

Jewish Family Services Connections



...dedicated to strengthening families, fostering individual self-sufficiency and promoting improved social and economic conditions

Business is Booming at JFS

You can see the result of Michigan's struggling economy in the growing case load at Jewish Family Services. The agency has experienced a 50% increase in client requests since the beginning of the year, mostly from people facing job loss, utility cut off, and potential eviction. "You never want business to boom at a social service agency," said Anya Abramzon, executive director. "Growth usually means that more people are in trouble."



Michigan has the third highest unemployment rate in the nation, with only hurricane-torn Alabama and Louisiana experiencing worse job loss. Typically, transitioning workers can spend 3 - 6 months finding a new job at a comparable salary. In today's economy, these transitions often take much longer, adding emotional and financial strain to the process. "Job

loss can lead families through a spiral of financial decline," according to Abramzon. "We have had twice as many requests for emergency assistance for the basics - food, rent and utilities - this year."

Jewish Family Services has reached out to those in need, distributing food baskets from EMU Hillel and accessing emergency funds from Beth Israel Congregation, Temple Beth Emeth, and the Unitarian Universalist Church. JFS has also joined a group of "Barrier Buster" agencies - a county wide program that provides rent and utility financial aid to families facing eviction. "Not only have we gained greater access to these funds for our clients," states Abramzon. "But we now participate in meetings where service providers discuss ways to prevent evictions and shut offs whenever possible."

JFS is working to reach out to local business owners as it looks to assist a number of highly skilled, experienced workers find employment in their fields, and transition these workers into new careers. This month, case manager Mira Sussman visited Detroit's Jewish Vocational Services to learn about their approaches and develop local resources for transitioning professionals.

JFS works with each client to address their immediate needs as well as establish a path towards long-term employment goals. As one client said, "JFS helped me find money to pay rent and prevent my phone from being turned off. I didn't have to worry about those bills for a month and could focus on searching for a job. Plus, just having someone to talk to was such a relief."

"We like to think that Ann Arbor is immune to the state-wide economic downturn that is affecting communities all around us," Sussman said. "The reality is that even highly skilled, highly trained people are finding themselves suddenly out of work."

Are you a business owner looking for employees or work with contractual laborers? Are you someone looking for work? If so, please contact Mira Sussman, Case Management Coordinator at mira@jfsannarbor.org.

Board Notes



What a whirlwind of services and programs by JFS this spring! Thanks to the support of you, our community, JFS has been able to respond to a 50% increase in services, aiding 58 Hurricane Katrina evacuee families (147 individuals) and helping a record number of people cope with a change in their economic circumstances due to the sinking Michigan economy. Meanwhile, you have supported our staff and volunteers through a number of significant community events.

Depression Awareness: A Community Conversation drew a standing-room-only crowd that dramatized the mental health needs of our community. Thank you to the friends and family of Dr. Toby Jacobowitz in whose memory the event was planned, and the cadre of volunteer professionals who staffed the roundtable discussions. Based on the overwhelming response to this program, JFS plans to address adolescent depression as part of a youth & family conference and at a follow-on depression awareness event next spring in Toby's memory.

(Continued on pg. 2)

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(Board Notes, continued from pg. 1)

JFS at UMS honored Ken Fischer with the Claire and Isadore Bernstein Resettlement Award for his contribution of music and culture to resettlement seniors. A number of you attended this wonderful event in March to celebrate a civic-minded community leader as well as to commemorate the work of the Bernsteins who were devoted to supporting new Americans in Ann Arbor. Their daughter, Amy Colton, presented a moving portrayal of her parents' lives. Thank you, Ken Fischer! Thank you, Amy Colton, in memory of your parents.

We are deeply appreciative of all of you for supporting the second-ever Dinner with the Family that brought together some 270 guests and 69 hosts and met our goal of raising \$20,000 to support JFS. If you attended the dessert reception at the JCC, you heard first hand the stories of Bernadette and Dean Gilbert, Hurricane Katrina evacuees, and of Ann Budilovskaya, who has come to rely on JFS as her family in the community. I encourage you to read their stories in this newsletter. We are truly grateful to our Dinner with the Family Co-Chairs, Sue & Larry Adler, for their guidance, hard work, and devotion.

JFS has a number of opportunities for you to get involved and help: be a career mentor, shape a youth & family program, and support our vital work financially. Your gift will bring us one step closer to reaching our 2006 fundraising campaign goal of \$120,000. Please continue to be a Friend of the Family by supporting JFS. We are honored to serve as your family in the community. We depend on you to be able to continue to do the good and needed work we do, day in and day out, as a helping hand in our community.

