

JFS 95th Anniversary Gala Shines!



*Kelli and Martin Fein
95th Anniversary Gala Co-Chairs*



Nine decades of Jewish Family Service accomplishments were celebrated during the 95th Anniversary Gala held on March 30th in the Grand Ballroom of the Westin Galleria Hotel. Rabbi David Rosen of Congregation Beth Yeshurun opened the evening with warm remarks about the role of JFS in the community and led those gathered in the Motzi. The opening ceremony featured the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of past presidents identifying themselves and sharing pride in their legacy.

The light from the candles of the golden candelabras cast an amber glow to the ballroom as Kelli and Martin Fein, Gala Chairs, welcomed more than 525 guests to the *Legacy, Leadership and Loving Kindness Gala* honoring the 44 past presidents of JFS who served from 1914 to the present.

“Tonight, we honor the stories of Jewish Family Service’s 95-year history, the stories of all our past presidents—how they came to be involved, why they chose to invest their time, efforts and resources with JFS and what they were able to accomplish during their tenures,” stated Kelli in her welcome message.

The Feins and their Honorary Co-chairs, Joan and Stanford Alexander
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Senior Adult Staff Offers Full Services

From its beginnings ninety-five years ago as a financial assistance association for the needy, Jewish Family Service has evolved into a full social service agency providing professional mental health and supportive services. As life spans have lengthened and the number of aged in the community increased, JFS saw a need to dedicate a larger share of its programs and services to the senior adults of the community.

JFS Senior Adult Department Staff members Mal Finger, LBSW; Leah Mueller, LBSW; and Ruth Sherman, LBSW, provide the services and programs offered to the Houston senior adult community. Finger states, “The goal of JFS is to offer a myriad of services which help our clients maintain as much independence as possible.” Services offered to seniors and their families include:

- Information and referral.
- Specific information about various types and levels of senior adult living facilities.
- Facilitation of family meetings with seniors and their adult children.
- Referrals of sitter/aides who can provide assistance to senior adults, either in their own homes or other places of residence. (JFS staff interviews and conducts background checks on all applicants before a referral is made).
- Assistance to Holocaust survivors applying for financial reparations. And, through the establishment of the *Sterling*

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Ruth Sherman (left) and Mal Finger explain the Lifeline program to adult children of a JFS senior adult client.

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PRESIDENT NOTES...

Donald Freedman, President, Board of Directors

Throughout history, societies have been judged by how they treat their most vulnerable members. While serving an increasingly broad spectrum of clients, for nearly a century JFS has helped the more vulnerable members of our own Houston Jewish community. This incredible legacy is one of the many reasons that our donors, volunteers, lay leaders and staff feel so very proud of JFS. As you probably know, JFS recently celebrated our 95 years of service in Houston. At a beautiful dinner dance chaired by Kelli and Marty Fein, JFS welcomed over 525 guests, a record attendance for a JFS event, and everyone enjoyed honoring our past presidents and their numerous achievements.



While different emergencies have surfaced over the years, such as Soviet resettlement in the eighties and Katrina in 2005, JFS has always risen to the occasion and provided assistance to those needing help in facing life's challenges. Over the past few years, JFS has received an increasing number of requests for emergency financial aid. These crucial funds are used to provide assistance with utilities, rent and medicine for those in need. Without these funds, members of our Houston Jewish community would have to make some frightening and painful choices. Because the demand for emergency financial aid exceeds the funds that JFS has to allocate, we have formed a Financial Aid Task Force to address this issue. In particular, the committee will evaluate past grants, formalize the process for future grants and forecast the amounts needed to make the aid available. I am delighted that the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston has begun discussions with JFS to help fashion a community response to this pressing situation.

Our strategic planning task process, which took place in 2006, identified a major desire in the Houston Jewish community for additional services for individuals with special needs and their families. The subcommittee that studied the special needs situation quickly realized that this group required significantly more services than were then being provided. JFS partnered with the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston through its new collaborative fundraising effort in a quest to seek funding for a special needs initiative. With a true heart of gold, Joan and Stanford Alexander stepped forward and made an incredibly generous donation that has allowed JFS to create the *Alexander Institute*. The *Alexander Institute* has had an amazing start, and I urge you to look at page 3 of the *Mishpacha* to see the new programs underway.

