



# Jewish Family Services Connections

*November 2007*

2245 S. State Street, Suite 200, Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 769-0209 • www.jfsannarbor.org



## Desperate Situations Call for Creative Solutions Unemployed Network to Find New Opportunities

"I haven't worked in months. I am desperate to find work anywhere." This statement is one heard more and more frequently at Jewish Family Services. Often someone calls for assistance with a bill or such, and swiftly employment becomes the topic of conversation.

As the state budget crisis and economic woes continue, many people feel that their job market prospects are tight. But some of JFS' clients are finding that the opportunities emerge when workers are open to creative and new paths previously not taken.

## New Leaders Steer JFS Through Tough Economic Times

### Hundreds of Supporters Join Effort

Steven Gerber, a former Ford engineer, brings his energy and exuberance for fundraising and events to Jewish Family Services as the new Board President. Steve has served as Treasurer, Executive Committee member, and Co-chair of the Friends of the Family committee, preparing him for this leadership role.



*New Board President, Steven Gerber*

"[T]imes are tough in Michigan, we need JFS now more than ever" - Steve Gerber

The board will refocus its energy on raising the visibility and viability of the agency. "The exceptional work of JFS is still not as well known as I would like to

These opportunities present themselves in various ways; sometimes by simply expanding one's previous contact network by attending SPARK or Chamber of Commerce events. A client reported that these events, which were not previously on his radar, have been helpful in helping him strategize his job search and making new contacts.

"I haven't worked in months. I am desperate to find work anywhere."

Others are looking at jobs outside of their immediate experience or working off hours. One JFS client recently started a new job with Zingerman's even though his previous experience was not in food service or delivery and the night position has "crazy hours" The previously unemployed and uninsured client has a full-time job with benefits, and reports: "I feel terrific. Zingerman's is a fantastic employer, so I feel very lucky."

Whatever an individual's previous experience or current situation may be, JFS works with people to help them best meet their needs. Contact the agency for employment and career assistance.

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*. . .dedicated to strengthening family life,  
fostering self-sufficiency and  
improving social & economic conditions*

## JFS Mission

To address the human services concerns which affect individuals and families in the community in a manner sensitive to Jewish culture, values & ideas while respecting diversity within an ever changing society.

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## New Leaders for Tough Economic Times (continued)



Andrew Rudick volunteered to help rebuild JFS offices, one of many ways he contributes to JFS

see it," states Gerber. "This year, we will concentrate on doing a more effective job of making its contributions better appreciated and more broadly known."

Andrew Rudick brings his fresh and creative ideas to the board as a newly elected member. Rudick has served on the Finance Committee and has provided key leadership to the Young Adult Division of the Jewish Federation of Washtenaw County. "We are pleased to have Andy join our team," says Gerber.

Leslie Kamil will serve as Vice President, while Bette Cotzin will continue as Secretary and Mike Fried takes over as Treasurer. Current members remain on the board including Past President Marjorie Checkoway and past Vice President Mark Berg. Checkoway steps down as President after six years of leadership while Berg has served as Vice President for the last four years. Israel Woronoff becomes an Emeritus, or honorary, Board Member after serving as a key advisor since 1996 and advisory committee co-chair from 2002 – 2004. Dean Solden, who served as Treasurer for three years, has recently stepped down from the board.



Margie Checkoway on site at new office

"Jewish Family Services would not be in the present vibrant and growing position without the strong leadership provided by Margie Checkoway and Mark Berg," notes Gerber. "Margie involved herself in all aspects of the organization and offered guidance to the Board with grace and modesty. Mark has consistently given wise counsel to the Board and delivered exceptional leadership during JFS's move to its present location." Gerber also noted contributions by Israel Woronoff and Dean Solden. "Since its inception, Israel provided guidance in a gentle, unassuming manner. Dean offered his unique way of looking at issues and creative solutions to challenges facing JFS."



Mark Berg hangs ceiling tiles at New

The board will develop a new five year strategic plan this year that will focus on organizational development, enhancing program implementation, and building the sustainability of JFS "As times are tough in Michigan, we need JFS now more than ever," said Gerber. "We are grateful to the hundreds of individuals and businesses who have supported the agency through the years. We truly couldn't do it without you!"

