



JFCS NEWS

Samost
Jewish Family
& Children's
Service
of Southern New Jersey

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE AND AFFORDABLE SOCIAL SERVICES TO SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

JFCS Goes Back to Basics in Response to Economy

With the economy in a crisis, we all face challenging times. JFCS has been besieged by calls from the community asking for financial assistance and food. One morning we received seven such calls before 11:00 AM! In the past few months alone, we have spent two thirds of our annual emergency assistance budget to help people pay utility bills and buy food and medicine. One weekend a homeless person showed up at the JCC saying he couldn't wait for our office to open on Monday because he had no food.

In response, JFCS is committed to making more of our resources directly available to meet basic human needs. We are consolidating and minimizing expenses so we can increase services. We provide one-time emergency cash relief to clients in dire need, as well as information about other available community resources. Requests for food from our food pantry have swelled, and we have more than tripled the amount of food we give out. Anxiety and stress levels are creating an increased demand for counseling services, but fewer people are able to pay so we find ourselves having to subsidize more counseling services for families in financial need.

Other conservation efforts will be made at JFCS throughout the year, including reduction of printing and publishing costs through greater use of e-mail blasts and E-newsletters. If your e-mail address is not already on our database, and you want to receive our e-mail communications, contact Karen Bray at kbray@jfednsj.org. By the way, this newsletter was printed in full color only because our printer charges a very nominal price differential between color or black and white, and it would actually have cost us more to redesign the newsletter in black and white.

A solicitation envelope from our Friends Emergency Campaign appears in the middle of this newsletter. If you are fortunate enough to be able to give, and you haven't already done so, please send in your envelope with as generous a donation as you can afford. Your support can make all the difference in the world to a family whose breadwinner is out of work. The economic crisis has hit home, but if we all pull together we can get through these tough times! As always, JFCS stands ready to help when and where it is most needed.

Get Ready to Rock and Roll at JFCS *Stepping Out* Fundraiser!

Brush up on your jitterbug moves, dust off those saddle shoes, and dig out your Clearasil and poodle skirts! JFCS is throwing one heck of a dance party on March 21, 2009 at its 14th Annual Fundraiser, *Stepping Out!* You are in store for a fabulous evening of live music from the fifties, an open bar, delicious fifties food prepared by Betty the Caterer, fun, and incredible auction and raffle prizes.

Be sure to join us as rock and roll musicians Mitch Albom, Sandy Clyman, Perry Gold, Howard Hait, David Jaspan, Mark Joffe, Victor Mellul, and Marc Rosenthal reunite as *The Lucky Tiger Grease Stick Band* and offer us a blast from the past. You most likely know Mitch Albom as the author of *Tuesdays with Morrie* and numerous other best selling books, but what you probably don't know is that he used to perform with the aforementioned group of very talented local musicians, including popular local bandleader Marc Rose (aka Marc Rosenthal).

A wonderful story of how the old friends reunited in Mitch's old basement (right here in Haddon Township, New Jersey) for the occasion of his 50th birthday recently appeared in *Parade Magazine*, drawing national attention to the group. They had the time of their lives reconnecting with life-long friends and making music together. You will, too, when you hear them play! If you would like to read their story or see their video, you can access the links at www.albom.com/lucky_tigers.html for the story or at www.parade.com/celebrity/2008/09/mitch-albom-band.html for the



The Lucky Tiger Grease Stick Band as they look today..holding a photo of their earlier days. Don't miss all the fun when they take us back to the good old days of rock and roll on March 21!

video. By the way, the *Parade Magazine* article about the group's musical talents is much too modest, as you will see if you watch the video.

There's an even more compelling reason to join us. Imagine having all that fun while at the same time providing crucial dollars to support the services and programs of JFCS that are a lifeline to so many vulnerable community members. With the economy in crisis, we are all facing challenging times, and the proceeds from this event are needed more than ever!

For more information about sponsorships or tickets, or if you would be willing to donate an auction item, please contact Special Events Coordinator Beth Wynne at 424-1333 or e-mail her at bwynne@jfednsj.org. See ya later, alligator!

Message from Jennifer Dubrow Weiss



I am pleased to report some positive news on the mental health legislative front. For many years, the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies has supported mental health parity legislation, which basically would require insurance companies to cover mental health benefits in the same way that medical and surgical benefits are covered. In

March, the House of Representatives passed the Paul Wellstone Mental Health & Addiction Equity Act of 2007, paving the way for the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, recently signed into law by President Bush. The legislation will require health insurers to offer mental health benefits equal in cost and scope to medical and surgical benefits. It also requires insurers to cover a broad variety of mental health conditions, while prohibiting insurers from demanding larger co-pays or lower reimbursement rebates for mental health conditions. This is good news for those who rely on their health insurance for coverage.

