We began our Friendship Circle in 2004, serving just a few children with special needs in a single-family home with an adjacent in-laws quarters. Now, fifteen years later, we serve over 150 children and are blessed with over 200 teenage volunteer friends and mentors. Our adult program, providing a continuum of care for our children, has blossomed as well. If you were to visit on a Sunday, you would find every inch of our campus packed with children enjoying spirited activities with friends.

But we realize that the population in need grows yearly. Every day we receive calls from parents, frightened and alone, unsure of where to turn after their child is diagnosed. While we are there for these families, we know there is so much more we can do - and must do.

We are grateful to all of our supporters who joined us this year, and for those who have stood alongside us over the years. Each one of you has illuminated the magic of friendship.

A few years ago we began planning a new 20,000 sq. ft. Community Center for children and families with special needs. We are proud to report that our plans and zoning for our project have been fully approved! Our new Campus will serve as the hub of our programs and wrap-around services, allowing our organization to serve more children and provide more comprehensive services.

This new campus is a life-long dream for countless families and, thanks to the leadership of our board of directors, we are now ready to build for our children’s future. In July we received a State allocation of nearly $300,000 to get the project off the ground, thanks to the advocacy of our good friend, State Representative Vance Aloupis. We recently launched our first evening fundraising event – our Heart & Soul Dinner, on November 7th. Our Circle continues to grow, with the community’s most prominent foundations and many new supporters joining us this year in our efforts. Staff, volunteers, donors, and partners, we will continue our mission, and work towards our vision – to build a more inclusive Miami.

Our 2019 Winter Impact Report highlights our collective impact. We hope you will enjoy our highlights from this past year.
SUCCESS STORY

Moving to Miami from Venezuela, Pietro was anxious about starting school and making friends. His mom learned about Friendship Circle and signed him up for programs. He was assigned his own mentor, and together they enjoyed activities and learned about each other’s culture.

Pietro instantly made friends with the companionship of his teenage mentor and, for the first time, began to have play-dates with his classmates. When he went to shop for uniforms for the new school year, he ran into one of his friends he made at Friendship Circle. He was greeted with a big hug! His face lit up, and his mother was brought to tears. No one had ever hugged her son before.

It just goes to show how connections made through Friendship Circle can have wonderful, far reaching effects.

Volunteers at Friendship Circle always say they feel they got far more out of the program than they gave. A stunning example is Morgan Levine, who was paired for six years with Arielle, a young girl with cerebral palsy. When Morgan attended Florida State, she kept in contact with Arielle and tutored her -- and Arielle made the cheerleader squad at her school! Arielle shared a book she had with Morgan, which talked about a disabled child “walking clumsily” and leaving the message that the disabled would always finish behind the non-disabled. Morgan was outraged -- she wrote the book’s publisher, and the publisher agreed: future editions of the book would NOT contain the offensive and untrue language.

Morgan recently graduated from FSU and is now a law student at St. Thomas University in Miami. She plans to work as an advocate for the disabled as a lawyer -- and her experiences in that wonderful field began when she volunteered at Friendship Circle. We’re proud of you, Morgan. May you continue to soar!

METRICS

WE DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS THAT ACHIEVE MEASURABLE OUTCOMES FOR PARTICIPANTS

- 97.2% of our parents agree the FC provides a crucial support system for their family
- 98.1% of our children with special needs express they feel accepted by the community
- 100% of our teenage volunteers indicate their viewpoint on special needs has changed
The Mission of the Friendship Circle is to offer friendship and acceptance to individuals with special needs, provide respite to their families, and empower teenagers to make a difference in their community through volunteerism.

NECHAMA HARLIG
Program Director

SUSIE WALCZAC
UPS Americas

It is truly remarkable what Friendship is doing to provide a safe haven for the kids to be able to maximize their experiences by teaching them how powerful a friendship can be.

TOGETHER WE ARE CREATING A MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY, THAT WILL IGNITE CHANGE ON A REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SCALE

KATE STUZIN
11th Grade
Becoming a role model gave me leadership skills that can now be applied to other areas of my life.

LIAT
12th Grade
Friendship Circle has taught me to be patient and understanding towards everyone... our differences are not what pull us apart rather what brings us together.

WE ARE MOLDING TOMORROW’S LEADERS THROUGH THEIR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

NANCY VEITIA
Mother
My son Danny has autism – and I live the pain and sadness of Danny’s everyday struggles. However, I’m grateful to Friendship Circle for helping my son build friendships through sports, art, band, and weekly outings. He has finally met friends that understand and accept him!

WE ARE PROVIDING COMFORT AND RESPITE TO PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
**REVENUE**

**FY 2018/2019 STATEMENT OF REVENUE**

- **DONATIONS** $364,130
- **GRANTS** $119,829
- **PROGRAM FEES** $41,710
- **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN** $2,105,000
- **WALK-A-THON** $200,988
- **TOTAL REVENUE** $2,831,657

**EXPENSES**

**FY 2018/2019 STATEMENT OF EXPENSES**

- **PROGRAM** $377,812
- **GENERAL ADMIN** $67,893
- **FUNDRAISING** $56,688
- **NEW CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT** $206,064
- **TOTAL EXPENSES** $708,457

**MESSAGE TO OUR SUPPORTERS**

We are grateful to the many prominent foundations and community leaders who have joined us in building a more inclusive Miami! We especially thank and recognize the following:

- THE BATCHELOR FOUNDATION
- ANTHONY R. ABRAHAM FOUNDATION
- PEACOCK FOUNDATION
- FAIRHOLME FOUNDATION
- ALBERT & JANE NAHMAD FAMILY FOUNDATION
- GREATER MIAMI JEWISH FEDERATION
- MIAMI DADE COUNTY
- REPRESENTATIVE VANCE ALOUPIS
- COMMISSIONER DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA
- REPRESENTATIVE ANITERE FLORES
- THE CHILDREN’S TRUST
- THE KIRK FOUNDATION
- COMMISSIONER ESTEBAN BOVO JR.
- DR. JOHN T. MACDONALD FOUNDATION
- CORAL GABLES COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
- RUDERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION
- DUNSPAUGH DALTON FOUNDATION

**OUR TEAM**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- David Evensky – Board Chair
- Tracey Berkowitz – Secretary
- Paul Kaplan – Treasurer

- Dr. Diane Adreon
- Stacy Bolduc
- Monica Cantera-Serralta
- Rossana Arteaga-Gomez
- Rabbi Yossef Harlig
- Nechama Harlig
- Libby Herrera-Navarette
- Eugene R. Hershorin, M.D.
- Robert Josefsberg
- Michele Kaplan
- Jason Margulies
- Claudia Potamkin
- Raquel Regalado
- Dr. Trevor Resnick, M.D.
- Joe Roisman
- Todd Ruderman

- Russell Eckert
- Heidi Rutland
- Colaiv Freeman
- Alex Fuentes
- Eugene R. Hershorin, M.D.

- Caryn
- Art Director
- Aaron
- Music Director
- Amy Kalas
- Music Therapist
- Karina
- ABA Therapist

**THANKS TO YOU OUR SUPPORTER – WITH YOUR FRIENDSHIP, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE!**

We invite you to contact us to learn more about our programs and how you can partner with us. Please contact russelle@friendshipcirclemiami.org or visit us online at www.friendshipcirclemiami.org/building

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