

kids in the news

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Letter from Henia Drucker

Dear Friends,

Despite the sadness and pain, Mischa's courage, compassion, humor and engaging spirit – qualities that led to the creation of Kids Helping Kids - continue to capture teens' positive energy, creativity and kindness. The message that comes up year after year is, *when given the opportunity and support, teens do have a great desire to reach out, connect and help one another.* In turn, their communities appreciate and embrace their efforts.

In this issue you will hear from our Youth Board Director, Carly Hirschberg, and will learn about the work of some of our current volunteers. You will also hear from some of our original Kids Helping Kids' members who have taken Mischa's ideas and the meaning of "kids helping kids" into the world as they have grown into caring and involved young adults. We are deeply moved realizing the impact of Kids Helping Kids.

In August, we fulfilled our financial goal of raising \$50,000 for the creation of a Teen Lounge at Children's Specialized Hospital in Mischa's honor. This was a very meaningful milestone for Kids Helping Kids and we have all of you to thank – our volunteers and donors who continue to support the organization.

As our mission states, Kids helping Kids will continue funding mobility and adaptive equipment, teen lounges etc. for kids transitioning back to their communities and schools. Although Kids Helping Kids' Headquarters is no longer organizing specific events, teens and their supervisors can find templates, examples and guidelines for developing their own social entrepreneurial projects and fundraisers at our website, www.kidshelping.org. Whether it's using their sports, music, dance, art, business or philanthropic sense, they see how their interests and talents can raise awareness and fulfill the goals of Kids Helping Kids.

To everyone who has worked with and contributed to Kids Helping Kids over the past 14 years, we thank you with all our heart and hope you'll continue to support our organization.

Sincerely,

Henia Drucker, LCSW
Kids Helping Kids Co-Founder



Our Mission:

To encourage youth volunteer programs and social entrepreneurial projects that:

- Provide mobility equipment, services, and funds for teen programs that help kids transition back to their communities after experiencing a life altering illness or injury
- Keep kids involved in the world of their peers and help them know they have not been forgotten
- Increase awareness among young people about the huge difference they can make in the life of another child.

Look What We've Look What We've

Mischa Zimmermann
Founder

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*"Don't walk behind me;
I may not lead. Don't
walk in front of me;
I may not follow. Just
walk beside me and
be my friend."*

—Albert Camus

Ask Our Alumni

Kids Helping Kids volunteers have been involved in all aspects of the organization, from fundraising to visiting kids in the hospital to running events...many of our volunteers have grown up with us. We asked them about their experiences over the last fourteen years.

You've grown up with Kids Helping Kids. What has the past fourteen years of involvement with the organization meant to you?

It is a really remarkable and thoroughly exciting chapter in our history to reach the first Teen lounge milestone. The idea of a Teen Lounge goes back to the earliest days of Kids Helping Kids. My favorite memories were spent with Mischa while he was dreaming of a space that embodied his goals for Kids Helping Kids. He hoped that one day we'd be able to close the gap between the lives of well and sick or recovering teens, so that no one was left behind. He hoped to create a place that would empower all teens equally, by offering a space devoted especially to their imaginations and passions.

Even now, a decade later, I am still inspired to take the skills and passions of my lifetime, and put them to good work to benefit the goals of Kids Helping Kids. The understanding I felt within this simple idea shaped my young adult life. In college, I developed a traveling theater project for children in hospitals. As an adult, I continue to work in a field I love, and continue to dream of producing a completely independent performance fundraiser to benefit KHK.

Carly Hirschberg
Broadway Theatrical Wardrobe Staff
Youth Board Director, Kids Helping Kids



Well, a lot of people know Mischa's story, but here's what I remember and what it's meant to me. Mischa understood that separation from one's peer group, hobbies, activities, experiences, and general teenage life is profoundly distressing psychologically...especially for 'kids.' I also think he recognized that the universality of kindness can be a wonderful motivator for healthy and handicapped kids alike, and the great satisfaction people can feel when they know they've joined together to help others in need. To me, Kids Helping Kids provides a network of connectivity between groups of people who care about each other, share the same understanding that misfortunes can happen randomly and lives can change suddenly, that people understand one another better when they help each other, and that one person's contribution to something positive can benefit many.

Robbie Hartnett
Musician
Youth Board, Kids Helping Kids

Look What We've Done

What was your impression of the opening of the KHK Teen Lounge?

