



Melt Away Those Winter Blues with an Evening in the Caribbean

Fed up with the cold icy winds of winter? JFCS has the perfect antidote. Grab your fanciest flip flops and favorite Hawaiian shirt and enjoy the sights and sounds of the Caribbean at our annual fundraiser, *Stepping Out*, on April 12, 2008! This is your chance to leave winter behind, without the security lines and need for a passport.

Dance the night away to the calypso rhythms of the steel drum band, Steel Source, official Caribbean band for the Sixers basketball team and performer at Flyers games, Wings games, and city festivals and other special events. So you know they're good! Enjoy an open bar and a variety of dinner stations loaded with the great food you have come to expect at our annual events, provided by Betty the Caterer.

You will have plenty of opportunities to win great prizes through silent and live auctions, featuring lots of great jewelry and sports collectors' items. Last year's silent auction winner, Josh Landsburg, who won the chance to appear on the WIP Angelo Cataldi morning radio show, wrote us to say: "As a diehard Philly sports fan, as well as an avid listener of this show, this was a dream come true for me...and I continue to strive toward the goal of hosting my own sports radio show. I will always remember this experience and I will always be grateful to JFCS for making this all happen."



L to R: Vice Chair Stephanie Specter and co-chairs Amy Green and Ann Miller invite you to enjoy the sights and sounds of the Caribbean at the annual fundraiser *Stepping Out*, to take place on April 12, 2008.

If you would like to donate an auction item, or become a sponsor for this year's event, please contact Beth Wynne at 856-424-1333 or at bwynne@jfedsnj.org. Invitations will soon be in the mail, and if one doesn't arrive at your door, call her. Whatever you do, don't miss this boat!!

Symposium To Address Jewish Genetic Diseases

Samost JFCS will partner with Albert Einstein Healthcare Network's Victor Center for Jewish Genetic Diseases, JFCS of Greater Philadelphia, and JFS of Delaware to present a Genetics Symposium titled *Healthy Generations: Mobilizing Our Community to Prevent Jewish Genetic Diseases*. The event will take place on March 31, 2008 from 8:00 am to 3:30 pm at the Philadelphia Hilton on City Avenue.

The goal of this symposium is to empower rabbis, social workers, physicians, nurses, genetic counselors, educators, and Jewish community leaders and members to raise awareness of what can be done to prevent Jewish genetic diseases, in the hope that every Jewish young couple will be screened before they start a family. Topics include: new developments in Jewish genetic disease screening presented by leading geneticists, a discussion of Jewish law and values surrounding genetic screening, and personal

experiences shared by a panel of family members affected by a variety of Jewish genetic diseases. Senator Arlen Specter has been invited to be the keynote speaker.

Jewish genetic diseases such as Tay-Sachs, Gaucher's Disease and Familial Disautonomia can have devastating effects on families. About 1 in 4 people in the Ashkenazi Jewish population is a carrier of a Jewish genetic disease, and if two carriers of the same condition have children together, there is a 25% chance with each pregnancy their child will be born with the disease. Today, screening can be done for genetic diseases that affect the Jewish community with one simple blood test. In fact, young couples can be tested for free up to one year before or after their marriage at the Albert Einstein Medical Center in the Victor Center for Jewish Genetic Diseases in Philadelphia. For information about free screenings, call 215-456-8722.

Contact Beth Wynne at 856-424-1333 or bwynne@jfedsnj.org for symposium details. Fee is \$36 and \$18 for students, and scholarships are available (includes breakfast, lunch and Continuing Education Credits).

Your Endowment Can Make a Difference!

An endowment can ensure the future of a JFCS program or service that is near and dear to your heart, while creating a living legacy in honor of or in memory of your loved one. We have many programs that may be of interest to you.

Please contact Executive Director, Jennifer Weiss, or Senior Services Director, Gail Belfer, at 856-424-1333 for more information.

Message from the Board President & Executive Director

This has been an incredibly exciting year at JFCS. We installed our new Advisory Council and Medical Advisory Council, and both have met and generated great ideas which have already been put into action. They include networking with state groups for the benefit of people living with cancer and a new grant to help families cope with teens at risk for depression and suicide. We are so appreciative to those who have agreed to serve on these advisory councils and feel fortunate to have them as part of our JFCS team.

