

# THE COMPASSION CHRONICKLES

THE TURN-A-FROWN AROUND (TAF) FOUNDATION, INC.

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## *Yoga-Thon to End Loneliness*

By Caitlyn Yerves

June 16, 2013, Long Branch, NJ - It felt like I tapped into some cosmic consciousness when the idea came to me - a Yoga-Thon to End Loneliness. With all the progress that's been made in the mission, it seemed natural that something as pure as yoga could be paired with something as special as TAF. It wasn't too much of a stretch to make the match!

By working with the concept, we were able to put together a 12-hour fun-raiser that highlighted healthy living and healthy loving. Drew stopped by to remind everyone of the importance of unconditional love and compassion as we laughed the day away with Forever Friends.

I was honored to be part of the small group that represented the dedication of the community we are creating. Thank you to everyone who shared their presences and their practices at the first ever Yoga-Thon to End Loneliness. Our next one is scheduled for August 25, 2013!

## *The Broadway Comedy Club*

By Allen Teplitsky

June 17, 2013, New York City, NY - I have had a strong connection to TAF ever since I met Drew at Montclair State and became president of the first Smile Station. Seeing the comedy show ensured me that Drew cares oodles more for his mission and can find any venue to make some smiles and round up some volunteers.

Drew made a lot of laughs when he came onto the stage as Professor Fullershit. He got the audience to sing along to *Hava Nagila* when he first got on stage and brought out some of the jokes we know and love later on. My favorite part was the use of the Smile Catcher; everyone left the comedy club with a smile.

Drew's passion to end loneliness is evident no matter the place or time. I look forward to more shows!

*To share your thoughts on future fundraising ideas, email [tafoundation@gmail.com](mailto:tafoundation@gmail.com)!*



The Compassion Theater Company at Montclair State University  
Photograph by Michael Greene

## Where Art and Compassion Combine

By Danielle De Sisto  
The Compassion Theater Company

I'm sensitive to the subject of loneliness. I've watched people tear themselves and those around them apart because of their own loneliness, and it's absolutely horrifying. Not many people know how to help the lonely, which is part of why it's still an ongoing problem, but the answer is actually quite simple: compassion. When I met Drew Horn and he proposed creating the "Compassion Theater Company" as an arm of the Turn-A-Frown-Around Foundation, I genuinely knew it was something I wanted to be involved in. I wanted to contribute to the cause of preventing loneliness, and since joining the Compassion Theater Company, I feel like I've done just that.

Drew always says that he feels CTC is an example of "where art and compassion combine," and he couldn't have found a better phrase to describe our little Company. I fell in love with art because of its ability to create change, even if that change is just simply altering a person's mood for a day. Whether I perform in a tremendous auditorium to an audience of 900 or in a nursing home to an audience of 25, the feeling remains the same; I know that someone out in that audience has the potential to be changed by my work, and that fact is absolutely stunning. It's difficult to describe how it feels when I see people smile after a CTC performance when they were scowling at the start, but it makes me feel as though we are doing something worthwhile, and indeed we are.

I'm certain that when CTC grows in the next coming years, we are going to be able to bring a lot of joy and compassion into the lives of those who really could use a smile. We have endless potential, and we will undoubtedly continue to strive for greatness. ●

## Angelic Updates

Angel Ed, Coordinator of the National Nursing Home Initiative, has accomplished so much in just the past few months in his new position!

TAFAs has now recruited over 75 new volunteers and ended loneliness in four nursing homes: Brakeley Park Care Center, Care Center of Phillipsburg, House of the Good Shepherd, and Traditions!

Angel Ed has also appeared on [WFMZ News](#), advocating for the mission to end loneliness! Great work. Ed! ●

## Transition Committee Shout Out!

TAFAs counts its blessings every day for the new transition team that is getting TAFAs to the next level! The team meets weekly to comb through TAFAs's goals and objectives.

TAFAs is thankful to the transition committee members, past and present:

Michael Fay, Colleen Meyers  
Guy Sole, Diane Van Blarcom,  
Afshan Ladha, and Drew Horn



## The Consumer Corner

By Afshan Ladha (aka Sweet A)

I had the lovely experience of interviewing Karen Byrne, a long-time friend to TAFAs and a very accomplished Olympian! Enjoy the interview!

What was your first experience like in the Special Olympics?

*"I was eight years old and my dad was at the end of the track after running my first 400 meter run. I won the junior state title in NJ."*

What motivates you to compete?

*"In life I was told to stand up for what I believe in and that I'm a leader, not a follower."*

What else would you like our readers to know?

*"Never give up hope; dare to be different."*

Karen has competed in the Tri-County Special Olympics, won Silver in the 1500 meter run, won the state title in a 3000 meter run, completed the Special Olympics Torch Run, and dedicated runs to her father and mother.

Congratulations Karen on all that you've accomplished! All the best on future competitions! ●

By Daniela Castano  
Medical Student, Medellin, Colombia

During the summer of 2009 my friend encouraged me to join a Medical Clown program in the city of Medellin, Colombia. Little did I know I was going to begin an experience that would transform my life. Every Saturday during the following six months I worked with clowns, artists, and actors from around the city. I was also introduced to Patch Adam's humanitarian and social medicine and decided that I wanted to be a physician.

The following year, after multiple hospital visits, parades, and festivals I was accepted to medical school. I vowed to integrate the clowning I had learned in my practice and disregarded what many of my professors said: "A doctor has to look serious." Unfortunately, the world of healthcare has demolished the patient-doctor relationship that served as the basis for trust and transformed it into a business transaction. It is no longer about how well you know your patient and how well you connect with him, but about how many patients you assist. Ultimately, some doctors are submissive and will continue to feed this atrocious system, but some of us will not. I will not.