Getting to see teens who are excited about using the complete lounge to make their hospital stay better was a really powerful example of the impact that our work with, and donations to, KHK accomplishes. Being a teenager is hard enough for healthy kids; by providing a place where sick teens can relax and just be teens is really making a difference in their lives.

Jeff Shrensel
Medical Student
New Jersey Medical School
Youth Board, Kids Helping Kids



What will the Teen Lounge accomplish for the teens at Children Specialized?

I was overwhelmed to see how much of an effect the Teen Lounge has on kids who are the same age I was when I began with KHK. It has given them the opportunity to do what every typical kid needs to be healthy and happy, to lounge. Mischa would have been so overwhelmingly proud of the progress we've made.

Kimberly Hirschberg
Special Educator
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer



How has being involved in Kids Helping Kids influenced you?

Mischa was an incredible person who taught me more life lessons than I can count. Maybe the most important lesson: Challenge yourself. Try your hardest. If you do, you can accomplish anything or overcome any obstacle. Life put quite a few speed bumps along Mischa's path, but he never let them slow him down.

During high school and college, I loved volunteering with Kids Helping Kids. The organization truly embodies how Mischa lived his life, with the constant belief that if he truly wanted to accomplish something, he wouldn't let his circumstances hold him back. Kids Helping Kids introduces the same idea to children who deal with similar life-altering events.

Mischa taught me life lessons without actually saying them. He did so through his actions, through the way he lived his life. KHK does the same thing for the children it helps. The resources KHK provides, as well as personal care and attention, show these children that they can embrace life despite their circumstances. That's why I love KHK.

Josh Spivak
Product Manager, Virgin Mobile USA
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

Kids Helping Kids is something that, over the years, helps remind me what LIFE is really about! To have been there when it started and to see us reach our goals is an indescribable feeling. I'm proud to be a part of something that actually makes a difference. When we went to the teen lounge and saw what KHK was able to contribute, it humbled me. When you are forced to stay in a hospital instead of the comfort of your own home, it's nice to know that there are people who would like to make your stay as close to home as possible.

Laura Hirschberg
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

Kids Helping Kids was a formative experience that served as an introduction to the challenges and rewards of social entrepreneurship. As a high school student, it was very exciting to develop and organize social enterprises, publicize our efforts, and fund projects to help kids who experienced catastrophic illnesses or injuries. I collaborated with students, hospitals, and local businesses to implement successful fundraisers like bracelet and greeting card sales, with the support of Henia Drucker and Betty Strauss. My experience with Kids Helping Kids fostered a lasting interest in socially responsible business.

Penny King
Student, Brown University
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

Being a part of Kids Helping Kids was a wonderful experience that I will forever cherish. Together as a team, led by Mischa's incredible charisma, Kids Helping Kids has taught me that kids are truly powerful and can make a difference in this world.

Zoe Farris
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

Look What We've Done

What We've Done

My involvement with Kids Helping Kids and my relationship with Mischa brought me opportunities that I didn't have in school or anywhere else. As a volunteer I was able to embrace my strengths and try to put them to good use in whatever capacity I could. This might have meant making a bracelet and selling it, going on a hospital visit, or attending a meeting. Through my connection to Kids Helping Kids, I realized the great power of love, commitment, openness, acceptance, caring, and a good sense of humor! I have Mischa and Kids Helping Kids to thank for giving me an outlet that allowed me to embrace these powers and carry them from my adolescence into the present.

Simone Calbi
Partner, Traduccion Audiovisual
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

I am honored to have had Mischa in my life as both a cousin and dear friend. He touched so many people with his amazing sense of humor, his positive outlook, and endless generosity. Not a day goes by that I don't think of him and the impact he had on my life. His legacy lives on through Kids Helping Kids and will continue to live on as his message and kindness touch so many. Mischa's vision has touched so many people in so many ways. I am truly blessed that he touched mine.

Jessi Farris
Account Director, ePrize.
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

It was great to be a part of KHK from the very beginning. It showed me that by building on Mischa's basic idea, there is real power in people working together to create something that benefits so many others. I know that kids that needed mobility devices, etc. received things that helped make their lives better, but I also know that the well-teen KHK volunteers who saw the direct results of their efforts also got so much in return. KHK has been an important experience for me and I'm glad to be a member.

Ferris VanRaalte:
Senior Associate, Mindshare
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

Being part of KHK has helped me understand that teen social entrepreneurial work can be effective and powerful, and it can change people's lives for the better. I think my experience with KHK has given me a valuable perspective as I've gone out into the business world. It has been great to see how the organization has grown over the years and I am truly proud to be a part of it.

