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Volume 188 | December 2023 in Review



## | December Treasure Talk 2023!

As we welcome a New Year, what will be different for you? Will anything change except that now you write 2024 instead of 2023?

Traditionally, the New Year is a time of new beginnings, of growing, learning, making new friends, and having fun.

For us at AACY, it is also a time to celebrate and thank you for the important caring differences you are making for yourself, your family, and even for society!

Please remember also to take time to thank yourself for all you are doing to make our world a better place.

Dr. Currie



# AACY Activities

Andreana Holliman, Activities Manager



## | Activities Recap & Preview:

**Greetings, CYP Friends!**

Happy New Year!

Our featured activity for December was AACY 2023 Holiday Party. You guys showed up and showed out! It was such a joy to see you and your families at the party in our Winter Wonderland theme, enjoying decorating cookies, ornaments, and a special card for Santa.

After making wonderful crafts, you got to enjoy a meal with your family, participate in several raffles, and your parents got to shop (for free items) at our wonderful boutique.

Lastly, you got to pick up a special gift we had for you and pick out additional gifts to give to your families. Such a wonderful experience! **Thank you to all of our donors, staff, and volunteers who made this experience one to remember!**

We wrapped up the month with Boca West Carnival. You got to enjoy free carnival rides, food, games, and more. How fun! Shout out to Boca West Children's Foundation for making this possible for you guys.

Keep looking out for upcoming activities!

If you want to see some pictures of you and your events, visit (and follow!) our Instagram [@caregivingyouthproject](https://www.instagram.com/caregivingyouthproject).

**Thank you.**  
**Andreana Holliman, BA**



## | AACY WINTER WONDERLAND PARTY 2023!





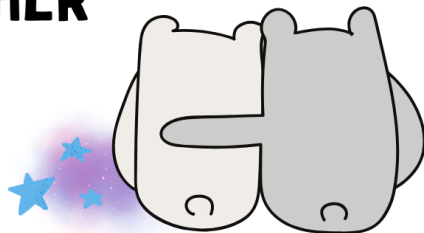






**THERE'S SOMETHING  
SPECIAL WHEN CAREGIVERS  
GET TOGETHER**

**-AACY**





# AACY School Shout-Out

## Loggers' Run Middle School



**School Shout Out** - "I want to send a shout-out to Loggers' Run Middle School Staff for their continuous support in making the Caregiving Youth Project a success at their school. Also, I am sending an incredibly special shout-out to Ms. Balais, school counselor, and secretary, Mrs. Denker.

Both are so welcoming and always have a space available for me to meet with the students. They are there to assist with whatever help I need throughout my time in the school. They are both extremely helpful and make the process simple.

Such amazing efforts show their true support for the AACY mission through the CYP program at their school. The American Association of Caregiving Youth appreciates how easy and effective all the Loggers' Run Middle School staff members are to make our program and me feel welcome. We are truly grateful for your support and teamwork!

Thank you, Logger's Run Middle School staff." - **Kadian Bernard, MAHS, AACY Family**



# AACY News

## | Caregiving Youth Goal Setting Worksheet for 2024



**Remember, the most important goal is your well-being! Take care of yourself first so you can be the best caregiver you can be.**

### **SET Personal Goals:**

#### **Self-Care:**

- What activities will you prioritize for your own physical and mental health (e.g., exercise, hobbies, relaxation)?
- How much time will you commit to self-care each week/month?
- How will you overcome challenges that might prevent you from taking care of yourself?

#### **Social Connection:**

- How will you connect with friends and family who support you (e.g., schedule

regular calls and outings)?

- How will you set boundaries with others to protect your time and energy?

#### **Personal Growth:**

- What new skill or knowledge would you like to learn in 2024?
- How will you make time for learning and personal development?
- What resources will you use to achieve your learning goals?

#### **SET Goals for Your Loved One:**

##### **Physical Health:**

- What are some specific, measurable goals for improving your loved one's physical health (e.g., increasing mobility, managing weight)?
- What activities or interventions will you implement to support these goals?
- How will you track progress and adjust your approach if needed?

