Dear Friends,

We are excited to announce that Gail Schulman has been selected as our next Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Gail’s appointment follows an eight-month national search, which we led in collaboration with Isaacson, Miller, a nationally known, Boston-based search firm.

Schulman is currently Chief Operating Officer at Gann Academy, Greater Boston’s independent Jewish High School. There she is responsible for all of Gann’s business functions, including finance, human resources, marketing, facilities, and operations. She also oversees and implements strategic initiatives at the school. Prior to joining Gann in 2016, she spent more than 20 years leading complex businesses in the high-tech sector, serving as CEO and COO for businesses of up to 500 staff and $200+ million in revenue including SunGuard, Thomson Financial, and others. Schulman is a passionate volunteer leader, Schulman has served as the board chair of Kesher Newton, led committees focused on youth and education at Temple Reyim, and served as fundraising and recruitment chair at Teen Voices. She graduated summa cum laude from Harvard University.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is a tremendous honor to bring Gail Schulman to JF&CS as our next CEO. As a highly regarded, successful business executive, Gail brings the skills necessary to manage a complex, multi-faceted organization. Gail combines her brilliant, sharp mind and business acumen with a warm heart and deep compassion for the mission of the agency. Her experience managing complex businesses brings a fresh perspective to JF&CS.

Gail’s enthusiasm for the position is energizing. The Board is so looking forward to working together with Gail as we continue the legacy of excellent service to our community.

“I am honored and thrilled to be joining Jewish Family & Children’s Service as CEO, and to lead the work of this critically important organization,” shared Gail. “JF&CS doesn’t shy away from the hardest challenges of our community—hunger, living with disabilities, aging, early childhood trauma, and so much more. And it does all of this based on a Jewish foundation of social responsibility, compassion, and respect for all members of the community. I think it is the foundation that provides heart and soul to JF&CS’s services, and that makes it stand out as such a special organization.”

Our team at Isaacson, Miller reached out to many sources, referrals, and prospective candidates. In early July, the team presented candidate resumes to the CEO Search Committee. These candidates represented a variety of for-profit and non-profit sectors, backgrounds in healthcare, Jewish communal organizations, higher education, advocacy, and social service agencies, as well as diversity in gender and cultural background. Candidates were both local and from different parts of the country.

This is a critical and exciting moment in our agency’s history. We have been fortunate to have Carl Zack as our Interim CEO, leading the agency with a firm and steady hand and a heart that cares deeply about every client we serve. Carl is committed to his role until Gail officially joins JF&CS after the new year.

Sincerely,

Jamie Grossman
JF&CS Board President

Steve Weil
Chair, CEO Search Committee

For more information visit jfcsboston.org or call 781-647-JFCS (5327)
Helping Build Families

Last year, Stephanie and KJ came to JF&CS looking to grow their family. With one child at home, they already had experience with other adoption agencies. This time around, they were looking for a different kind of adoption experience. “While looking for adoption agencies in Massachusetts, the JF&CS website indicated that they were inclusive of LGBTQ people. That was definitely an important factor for us,” KJ said.

Although Stephanie and KJ didn’t know it at the time, JF&CS Adoption Resources had received a grant from the Krupp Family Foundation that allowed the agency to be more visible to LGBTQ families. JF&CS has always been LGBTQ friendly, but this grant gave us the chance to create a new website that could be seen by more families in search of a welcoming adoption agency. In addition to creating an inclusive website, this grant made it possible to give LGBTQ families an interest-free loan for the adoption process.

Approximately 65,000 adopted children across the nation are being raised by LGBTQ parents. In many cases, LGTBQ families face the same struggles as heterosexual families such as confusion about the adoption process, financial hardship, and legal risk, while also experiencing their own unique difficulties. There are very few resources that focus on the needs of LGBTQ adoptive parents and their children. LGBTQ couples also struggle with the opportunity of having financial assistance grants available to them due to explicit or covert discrimination. With the interest-free loan that is exclusively for Adoption Resources’ LGBTQ couples, they are given the same opportunities as heterosexual couples to grow their family. This interest-free loan is one of the only loans of its type for LGBTQ families.

“We’ve been able to attract a diverse pool of adoptive parents with the Krupp grant. Between fifteen and twenty percent of our families are LGBTQ. We’ve become more visible in the community, and we’re able to give some families the opportunity to adopt without the financial risk,” shared Betsy Hochberg, LICSW, Director of Adoption Resources.

