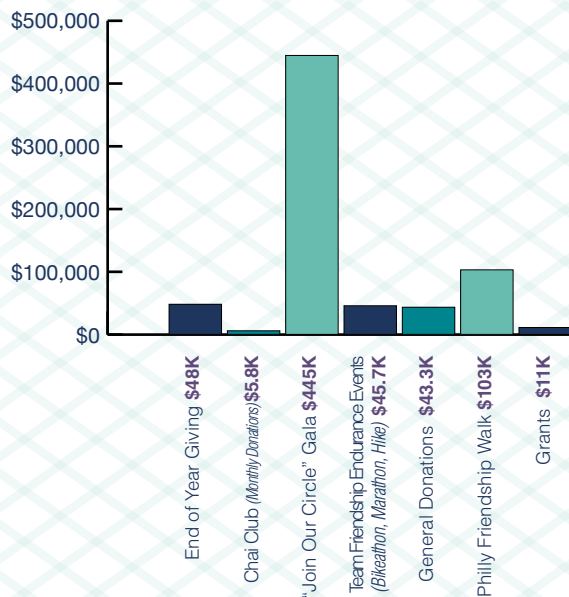
- Behavior Specialists (4) **\$730**
- Activity Facilitators (4) **\$550**
- Supplies (Art & Cooking) **\$225**
- Location **\$200**
- Food (For Snack & Parent Room) **\$85**
- General Supplies **\$35**
- Cleanup/Setup **\$50**
- Photographer **\$25**

# FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE BUDGET

### GENERAL EXPENSES: \$531,161



### REVENUE: \$690,958



Friendship Events

+ **325**  
Friends at Home Visits

= **5104**   
hours of  
FRIENDSHIP

## IMPRESSIVE NUMBERS

### 655

NEW DONORS

### 1,200

TOTAL DONORS

### 18%

DONOR BASE GROWTH

### 275

DONORS WHO INCREASED THEIR TOTAL ANNUAL GIFT



**34** TEEN VOLUNTEERS

attended **14** LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GROUP SESSIONS

### I support FC Because...



"I believe in what FC is trying to accomplish in creating a welcoming place for kids with special needs. I also believe that the sensitivity and leadership FC fosters among teens is unmatched by other volunteer programs."

*Stacy & David,  
Friendship Circle Supporters*

### THE FUTURE OF FC IS BRIGHT!



### 21

GRADS

of our 6th & 7th grade Mitzvah Volunteer Program  
attended **6** of our **12** educational workshops

Dear FC:

It is with a grateful heart that I write about what the Friendship Circle has meant to my family since we became involved two years ago. Zev, Chani and FC have embraced every member of my family. They have provided a safe, happy place for my two neuro-typical children to participate in programming with their brother with special needs. It is a place where all are free to be who they are with no judgment.

We all look forward to Sunday Circles. My three children have fun in a nurturing, loving, Jewish environment, while I get to spend time with the other parents, many whom are years ahead of me on this journey. It is comforting to have this group of wonderful parents to share information with about therapies, schools, sibling relationships, insurance, etc. What FC provides to families like mine-at no cost- is a warm, loving, inclusive program. I feel so fortunate to be a part of FC family.

XOXO,

Jaime

**O**ur mission is based on the bedrock foundation of "love your fellow as yourself."

The Friendship Circle provides organized physical and social structures to support inclusive friendships, connections, respite, and fulfillment for youth with special needs, young adult volunteers, their respective families and the Jewish community at large.

Through fun and interactive experiences, these relationships bring a sense of joy and meaning to the Friendship Circle community and beyond.

#### Executive Board

Rebecca Cohen • Leza Raffel • Jonathan Seltzer • Gail Simon

#### Our Staff:

Rabbi Zev Baram, *Executive Director*

Chani Baram, *Director of Community Engagement*

Victoria Branca, *Administrative and Marketing Coordinator*

Emily Coplon, *Accounting*

Jared Pashko, *Outreach and Friends at Home Coordinator*

Jared Rosenbloom, *Program and Curriculum Coordinator*

Marsha Stamm, *Director of Operations*

## MAKE AN IMPACT!

### SUPPORT US!

1. Join our Chai Club and donate monthly
2. Donate for a loved one:
  - In honor of
  - In memory of
3. Support FC when you shop online:
  - AmazonSmile - Choose Friendship Circle Philadelphia Region, Inc.
  - Goodshop - Choose Philly Friendship Circle.
4. Consider establishing a legacy gift
5. Inquire about:
  - Corporate matches
  - Stock donations
  - United Way Donations (44542)
  - Sponsorship of an event

### HELP US!

1. Tell one person about The Friendship Circle this year.
2. Bring a friend to a Friendship Circle event to see us in action!
3. Take pictures at our events and share them with us.
4. Send us a note about how The Friendship Circle has touched your life.
5. Spread the message of inclusion by booking a sensitivity workshop for your school or synagogue.



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