The humanitarian and social medicine conferences I have assisted to during the past months focus on the quality of care. It only takes initiative and action to help a friend. On 2012, I had my first encounter with psychiatric patients. In a patio were men walking to and from and on each silent corner was a man with a miserable look while the others were in the middle of their habitual afternoon conversations. I wanted to speak with them but I was told that it was not safe. Monotony, carelessness, and distance are three things that cannot be tolerated. Countless patients spend their last moments alone in hospitals. Mr. Silvio was weakened by his incurable lung cancer but was strong enough to give me an enormous sincere smile and wave at me; he passed away the next day.

What is true is that people really know when you care. Friendship begins when you listen and care with all your heart and this I learned with Drew Horn at the Turn-A-Frown-Around Foundation.



Daniela Castano

He reminded me that I do not have to be like every other doctor or like every other medical student. This is not an article to laud health as a career, but to emphasize and remind others to be a good citizen, to be humble, and to volunteer! To call out to those who stand on a pedestal because they

may be of a 'higher social status' and to remind others that the greatest people are those who remain true to themselves. Although many people regard those who give unconditional love as 'a little crazy' or 'happy go-lucky', at the end of the day every smile you bring to a person makes the day count. Whether it is to have long crazy curly hair, to wear colorful sneakers, or to carry around a red nose, what truly matters is to put yourself in another's shoes, to open your eyes, to really look around and to find ways to share your time with others. To start questioning yourself: How is Elisa feeling in that bed? How many times has her family visited? How can I really make her stay better?

We must take action today. We must learn how to cultivate strong friendships and there is no better way, than by talking to strangers. Children, adults and the elderly are full of life and stories to share. Many of them wait patiently for a visit. Finally, as days go by we approach the days when we will be the elderly longing to be visited by a new friend. That is one of the reasons why compassion needs to be cultivated in the hearts of the youth. Only when we are in a specific situation, do we awaken from our perfect lives and become conscious of the real problems. We are not here to compete for a spot on a platform; we are here to help each other make out of our stay here a very enjoyable one. ●

*To submit an article or idea to the newsletter,  
email [tafafoundation@gmail.com](mailto:tafafoundation@gmail.com)*



## Campus Compassion Crusade Conquest

By Chelsea Durocher  
Coordinator, Campus Compassion Crusade

I am ecstatic to be on board with TAFAs. I was recently named the Coordinator of the Campus Compassion Crusade Initiative which is more than just an honor to me; it completely fulfills me. My entire life I have had a huge heart and I always loved making people feel better when they felt down. What a better organization to be part of than TAFAs.

Creating friendships for the forgotten is exactly what I do. I almost feel as if I were destined to be captaining the spread of Smile Stations on every university and college campus. I know changing the world is a big task- but changing every college campus into a more compassionate body of students is DOABLE for me! I have been promoting TAFAs' mission on various radio stations over the past few months with Drew Horn and Ed Johns. With each radio FOREVER FRIENDATHON we fill up a local nursing home with Forever Friends and end the loneliness that plagues that nursing home. Our goal is to do this "search and rescue" mission until we end loneliness once and for all in every facility.

It's easy- we find a local facility, get the number of patients who are lonely, and create a Smile Station that links them with Forever Friends. It is literally as easy as 1-2-3. I am confident that the first ever campus Smile Station at Montclair State is a fantastic model for all other campuses to follow. I personally extend myself as the "training wheels" to other universities for getting their Smile Stations started. I will do whatever it takes, which isn't much because it is so easy!

I am sure the Campus Compassion Crusade will be a huge success, and I personally promise I will do everything in my power to see TAFAs fulfill its' mission of ending loneliness. By creating a Smile Station on your campus, you and your peers can change the world one friendship at a time. ●

### *Do you need a friend right now?*

Loneliness does not discriminate. TAFAs wants to end your loneliness by offering compassion through the love of a Forever Friend.

To get in touch with a Forever Friend today, contact us and we'll connect you with someone as soon as possible.

There is no charge to end your loneliness.

Contact us at [tafafoundation@gmail.com](mailto:tafafoundation@gmail.com) or call (973) 746-7353.

Visit our website: [turnafrownaround.org](http://turnafrownaround.org)

Find us on Facebook: [TAFAS Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/TAFASFoundation)

Follow us on Twitter: [TAFAS Foundation](https://twitter.com/TAFASFoundation)

## Get Involved

Volunteer for any of the positions below:

- Forever Friend/E-mail Friend/Phone Friend
- Ambassador to the President (Create a Smile Station)
  - The Compassion Theater Company
  - Publicity and Marketing Efforts
  - Join the Administration

We can never have too many volunteers.  
Make TAFAs your cause. Own the mission.

## The Smile Station Express

The Smile Station Express travels from town to town, setting up Smile Stations to turn your frown around.

Who will love the loveless?

Who will be a friend?

Who will seek and find the lost?

Who will bring loneliness to an end?

Will it be the worship house?

Love is what they teach.

Or the local bar and grill?

With beers within your reach.

Elk clubs, moose, and lions,  
any animal will do.

Kids from grammar school to college,  
it could even be your friends and you.

So climb on the Smile Station Express  
as we gather each Forever Friend.

Start a Smile Station right now,  
is the message that we send.

Just think about the lonely  
and how they will come alive.  
Just think about the forgotten  
whose soul you will revive.

So will you become a Forever Friend?  
Don't make us wait or guess.

Please bring your unconditional love  
and join the Smile Station Express.