This year has also marked our first ever Birthright trip to Israel for individuals with special needs. The group left January 1, 2008 and we are excited to see this dream come to fruition. Our counseling services continue to grow and we have had a steady wait list all year which has necessitated the recent hiring of two new therapists to help us continue to strengthen our community, one person at a time. We are looking forward to partnering with the Albert Einstein Healthcare Network's Victor Center for Jewish Genetic Diseases, JFCS of Greater Philadelphia, and JFS of Delaware to present the March 31st symposium titled *Healthy Generations: Mobilizing Our Community to Prevent Jewish Genetic Diseases*, and feel honored to be included in this great community event.

We have so many new and exciting things happening at JFCS that you will read about in this issue of the newsletter. Please take the opportunity to sign up for our email blasts so we can keep you informed on an even more timely basis. We are truly proud of all of the creative and innovative programs at the agency, but mostly for being blessed with the opportunity to continue to meet the needs of those living in our community. We wish you a happy and healthy new year, and we look forward to seeing you at our annual fundraiser, *Stepping Out*, on April 12th.



Michele Golkow

Michele Golkow,
President of JFCS
Board of Trustees

Jennifer Dubrow Weiss

Jennifer Dubrow Weiss,
JFCS Executive Director



Special Needs Adults Enjoy Birthright Trip to Israel

It's a chance of a lifetime for a group of special needs young adults...the opportunity to travel to Israel with a group of their peers. And on January 1, 2008, ten very excited young people left Cherry Hill on the first leg of this journey of their dreams.

Led by Barbara Abrams, Director of the Developmental Disabilities SAIL (Supports to Achieve Independent Living) Program, and accompanied by five chaperones, a tour guide and a security guard, they are participants in the Taglit Birthright Program, which has been sending young people to

Israel for many years. What makes this trip so unique is that this is the first time a group of adults with special needs is traveling from the South Jersey area.

Their itinerary includes stops at Tsfat, Neve Shalom (a village of Israelis and Palestinians working together for peace), Dan Nature Reserve, Deganya, and Tiberius. The group was still away at press time, but more details of their trip will be included in the Voice.

Funding is being provided by the Ellen Dubrow Developmental Disabilities Memorial Fund.



Participants in the SAIL program enjoy a Middle Eastern dinner with their chaperones and federation Shaliach, Sarit Cioban (top left) while planning their trip to Israel.

JFCS Welcomes Advisory Council & Medical Advisory Council Members

JFCS welcomes members of the JFCS Advisory Council and Medical Advisory Council who were installed at our Annual Meeting. The Advisory Council is comprised of individuals who have had a long term relationship with JFCS and who are interested in helping to establish policy, goals, and future directions. The Medical Advisory Council is comprised of physicians who help to establish policies for health related programs, such as Yad b'Yad and The Cancer Connection. Both councils met last fall, and have March meetings planned.

The Advisory Council members include: Bucky Buchman, Jane Davis, Karin Elkis, Caren Fendrick, Lori Goldstein, Phyllis Hecsh, David Kessler, Susan Bass Levin, Bob Paul, Eileen Norman Perice, Arlene Plasky, Harry Platt, Marvin Samson, Joan Shuster, and Aaron Singer.

The Medical Advisory Council includes: Dr. Arnold Baskies, Dr. Ari Brooks, Dr. Brett Garber, Dr. Diane Gillum, Dr. Generosa Grana, Dr. Eric Miller, Dr. Susan Orel, Dr. Catherine Piccoli, Dr. Anne Rosenberg, Dr. Dahlia Sataloff, and Dr. Norman Siegel.

Art Show Displays Talents of NORC Seniors

Proving that you're never too old to learn and enjoy a new hobby, NORC senior residents of the Towers of Windsor Park proudly showed off their creations at a special art show on November 13. Their work was the result of months of classes with volunteer art teacher Iva Samost, who taught art in the Philadelphia School District for 22 years. Under her tutelage, the eager students learned techniques in charcoal, stenciling, sponge painting, oil painting, and more.