Warm wishes,



Marjorie Checkoway, President, Board of Directors

Meet Our Staff



JFS was blessed to have Sara Beth Levin working for us while she completed her Masters in Social Work and certificate in Jewish Communal Service at University of Michigan. Sara Beth quickly involved herself in the work at JFS – writing grants, helping with Katrina clients, organizing Diversity Day and our holiday basket deliveries.

Sara Beth served on our Direct Services and Friends of the Family Committees, as well as assisting with our monthly board meetings. She says: "My time at this agency has provided me with an opportunity that allowed me to develop my professional skills and understanding of non-profit agencies. I want to thank all of the staff at JFS, the board of directors and all of the committees for welcoming me into their meetings and allowing me to participate in the tasks." We wish Sara Beth well as the Mandel Center Associate with the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach, Florida – she will truly be missed.

JFS Connections

JFS Fills the Void

By Ann Budilovskaya



Ann speaking at Dinner with the Family Dessert Reception.

I moved to the US with my mother and grandmother from the Ukraine in 1990. We moved here because my mom and grandma wanted a better life for me. We found a wonderful new extended family of friends here in Ann Arbor. JFS staff were a big part of this extended family. They

helped us settle by providing us with furniture and giving my mom and grandma the opportunity to study English, while I went to the Hebrew Day School.

My grandma found a new community and involved herself in bake sales and other programs provided by JFS. We attended many programs and picnics and JFS gave us the opportunity to socialize with other people who were brand new to the area, enabling my family to form friendships that have lasted to this day.

During my senior year of high school my life changed forever when my mom died at the age of 42. I lost my foundation. Eight months later my mom's brother died and I was devastated by all the losses and changes I experienced at such a young age. The loss of both children at a relatively young age was very hard on my grandma, but she stayed strong for me.

JFS was there to guide us through the whole process. When my mom died, I moved in with my grandma, and JFS helped with speeding up the process for us to get a two-bedroom apartment. For almost a year, Anya met weekly with my grandma to support her during this difficult time.

In July of 2004, things really took a turn for the worse when my grandma suffered a series of strokes and had to be put into a nursing home. Once again JFS was there throughout the whole process, providing translators for doctors' appointments and helping us pick out the best nursing home for her. My grandma continued to fight for me, but in November 2004 she lost her battle.

During this hard time for me, JFS was a big part of my support system. They helped me financially, emotionally and provided help in obtaining things like health insurance and a place to live. Things were very hard at first, but JFS has, and continues, to help me get back on my feet.

JFS is "my family in the community." JFS is encouraging me to grow, learn and achieve. As I lost those closest to me, JFS has tried to fill the void. They nurture, push, advocate and accept me. JFS is a safety net. Each time life hit me hard, JFS was there to catch me and keep me from despair.

Support the 2006 JFS Annual Campaign

Jewish Family Services, a non-profit organization, relies heavily on the support of our community. JFS, Your Family in the Community, offers a helping hand to those in need. It is an expensive business. Our clients need your help.

JFS Expenditures *



* Based on an independent audit

What Does Your Money Support?

Every dollar you give to Jewish Family Services goes to support one of the crucial services on which this community depends. When you decide what your contribution to JFS will be this year, do not ask "How much should I give," but rather "What activity or program will I choose to fund?"

How will you choose to be a Friend of the Family?

Family for the Elderly

Visits for the homebound \$75
In-home assessment for elder care \$250
A month of transportation services for older adults \$1500

Family for Those in Financial Crisis

Emergency funds for food, utilities or medical bills \$250
Month of aid for a family on the verge of eviction \$500

Family for the Unemployed

Initial employment counseling session \$50
Transitioning skills and securing employment \$1000

Family for the Emotionally Distressed

Hospital or rehabilitation facility visit \$100
Patient navigation for a critically ill family member \$250
Six sessions of therapy \$300

Family for the Displaced

Train & transition a new American into the workforce \$1500
Resettlement for one family \$2500

Family for Parents

Family counseling \$90 per session
Parenting Workshop \$150
Adoption support \$1000



Jewish Family Services
of Washtenaw County

I/we want to be a member of the "Friends of the Family." Enclosed is a tax-deductible donation of: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Jewish Family Services

Name(s) (Please Print): _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone : _____ E-Mail: _____

Levels of Giving

Circle of Legacy -	\$10,000 and above
Circle of Life -	\$5,000 - \$9,999
Circle of Traditions -	\$2,500 - \$4,999
Circle of Generations -	\$1,000 - \$2,499
Circle of Community -	\$500 - \$999
Circle of Family -	\$250 - \$499
Circle of Friends -	\$100 - \$249
Circle of Giving -	up to \$99

I/we would like to pay by credit card: Name as it appears on credit card: _____

Visa Master Card Quarterly (minimum payment \$50) Full payment

Card No. _____ Exp. ____ \ ____

I am interested in creating a permanent legacy, please contact me.