##### **Quality of Life:**

- What are your loved one's hopes and interests for 2024?
- How can you help them participate in activities they enjoy and find meaningful?
- How will you celebrate their achievements and milestones along the way?

##### **Additional Tips:**

- Set SMART goals: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- Break down large goals into smaller, actionable steps.
- Celebrate your successes, no matter how small.
- Be flexible and adaptable. Unexpected things will come up, so be prepared to adjust your goals as needed.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Remember, you are not alone in this journey. Take care of yourself, stay connected with others, stay connected with your family specialists, and focus on making 2024 a positive and fulfilling year for you and your loved one.

## **AACY Support Corner**

### **| We support you:**

We're here to support you on your caregiving journey. We'll share fun and educational content, inspiring stories from other young caregivers, and reminders that you're not alone. **Thank you for all that you do for your family.**

### **| Caregiving Youth: Sharing Your Stories**

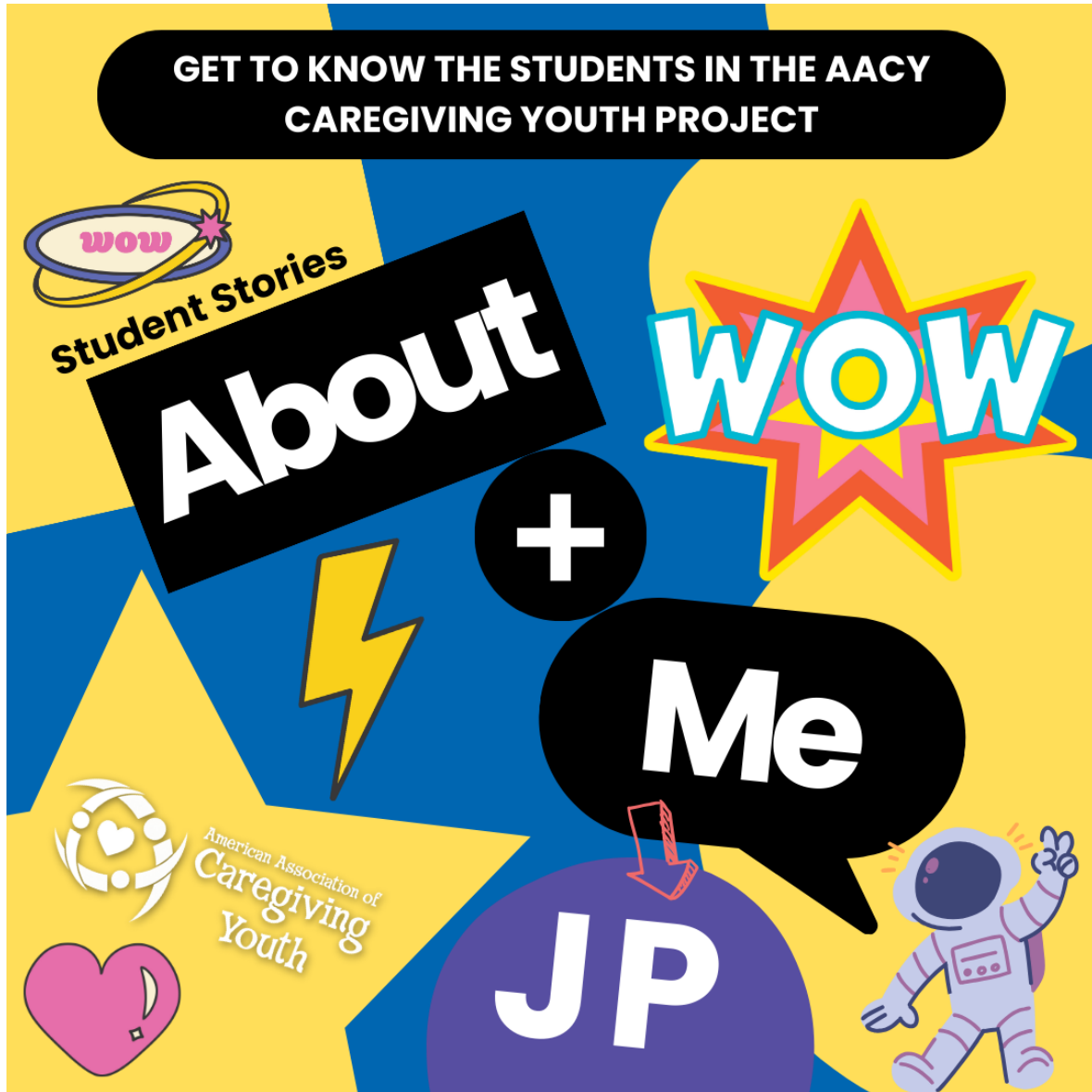
This part of the newsletter aims to give you a platform to share your stories and experiences and to raise awareness of the challenges and triumphs of being a caregiver in middle and high school.

