

**JF&CS: Working Together
Kol Isha and Visiting Moms
Collaborate to Help New Mothers**



As domestic abuse often escalates during pregnancy and shortly after the birth of a child, many of the clients of the Visiting Moms program experience abuse. Visiting Moms, a program of the Center for Early Relationship Support (CERS) at JF&CS, is a home-based program that matches trained volunteers with new mothers who have a particular need for a supportive connection. The primary objective of the program is to help new mothers cope successfully with the early months of parenthood, thus promoting healthy, nurturing family attachments.

Kol Isha trains Visiting Moms to recognize the warning signs of domestic violence in their clients. Visiting Moms may refer clients to Kol Isha for direct services and often consult with Kol Isha in order to assess safety. Clients being supported by both programs have the benefit of having a Visiting Mom as well as a Kol Isha advocate who can coordinate services so that the mother and child are safe.

New Program Wins Innovation Award

It is estimated that more than 1 million people are trafficked annually around the world; some experts say it could be double (www.HumanTrafficking.org). While many people may imagine human trafficking as a crime that only afflicts developing nations, the truth is that human trafficking and slavery is a silent epidemic right here in Massachusetts.

To combat this growing problem, Kol Isha has undertaken a new initiative as a member of SafetyNet: A Program for Trafficked and Exploited Persons. SafetyNet is a collaboration of the International Institute of Boston (IIB), the Victims of Violence (VOV) program and JF&CS. This partnership serves victims that have experienced a range of abuse and neglect that include enslaved domestic workers, victims of prostitution rings, women in servile marriages and exploited laborers. We are excited to report that this new program has just received the Massachusetts Office for Victims Assistance Innovation Award.

A victim of a servile marriage has often been brought to the United States under false pretenses only to become sexually and domestically enslaved.

Kol Isha's role in this community-based coalition is to serve Russian-speaking victims of trafficking and slavery, with a particular focus on those women trapped in servile marriages. As in domestic violence, a woman living in a servile marriage is usually isolated in a number of ways by her spouse. Denied access to her own passport and ESL classes, a victim of a servile marriage has often been brought to the United States under false pretenses only to become sexually and domestically enslaved.

Through "Zhensky Golos," Kol Isha's Russian-speaking service, we are uniquely able to serve Russian-speaking victims of human trafficking and slavery. Kol Isha offers comprehensive services to these clients including crisis counseling, safety planning, court advocacy and case management. In addition, through its Safe Homing Partnership with numerous shelters, safe homes, and transitional housing programs, Kol Isha helps victims of trafficking flee their dangerous situations.

Welcome,

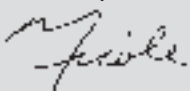
In the last 5 years our community has come a long way. When speaking about Kol Isha, I do not hear, "but Jewish men don't hit their wives" nearly as much as I used to. Still, as a community we struggle to fully understand the dynamics of domestic violence. People often ask, "Why didn't she just leave?" We can turn to our own text for the answer.

Think of the Israelites who fled the oppression and pain of slavery in Egypt, and found themselves without a home. We do not ask, "So why didn't the Israelites just leave Egypt? Why did they put up with slavery for 400 years?" We know they could not just leave Egypt. It took leadership, strength and even miracles for them to break free. History has taught us that a community may not always be able to protect itself from those who wish to do them harm. We therefore already have the template for understanding why one cannot easily escape the personal enslavement of domestic violence.

If the abuser is controlling and suspicious, how can she escape his watchful eye long enough to access supports, design a safety plan and make her escape? And once free, what awaits her? For victims of domestic violence, fleeing that relationship means making more than just a sacrifice for safety. All is unknown to her. How will she pay her bills? Will she be homeless? Will she be able to have custody of her children? If not, will her children be safe in the hands of her abuser? Will her friends believe her? Will her community support her or cast her out? Will she always be alone?