Top Row left to right: Norma Ehrlich, Elaine Procida, Iva Samost (teacher), Bernie Vernick, Evelyn Sabel, and (bottom row) Louise Greenbaum and Jeanne Engel show off their talents at art show.

"I can't believe I was able to do this!" proudly boasted Louise Greenbaum, holding up her charcoal rendition of a tree. Bernie Vernick said he found the class challenging and full of camaraderie. A painting by Susan Graham (not pictured) was made into a beautiful Rosh Hashonah greeting card, which JFCS reproduced and mailed out to its sponsors last fall. "They are so eager to learn, and continually surprise themselves at what they are able to accomplish," Mrs. Samost says.

NORC, an acronym for Naturally Occurring Retirement Community, is currently funded by the State of NJ, and provides social, cultural and medical services to seniors age 65 and over. This supports their ability to age in place by providing them with necessary support resources, including transportation, health and social work services. JFCS, which has been cited as having one of the most successful programs in the country, established its NORC at the Towers of Windsor Park in the fall of 2005.

Vocational Breakfast Celebrates Achievements of Clients and Employers

Over 200 guests attended our Second Annual Celebration Breakfast, hosted by the Developmental Disabilities Vocational Department at the Doubletree Hotel in Mt. Laurel. The event paid tribute to the combined efforts of employers, child study teams, DVR counselors, and families who have supported the agency in achieving the goals of vocational success for its clients who have special needs. Five area employers were acknowledged for their contributions, including Wegmans and Best Buy of Mt. Laurel, the Isdaner Early Childhood Center at the Katz JCC, the Mt. Laurel Library, and the Politz Day School.

The program provides services for individuals with special needs, and includes job coaching, assessments, work samplings, evaluations and placement. A team of job coaches works with area employers, and has placed more than 60 special needs clients since its inception several years ago, including 25 students from 8 area high schools.

Here's what some of the clients and employers had to say:

Gail Distenfeld: "JFCS feels like a second family to me. I feel good knowing they are there for me."

T.J. Rogers: "I like to help customers...I hope I can continue to learn and help people find the things they want to buy."

Dan Horan, Wegmans of Mt. Laurel: "We hire people with abilities, not disabilities...Erica exemplifies all the values we seek."

For more information about the program, contact Barbara Abrams or Sheila Corrado at 424-1333.

Free Conferences Respond to Community Needs

Hereditary breast cancer, infertility, and sex addictions were the topics of recent free community conferences, sponsored by JFCS. Free conferences on important topics such as these are just one of many ways our agency reaches out to help community members deal with timely issues. *Seeds of Hope: The Jewish Response to Infertility*, a roundtable for couples struggling with infertility, was presented on November 28 by panelists Rabbi Jeffrey Arnowitz of Congregation Beth El, Dr. Gary S. Packin of South Jersey Fertility Center, JFCS social worker Rena Esrog, and a young couple who have experienced fertility problems. A podcast will be available on our website at www.jfcssnj.org, and support groups are planned.



Discussing infertility issues at Seeds of Hope Conference are: Standing (L to R) Joel Schwartz, Rena Esrog, Justine Cohen. Seated (L to R) Julie Schwartz, Dr. Gary Packin, Rabbi Jeffrey Arnowitz.

On November 14, *Sex Addictions: Beyond the Stigma: Bringing Sex Addiction into the Open*, was presented to over 50 community members and professionals. The event featured Cara Tripodi, Director of STAR, a sexual trauma and recovery treatment center, and was geared to addicts, their families and loved ones, and professionals who work with addicts. A free follow-up support group for family and friends of those struggling with addictions will be held on February 18. On January 22, JFCS presented a roundtable on *Breast Cancer Prevention Strategies for High Risk Women*. Presenters included medical specialists and a genetic nurse, as well as several women at high risk for inherited breast cancer.

For more information on addictions group, contact Lisa Weissbach at 856-778-7775.

Yad B'Yad Program Moves Forward



The JFCS Yad b'Yad (Hand in Hand) Program is nationally recognized as a model program and will eventually be replicated by other JFCS agencies nationwide. A partnership between JFCS and the Philadelphia Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the program provides support relationships between trained breast cancer survivors and newly diagnosed patients, as well as resource materials and community outreach. Here's an update on events.

