

## Around the Community

### Walk4Friendship 2018 *By Mandy Hakimi*

On Sunday, September 2nd, the clouds dispersed and rain ceased just in time for The Friendship Circle's Walk4Friendship in Northbrook. The annual event brings people together from all over Chicagoland in support of individuals with disabilities. The organization provides programming that partners teenage volunteers with children and young adults with disabilities, in order to foster friendship and promote inclusion. Or as Director, Rabbi Zelik Moscovitz, put it, "The Friendship Circle helps build friendships and social skills for a group of children who can use a little extra help, for a big change in life."

After a brief opening ceremony, the starting ribbon was cut by Naomi Gorstein, a student at Solomon

Schechter, whose walk team raised the most money of the teen lead teams. "I first got involved with the Friends at Home program because I liked what Friendship Circle stood for," said Ms. Gorstein when asked about her relationship to Friendship Circle. "It connects kids and young adults with disabilities to the community. It also builds new friendships that would never have been developed. I chose to create a team for the Walk4Friendship as part of my Bat Mitzvah project because I wanted to raise funds for this amazing organization and I wanted to introduce it to many of my friends and family."

The walkers then weaved through the streets of Northbrook and returned to Field School to enjoy the ensuing Friendship Fair.

Some highlights included a performance by ZuZu African Acrobats, food from Mizrahi Grill, face painting, a petting zoo, and inflatables.

Over 500 people attended Walk4Friendship from throughout Chicagoland. Many have been coming for years. Emily Hoffman and her family never miss it. "The Friendship Circle Walk is a special event every year. It's usually hot and full of love and joy. We most look forward to the actual walk, when we always get good conversations in with a unique blend of people. We also have many projects from the wonderful Home Depot stand, which always has a great craft project for kids to make. It's a great event for a great cause. Why not walk?!"

New people are always joining as well. Chava Rosenbaum brought

her children for the second time this year. "I've found Friendship Circle to be so welcoming to everyone. The walk is a great outlet for my kids and for us. The entertainment appeals to all ages, and the food is great, so we definitely plan to make it an annual family outing."

The event is free and open to the public, although donations are encouraged. Next year will mark the 10th Annual Walk4Friendship, scheduled for Sunday, September 1, 2019. The Friendship Circle has served the local community since 2006. To learn more about their work, and how you can get involved, check out their website, [www.fcil.org](http://www.fcil.org).

*Photos by: Yakov Strelchin; Photography by Yakov.*