As you can see, under the expert guidance of Linda Burger, the JFS staff works tirelessly to address the concerns of our clients and to expand our services when we recognize unmet needs in our community. As we move toward our 96th year, it is my sincere hope that JFS will continue its sacred work of touching lives and providing light, hope and help for many years to come.

Senior Adult Staff (continued from page 1)

Survivors Fund at JFS, low-income Holocaust survivors can access sufficient funds for basic living needs as well as for emergency expenses.

- Jewish Senior Assessment Service, a full psychosocial and physical health assessment by Mueller and Janet Pinner, RN, MSN, Jewish Community outreach nurse, providing a review of medications, wellness education and a home safety assessment for seniors.
- In-home assessment to establish eligibility for the *Kosher Meals on Wheels* program in collaboration with the Jewish Community Center.
- *Lifeline* Personal Emergency Phone System.

Sherman added, "Often, adult children have visions of what is best for their aging parents...that is suitable for them... but not always understanding that the parents may have different needs. Our senior staff can offer a wider overview of a situation, offer other workable plans and services available, and suggest long-term solutions that may be best for all concerned. Many additional pieces to the aging parent-adult child relationships can be discussed with in-depth attention to legal, health and living aspects that provide information not previously considered by either side. All of this with complete confidentiality."

Mueller supervises Hilda Evans, Field Specialist for the *Care for Elders Program*. Through this collaborative program created by *Sheltering Arms Senior Services*, JFS accepts referrals for case management services that help to improve the quality of care and to enhance the quality of life for senior adults and their families in the Houston/Harris County area.

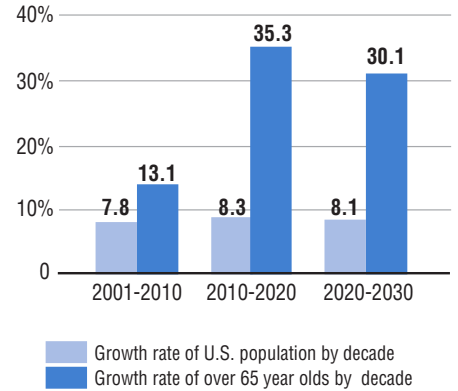
"Hilda has been a wonderful addition to our team. She explores all avenues of assistance for the seniors in our case management portfolio and can assist clients with applications for such services as: food stamps, transportation and social security information, health care and prescriptions services. She helps JFS carry out a plan for a particular senior," explained Mueller.

Two other JFS Senior Adult Staff members provide services at project-based Section 8 HUD facilities; Stella Blumenthal, LBSW, at *Goldberg B'nai B'rith Towers*; and Ellen Rosenberg, M.Ed., at *The Pinemont*.

During 2007, the members of the senior adult staff provided service to over 3,700 clients. "We are incredibly

fortunate to have such a group of dedicated, long-term professionals working for Jewish Family Service. Their experience and longevity of more than 55 years at JFS expresses their devotion and dedication to the senior population of Houston," stated Toby Newman, LCSW, Director of the Senior Adult Department.

For additional information about the services of the Senior Adult Department, contact Newman, 713-667-9336, x 133.



Hilda Evans (left) and Leah Mueller review the list of *Care for Elders* case management clients.

NEW German Compensation for GHETTO WORKERS

The German government has announced a new, one-time payment of 2,000 Euros for Holocaust Survivors who performed "voluntary" work in a Ghetto.

Please contact Leah Mueller or Ruth Sherman at JFS, 713-667-9336, for more information.



JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE
Alexander Institute
for Jewish Families with Special Needs

Linda L. Burger, Executive Director

JFS has been in the forefront of Jewish communal life for 95 years.

Its presence has contributed to the rich tapestry of both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

As one of the first to respond to the needs of our community, our remarkable agency helped launch two key institutions that are providing important services in Houston today...both the United Way of Greater Houston and the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston.