You'll hear from Caregiving Youth from all over our CYP programs in Palm Beach County,



caring for loved ones with various medical diagnoses and conditions. They will share their insights through writing prompts, creating a space for their voices to be heard.

We hope that you will find these stories inspiring and informative. We also encourage all of you to participate! Keep writing and sharing!



**My name is:** JP

**My grade is:** 11<sup>th</sup>

**I care for my:** Little Sister

**I care for my little sister who has Down Syndrome mostly,** she needs my help and relies on me as her big brother to help a lot. I also help take care of my parents who are in their 60's.

One of the most challenging things about being a caregiving youth is having the patience it takes when helping others. But I know to take a break, rethink, and see how to do better whenever I am feeling overwhelmed at times.

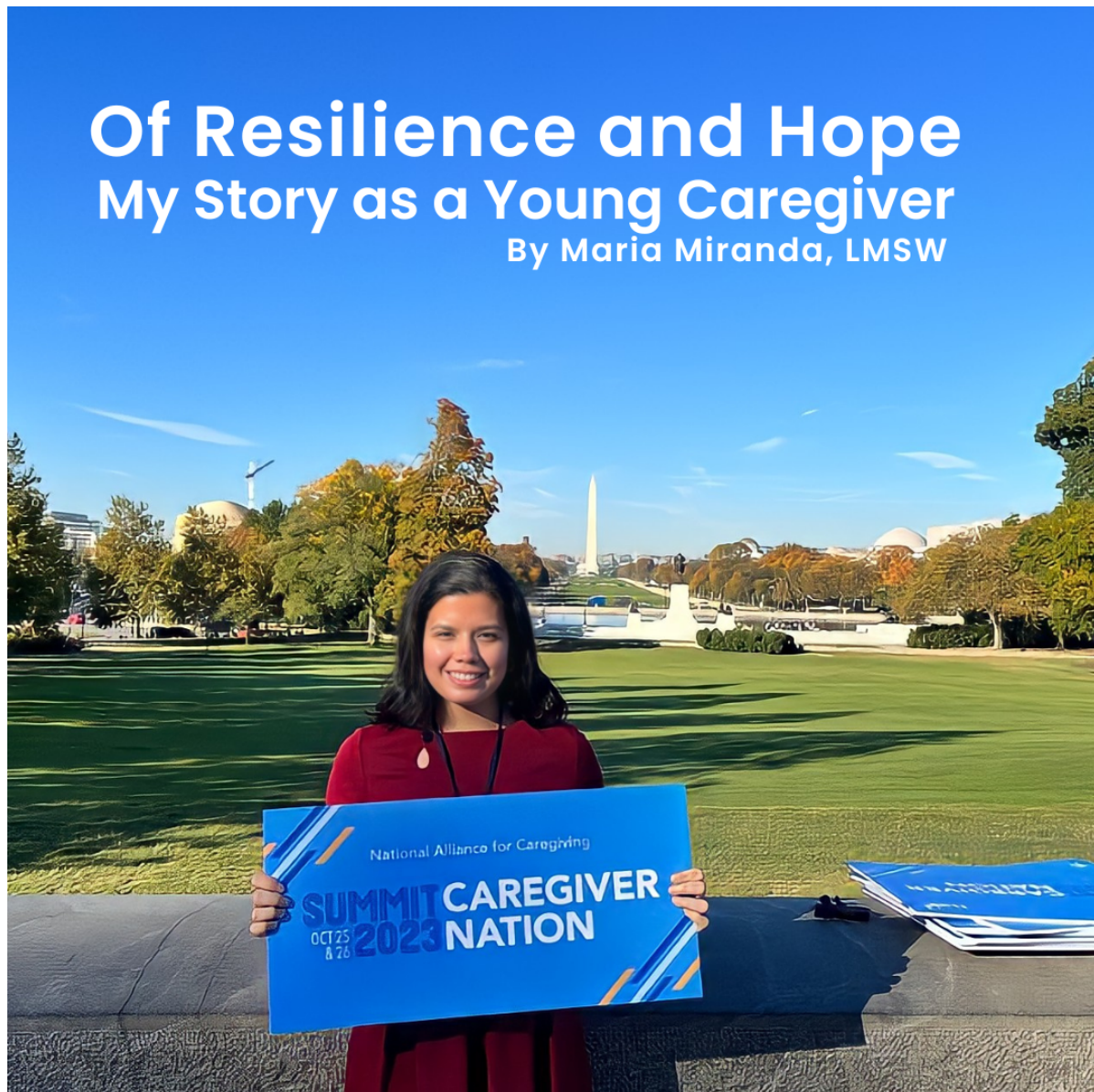
Even though it can get overwhelming, the reward of seeing a smile on my sister's face and my parents makes it worth it.

