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AFA Names College Scholarship Winner

Emily Riber of Monroe, CT was recently named the winner of the second annual AFA Teens for Alzheimer's Awareness College Scholarship.

Emily's essay, a requirement for the competition, recounted the close relationship between her and her grandfather, his struggle with Alzheimer's disease, and the compassionate nursing home care that inspired her to give back.

Her essay was selected out of more than 1,500 heartfelt essays submitted as part of the application process for the \$5,000 scholarship.

"Having a family member with Alzheimer's disease definitely raises one's awareness of those in need," Emily said. "While in college, I hope to begin working within the Alzheimer's community to support teenagers in a similar position."

Emily plans to attend the Silver School of Social Work at New York University in New York City this fall.

AFA offers the AFA Teens for Alzheimer's Awareness College Scholarship to one deserving college-bound student each year.



Emily Riber

AFA Teens Chapters Raise Awareness



From coast to coast, AFA Teens chapters are spreading the word about Alzheimer's disease. Among them, 16-year-old Natalie Innocenzi from La Canada, CA helped her community realize that no one has to cope with Alzheimer's disease alone. This past school year, she started an AFA Teens chapter and held the first Alzheimer's Awareness Week at her school, the Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy.

The week-long series of events included a school-wide assembly at which a guest speaker spoke about the importance of proper diagnosis and meaningful interactions with individuals with dementia. In addition, students planted forget me-not seeds in the school garden.

Across the country, in Norwell, MA, an AFA Teens chapter started by five siblings has been entertaining its community. Maggie Hynes, 17, and her younger siblings have been performing in their string quintet at local long-term care facilities, where many of the residents have Alzheimer's disease.

Natalie Innocenzi

AFA Teens invites other teens to start chapters in their communities.

New Advisory Board Members Named

To further guide its development, AFA Teens recently named new members to its AFA Teens Advisory Board.

They are: Ruchita Amin of Tampa, FL, Teresa Ciaramella of Staten Island, NY, Jessica Dobbs of Ackerman, MS, Chester Hilborn of Houston, TX, Maggie Hynes of Norwell, MA, Natalie Innocenzi of Arcadia, CA, and Ginny Lee of Marysville, WA.

"It's great to see young people willing to give their time and commitment," said Eric J. Hall, AFA's president and CEO. "As today's leaders in terms of raising awareness of Alzheimer's disease, these advisory board members hold the promise of making significant contributions to their communities and the cause as a whole."

The board is charged with building on the division's efforts to connect teens facing Alzheimer's disease in their families, educating teens about the brain disorder and encouraging teens to take action.

Candles of Care



AFA invites teens to take part in an inspirational event on November 15, 2009: Individuals and groups from around the country will light Candles of Care to honor and remember those affected by Alzheimer's disease as part of AFA's National Commemorative Candle Lighting.

You can get involved in two ways: either host a candle lighting ceremony or attend one taking place in your community.

As a host, the event is a great way to engage your peers and raise awareness of the brain disorder. When you sign up to host a ceremony, we will send you a kit of marketing materials and other directions to help you easily carry out the event. Please contact josborne@alzfdn.org for a registration form.

If you cannot host your own site, you can still participate by locating a scheduled site in your community at www.candlelighting.org. Check back early this fall for listings.

AFA Teens Honorable Mention

AFA Teens recently received honorable mention as an "organization making a difference in the lives of caregivers" by the National Alliance for Caregiving and Met Life Foundation.

The 4th annual awards program is designed to recognize community-based programs for their innovation, effectiveness and responsiveness to the needs of family caregivers of older adults.

Embracing teenagers' thirst for the Internet, the hallmark of AFA Teens is an Alzheimer's disease specific online resource offering direct interaction with teens. Its dedicated Web site, www.afateens.org, conveys educational information about the disease and tips for caregiving; offers a message board where teens may share their feelings and concerns; and posts creative contributions. As part of its efforts to raise awareness about the disease and encourage volunteerism, AFA Teens asks teens to set up local AFA Teens chapters and volunteer in their communities.