Throughout the decades we see Jewish values reflected in the work of presidents, their boards, professionals and volunteers. At the core of every administration was the importance of helping the most vulnerable in their midst. Quietly, families with compassionate hearts and generous spirits stepped forward to ensure that our agency could meet the needs of the day.

Each administration empowered the vulnerable with strength and dignity...whether through one-on-one support, help with ongoing needs, family education or other initiatives, G-d was always present. The minutes serve as a reminder that through their actions our community became Holy.

The people who brought vision to our organization did so with great skill and assurance. Their dreams helped shape the reality of today.

The successes of the past give us the courage and the fortitude to dream of what we could become, confident that our dreams today will be tomorrow's legacy.

Jewish Family Service—95 years of legacy, leadership and loving kindness.



Since its inception nine months ago, the Jewish Family Service Alexander Institute for Jewish Families with Special Needs has worked diligently to identify and quantify needs within the Houston Jewish community and, in response to those needs, to carefully build and offer programs and services, information, referral and education to individuals and families dealing with special needs. Seeking to gain additional insights and build working relationships, staff members have initiated contacts with many families who submitted Questionnaires.

The Alexander Institute was conceived to be a service to the community, in partnership with individuals and organizations. You and your input are vital as the Institute moves forward in its planning and programming. If you have a loved one with special needs, regardless of his/her current age or location, and have not already submitted a completed confidential Questionnaire, please do so. The form may be accessed at www.jfshouston.org. For additional information, contact Marni Litvack, Project Director, at 713-667-9336 x 222.

Together may we learn, serve and go from strength to strength.

Sandra Block, Chair, Alexander Institute Advisory Board

Meet the Staff

Marni Litvack, MAJC, MM, Project Director

After graduating with honors in psychology from Lee College at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles, Marni earned a double Master's degree from the Heller School of Social Policy and the Hornstein program in Jewish Communal Leadership at Brandeis University. Marni worked for the Jewish Family Service of Salt Lake City as program director for two years prior to coming to the Alexander Institute where, as Project Director, she directs and oversees the programs, initiatives, research and planning.

Jody Mizrahi, MA, LPC-Intern, Rehabilitation Counselor

Jody graduated with honors in psychology and Kinesiology Health Services from York University in Toronto, Canada. At Adler School of Psychology, she received a Master's in Counseling Psychology. Jody began her involvement at JFS as a volunteer, and then accepted a position with the Alexander Institute specializing in customized employment and counseling individuals with disabilities and their families.

Mira Reuveni, LPC, M Ed., LPC, Family Therapy Supervisor

A graduate of Antioch College with post-graduate clinical experience at the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute in Philadelphia, Mira has 30 years of clinical experience in counseling and psychotherapy. On the JFS staff since 1989, she is currently the coordinator of *Project Shalom*, a program for chronically mentally ill adults, and a consultant for the agency's Community Mental Health Program for toddlers and preschool children in school settings.

Activities & Programs

Social Group

A social group for young adults with Asperger's Syndrome meets every two weeks. Members will also serve as the test group for Itsmypplace.org, a safe, monitored virtual community for young Jewish adults with special needs. For additional information, contact Marni Litvack at 713-667-9336 or mlitvack@jfshouston.org.



Residential Task Force

The Residential Task Force, chaired by Sandi Greenstone, has extensively researched 44 Houston-area special needs residential facilities of different types and models. Having screened many sites, the Task Force has also completed visits to five local residential sites with an additional 14 to be visited by August 1, 2008. Members of the Task Force have also visited residential facilities serving the Baltimore, Detroit and Washington, D.C. Jewish communities. The committee is working to identify best practices in different types of residential facilities throughout the United States, Canada and Israel. Their

continued on page 4

JFS Mission Statement

To strengthen Jewish individual and family life through counseling, education and social services.

Alexander Institute continued from page 3

work will serve as a resource to Alexander Institute staff working with families.

Employment

All Alexander Institute Questionnaire respondents who identified employment as a top priority were contacted to explore specific needs and interests.

Job opportunities continue to be developed to meet the specific needs of clients.