Being in the Caregiving Youth Project helps me in many ways. The program helps me with tutoring, and I got a B in the class I was failing. The program helps with community services and more.

*Thank you, JP. Your voice matters because it shines a light on what young caregivers go through, which is very different from the usual teenage stuff. Opening up shows others they're not alone and gives them the courage to find their own strength. So keep rocking it, JP! We need your fire to light the way. You are awesome!*



## | "Of Resilience and Hope – My Story as a Young Caregiver – By Maria Miranda, LMSW"



Picture in your mind the typical life of a 9-year-old and you most likely would think of the following: play dates with friends, participating in school activities, and gushing over the latest pop star/movie/television show.



I now would invite you to picture another 9-year-old girl, waiting to be picked up from school by her grandmother. As she sits on the school steps, she looks to her left and instead sees her grandfather, struggling to walk to her, cane in hand, leaning to one side with a shuffling step. The girl runs up to him and tells him that he can't be out in his condition. The grandfather tells her that he is there to get her home safe; but it was the girl that ensured that she got her grandfather home safe, supporting him as he walked and having him stop at sign posts to prevent a fall.

That 9-year-old girl was me, being a caregiver to my grandfather who suffered from vascular dementia.

At the time, I didn't realize that I was a caregiver.

I was being a granddaughter, helping my grandmother and mother care for him. [Read Maria's whole story here](#)



## | Caregiving Friends are Gold!

**FELLOW CAREGIVING YOUTH  
CAN BE AN ABSOLUTE  
GOLDMINE - NOT ONLY FOR  
IDEAS BUT FOR VENTING  
AND COMFORT WHEN THINGS  
ARE TOUGH. SOMETIMES IT  
TAKES A FELLOW  
CAREGIVER TO FULLY  
UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU  
ARE GOING THROUGH.**

-AACY





**SET A GOAL TO  
CHECK IN WITH  
A CAREGIVING  
FRIEND EVERY  
DAY IN 2024!**

-AACY





In Florida, 16.4% of high schoolers and 23.6% of middle schoolers provide care, or more than 290,000 youth.

Kids are not alone.

# CAREGIVING YOUTH PROJECT

of the American Association of Caregiving Youth



## 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 is a leading national authority on matters related to Caregiving Youth.



## 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.

**CYP**



**Join us and spread the word!** To participate in our program, Caregiving Youth Project (CYP) participants must reside in Palm Beach County and can be referred through personal outreach, recommendations from school staff, or other organizations. Our support is provided both at school and in the home.

If you are a Caregiving Youth or know someone who is but they don't live in Palm Beach County, please encourage them to email us at [info@aacyp.org](mailto:info@aacyp.org). We are committed to helping them find resources, no matter where they reside in the United States.

