

# Pinecrest

ONE OF MIAMI'S COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

MARCH 10 - 23, 2014

## Walking 4 Friendship raised awareness, money and spirits

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*Publisher*



My brother Michael and I recently participated in Walking 4 Friendship, a 3k walk and carnival that benefited the Friendship Circle of Miami.

This was the sixth year of the event and it's one we wouldn't miss. More than 1,000 children, teens, parents, grandparents and supporters came together on the Friendship Circle campus to walk and raise awareness and money for this program that offers recreation and services for children, teens and young adults with special needs.

Each year, the walk and carnival get bigger and more money is raised. Through email and social media, through "friends asking friends," the impact of this event goes beyond our community. More than 1,160 donors from all over the world donated \$127,000, and that figure continues to rise. It's important to recognize and thank the top fundraisers Todd and Liz Ruderman and Joe and Aida Roisman.

The Friendship Circle team of Nechama Harlig, Jessica Szmuler, Linda Woodson and Rabbi Yossi Harlig deserve thanks for organizing Walking 4 Friendship, and so do the many volunteers. Volunteers are key to the Friendship Circle's success and they were certainly key to this event. The program's teen, young adult and parent volunteers along with volunteer groups from many area schools



More than 1,000 people participated in this year's Walking 4 Friendship.



Friendship Circle Director Nechama Harlig received a proclamation from Mayor Cindy Lerner.

made it all possible.

"It was such a powerful day, the community's response validated the program and the efforts of the supporters and volunteers who so generously give of their time," said Nechama Harlig. "The children with special needs and their families were overwhelmed with the outpouring of support. They simply beamed with pride."

The day was full of smiles and laughter.

Children enjoyed carnival rides and crafts. Families enjoyed a performance by the Greater Miami Symphony, martial arts demonstration by Kia Kidz and presentation by the American Sign Language Club from Killian High School. Jack Ruderman played the piano and the children of the Friendship Circle's Music, Guitar and Hip Hop programs also gave memorable performances. Mayor Cindy Lerner was there lending her support and the Miami-Dade Police Department helped keep everyone safe.

It was great to see several local organizations joining the Pinecrest Tribune as sponsors of the event. Among the supporters were Wings Beachwear, Ruderman Family Foundation, Ralph Maya & Co., Bayfront



Rabbi Yossi Harlig with top fundraisers Joe Roisman (left), Todd Ruderman and his son Jack.

Dental, Value Store It, Perry Ellis International, Danny Berry Diamond Backs Baseball Academy, KW Property Management, Evensky & Katz Wealth Management, Bank United, Palace Group, Fairholme Foundation, Clayton Feig Memorium and the Moshe Sholom Ben Yudel Dovid-Dr. Morry Fox Memorium.

The money raised is vital to continuing this great program and donations can be made throughout the year. To learn more or donate, go to <info@walking4friendship.com> or call 305-234-5654.



Teen volunteers are the lifeblood of the Friendship Circle programs.