The Employment Task Force, chaired by Stephen Rosenbloom, is working to develop a business plan for a social entrepreneurial venture in a supportive and flexible work environment for people with disabilities.



On-going Programs

Support Group

A support group for Jewish parents, family members and caregivers meets monthly and is open to anyone who has a loved one with special needs. Please join the group for lively discussions and a chance to connect with others: **3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.** at JFS. Jody Mizrachi and Jamie Paul Weiner, MSW, co-facilitate the group. There is no fee for this program.

WINK* Informational Speakers

What I Need to Know* offers speakers on various topics regarding special needs. All sessions are held at JFS on the **1st Tuesday of each month from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 a.m. There is no charge for the programs.

July 1, 2008 - Jacque Brennan, disability rights attorney with ILRU and the Southwest ADA Center, will discuss **“Special and Not-so-Special Education in Texas.”** Brennan will address a variety of topics regarding special needs education in public and private schools.

August 5, 2008 - A TEAM project representative from the Partners Resource Network (PRN), a nonprofit agency operating the Texas Parent Training and Information Centers (PTI’s), will discuss acquiring the skills to become your child’s best advocate. For more information, contact Jody Mizrachi at 713-667-9336, x 207 or jmizrachi@jfshouston.org.

Alexander Institute Activities

Coalition of Related Agencies

- The Coalition (Alexander Institute, Federation, JCC, BJE, 7 Acres, Chabad Outreach Friendship Circle, Houston Rabbinic Association) meets quarterly to share information and plan inter-agency cooperation.

JFS Alexander Institute in the Community

- Co-sponsored, with Congregation Beth Yeshurun and the Houston Jewish Special Needs Yahoo Group, a program featuring Rabbi Shawn Fields-Meyer, the founder and director of *Ozreinu*.
- Sponsored 4 workshops at *Yom Limmud* that focused on families with special needs and offered a staffed



During the recent AJFCA National Conference, Lee Sherman, Association of Jewish Family & Children’s Agency Board Chair, presented the winning KOVOD Award to Jewish Family Service for Excellence in Print Publication for their superb entry of the JFS Alexander Institute Brochure, Special People, Special Needs. Accepting the award are (l to r) Linda Burger, JFS Executive Director; Sandy Block, JFS Alexander Institute Advisory Board Chair; and Donald Freedman, JFS President.



Joan Alexander (right), a recipient of the 2008 Women of Courage Award from Hadassah, is congratulated by Sandy Block, Alexander Institute Advisory Board Chair.

Special Needs Structured Class that enabled parents of children with special needs to participate in the day.

- Made assisted listening devices available to *Collage* participants.
- Co-sponsored a parenting class with ESCAPE Family Center and instituted a support group for parents dealing with the challenges of caring for a child with exceptional health or developmental needs.
- Sponsored *Praying with Lior* at the Jewish Film Festival, a documentary about a young man with Down syndrome preparing for his Bar Mitzvah. An interactive panel discussion led by special needs professionals followed the movie.
- Presented to the *Maimonides Society*. A “prescription pad” and letter were sent to members of the Maimonides Society by the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, encouraging physicians to make referrals.
- Hosted Dr. Jeffrey Lichtman, National Director of *Yachad, the National Jewish Council for Disabilities*, who met with staff and community leaders and led a session entitled “Don’t Forget the Siblings” for parents.
- Staff members met with Rabbi Bradley Artson, Dean of the Ziegler Rabbinic School at American Jewish University.

Other Community Activities

Check out other community activities for Jewish families with special needs including:

- Club Haver, Top Soccer and Nite Owls** JCC: 713-729-3200
- Friendship Circle** Chabad Outreach 713-774-0300
- Keshet** BJE: 713-729-7000
- Houston Jewish Special Needs Yahoo Group**
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/houstonjewishspecialneeds>



Explore local, state and national resources in the Jewish Family Service *Special Needs Online Resource Guide* at www.jfshouston.org.