Other welcome news is the enactment of the ADA Amendments Act, which restores the 1990 bill to its original intent to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination in the workplace. Specifically, it redefines a disability to include any condition that limits a major life activity regardless of whether it is treatable with medication or technology. This legislation reverses recent Supreme Court decisions, which excluded individuals who were originally intended to be covered by the 1990 ADA law. We believe the ADA Amendment Act, which defends the rights of individuals with disabilities, is consistent with traditional Jewish principles.

Finally, one more piece of good news. The SSI Extension for Elderly and Disabled Refugee Act extends the maximum period that elderly and disabled legal immigrants can receive SSI benefits from 7 to 9 years. Currently, legal immigrants only receive payments for 7 years unless they can successfully apply for naturalization, a difficult task due to bureaucratic and tape and immigration backlogs. Legal immigrants who have taken honest steps towards naturalization have been unable to complete their applications in a timely fashion. This legislation will restore benefits to 8,000 refugees from the former Soviet Union and prevent an additional 12,000 from losing theirs.

Jennifer Dubrow Weiss

Jennifer Dubrow Weiss,
JFCS Executive Director

Message from Michele Ettinger



When I assumed the presidency of JFCS, I imagined there would be challenges ahead, but I never envisioned that life would become difficult for so many people in such a short period. According to the latest report from the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies, an unforeseen number of people across the country are experiencing financial hardships, and the impact that this troubled economy is having on Jewish Family Service agencies from coast to coast was documented.

At JFCS, we are experiencing a dramatic increase in requests for financial assistance. Many families are on the brink of poverty because of job losses. No one is immune, as many families who never experienced financial difficulties before are struggling to pay their mortgages, car payments, and even to put food on the table. When the economy suffers, there is usually an increased demand for counseling, with fewer people able to afford co-pays.

These are unprecedented times, and since becoming JFCS President I am so impressed with how creative, flexible, and responsive we have become. We have to provide more staff to answer intake calls because the phones are ringing incessantly. We are reducing and consolidating our expenditures to allow us to provide more services directly to the community. We are proactively refining programs and developing new strategies to better meet the changing needs of our clients.

We are helping homeless people by preparing emergency food boxes to be given out in hardship situations. We provide blankets and gift cards and clothing. Our staff provides resources and information to help indigent and homeless people navigate entitlement programs to find the help they need. Recently our therapists attended a seminar on bankruptcy, foreclosures and credit so they would be better equipped to answer questions and help their clients.

In my 20th years of involvement with JFCS, I have never seen the need or demand for emergency services so great. I am proud of the way we are responding, and am confident that we can continue to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

Michele Ettinger

Michele Ettinger,
President of JFCS Board of Trustees



The JFCS Food Pantry provides food, scrip and personal care items to individuals in need during these challenging times. It is open during normal business hours to accept donations, as well as to distribute food. Donations from synagogues, organizations, the JCC Camps, the Ravitz Family Foundation, and others help keep it well stocked. In addition, families often donate food "table centerpieces" from Bar and Bat Mitzvah celebrations, as well as gifts from other life cycle events.

Sam (L) and Chase Frieman brought in food and gift cards donated in lieu of birthday presents for five-year old Sam's birthday party.

Wii Are All Over the Place!

In the last issue of this newsletter we reported on the popularity of the Nintendo Wii among seniors, and how its use can improve memory, balance, coordination, concentration and other skills that tend to diminish as we age. Thanks to a very generous grant from the Samost family, we now have a very extensive Wii Fitness Program in place that has enabled us to donate over 135 Wii's that are being used by well over a thousand seniors throughout the tri-county area, including Philadelphia and Vineland. In Voorhees alone, virtually every senior facility has been given a Wii, which resulted in a public proclamation and commendation from Mayor Michael Mignogna at a meeting last spring of all the Wii recipients.

The Wii has been distributed to very diverse populations of all denominations, which include: synagogues, churches, nursing homes and rehab centers, active adult communities, Jewish Federation housing facilities and the JCC, NORC, Lions Gate, schools, senior housing facilities, adult day care centers, assisted living facilities, community centers, Bancroft School, Masonic homes, special needs populations, and even the Jewish War Veterans. In addition, we offer all communities the opportunity to have a demonstration on how to properly use the equipment. Caregiver Respite Grant and Wii Coordinator Rebecca Rosenau (assisted by Lydia Silpe) has worked virtually non-stop since last May to distribute all of these Wii's and to give demonstrations. Best of all, this has also become a very successful intergenerational program, as our Volunteer Department has recruited many teen volunteers who visit various locations to show residents how to use the gaming system. Who better to learn technology from than a kid!