Return to: Jewish Family Services
625 State Circle Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

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JFS Connections

JFS Honors Bernsteins, UMS and Ken Fischer



Ken Fischer, Margie Checkoway.

Jewish Family Services honored Ken Fischer, President of the University Musical Society at an award reception on March 19, 2006 before the Kirov Orchestra concert. JFS presented the Claire and Isadore Bernstein Resettlement Award to Fischer and UMS for enriching the lives of older adults in the resettlement community. The event brought together community leaders and supporters of UMS and JFS as well as people resettled here from the Former Soviet Union.

UMS, through the Clifford and Fanni Epstein Fund, supplies tickets to seniors so they can enjoy world-class performances they would otherwise be unable to afford to attend. UMS piloted the first year of this program with JFS and has used its experience as a model for extending the program to other area agencies serving seniors.

At the reception, Ken Fischer noted that "JFS is well run agency and a perfect partner for this effort." He said, "I am deeply moved by the gratitude and deep appreciation for UMS performances from the members of the resettlement community."

JFS honored the memory of Claire Bernstein who passed away in October. At the reception her daughter, Amy Colton, shared how her parents welcomed the first Russian Jews to Ann Arbor. She said, "I realized that if an individual lives by democratic, Jewish and moral values, and isn't afraid to stand up for what he or she believes in and is willing to go the extra mile to make things happen, individuals can move mountains and change lives in very significant ways. You just need a vision and the will to make it happen. My parents had both."

JFS established the Bernstein Resettlement Award to recognize community members providing time, resources and support for the area's resettlement community.

JFS Awards Dingell for 50 Years of Service



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

Jewish Family Services presented Congressman John Dingell with a certificate recognizing his steadfast work on behalf of the people of Southeastern Michigan during his 50 years as United States Congressman. JFS president Marjorie Checkoway, executive director Anya Abramzon, Federation director Jeff Levin as well as two Katrina clients met with the Congressman and his staff to brief him on the issues facing JFS and the people it serves. Representative Dingell has championed the needs of the underserved during his Congressional tenure – crafting programs such as Medicare and fighting to keep them funded. The poor, immigrant and elderly populations we serve owe him a debt of gratitude.

Meet Our New Staff


JFS added some much needed help to our front office.



Regina Hunter comes to us with prior office experience as well as graphics and layout experience. She attended Washtenaw Community College, majoring in Graphic Design with certification in Video Production. Regina has been instrumental with the layout and design of our materials, advertisements and new program brochures. She spends her off hours keeping up with an eight year old daughter and two dogs.



Jean Ing, HelpSource aide, is a recent transplant from the Upper Peninsula. She lived in Bay City for many years, and was co-owner of a well loved Bay City restaurant, House of Ing for seven years. Jean has been answering phones, sending mailings, and helping reorganize office storage. She has two grown sons, one residing in Ypsilanti and the other, in Haslett.



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Serving the Community for Over 40 Years

Community Tackles Stigma of Depression

By Susan Kolovson

Over 150 people crowded into the Jewish Community Center lounge to participate in Depression Awareness: A Community Conversation, sponsored by Jewish Family Services. The event was organized by a group of friends of Dr. Toby Jacobowitz, an Ann Arbor physician, mother, and wife who took her life last year. The goal of the program was to provide a comfortable forum for people to discuss a topic commonly associated with stigma



Dolls and poem displayed at the program as a memorial to Dr. Toby Jacobowitz.

and shame. The event featured a panel of four community members who discussed their experiences with depression, either individually or as a spouse of someone with depression. A conversation followed that focused on social

and clinical aspects of the disease, with an emphasis on working through barriers to make depression a more acceptable topic. The program concluded with roundtables

facilitated by mental health professionals who volunteered their time.

Based on the overwhelming positive response from 85 evaluations, JFS and its group of volunteers will shape a follow-on program for next spring. The event will focus on depression in adolescents, an area of great concern to many participants. The program will continue as a memorial for Toby Jacobowitz.

Community members are encouraged to contact JFS for a mental health assessment and referral or to get involved in our mental health awareness campaign.

Members of the Mental Health taskforce include: Ellen Abramson, Cindy Frey, Sylvia Gordon, Steve Landau, Susan Kolovson, and Gloria Zimet.

County Recognizes JFS for Exceptional Service



From L to R, members of the Board of Commissioners, Elfrion Smith, Denise Richard, Anya Abramzon, Mira Sussman.

Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners presented a certificate of recognition to Jewish Family Services at a meeting in February. Executive Director Anya Abramzon and case managers Cindy Frey and Mira Sussman and the rest of the JFS staff were recognized for their generosity and kindness in aiding families displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

Meet Our Board Member



Syma Kroll, a member of Temple Beth Emeth for nearly forty years, was introduced to issues in the broader Jewish community in 1979 as a member of Syd Bernard's Needs Assessment Survey Committee. She then became involved in many groups throughout the Jewish community. She was chair of the final UJA Board that guided the community through the process which merged

the Jewish Community Council and the UJA and ultimately resulted in the current Jewish Federation. Syma was the first chair of the unified fundraising committee and then chaired the committee that oversaw allocations of local funds to Israel. Syma served on an international United Israel Appeal oversight committee and the UIA Board of Trustees.

Her relationship with Jewish Family Services began when her elderly mother, always a role model for involvement in Jewish community activities, moved to Ann Arbor from Florida and benefited from JFS services. Subsequently, Syma became a JFS volunteer, served on the Advisory Committee for 6 years, and became a board member of the newly incorporated Jewish Family Services. Syma teaches reading privately to differently-learning students. Her husband, Phil, a psychiatrist employed by the VA hospital, also has been involved in Jewish community activities. She has two daughters who were raised in Ann Arbor and three grandchildren.

At Creative Windows, we're pleased to be a supporter of Jewish Family Services.

www.creativewindows.hdwfg.com

Creative Windows

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Building Support One Dinner at a Time



Adler Dinner, Hosts with Guests

Jewish Family Services held its second, highly successful fundraiser Dinner with the Family on April 2nd. Roughly 300 people and 60 businesses helped us

surpass our goal of raising \$20,000 for our direct services for families in need. The community demonstrated deep support and appreciation for JFS and its work.

Our hosts not only paid for and prepared the meals in their own home, but they also led a brief discussion about JFS at each dinner. Each host shared their impression of JFS and had centerpieces featuring illustrative stories of the people served by the agency: the elderly, unemployed, families & youth, new Americans, and displaced refugees & evacuees.



Dinner with the Family Centerpieces

Co-chairs Sue and Larry Adler held a host appreciation brunch in their home a week before the event to prepare hosts for this role. "I felt it was important as a host to know about JFS and be able to answer questions about the organization," commented Larry Adler.



Weingarten and Gessner Dinner

We are very grateful to our 69 hosts, 270 guests, 30 sponsors and 30 in-kind donors. Due to the generosity of our hosts and area businesses with donations of money, time, food,

flowers and hospitality, all the costs of the event were covered and guest donations will directly support JFS services. In particular, we thank our platinum sponsor, The Charles and Rita Gelman Educational Foundation, and gold sponsors, ProQuest Inc, and Creative Windows for underwriting both Dinner with the Family and JFS at UMS.

Katrina Evacuees Thank JFS and Ann Arbor

By Bernadette Gilbert



The Gilberts speaking at the Dinner with the Family Dessert Reception

Dean and I are Katrina evacuees. Six months ago we never dreamed we would be in Ann Arbor speaking to people about Jewish Family Services. It was an organization we never had heard of and a

situation we could never have imagined.

We were living in our dream home that we built for our retirement in New Orleans. We grew up there, but spent our adult lives in Chicago where we raised our three sons. We moved back to New Orleans to take care of my mom and because we loved the weather. That life ended on August 29th when Katrina hit land. We had to evacuate with just a few personal items and some summer clothing,

We came to Ann Arbor to be near our son while we sorted out what to do next. We are still sorting things out—dealing with insurance companies, FEMA and waiting for the city to tell us when we can repair our home.

We were referred to Jewish Family Services by the Red Cross. That's when our burdens were lifted and our stress started to disappear. We met a wonderful person named Mira [Sussman]. She went to work making us feel at home, helping us to find an apartment and furniture. When we moved in we had everything we needed to be comfortable.

Mira introduced us to people who showed us love, caring and concern. JFS is still helping us so that we don't battle the

(Continued on pg. 7)

JFS Says Thanks!

Jewish Family Services has received a grant of \$7,000 from the Anna Botsford Bach Fund of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation to cover roughly 35% of our first year operating costs of the JFS Care Van Program. JFS has purchased and equipped the van with a grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation, and will launch this new transportation service in the months to come.