A Very Special Request

With the input of many individuals and families throughout Greater Houston, the Alexander Institute has not only begun to identify the extent and scope of needed services, but has also initiated programs and services to begin to address the needs. Understanding the breadth of special needs in Jewish families is critical to our planning and implementation of additional services and programs. If you—or someone you know—has special needs, please complete and mail the following confidential questionnaire to JFS. The questionnaire is also available on-line and may be accessed at www.jfshouston.org. If you wish to speak with someone about your situation, call Jewish Family Service at 713-667-9336 and ask to speak with a member of the Alexander Institute staff.



The JFS Alexander Institute display is a traveling display complete with information about the Alexander Institute.

Confidential Special Needs Questionnaire

Also available at www.jfshouston.org

(PLEASE PRINT YOUR ANSWERS.)

1 Do you or a member of your family have a special need?

Child Spouse You Other _____

Gender: M F

2 What is the disability?

3 Age: 0-5 6-10 11-15 16-20 21-30
31-40 41-50 51-60 60+

4 Residence: At home Residential facility
Independent Other _____

5 Is there need for special transportation?

Yes No If yes, what kind? _____

6 What are your greatest concerns for the future of your loved one?

7 What services do you need now?

8 What services do you anticipate needing in the future?

9 Is having a Jewish service provider important to you? Yes No If yes, for what services? _____

10 If JFS Alexander Institute can help you, what would be your priorities? Please list in order of preference.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

11 In what special needs area(s) are you most interested? (Check all that apply)

- Education
- Social interaction programs
- Referral resources
- Support/respite groups
- Other _____
- Please update me about new programs and services.
- I am a special needs professional and would like to know more about the JFS Alexander Institute.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (work) _____

(cell) _____ (home) _____

Email Address: _____

Return to: Jewish Family Service / Alexander Institute
4131 S. Braeswood Blvd., Houston, TX 77025



Members of the Houston Symphony Orchestra string quartet play for Project Shalom. (l to r) Ming Qi, violin; Siyang Lao, violin; Tony Kitai, cello; and Linda Goldstein, viola.

Israel @ 60 Parade



David and Marlene Spolane and children distribute band-aids to participants in the Israel @ 60 Parade at the JCC.



Donald Freedman giving JFS band-aids to Richard Kammerman and granddaughter at the JFS booth.

BRAVO

Thank YOU, United Way of Greater Houston!

Jewish Family Service enthusiastically says, "Thank you" to the United Way of Greater Houston for its on-going support. The United Way Campaign exceeded its goal, raising \$76.7 million: the largest increase in a decade. The annual allocation from United Way, together with an allocation from the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston, and the generous support of foundations and individuals, enables JFS to continue offering assistance to individuals and families in need of our services. A list of our current foundation supporters may be found on page 11.

95th Anniversary (continued from page 1)

and Ellen and Stephen Susman, read short profiles of each of the 44 past presidents. More than 20 family members of past presidents came forward to attest to the heritage of leadership and good deeds as their family legacy.

All 14 active members of the Past Presidents' Council were present to accept their awards. Following the naming of the last past president, the entire audience rose in a standing ovation. Kelli remarked, "These past leaders inspire the current leaders of JFS to continue the legacy of bringing Light, Hope and Help to all those who walk through our door."

Donald Freedman, JFS President, and Linda Burger, JFS Executive Director, spoke of the loving kindness provided to the agency's clients throughout the past nine decades.

Many volunteers worked countless hours to create the memories of the 95th Anniversary celebration. Volunteers who took on special projects and were recognized with awards included: Adele Segel, Hanukah Candle Lighting Chair; David Goldstein, creator and producer of the evening's JFS Leadership video; the "Dream Team" of Ruth Morris, Sheila Sack, Ellen Trachtenberg and Mignon Wolf who researched and wrote the stories of each of the 44 past presidents featured in the treasured keepsake Historical Journal; and Linda Freedman Block, Chair of ad solicitation and Journal production.

The dinner was followed by dancing to the music of the Richard Brown Orchestra, whose selections represented the decades and history that were the focus of the 95th anniversary celebration.

Thanks to donors, attendees and those who supported the ad journal, this was the most successful fundraising event in Jewish Family Service history.