The response has been very enthusiastic, and as a side benefit, JFCS has received a great deal of favorable publicity and good will throughout the community. Articles about the Wii, which also include a thorough description of JFCS services, have appeared in dozens of community and facility newsletters, as have photos of our staff and board members presenting the Wii's to community board members. Although that was not our primary reason for donating Wii's...it has had a very beneficial effect as it has helped us spread the word of our worthwhile programs and services to people who may not have known about us before!

We are very indebted to Iva and Joe Samost and to GameStop, without whom none of this would be possible. Iva, who has seen several immediate family members suffer from the effects of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, says her goal is to make the Wii available to seniors everywhere so they can remain active, stimulated and interested in life. The Wii Fitness Program is certainly accomplishing that goal!



Grateful Client Gives Back Through Endowment



L to R: Margaret Costello, Jewish Community Foundation Executive Director Jeff Klein, Laura Merkin, JFCS President Michele Ettinger, Kim Pintozi, Renee Hillias, and Coleen Brandel celebrate the memory of Dr. Sam Gordon at a special reception hosted by JFCS.

Samost Jewish Family and Children's Service recently celebrated the memory of a beloved Senior Chai client, Dr. Sam Gordon, with a special reception attended by his JFCS "family". Guests included his caregivers, JFCS staff members, and other friends. Dr. Gordon, known affectionately as "Doc", was a physician who became a Senior Chai client in January of 1999 at the age of 93. He never married, had no children, and was living alone when his elder attorney, Tom Begley, Jr., referred him to JFCS because he required case management services and was in need of some TLC. He got TLC and more from his JFCS family, and he remained a very satisfied and grateful client till he passed away at the age of 102 in 2007.

Dr. Gordon resided at the Lutheran Nursing Home in Moorestown. JFCS social worker Laura Merkin visited on a weekly basis, and as his health began to fail, she arranged for four caregivers to assist him seven days a week. They were very devoted, and "Doc" always told everyone how his "girls" meant the world to him. His 100th birthday party, held several years ago, was attended by his JFCS family.

Through the Jewish Community Foundation, Dr. Gordon left a very generous endowment in his will to the JFCS Senior Services Program that will enable the agency to fund future services to benefit other older adults in need. JFCS Senior Services Director Gail Belfer expressed her hope that others might also consider leaving endowments to the JFCS Senior Services department in their wills.

A gift to the Senior Services Endowment Fund of JFCS is a wonderful way to leave behind a meaningful legacy and ensures that the vital programs and services will be around for future generations. An endowment fund can be created in honor of or in memory of a loved one. For more information, contact Gail at 424-1333.

A Personal Note from the Editor ...

As Communications Coordinator for JFCS, part of my job is to write about our success stories and to educate the community about ways we help people. Last spring, I had the chance to experience it first-hand. My Aunt Ruth and Uncle Ralph, then both 83, lived alone in the same large house where they had raised their family of six children. My uncle was in good condition, but my aunt's health was beginning to fail with Parkinsons, arthritis and some dementia. She required a great deal of assistance with bathing, eating, and even walking.

One day last winter I received a call from my uncle, and it was clear that being caregiver to my aunt was taking a toll on him. I immediately called Gail Belfer, Senior Services Coordinator, and explained the situation. Within a day, JFCS nurse Judi Shoulson visited them and made available a network of services, including home health care assistance and rehabilitation services. This removed a great deal of the pressure from my uncle, and he felt much relieved.

My aunt died last June, and my uncle said having those services available to him was a "lifesaver." The care and attention they received made a huge difference in their lives during the six months before my aunt's death, and probably helped to save my uncle's life.

As part of my work, I am always writing about the difference we make in people's lives. This time I was able to experience it personally. I was so impressed with the level of compassion and professionalism shown by the senior services staff. It's one thing to write about how JFCS touches lives; it's quite another thing to experience it for yourself. The family still keeps in touch with my aunt's caregiver, and my uncle expressed his gratitude by making a very generous donation to the Senior Services department, so it was a win-win situation for all! I am so proud of JFCS!

— *Sherry Wolkoff*



Adoption Program UPDATE!