Jason Murray
Account Supervisor, Cline Davis Mann
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

High School Clubs

I could not wait to help Mischa's cause. I was lucky enough to meet him when I was eleven, and ever since I first heard about his organization, I knew that I wanted to become involved in some way.

I found out about the organization's special relationship with Children's Specialized Hospital. I could not wait to start building relationships with some of the patients there. I had become very familiar with that hospital after I suffered a moderately severe brain injury in a terrible bus accident when I was twelve. For the entire year following the crash, I was treated as an outpatient at Children's Specialized. I was extremely lucky to recover fully after twelve months, and although my condition was not nearly as severe as Mischa's, I was only able to attend school for half days during my entire seventh-grade school year. After I recovered, I did not forget the loneliness of those twelve months, and it was this small taste of isolation that made me even more passionate about wanting to become involved in giving back. If there were something I could do to help make Mischa's dream come true, then I would have to make it a priority.

I'm pleased to report that under the auspices of Children's Specialized Hospital, we have made some visits to the hospital, and even got a team together to participate in the Walk n' Roll last May. Hopefully we can keep this going in our community for many years to come.

Benji Bernstein
President, Children's Specialized Volunteers
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer



*The Laurencerville School
KHK Club*



*Benji &
Montclair High School
KHK Club*

Look What We've Done Look What We've Done



Theophilus London

Events

The Lawrenceville chapter of Kids Helping Kids recently hosted a concert starring hip hop/rap star Theophilus London that raised over \$10,000.

And not only did we have a great concert, but we witnessed a great expression of charity and caring: a bunch of young guys from Brooklyn who may have never heard of either Lawrenceville or Kids Helping Kids learned what the event was all about and immediately said, "We're in!" They were so excited about coming to Lawrenceville that we knew we had something special.

London mesmerized the crowd with a masterful 50-minute set. His performance was nothing short of electrifying. Everyone instantly understood why *Rolling Stone* magazine labeled him "the next big thing." It was an amazing evening that succeeded in helping an amazing cause, Kids Helping Kids.

Luke Armour
Princeton University
Kids Helping Kids Volunteer

Sports

Evan Yablonsky, a former soccer teammate and friend of Mischa's participated in a dodgeball league through an organization known as the Zogsports (www.zogsports.com). Evan, along with his brother, was on the winning team. They were able to choose the charity to which a portion of the league's proceeds would be donated and they chose Kids Helping Kids.

Socially Responsible Businesses... Social Entrepreneurial Projects Benefit Kids Helping Kids

These are examples of social entrepreneurial projects created by teen volunteers to benefit Kids Helping Kids. The cards and bracelets were sold in many fine stores: Over the Moon, Montclair Paperie, Little Angels, Frederic Goodman, Learning Express, Watchung Booksellers, Banyan Tree, Thread, Semplice, Just Kidding Around, Hip Chic, Only Hearts (NYC), and Selima Optiques (Prince St. NYC) etc.



Molly Rose Zimmermann, Mischa's sister and one of our founders, is in the process of developing her own jewelry line. Taking time from her life as an assistant producer at a visual effects company, Molly is designing a special piece inspired by Mischa and those who stood beside him. A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the organization. Check out Molly's website, www.MoMiDesigns.com.

Recently, Caren Patterson, long-time volunteer, hosted a reflexology workshop to support the organization. "For me, reflexology is a wonderful way to promote overall health and well-being. It seems like an incredibly appropriate way to support Mischa's mission to help increase mobility and transition," said Caren. Workshops are planned in the very near future at Naturally Yoga in Glen Rock, NJ and in Astoria, NY.

"Playing" It Forward! Reaching Our Goal!

Thank You!



Kids Helping Kids Founder,
Mischa Zimmerman's
love for soccer...



Inspired his teammates to
organize annual Soccer
Challenge Cup fundraisers...



That raised funds to purchase
sleds and hocky equipment...



That built the Teen Lounge at
Children's Specialized Hospital.



That contributed to reaching
our \$50,000 pledge goal...



That were used in each year's
Sled Hockey fundraising games with
the Kearny Fire Department...



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www.kidshelping.org

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Want To Support Kids Helping Kids?

We appreciate all the support you give, in whatever way you give it. Create an event, develop or support a social entrepreneurial project or business or visit our website at www.kidshelping.org and donate. Once you've accomplished something great for Kids Helping Kids, send us your pictures and a write-up and let us share it in our next newsletter!