Members of the Past Presidents' Council and family members of past presidents in the JFS board room during the evening of the Hanukah Candle Lighting.



Bebe Hess, daughter of past president William Nathan, and Larry Reader lighting candles at the Hanukah Candle Lighting.



Adele Segel, Hanukah Candle Lighting Chair, (right) with Kelli and Martin Fein, Gala Chairs, begin the Hanukah program.

The **JFS HISTORICAL JOURNAL** was created for the 95th Anniversary Gala through the review of decades of handwritten and typed minutes of the agency board meetings. The journal chronicles the history of JFS through the accomplishments and tenures of each of the 44 Past Presidents who were honored with the *Legacy, Leadership and Loving Kindness Award* at our gala. You can receive this fascinating reflection of our community's development and the service of JFS by calling 713-667-9336 x 100 or by e-mailing Robin Sofer at rsofer@jfshouston.org.



Why is it important for us as individuals or as a community to help the most vulnerable among us?

The heart unlike the mind does not understand the meaning of the word "impossible." If we fail to acknowledge and confront our own vulnerabilities and brokenness, we shut out all the suffering of mankind, denying ourselves and others the healing potential of brotherhood and connection with our fellow man. Having received caring, love, nourishment and assistance as we have traveled our paths in this world, life then offers us the opportunities to share these blessings with others in need. We are collectively enriched both from the giving and the receiving.

Kelli and Martin Fein
JFS 95th Anniversary Gala Chairs
Board Member of JFS

A fence is no stronger than its weakest link. That's why the Jewish community must take care of its own. It's a family affair. That's why three generations of the Susman family have supported the work of the JFS.

Ellen and Steve Susman
JFS 95th Anniversary Gala Co-Chairs

We are all made in the image of G-d: we're different from each other — not better or worse — just different. Each time we are tempted to judge others, we must remember that stigma is not just an attitude; it's an act and we have a choice. The choice to make a difference. It will ultimately take all the vision and power of broad community support to eliminate the many forms stigma takes in our lives. My hope is that all of us — a legion of determined people with the spiritual values of compassion, understanding, and courage — will leave here today with the intense commitment to work together to change societal messages that have such devastating effects on people.

Joan Alexander
JFS 95th Anniversary Gala Co-Chair
Founder of the JFS Alexander Institute

Because none of us is immune to the challenges or difficulties of life, it is a great comfort to know that JFS is a safety net when one is facing an immediate crisis or dealing with chronic issues. Whether giving or receiving, JFS helps me, and I believe each and every one of us, discover the best in ourselves.

Donald Freedman
President, Jewish Family Service

95th
Anniversary



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The 8th and 9th grade Gesher class of Temple Sinai are (l to r): Sandhya Krishnan, Pedro De Souza, Paige Bennett, David Miller, Monica Garner, Jenny Janssen, Dani Gardner, Jennifer Hoffman, Warner Boin, Jonathan Selzman, Sean Schicker, Jackie Schicker, Darah Lueck, Rebecca Waronoff, and Mae Shaffer. The program was coordinated by Rina Mesarwi, Temple Sinai Education Director.



Participating in the Project Shalom Seder were (l to r) Project Shalom member Elaine Goldgar and her sister, Jere; Mimi Lait, Linda L. Burger, Donald Freedman, Bruce Stein and Donald Wilson.



UOS Goldberg Montessori School are: seated (l to r) Liam Ozeri, Misha Berry, Elan Silberlicht, Lily Pesikoff, Natan Lagnado. standing (l to r): Saul Myers, Robert Gateno, Alexa Tabin, Eliaua Hass, Jack Alberts, Mika Borzilay, Eden Elbaz, Ohad Tessler, Carol Yevdai. back row (l to r) Alyson Gershenson, teacher; Josie Aguilar, assistant teacher; and Hetty Perl, Director of School.



Brownie Troop #21181 (first row l to r): Liat Perets, Deborah Brown, Maya Wadler, Lior Perets; (second row l to r): Priya Shloss, Miriam Alberts, Anna Brunson, Noa Segal; (third row l to r): Mikayla Shkedy, Ariella Sasoan, Ariella Teller, Ariella Wolf, Adina Passy, Tania Blanga, Samara and Frances Zuckerbrod check presenters; (fourth row l to r): Troop leaders: Elise Passy, Carol Alberts, Marisa Brown and Donald Wilson of JFS.