This newsletter highlights many of our outreach efforts, which provide the information needed to create the leadership, strength and even miracles in our community for victims to break free. It is through your efforts and support that we are able to continue these programs so that one day, no one will ask, "Why doesn't she just leave?"

Sincerely,



Nicole Lesser
Director of Kol Isha

Sukkah of Peace



The Kol Isha Advisory Committee – top row (l to r) Karen Langsner, Lisa Freudenheim, Patti Kraft, Abby Rordorf, Lisa Goodman, Julie Riven Jaye, Event Chair, BJ Scheff, Lorre Polinger, Patricia Berenson, Advisory Committee Chair – bottom row (l to r) Nancy Geisinger, Martha Hausman, Nicole Lesser, Director of Kol Isha, Amy Chartock, Barbara Shapiro (not pictured)

On Tuesday, October 5, 2004, Kol Isha had a very successful Sukkah of Peace event with over 170 people in attendance at Newton's Temple Emanuel. This community-wide event celebrated the work of Kol Isha in providing a refuge of support and safety from domestic violence for over 160 women throughout Greater Boston.

Sheriff Andrea Cabral was the keynote speaker and she shared her experience in prosecuting batterers and the difficulties victims face in courtroom settings. *Boston Globe* food columnist Julie Riven Jaye, a founding member of Kol Isha, chaired the event. Julie shared her recollections of the beginnings of Kol Isha and opened the event with a candle lighting ceremony evoking the connection between the journey to freedom of the Israelites fleeing slavery and the journey victims of domestic violence take in order to find safety. Another highlight of the evening was hearing a survivor share her story.

The Sukkah of Peace Event raised \$48,000 which will enable Kol Isha to continue its important work and reach new clients everyday. In addition, event participants were able to make an individual impact on the everyday lives of Kol Isha's clients by purchasing table centerpiece baskets filled with personal care items and grocery gift cards. The lovely pampering baskets were donated by "twist," an event design and management company.

Special thanks to event benefactors Robert L. Epstein Family Foundation, The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation, Julie and Anthony Goschalk, HMS Financial Group – Certified Divorce Financial Analysts, Julie Riven Jaye and Barry Jaye, Robert and Diane Jaye Charitable Trust, Beth S. and Seth A. Klarman, Patti and Jonathan Kraft, Judith and Douglas Krupp Foundation, The Novack Family: Marianne and Kenneth Novack, Laura Novack Pontin and Johan Pontin.

Save the Date: Next year's Sukkah of Peace event, chaired by Patti Kraft, will be held on October 20th.

Stopping Domestic Violence in Russia

In a unique summit last May, a team of experts from Massachusetts met with legal and grassroots organizations in Western Siberia to address the terrible domestic violence problem in Russia. Marina Livshits, Kol Isha's clinical coordinator, joined the team of six who attended four days of planning sessions, visits and formal presentations in the city of Tomsk.

Nicole Lesser, program director of Kol Isha, reports a dire situation in Russia. She says, "There are ten times as many women killed in Russia by domestic violence as the US, in a country with only 135 million people. At the same time they have no laws against domestic violence."

The team left their Russian counterparts with the message that if they are to be a truly democratic society then domestic violence needs to be taken seriously as a human rights issue and public health concern. Marina stressed, "This problem can't be managed by one group. It needs the cooperation of the criminal justice system, health institutions and community response."

At the end of the summit attendees agreed to form a coalition and developed a statement of intent to stop domestic violence, which all present signed.

We are happy to report that the coalition has continued to work together and Marina and the team will be traveling back to Russian this spring.

Emergency Hotline Numbers

If you or someone you know is being abused, help is available. To access support after hours, call these emergency hotline numbers.

REACH
1-800-899-4000

Massachusetts SafeLink
1-877-785-2020

Shalom Task Force Warmline
1-888-883-2323

For more information, please call
781-647-JFCS (5327) and ask for Kol Isha.

