IN THE NEWS
Accomplishments in Academics, Arts, Athletics & Service

STUDENTS
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Creative Kids Care

Helping others was an integral part of Rachel Rutstein’s childhood. The 16-year-old from Boca Raton grew up attending charity events and watching foster children find new homes — her mother was the president of a nonprofit and an adoption attorney.

So at age 9, Rachel was eager to make a difference and show others that even a child could do something big.

She combined her passions for making jewelry and helping others to form Creative Kids Care in 2009. The nonprofit organizes events two to three times a year and sells hand-crafted silver and gold jewelry and art to benefit different groups of children.

“There are all different kinds of plights and challenges kids face. I didn’t want to spotlight one — they should all be spotlighted,” said Rachel, a sophomore at Pine Crest school in Fort Lauderdale.

Because she began her nonprofit at such a young age, Rachel said people often treated her like a child.

“I was not being treated like an adult or like I was really in charge,” she said. “Some people don’t understand that even though I was little, I was capable of running an organization.”

She has about 30 volunteers — some as young as 10 — who help make jewelry and art. She estimates she’s raised more than $40,000 since she started Creative Kids Care. For more information visit creativekidsccare.com.

Pep Talk

Trying to convince a crowd to see the world your way is a skill 16-year-old Jacob Ronkin has learned to master. He says it’s helped build his confidence and now he wants others to reap the benefits.

Jacob, a junior at University School in Fort Lauderdale, started Pep Talk in 2014 to mentor students interested in the art of speech and debate.

“I have to give back for all that [speech and debate] has given me,” said Jacob. He said he realized those who do well at the tournaments tend to come from the same schools, which often provide more resources to their students.

Broward offers debate in each of its high schools but “it doesn’t mean [students] are getting the adequate help that they need,” said Jacob, of Weston.

Through Pep Talk, students mentor other students and help them prepare for competitions. The volunteer mentors use Skype, text messages or email to communicate.

Jacob said setting up the nonprofit was challenging because he had to juggle school and his own speech and debate activities. But with the help of his parents, Pep Talk was up and running last fall.

So far, he’s recruited 15 volunteer mentors and helps about 25 high school students.

“There are so many benefits in debate,” said Jacob, explaining it allowed him to meet people from other countries, improve his public speaking skills and perform better in school. For more information visit: facebook.com/PepTalkDebate.