As of November 1, 2008, we are partnering with the Open Arms Adoption Network (Open Arms), a program of JFCS of Greater Philadelphia. Licensed in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Open Arms has been providing adoption services and counseling since 1855, and is dedicated to facilitating child-centered domestic open adoptions, in which birth and adoptive families create healthy lifelong relationships. Open Arms will help coordinate international adoptions as well by conducting the home study and Post Placement visits and preparing those reports. The other good news is that for the first time JFCS adoption services will now be able to provide placement of babies!

The transition of our Adoption Program to Open Arms will be seamless. New Adoption Coordinator Kelly Worrell has already been handling the adoption files for several weeks, with the assistance of interim Adoption Supervisor Bobbi Cohen, and Lydia Silpe, Director of the Mt. Laurel JFCS office. The Director of the Open Arms Adoption Network is Meredith Rose.

Kelly will be assisted by the social workers who have been with our agency for years, and who will maintain their working relationships with their clients and remain a valuable resource to Open Arms. They will continue to prepare home studies and updates and post placement reports, as in the past.

Open Arms services will be available at both our offices in Cherry Hill and Mt. Laurel. Kelly will work from the Mt. Laurel office for the time being, but will have access to e-mail and voicemail messages addressed to her at either location. Her e-mail address is kworrell@openarmsadoption.net and she can be called at 856-778-7775. In addition, Lydia Silpe will continue to be available at that same number for questions and file handling.

Yad b'Yad Team Raises \$34,000 for Komen for the Cure at 3-Day Walk

Congratulations to Team Yad b'Yad, a group of ten employees, board members and volunteers who walked 60 miles over the course of three days on the weekend of October 17-19 to raise over \$34,000 for Susan G. Komen for the Cure and the National Philanthropic Trust Breast Cancer Fund.

Many of the team members have had a personal experience with breast cancer, either directly themselves or through a family member or friend. Yad b'Yad (Hand in Hand) is a JFCS mentor and support program provided to newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. Walkers included: Margery Dannenbaum, Rande Dubrow, Mara Fisher Curlander, Suzanne Fox, Staci Marzolino, Rebecca Rosenau, Tracy Schwartz, Lydia Silpe, Cindy Stevens and Jennifer Weiss. They all even slept in tents overnight!

"It was an incredible experience walking in solidarity with 3100 other women and men, hoping to eradicate breast cancer in our or our children's lifetime," Team Captain Margery Dannenbaum said. "The level of commitment inspired each of us to continue walking, in spite of our sore feet and muscles." Anyone wishing to donate can still do so by contacting Margery at 424-1333.



L to R: Rande Dubrow, Lydia Silpe, Rebecca Rosenau, Staci Marzolino, Suzanne Fox, Tracy Schwartz, Jennifer Weiss, Cindy Stevens, and Margery Dannenbaum walked 60 miles in 3 days!

Way to go, team! We are also grateful to Joe Palombo's Mirabella Cafe which donated ten percent of their proceeds on October 5th to increase the team's coffers.

SOS Teaches Economic Skills to Young Adults

While most of the world is finding their investments are declining in worth, a group of young adults with special needs expects to see their double in value! Listening intently as their instructor, Wanda Miranda, Community Development Director from TD Bank, taught them about bank deposits one October evening, this group of young men and women was clearly excited to learn how their money could work for them, and how their savings could even double.



Lois Forman (right) assists SOS participants with their deposits as instructor Wanda Miranda from TD Bank (background) explains the process.

SOS, which stands for Success of Savings, is a new financial literacy program offered through the JFCS Development Disabilities Department, that empowers people with disabilities by teaching them new financial skills, and how to budget and save their earned income. The program, which began in October, encourages saving and promotes economic awareness through a combination of interactive coursework, trips to local banks, and supported banking.

Savers select their own savings goal, which may be a personal computer, a first vacation, furniture for their homes, or anything else they may want are to need. Each saver opens his or her own bank account and starts a savings plan. For every dollar they put into their bank accounts, they will receive one dollar from the program, up to a maximum of \$500. Topics include basic banking terms, types of accounts, banking services, ATM's, budgeting concepts, and many other issues related to finance. Most of the participants are also participants in the JFCS SAIL Program, according to Lois Forman, who coordinates SOS. JFCS volunteer and financial planner, Bob Ross, is also helping out with the program.

Savers who have participated in this program in other areas of the country say it has helped them gain hope, fulfill dreams and become self-sufficient. In this troubled economy, SOS offers a very valuable set of skills, and JFCS is proud to present this new opportunity to our clients.