Second International Conference on Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community

Nicole Lesser, director of Kol Isha, participated on the planning committee of this year's Jewish Women International conference in Washington D.C. This conference is attended by more than 500 men and women from around the world. In addition to playing a role in conference organization, Nicole led a workshop on starting a Jewish domestic violence program from the ground up. Marina Livshits, clinical coordinator at Kol Isha, also led a workshop on working with Russian-speaking victims of domestic violence and participated in a panel discussion on human trafficking. This year, for the first time, a pre-conference retreat was held for young leaders in the Jewish community in order to address teen dating violence. Nicole was also honored to be on the pre-conference retreat planning committee, and she led a workshop on understanding why it is so difficult to leave an abusive relationship and how teens can help a friend who is being abused.



JWI's "When Push Comes To Shove... It's No Longer Love!"™ Young Leader's Retreat

Boston Jewish Community Women's Fund

This year, the Boston Jewish Community Women's Fund (BJCWF), a part of Women's Philanthropy and a fund of CJP, chose Kol Isha to be one of the recipients of their fabulous grants program. The BJCWF has a commitment to the well being of women and girls, and promotes programs that foster women's leadership, education and empowerment. Their support enables us to continue to provide culturally sensitive services in Russian to Russian-speaking victims of domestic violence. Zhensky Golos, the Russian-speaking service of Kol Isha, is currently New England's only domestic violence program specifically designed for the Russian-speaking community. With approximately 70,000 Russian speakers in the Boston area alone, Kol Isha's Russian-speaking service fills an important niche in the domestic violence service arena and we are grateful to the BJCWF for their support.

Acts of Kindness from Teen Safe



Russian Teen Safe Valentine's Day Project

In Massachusetts, one in five females report being physically and/or sexually abused by a dating partner before graduating high school. This statistic is just one of many reasons why Kol Isha's Teen Safe Program is so important to Jewish and Russian-speaking teens throughout Greater Boston.

Teen Safe reaches out to our youth wherever they can be found, working in collaboration with public schools, Jewish day schools, synagogues, regional youth groups, Teen JCC, Jewish camps and college Hillels. Through discussion groups, experimental workshops and individual counseling, the program empowers teens to choose relationships based on mutual respect, to recognize patterns of communication that are healthy versus unhealthy, to identify warning signs, to look at their cultural and religious context and to seek help when necessary.

Our program at Brookline High School, generously supported by the Brookline Community Fund and staffed by Kol Isha, is a prevention program for Russian-speaking teens and has a wonderful team of active peer leaders. They have developed a tradition of celebrating Valentine's Day with acts that raise community awareness about domestic violence. This year they headed a project whereby students created artful cards and small gifts for residents of a domestic violence shelter in Boston. Kol Isha has received wonderful feedback from the shelter that this "act of kindness" created smiles and laughter among the shelter residents.

Whether you would like a presentation for your staff, a program designed for younger teens, a consultation regarding issues that have come up or a facilitated dialogue, we can tailor our program to fit your needs. All services are free of charge and are designed to keep teens safe. To schedule a Teen Safe Program in your organization, please contact the Kol Isha outreach coordinator at 781-647-JFCS (5327).

A Call for Safety

Give a Phone. Save a Life: Kol Isha Cell Phone Drive

Kol Isha is launching a coordinated cell phone drive in the Jewish community to give to victims of domestic violence. Cell phones are important because abusers often try to prevent victims from calling the police. If you have a cell phone you no longer need, you can donate it to help a victim of domestic violence. With your help, victims can have a 24-hour lifeline to the help they need.



Used cell phones are reprogrammed to call 911 and the Massachusetts Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline, SafeLink, without the need of a cellular service plan and free of charge. We will take any cell phone and battery. In addition to providing a phone to clients, cell phone parts are sold to raise funds that support the services of Kol Isha. Your donation provides much needed philanthropic support for the program.

Please send us your cell phones! Your donation could save a life.

If you are interested in hosting a cell phone drive at your synagogue or organization, please contact Nicole Lesser at nlesser@jfcsboston.org.



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United Way



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