Tzedakah for Passover



O.N. Weil
President, 1922-24

COMES IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS

As Jewish Family Service celebrates 95 years of Legacy, Leadership and Loving Kindness, we look back with pride to the administration of O. N. Weil, President of United Jewish Welfare Association, the forerunner of JFS, as his Board voted to provide matzah to needy families in Houston so that they might enjoy "a respectable Passover." This mitzvah has been an ongoing commitment of the boards of Jewish Family Service.

"Since 1989, the JFS Passover Assistance program, under the leadership of Avrohm Perl, has been expanded to heighten awareness of the needs and to encourage community-wide support. As you sat down to enjoy your Seder, Jewish Family Service knew that 730 members of the Houston Jewish community were also sharing in a traditional Passover Seder because of the Passover Assistance Program," according to Perl.

Each year, JFS receives more requests for Passover Assistance from those in need. The JFS Senior Adult Department professional staff members work with the families as requests come into the agency. Each family member over the age of three receives a gift certificate from JFS for \$30 to help purchase foods for Passover.

Perl observed, "Each year, JFS asks the community to participate in this mitzvah of *maos chitim* [Passover Aid], which comes from a holy tradition to make sure that even the most needy in the community are cared for during the Passover holiday. This program is two-fold. It not only offers much needed financial assistance to members of the community, but it also involves the children in the religious and day schools in the tradition of *tzedakah*. The program is explained to the youngsters and teaches them how their gifts of kindness (*mitzvot*) help others have a traditional Passover."

"We are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to our Passover Assistance Program this year. Donations were received from individuals, the children in the day and religious schools, community organizations and congregations as well as from the JFS staff and the JFS Officers and Board of Directors," said Donald Wilson, JFS Director of Professional Services, who co-ordinates the annual program.

Donations were received from the children of Goldberg Montessori School of United Orthodox Synagogues; Brownie Troop #21181 gave a portion of their cookie sale money to the fund; Robert M. Beren Academy students painted ceramic dishes to sell for the fund; students at Sefaradic Gan donated their change; the Houston Community Service Club provided over 100 bags of Passover foods that were distributed to the Jewish residents of Goldberg B'nai B'rith Towers; and the 8th and 9th grade students of Temple Sinai, with the financial support from the congregation's Brotherhood and Sisterhood, brought over 40 beautiful spring gift bags containing Passover foods, candy and Haggadahs, which were delivered to the Jewish patients in the Texas Medical Center by the JFS Chaplaincy volunteers.

Along with the financial assistance, JFS enhanced the celebration of Passover by providing the Annual Model Seder for members of the agency's *Project Shalom* and their families.

Bruce Stein, JFS volunteer, conducted the traditional Seder with assistance from Donald Freedman, JFS President, and Barbara Loeser, Family Education Coordinator for the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston's Bureau of Jewish Education. Stein has been conducting this model Seder for many years. A specially created Haggadah was used by the participants. Other volunteers who assisted with the Seder were Mimi Liat, mother of JFS Executive Director Linda L. Burger; Lorraine Brown, member of JFS Past Presidents' Council; and Tammi Altshuler, JFS staff member. Assisting the leaders was Mira Rueveni, M.Ed, LPC, JFS Coordinator of *Project Shalom*, a JFS program for adults with chronic mental illness.

Another Model Seder, led by Rabbi Deborah Schloss, JFS Chaplain, was held for members of the Methodist Hospital Spiritual Care Department. JFS donated the haggadahs and the seder plates. According to Rabbi Schloss, "We hope this will become an annual event."

Contributions for Passover are still being accepted and checks should be made payable to JFS Passover Assistance Fund, mailed to 4131 South Braeswood, Houston, TX, 77025; for credit card donations, call 713-667-9336 x 100 or on-line at www.jfshouston.org/giveonline.php.