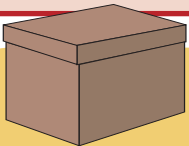
PINK SHABBAT is our way of getting the word out to the community about Yad b'Yad, and we hosted them at Congregation Sons of Israel on November 10, Temple Emanuel on January 11, 2008, and Temple Beth Sholom on January 26. The rabbis discussed the program from their pulpits, JFCS hosted the kiddush following services, and JFCS board or staff members were available to answer questions.

A free roundtable panel discussion, *Breast Cancer Prevention Strategies for High Risk Women: Who is at Risk and What Can You Do About It?*, was held January 22, 2008, featuring Dr. Generosa Grana from Cooper Health System, Dr. Anne Rosenberg of Jefferson Health, Dr. Catherine Piccoli, of South Jersey Radiology Associates, genetics nurse Bridget Legrazie of Fox Chase Virtua Health, as well as several high risk women who shared their experiences. Participants got the lowdown on the risks and genetic implications of inherited breast cancer, the importance of early detection, and options available for women at high risk for inherited breast cancer.

Our traditional program continues to grow, with newly diagnosed individuals calling all the time for help and information. We have disseminated over 400 resource guides throughout the community. Our Yad b'Yad and Cancer Connection Coordinator, Margery Dannenbaum, has been named to the New Jersey Breast Cancer Task Force, and will keep us updated on state initiatives.



L to R: Yad b'Yad founders Valerie Yasner, Amy Spiegel, Zeld Joffe, and Selina Barnett plan Pink Shabbat at Temple Beth Sholom, along with Yad b'Yad coordinator Margery Dannenbaum (center) and Rabbi Steven Lindemann.



JFCS and JCF Provide Blizzard Packs for Homebound Citizens

With the help of a \$2500 grant from the Jewish Community Foundation, 125 homebound seniors will have a few day's supply of nonperishable food to tide them over in case of a severe snow or ice storm this winter. JFCS Project Blizzard Pack provides emergency food packages that include items such as cereal, packaged milk, crackers, peanut butter and jelly, and canned tuna, soup, vegetables and applesauce to clients who normally receive kosher meals on wheels or home-maker services.

"We want to ensure that people who are unable to leave their homes to go grocery shopping during inclement weather will not be left with nothing to eat," explains Gail Belfer, Director of Senior Services for JFCS. "Many homebound seniors depend on our meal deliveries or their home-making aide to shop for them. This way they will have a guaranteed supply of food."

Gail thanked JCF for its generous grant, as well as the team of JFCS staff and volunteers, supervised by JFCS volunteer coordinator Andi Loew, who helped to package the many boxes of food. "If anyone would like to help us provide food for more clients, we would welcome your help," she says. Contact Gail Belfer at 424-1333.



The blizzard packs almost reached the ceiling, after they were packed by Volunteer Coordinator Andi Loew, Jewish Community Foundation Executive Director Jeff Klein, JFCS Executive Director Jennifer Weiss and Senior Services Director Gail Belfer.

Let's Get Technical

This newsletter only comes out a couple of times a year, but we would like to communicate with you more frequently and less expensively! Please take a minute to send us your email address so we can keep you informed and updated about JFCS events and new services. Email Karen Bray at kbray@jfedsnj.org, and write "Add my Email Address" in the subject line. We promise not to use your address for any purposes other than to keep you informed, so let's hear from you!

Also, we are now offering podcasts of certain programs and conferences on our website, so you don't even have to leave your home to learn about some of the services we provide. We already have a podcast featuring medical experts and ovarian cancer survivors talking about ovarian cancer, and another on the way that features a roundtable on infertility. We plan to add more podcasts to our website, so the entire community will have access to information presented at our conferences.

Check us out at www.jfcs.nj.org



We've Got The Nintendo Wii!

The Nintendo Wii might seem like an unlikely plaything for someone who is suffering from Alzheimer's or dementia. But in the near future, JFCS clients will have the opportunity to use some of the unique features of this very popular electronic gaming system to sharpen their memories and motor skills, thanks to a generous \$80,000 grant from Iva and Joe Samost. The program will also provide funds for much needed respite care, which will relieve some of the burden from family members.