...dedicated to strengthening family life,  
fostering self-sufficiency and  
improving social & economic conditions

## Rupture in family relationships not “Just Growing Pains” according to experts involved with youth in crisis



JFS launched the first Youth in Crisis workshop last year in large part due to the vision, passion and foresight of Board Member Barbara Stark-Nemon. In a recent interview, she expressed why JFS was the place to tackle this challenging issue.

ago be- “I joined the board of JFS five years ago because I saw a dynamic, creative, and effective organization that always finds a way to do a bit more within its limited size and resources.” Barbara notes that youth issues were a top concern based on her own personal and professional experience and that of many others in the community.

“There are a substantial number of youth here in Washtenaw County who can not function in the expected manner in school, in their families, or their peer groups,” said Stark-Nemon. “Many caring, supportive families have kids in behavioral or social emotional crisis or on the verge of one, and don’t know where to turn.”

Last spring, JFS convened a group of teachers, parents and professionals involved with youth to discuss this issue. The workshop identified the need for better resource and referral services for these families and the professionals they approach. Workshop participants saw JFS as playing a unique role in bridging the gap between the

community’s well-established supports for economically or educationally “at risk” children, and leadership development programs for youth, to focus on the youth who fall through the cracks.

“Workshop participants pointed to the desperate shortage of residential and intensive day treatment services locally,” according to Stark-Nemon. The need for family support was also highlighted. “Parents feel isolated; afraid to admit that their families and children are less than perfect.”

These are not “just growing pains.” “Even the most well adjusted, highly functional teen introduces a certain amount of strain in the fabric of a family,” according to local psychologist Arthur Brickman, Phd. “. . . Rupture occurs when the teen no longer accepts the social contract about family; i.e. (a) parents are in charge of the family, (b) certain expectations exist, and if not met then at least will be addressed, and (c) all members of the family are entitled to respect.”

The group identified a number of short term tasks for JFS to accomplish, which the new Youth and Family Services Program Coordinator, Lisa Keefauver has begun to accomplish. The long-term vision is to partner with other resources in the community to create programming similar to ones located in Canada and California.

“. . .the community needs to step up. These are our own children, our future.” Barbara Stark-Nemon

“In order for our efforts to succeed, we must secure long term financial support for these programs and services”, notes Barbara Stark-Nemon. “We have had two generous donors so far, but the community needs to step up. These are our own children, our future.”

JFS invites community members to be involved in establishing the Youth in Crisis Referral and Resource Network and plan the second Youth in Crisis Workshop. Interested community members should contact Lisa Keefauver at [lisa@jfsannarbor.org](mailto:lisa@jfsannarbor.org) or (734) 769-0209.

### Our New Staff



Lisa Keefauver joins JFS as the Youth and Family Services Coordinator providing case management and program support to families with youth in crisis.

She has a Masters of Social Work with a concentration on youth and families from the University of Vermont and four years of field experience. She lives in Ann Arbor with her husband and their adopted daughter Lily.

# Jewish Family Services 2006–2007 Annual Campaign

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Jewish Family Services receives  
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It does a world.™

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*"JFS of Washtenaw County is like no other. You'll always hold a special place in our hearts. Keep us on your mailing list for an annual donation." - former clients, Heidi, Igor & Max Vizelberg.*

# Cruisin' JFS Bat Mitzvah Celebration



Jewish Family Services celebrated its thirteenth year with over 200 community members at a unique and fun filled, JFS Bat Mitzvah Cruise. The Cruise event "set sail" on April 22 at Travis Pointe

Country Club with an opening reception honoring the thirteen elements instrumental to the success of JFS. Representatives of the following groups were invited to light a candle of Mizvot.

- (1) Early Community Supporters -who began the work of JFS on a voluntary basis;
- (2) Community Leaders who nurtured a professional agency;
- (3) Advisors that offered vision and hands on support
- (4) JFS Services that fulfill essential needs in our community
- (5) Supporters who provide vital funds to support the agency
- (6) Local Community Partners that collaborate on JFS programs and services
- (7) Committees that help formulate and review JFS services
- (8) Adult Volunteers who donate valuable time to JFS
- (9) Youth Volunteers who offer energy and time to JFS
- (10) Staff that work endlessly to meet the needs of the community
- (11) Professionals who donate their expertise, sponsorship and materials to JFS
- (12) You who help JFS remain your family in the community



The rest of the evening was dedicated to fun and celebration. Participants could watch the Not-so-newlywed game show with MC Big Al Muskovito who tested three couples on their knowledge and

compatibility. All contestants won



*Dinner with the Family Centerpieces*

beautiful Judiaca art from Carole Roeda Studios. (photo)

Others enjoyed

singing along to their favorite tunes provided by Chasen' Dreams DJ and Karaoke. (photo)

Some guests took a tour of the world with a wine tasting hosted by Becky Sue Epstein of Intermezzo Magazine, other learned some dance moves with Max Ali and his students Steve and Joyce Gerber. At



*Weingarten and Gessner Dinner*

the same time, guests could enjoy a massage, sit for a caricaturist drawing, or experience the magic of Jeffrey "the magician" Olds. (Photos)

On the lower deck, youth hung out poolside with their own buffet and DJ music provided by Elemental Brothers. Some guests also took advantage of the indoor racquetball and tennis courts.