Samost JFCS Provides Kosher Meals on Wheels to Community

The JFCS Senior Services Department is now providing Kosher Meals on Wheels to interested community members in the Burlington, Camden and Gloucester County area. The new service is very popular, and 18 to 30 individuals are now ordering and receiving on a weekly basis. The delicious and nutritious meals are prepared by Betty the Caterer and are kosher certified by Rabbi Joshua Toledano. In addition, the Saltzman House prepares meals to accommodate those with Glatt kosher needs under the supervision of Tri-County Va'ad. A variety of dairy, meat and vegetarian entrees, and heart healthy options, all clearly labeled and sealed in microwaveable containers, are available. Each meal is accompanied by a dinner roll or bread.

"We are responding to a need in the community to provide kosher meals that are nutritious, tasty and easy to prepare," explains Gail Belfer, Director of Senior Services for JFCS. "We have been providing these meals to our clients and are pleased to extend this service to the rest of the community." She also notes that meals can be ordered on a short-term basis, and can be very helpful for individuals who are recuperating from illnesses or are otherwise unable to cook for themselves. Meals are \$6. To order, call Maxine Kaminsky at 856-751-3343. For more information call Gail Belfer at 856-424-1333.



L to R: Director of Senior Services Gail Belfer and Volunteer Coordinator Andi Loew get ready to deliver kosher meals to a client. Entrees included meatballs, brisket, cheese blintzes and kugel.



A Division of Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey



Samost Jewish Family & Children's Service of Southern New Jersey Touching People's Lives

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Make a difference in the life of a child whose family faces tough economic times! Your donation of a gift card can enable parents to choose their child's holiday gifts. Please drop off at our Cherry Hill or Mt. Laurel office.

JFCS NEWS Samost JFCS proudly stood up as an agent of change during Domestic Violence Month by promoting education and raising national awareness.

Join Us for Émigré Tribute Brunch on December 7th

Samost Jewish Family and Children's Service invites the community to attend a special Émigré Tribute Luncheon at noon on Decemcer 7 at the Weinberg Jewish Community Campus to celebrate the achievements of the 5,000 clients and the dedicated volunteers of the JFCS Refugee and Immigrant Program. The event will honor Claire Zelman for her 20 years of devoted service as the Program Coordinator.

Over the course of those 20 years, Claire has helped to resettle over 5,000 New Americans, enabling them to establish successful new lives in the U.S. Initially hired by JFCS in 1989 to resettle the wave of Soviet émigrés who were then pouring into Southern NJ, she has assisted clients from Israel, Lithuania, the Republics of the Former Soviet Union, Iran and many other parts of the world.

Her advocacy efforts on their behalf helped countless

clients to navigate the bureaucratic maze to obtain government entitlements; obtain US citizenship; acquire employment, housing and furniture; and generally adjust to their new lives in this country.

In addition to those who have been directly affected by Claire's program, countless community members have been involved in some way. Volunteers contributed by serving as host families and tutors, helping to set up new residences, providing transportation, and assisting them with re-establishing their ties to Judaism.

General admission is \$36, or \$12 for senior citizens on fixed incomes. A special scrapbook will be presented to Claire. For more information about scrapbook contributions, registration or sponsorship information, please call Beth Wynne at 424-1333 or e-mail her at bwynne@jfedsnj.org.

- SAVE THE DATE
December 7, 2008 12:00 Noon Émigré Tribute Brunch
December 12, 2008 8:00 AM Vocational Celebration Brunch at the Mansion
March 21, 2009 8:00 PM JFCS Annual Fundraiser Stepping Out
May 6, 2009 7:30 PM JFCS Annual Meeting

Send Us Your E-mail Address and Help Keep us Green!

JFCS is trying to conserve costs and protect our environment by using less paper and more technology!

This newsletter comes out a few times a year, but we want to communicate with you more frequently and less expensively! Please send us your e-mail address so we can keep you informed and updated about JFCS events and new services in a more timely fashion. E-mail Karen Bray at kbray@jfedsnj.org, and write "Add my E-mail Address" in the subject line.

Also, we are now offering podcasts of many of our programs on our website, so you don't even have to leave the comfort of your home to hear experts speak on topics such as ovarian cancer, breast cancer wellness, infertility, and other issues. We plan to add more podcasts to our website, so the entire community has access to information. Just log on our website at www.jfcssnj.org and click on JFCS podcasts. So far, we have received over 1800 hits and counting...! We are planning some improvements to our website, so plenty more will soon be coming your way.