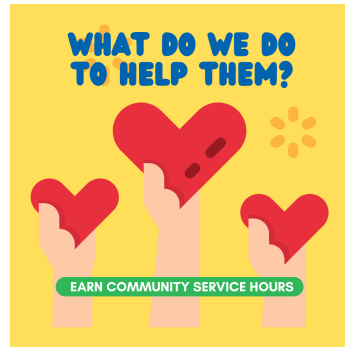
# Resources - Support - Help



## 988 Crisis Hotline

We at AACY believe that prioritizing mental health is a year-round endeavor. When you're having a difficult time, it's important to seek help. Thankfully, there is a new phone resource available no matter where you are in the US!: Just dial the **9-8-8** hotline.

This hotline is available 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Don't suffer in silence - get help and keep hope alive.



## Community Service Hours

A reminder: please submit your Community Service Hours for the work you do at home!

If you have any questions, need more information or help to complete the form, please contact your Family Specialist.

**IN A CRISIS?** [www.crisistextline.org](http://www.crisistextline.org)

**Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a volunteer Crisis Counselor** **FREE**

Free 24/7 support at your fingertips.

**Text Us 741741**

**How It Works**

Text HOME to 741741 from anywhere in the United States, anytime. Crisis Text Line is here for any crisis. A live, trained Crisis Counselor receives the text and responds, all from our secure online platform. The volunteer Crisis Counselor will help you move from a hot moment to a cool moment.

## Crisis Text Line

**GET POISON CONTROL HELP**

Contact Poison Control right away if you suspect a poisoning. Help is available online with **webPOISONCONTROL**® or by phone at 1-800-222-1222. Both options are free, expert, and confidential.

Get help online or Call 1-800-222-1222

**POISON CONTROL**  
National Capital Poison Center

Need help identifying a pill?

Mixed up your meds? Found a loose pill? Worried that your refill looks different? Fortunately, most medications can be identified from the letters and numbers imprinted on the pill.

Identify a pill

## Need help identifying a pill?

Free 24x7 support at your fingertips.

[crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org)

Text HOME to 741741

### Poison possibility?

Mixed up meds? Found a loose pill?

Worried that a refill looks different?

Suspect an overdose?

Call 1-800-222-1222

Contact [poison.org](http://poison.org) - Free



### Are there any VETERANS in your Family?

Resources Available - Check it Out

#### Palm Beach County Government

PBC has services that might be of assistance to your family

<https://discover.pbcgov.org/communityservices/humanservices/pages/veteran-services.aspx>

#### VeteranAid.org

VeteranAid.org offers free help applying for Aid and Attendance if a Veteran requires assisted living care in a community or at home.

VeteranAid.org was created to help families pay for the care their senior loved ones need by claiming the Aid & Attendance (A&A) benefit their veterans are entitled to.

### Are there any VETERANS in your Family? Resources Available:

PBC has services that might be of assistance to your Family. [Learn more here](#)

### Another resource is VeteranAid.org.

This organization offers details information on a Veteran's pension benefit called Aid and Attendance (A&A)

If a Veteran requires assisted living care in a community or at home, A&A gives the information they need to apply for this benefit for free. Senior Veterans and spouses use this benefit to help them afford quality home care. [Learn more here](#)

## Many Thanks to Our Partners:



United Way of Palm Beach County



Town of Palm Beach United Way



Treasure Talk is a monthly newsletter for and about the students in the AACY Caregiving Youth Project (CYP) and all supporters of Caregiving Youth. We use the term "Treasure" in Treasure Talk to let the kids know that they are highly valued and cherished as individuals – and to recognize and remind them of the positive impact they have on the lives of others around them.



## DID YOU KNOW?

When you **recycle your old and/or used ink cartridges** with us, you not only help the environment, but you help support one of AACY's many initiatives!

When we mail in those old and/or used ink cartridges, Planet Green donates back to AACY!

Want to collect ink cartridges from family and friends? This is a great way to earn additional community service hours!

Please contact [kristen@acy.org](mailto:kristen@acy.org) for more information.

Thank you for your support!







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

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