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WBZ Cares: CORSE Opens Doors

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BOSTON (WBZ-AM) -- Each month, “WBZ Cares” highlights a worthy non-profit organization and tells the story of what that organization does for the community. This month WBZ is profiling The CORSE Foundation (Community of Resources for Special Education) which was established by a group of dedicated parents and educators to raise funds to provide high quality and affordable programming, training, and resources to benefit children with special needs (ages 3-22), their families, and educators throughout South Shore Massachusetts.

WBZ Cares features “Community of Resources for Special Education," known as the CORSE Foundation, serving the South Shore.

“My daughter Athena, who's going to turn 20 this year, is one of the very first CORSE kids,” said Mariah Avallone, parent and CORSE volunteer.

Mariah Avallone is a CORSE volunteer and parent of a daughter with autism.

“Before we were involved with CORSE, we would drive like an hour and a half for her to have a social skills group with a teacher that she would never see again after, you know, the six-week period. So CORSE having these teachers be in her life the entire time for her education has just been something, so they get to know the kids, and the kids make friends, and the parents have support. It's been life-changing for us,” stated Avallone.

Athena has participated in CORSE since she was just 5 years old.

“Giving her opportunities for success in things that she might never have an opportunity to do. We did gymnastics, alongside typically-developing, so both my girls would participate at the same time, and it took Athena six years to do a forward roll, but when she did it the whole place erupted. Everyone was invested in her success. Athena's been able to canoe and sail, and these are things that bring tears to my eyes. When I saw her get up on that paddle board it was life-changing for me. I have another daughter who's typically developing, whatever that means, and she's also been a CORSE kid from the start,” said Avallone.

“I'm 21 months apart from my older sister Athena, and it's just been a wonderful experience to grow up with her,” commented Aurora Avallone, CORSE Foundation participant and Best Buddies president.

That's Aurora Avallone. CORSE programs are inclusive, tailored to those with special needs, but open to all kids and young adults. So Aurora grew up taking part, right alongside her sister.

“One of the facets of CORSE is making sure that people are included in that we are able to accommodate for everybody and have it be a place where you can feel comfortable and people like my sister even if it takes time, they'll come around and be able to do anything that a typically developing kid can do,” said Aurora Avallone.

Aurora is now a volunteer and this year's president of Best Buddies.

“Helping to impact, positively impact the lives of so many other kids like my sister has just been such a rewarding experience,” concluded Aurora Avallone.

WBZ NewsRadio1030's Shari Small Reports