Researchers are optimistic about the potential of this technology to improve the skills of this segment of the population. The Wii, which features virtual games of golf, baseball, bowling and other sports, actually simulates the physical motions of these sports, and can improve flexibility, strength, eye-hand coordination, and memory. JFCS will pair seniors with teen volunteers, who are well known for their expertise with such games, to build multi-generational relationships while stimulating and engaging those suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's, or other age-related memory impairments.

Two Nintendo Wii systems have already been purchased to launch the program. Funds will also subsidize counseling, case management, and respite services for clients and their caregivers. JFCS looks forward to partnering with the Dubin, Saltzman and Gesher Houses, as well as Lions Gate, in providing these services.

Teens interested in volunteering can contact Andi Loew at 424-1333.



JFCS has the hottest consumer item of the year! L to R: Board President Michele Golkow practices bowling with the Wii, as Senior Services Director Gail Belfer, and Volunteer Coordinator Andi Loew watch.

High Praise Received for JFCS Adoption Program

Greg and Larissa Kramer have nothing but glowing words for the services provided by the JFCS Adoption Program. The South Jersey couple opened their home and their hearts to Tseganesh (age 11), Mulunesh (age 5), and Birhanu (age 3) who were all adopted from Ethiopia between November 2006 and June of 2007. The Kramers now have six children, five of whom are adopted. Two other children are African American,

adopted through the NJ Foster Care System, and their biological son is a blend of Larissa's South Indian Tamil and Greg's Pennsylvania Dutch heritage. The adoptions of Mulunesh and Birhanu were complicated, but JFCS completed their home studies in record time and provided detailed advice, turning a complicated and difficult situation into a much easier one, according to the Kramers.

"I can't say enough good things about JFCS. My wife and I would recommend JFCS to any prospective adoptive family. The staff was knowledgeable and responsive, exceeding our every expectation. They know their business and yet exhibit a compassionate and humane spirit, a rare combination in today's world."

-Greg Kramer



The Kramer family includes: top row left to right: Larissa (mother), Mulunesh, Laverne Manning (grandfather), Tseganesh, Greg (father), Ethan. Bottom row: Olivia, Birhanu, Jakob.

JFCS NEWS

A Division of Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey

Samost

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JFCS NEWS

The JFCS Annual Report was the winner of the AJFCA Annual Report Competition, selected from dozens of submissions throughout the country!



L to R: Café Europa members Lisa Van Dyk, Erna Anolik, Emil Paul, Lili Paul, and Rose Weiss sing blessings and light candles at their annual Chanukah party on December 6. The group enjoyed a luncheon of latkes and other goodies and an afternoon of singing Chanukah songs, led by Claire Zelman and Rabbi Lewis Aron.

UPCOMING EVENTS

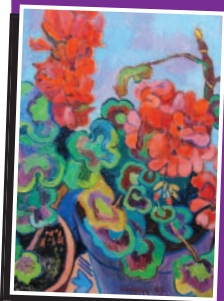
- February 18: Addictions Support Group
- March 9: Transition Planning Conference for Special Needs Students
- March 31: Healthy Generations Symposium: Preventing Jewish Genetic Diseases
- April 13-15: AJFCA Conference at Philadelphia JFCS: (we co-host cocktail party)
- April 12: Annual Fundraiser: *Stepping Out*
- May 14: Annual Meeting

JFCS Tribute Cards: A Beautiful Way To Show You Care!

Personalized Invitations and Special Tribute Cards for Special Occasions!

The purchase of JFCS traditional tribute cards is a great way to honor the special occasions of your family and friends while benefiting the programs and services of JFCS. Our stunning new *Yad b'Yad* tribute card helps fund our new breast cancer support program, is a meaningful way to show your support for those living with breast cancer, while acknowledging a special woman in your life. They are blank inside for your own message, and can also be used as note cards. Cards available online at www.jfcssnj.org or by calling 424-1333, ext. 160.

Select personalized invitations for your Bar/Bat Mitzvahs or other special occasions. Browse through our samples with our in-house consultant. All proceeds benefit JFCS and your donation is acknowledged on the invitation. Contact Marsha Becker at 424-1333, ext. 173 for more information. Check out our unique online samples on our website!



Yad b'Yad
Tribute Card