## Our New Staff



Rick Finger serves as the JFS Program Coordinator for the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative, a grant funded program with the goal of making our communities safer as citizens return from the Department of Corrections. Rick applies JFS employment and case management expertise to transitioning parolees while drawing upon his own years of experience in mental health services, court casework, and general health care ad-

## JFS Thanks Volunteers at Office Grand Opening



*The Gilberts speaking at the Dinner with the Family Dessert Reception*

Jewish Family Services celebrated its move into new offices at 2245 South State Street with an afternoon of music, food and dancing. Between October and April, over 100 volunteers spent

weekends, weekdays, and evenings transforming the interior office space into private offices. "We are so grateful to those who donated their valuable time to this project," said Board Vice President and Project Manager Mark Berg "Thanks to the significant contribution of these exceptional community members, JFS is now in position to meet growing demands for the high quality services it provides to community members in need."

The new interior would not be possible without the help of hundreds of volunteers including: community youth groups, members of the resettlement community, ESL class members and graduates, members of YAD and Hillel, board and staff members of JFS and students from the Ann Arbor Public School construction program.

Over 20 businesses offered donated and discounted materials and labor including: TJ Electric & Construction of Farmington Hills, Home Depot,

## JFS Receives Funds for Literacy

Jewish Family Services has received a grant of \$13,800 from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to enhance its English as a Second Language and Civics instruction to immigrants and refugees. The agency offers daily classes on site to adults seeking long term employment and three weekly classes of site for older adults seeking to practice and enhance their language skills. These funds will greatly enhance our ESL and Civ-

## ESL Students learn about Tzedekah



*From L to R Carol Lessure, Anya Abramzon, Margie Checkoway, Rep. John Dingell, Jeff Levin, Sadeepa and her brother Chalan.*

Over the years, the ESL (English as a Second Language) program at JFS has grown into a very valuable part of the services offered by the agency. Students from all over the world come daily to class. Not only do they learn how to improve their language skills, but they also learn life skills. Instructor Barbara Schreier is amazed on a daily basis over the improvement in language growth, but also in the fellowship among the students. Her most heartfelt time comes when introductions are being practiced, and Michael says "I am from Israel", and Mohamed says "I am from Palestine".

There is no charge for these ESL classes, as the costs of the program are covered under two grants from the Michigan Department of Education and a newly acquired grant for enhancements from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.

Giving back has become an important attitude among the students who appreciate the daily classes. So, during the construction of our new building, volunteers from 12 different countries were working together to "give back" each weekend.

In particular, Michael Verdinger from a moshav near Ashekelon, Isreal, Sergey Pakharenko from Krasnodar, Russia, and Alfredo Castillo from La Paz, Bolivia provided invaluable skills. They could be seen working side by side during the entire build out of the JFS office space this winter

## Save the Date: Unique JFS Programs

Celebrating Jewish Mothers – No Guilt!	Nov. 18
Grandparent U: Non-traditional Families	Nov. 29
Stars of David Chanukah Shabbat	Dec. 7
JFS at UMS: The Bernstein Award Event	Dec. 9
JFS Advocacy Connection Workshop	Dec. 13
Grandparent U: The “Other Grandparents”	Dec. 20
Motor Meals Delivery Day	Dec. 25
JFS Advocacy Connection Workshop	Jan. 27
Grandparent U: Equality, Fairness, Favoritism	Jan. 31
<b>Grandparent U: Storytelling</b>	<b>Feb. 28</b>
Depression Awareness Day	March 2
Grandparent U: Holidays & Traditions	March 27
Dinner with the Family	March 30
Grandparent U: Being Spiritual Guides	April 24
Youth & Family Workshops	May 2

Issue #10





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June 2007

## Help Families Avoid Disaster

A working car, a tank of gasoline, or loans for unexpected expenses can prevent unemployment and homelessness.

Please consider donations of the following:

-  Automobiles in good driving condition
-  Gasoline pre-paid cards
-  Optical care and supplies
-  Emergency financial assistance

*All donations are tax deductible.*



**Jewish Family Services**

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