(Evacuees Thank JFS Continued from pg. 6)

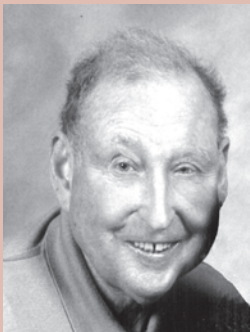
bureaucracy alone. They help us follow up with phone calls, faxes and emails and deal with FEMA so that we don't fall through the cracks. Mira helps us be "squeaky wheels," because they get the grease. We are not squeaky by nature.

Dean has always been the provider. He worked for Health and Human Services as an adjudicator, and I taught for 38 years in the Chicago Public School System. We put all three sons through college and they graduated with no loans to repay. Our family was always giving to others and working with our church, St. Peter Claver. So believe me when I say—if it happened to us, it could happen to anyone.

You truly don't know what will happen tomorrow—illnesses, accidents and natural disasters lurk on the horizon, waiting to pounce on people like us and our good neighbors in New Orleans. Thankfully, we have some savings, but much of what we had planned for this phase of our lives has changed. We were looking to traveling and landscaping on our house, and now we find ourselves using our savings to pay rent AND mortgage on our home that we cannot live in.

I never dreamed that we would be in need of aid from a social services agency—much less one called Jewish Family Services. We were very grateful for the generosity of this community and the warm regard JFS showed all of us. Thank you for supporting us and JFS during this unusual national disaster.

Meet Our Board Member



Herb Amster has served on our board since 2004. He also serves on the Advisory Board of the Jewish Community Foundation, and played an instrumental role in the founding of the Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Center in Washtenaw County. A founder and chief executive officer of Irwin Magnetic Systems, Inc, Herb has served on a number of corporate and nonprofit boards. He

is also a board member of NanoBio, ReCellular, The Bartec Group, and Arbor Hospice Foundation. The Council of Great Lakes Governors and the University of Michigan Business School have recognized his entrepreneurship, and he was named the Michigan Industrialist of the Year in 1987.

Herb has a long history of community leadership and philanthropy, and in 2003 he and his wife Carol received the Humanitarian Award from the Jewish Federation of Washtenaw County. Herb holds degrees in Industrial Management and Business Administration from the Sloan School at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). JFS benefits greatly from his wisdom and experience.

New Fees at JFS

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the Direct Services Committee, we wish to let the community know that Jewish Family Services will continue its high level of quality services while instituting fees to support them.

JFS has sought to provide a broad range of services, particularly to older adults. A few years ago, the agency started modest fees for counseling, immigration, translation and notarizing services to help cover expenses.

Our older adult services have largely been covered by grants, however government and private funding sources are dwindling while at the same time our senior population and need for services has grown significantly.

Consequently, Jewish Family Services will institute a broader fee-for-service system on September 1, 2006, the beginning of our fiscal year. The goal of these fees is to ensure the continued access and quality of our services. However, the fees will cover only a small part of the cost to JFS for these services.

Please note the following:

- Fee for service will be based on ability to pay.
- No person will be denied service due to inability to pay.
- Fees will comprise less than 5% of our annual revenue.
- JFS continues to seek grants and donors to sustain and grow our services.

Implementing a fee system for those who are able to pay will help enable us to serve those in our community who may need us. Thank you for your understanding, cooperation and support.

Please contact us for comments, concerns and questions:

Anya Abramzon

Anya Abramzon
Executive Director

Phyllis Herzig

Phyllis Herzig
Chair, Direct Services Committee

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Jewish Family Services

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Jewish Family Services Mission

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

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What Does it Take To Serve an Unemployed Professional?

Jewish Family Services provides assistance to over 100 people in seeking employment in Washtenaw County. Our goal is to help these individuals help themselves, and return them to the workforce as quickly as possible while addressing various emotional, financial, and training needs.

TO SERVE ONE TRANSITIONING PROFESSIONAL:

Staff time (case manager) – over 50 hours or \$1,300 per year

- Evaluate client situation (experience, background, current situation)
- Assess client resources
- Identify areas of need and barriers to employment
- Prioritize the needs
- Coordinate services
- Assist in securing food, legal, financial, and medical services
- Provide education and advocacy for those facing eviction and other financial challenges
- Revamp resume and identify networking opportunities
- Identify resources for job information
- Schedule both phone and in person interviews
- Post employment support and follow up

Support services – up to \$2,000 per family

- Emergency financial assistance (food, rent, transportation & utilities)
- Gift cards and other supplemental support
- Professional clothes and childcare

Job Opportunity at JFS

Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County seeks an **Older Adult Services Coordinator** with MSW and Michigan license. Must have strong clinical and programming skills and experience, knowledge of Jewish community desirable. For a complete job description please visit www.jfsannarbor.org or contact Elina Zilberberg at (734) 769-0209.

Issue #8

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May 2006

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