The program is partially funded by the Deutscher, Hecht, Mandel Fund of JFS, which receives contributions throughout the year. For additional information, call JFS Development Department, 713-667-9336, x 219.



Project Shalom member Evelyn Bell and sister, Marian.



Lorraine Brown, Barbara Loeser, and Mira Rueveni.



DONOR Appreciation

These gifts make it possible to respond to those who come to us seeking hope and help.

Donations listed in this issue of *Mishpacha* were received between October 11, 2007 and May 14, 2008.

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A Sincere Thank You
JFS extends a sincere thank you to the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston for a \$45,000 Local Emergency Fund grant. These funds and donations to the Jewish Family & Children's Financial Aid Fund will help JFS respond to the increasing requests from Jewish families for financial assistance to meet basic living expenses.
Thank you to our supporting foundations:
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Names in the News

Leah Mueller, LBSW, JFS Senior Adult Department, has been named Chair of the Community Care for Seniors and Disability Work Group of the One Voice Organization (OneVoice.org) for a two-year period.
Toby Newman, LCSW, JFS Senior Adult Department Director, has a chapter entitled 'Living with Dying: How to Keep the Group Alive when the Members are Dying,' included in a recently published book, 101 Interventions in Group Therapy, edited by Scott Simon Fehr, PsyD, CGP.
Cheryl Levy, JFS Volunteer Coordinator, was recognized as one of two second place finalists for the 2008 ExxonMobil Volunteer Spirit Award.
A BIG THANK YOU to Jason of Bead Traders who has offered guidance and assistance to the members of Project Shalom.
The Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies (AJFCA), during its recent national conference, presented JFS with several recognitions: Sandy Block, recipient of the 2008 Shirley and Allen Becker JFS Leadership Award, received the AJFCA Leadership Award and Linda Burger, JFS Executive Director, was recognized with a Distinguished Service Award for her more than 20 years of service as a Jewish communal professional.
Kristin Watson, JFS Clinical Social Work intern from the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work, will be with the agency through August 2008.



'Let it Out, a place to help teens deal with real-life situations, has been a successful program of JFS for almost a year,' according to Ethan Klein, LMSW, program facilitator. Continuing, Klein states, 'The teens, ages 15-18, have been wide open about what they want to talk about. They have discussed such subjects as parent-child relationships, peer pressure, drugs and alcohol, body image, fear of the future, relationships and sex. The subject matter changes constantly. Come join us and let it out!'

Let it Out! meets every Monday night at JFS from 5-6:15 pm ages 15-18 Completely confidential sliding fee scale

This program is held each Monday evening from 5:00 to 6:15 p.m. at Jewish Family Service. This is an on-going program, and new participants can join at any time. Completely confidential with a sliding fee scale. Call JFS, 713-667-9336, ext.123 or email, eklein@jfs-houston.org.

What's Going On at JFS



Let It Out!! For Teens 15-18 ONLY Each Monday 5 to 6:15 p.m. Facilitated by Ethan Klein, LMSW Jewish Family Service - Call 713-667-9336

JFS Alexander Institute On-Going Programs WINK (What I Need to Know) Informational Programs First Tuesday of each month: 7 to 8:30 p.m. JULY 1: Special and Not-so-Special Education in Texas Presenter: Jacquie Brennan, Southwest ADA Center attorney AUG. 5: Developing Great Advocacy Skills Presenter: Partners Resource Network (PRN)

Support Group Third Tuesday of each month 7 to 8:00 p.m. Facilitated by Jody Mizrahi, MA, LPC-1, and Jamie Paul Weiner, MSW Jewish Family Service Call 713-667-9336

For updated news visit our website at www.jfshouston.org

JFS Jewish Family Service MISHPACHA Published semi-annually by Jewish Family Service 4131 South Braeswood Blvd. at Linkwood, Houston TX 77025 Phone: 713-667-9336 Fax: 713-667-3619 President: Donald Freedman Executive Director: Linda L. Burger Mispacha Staff Writer: Gloria Ribnick Graphic Design: Graphics II Jewish Family Service Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Friday Publication postage paid at Houston, Texas

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