"The number of teens being impacted by Alzheimer's disease continues to grow each day. AFA Teens is continually striving to better meet the needs of this younger generation of caregivers, and this recognition validates that we are providing a vital and supportive resource for teens," said Eric J. Hall, AFA's president and chief executive officer.

News Update

- **Care-centered approaches ease agitation in individuals with dementia ...**In a study of 289 residents of care facilities in Sydney, Australia, those who received four months of behavioral interventions and other standards of care known as person-centered care and dementia care-mapping showed less agitation than those who had usual care. Person-centered care puts the person with dementia at the center of the care-planning process, respecting their wishes and needs as an individual. Dementia-care mapping is an assessment tool and philosophy designed to improve person-centered care. [Read More...](#)
- **Strong sense of purpose may lead to longevity...**In a study of 1,238 older adults (average age 78) without dementia, researchers found that those with a more solid sense of purpose--whether ambitious or modest--had half the risk of dying over a three-year follow-up period than those who had a lower sense of purpose. The researchers define purpose as anything ranging from wanting to accomplish a goal to volunteering or even reading a series of books. [Read More...](#)
- **Caffeine may slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease...** New research shows that the equivalent of three large cups of coffee each day reduced the levels of amyloid protein in the brains of mice by 50 percent and improved the rodents' memory and thinking skills. The mice, aged the equivalent of 70 in human terms, were genetically engineered to develop dementia symptoms and were given 500 mg of caffeine in their drinking water daily during two months. [Read More...](#)
- **Antibodies may play a role in the prevention of Alzheimer's disease...**When researchers studied blood samples from more than 250 individuals who were between 21 and 89 years old, and either did or did not have Alzheimer's disease, they found the presence of antibodies which targeted amyloid beta in the blood. The levels of these antibodies dropped as the subjects grew older and continued to drop in individuals with the brain disorder as the disease progressed. [Read More...](#)

In this Issue

- What Other Teens are Saying
- Teens in the Headlines
- Join the Cause
- The Latest in Alzheimer's News

Our Mission



AFA Teens educates and engages teenagers--both those with family members affected by the disease and those purely interested in the cause--and raises awareness of Alzheimer's disease among the younger generation and the general public.

Get Involved

Web Site Expanded

AFA Teens recently added two new sections to its Web site to further educate and engage teens.

First, under the "Learn More" category, a section called "Young Onset Dementia" provides information about this rare form of Alzheimer's disease that affects individuals in their 30's, 40's and 50's. It also highlights a personal essay written by a Long Island, NY teenager whose father has the illness.

Secondly, the new "Creative Contributions" section, listed under "Get Involved," features written and visual works by teens. AFA Teens encourages other teens to express themselves and showcase their talents by contributing to this section.

Volunteer This Summer

- Make care packages
- Help out at a local hospital
- Read to an elderly neighbor
- Do activities with someone with Alzheimer's disease
- Run errands for a caregiver

Save the Date

National Commemorative Candle Lighting

Sunday, November 15, 2009

Host a local ceremony and light "candles of care" to remember and honor those affected by this illness, and educate the public.

Please sign up at www.candlelighting.org

AFA Teens for Alzheimer's Awareness College Scholarship

Deadline: Monday, February 15, 2010

AFA offers a \$5,000 college scholarship, awarded competitively, to a college-bound student each year.

Obtain an application at www.afateens.org

Contact Us

To obtain more information about AFA Teens, visit us at www.afateens.org or call us toll-free at 866-AFA-8484

Alzheimer's Disease Facts & Figures

- Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, degenerative disorder that attacks the brain's nerve cells, or neurons, resulting in loss of memory, thinking and language skills, and behavioral changes.
- Currently, as many as 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer's disease.
- It is projected that the incidence of Americans with Alzheimer's disease could more than triple by mid-century.
- Clinicians can now diagnose Alzheimer's disease with up to 90 percent accuracy. But it can only be confirmed by an autopsy, during which pathologists look for the disease's characteristic plaques and tangles in brain tissue.
- Currently, the causes of Alzheimer's disease are still unknown and there is no cure for the brain disorder.
- Early detection is critical to maximize available medical treatments and social services intervention.
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Resources

AFA Teens Bulletin Board
care ADvantage magazine
American Association of Caregiving Youth
Care Camp