Once Stephanie and KJ began their adoption experience with JF&CS, they saw what really made Adoption Resources stand out among the rest. “JF&CS was so supportive; I never thought we could get the personal guidance we found through the process,” Stephanie said.

“Adoption can be an emotional roller coaster. There’s a lot of everyday ups and downs, hopes, and expectations,” said KJ. “But JF&CS made the process feel so positive,” said Stephanie. “We had a great working relationship with the adoption team. They helped us practice the patience we needed to navigate it all.”

JF&CS provides waiting families with the knowledge and resources they need to be prepared every step of the way. “We’re very hands on and supportive from the beginning pre-adopt stage, through the waiting period, and long after placement. Families adopt and, understandably, have questions along the way as they parent,” said Deb Shrier, LICSW, Associate Director of Adoption Resources.

By attending adoption education workshops through JF&CS, Stephanie and KJ, as well as other pre-adoptive families, can feel comfortable and prepared for the future. Whether waiting families are attending an orientation meeting about the adoption process, hearing adoptive parents share their personal experiences, or listening to a panel discussion of birth parents who have made adoption plans for their children, JF&CS provides the guidance families need to feel confident and reassured throughout their adoption.

Through educational workshops and meetings with their social worker, Stephanie and KJ were able to have a smooth and personalized adoption experience. Last spring, Stephanie and KJ added two girls to their family, and according to KJ, “the biggest surprise was twins.”

Great Success at the Annual Ride for Food

The 8th annual Ride for Food held on Sunday, October 6 was a huge success for the Family Table team! Thirty-eight riders and spinners participated to put fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain products, and other healthy foods on the tables of those in need. Each year, Three Squares New England brings local food pantries together to raise awareness and funds for this vital cause.

Together, we raised over $50,000 for Family Table. Our team, comprised of JF&CS staff, Family Table volunteers, and many friends, showed up in full force to help us exceed our fundraising goal. In total, the event raised more than $480,000 for hunger relief organizations like ours throughout Greater Boston. All the funds raised through this event will help Family Table provide much needed, nutritious food for more than 500 families each month in the coming year.

We are so grateful to our riders, contributors, and supporters who have helped make this another successful Ride for Food.
Dear Friends,

As I write this letter, fall foliage is in full swing. Living in New England provides us with a mosaic of shapes and colors this time of year, reminding us of new beginnings, changes, and the beauty and complexity of nature. The landscape of nonprofits is not much different. And while many of us fundraisers wish that money really did grow on trees, we must work hard to harvest meaningful, impactful, philanthropic support.

Today, at JF&CS, we are addressing some of the most pressing challenges in society from income inequality to food insecurity, opioid addiction to social isolation. Our clients walk through our doors needing food, diapers, safety, employment, respite, friendship, and community. Our collaborative model of care ensures that we will find the resources our clients need, we will partner with organizations, and we will leave no stone unturned to help our clients and their families.

Our agency is fortunate to have the loyalty and generosity of our individual donors, who make up more than half of our philanthropic support. We are, of course, grateful for the support of Combined Jewish Philanthropies and the dozens of foundations who sustain our work, providing the resources and inspiration to provide impactful programs to our 14,000 clients and their families. And we are grateful to live in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, where we are fortunate to work closely with our elected officials to ensure that our most vulnerable families and those experiencing trauma and mental illness can access the resources they need. We are proud of the nearly 100 partnerships we have with hospitals, universities, and other social service agencies who realize, like us, that we cannot do this work alone.

Today, we find that donors of all ages are seeking more meaning in their giving. For some, that means including JF&CS in their estate plan, and for others, it means sharing their time and expertise as volunteers. We are excited to work with individuals, families, and corporations to create meaningful volunteer experiences. Last year, we welcomed close to 50 volunteer groups and are grateful to the more than 2,000 volunteers who help us build a foundation of well-being and resilience for our clients.

To the more than 5,000 donors who gave to JF&CS in 2019, thank you. Your philanthropic support is truly life changing for our clients and their families, for generations to come.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Wendy Schiffman Wilsker
Chief Advancement Officer

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**Partnering to Help Those in Need**

For Judi Fanger, volunteering is a family tradition. “I grew up in a small Jewish community where everybody contributed their time. Now, I want to help those in need just as my family did when I was younger,” shared Judi.

Judi was first introduced to JF&CS when she started volunteering for our Family Table Marketplace. The Marketplace allows families to pack their own groceries and choose whichever produce they wish, as opposed to having their groceries delivered monthly. As a volunteer, Judi helps clients select what they want, brings groceries out to the client’s car, and cleans up after everyone has picked out their food.

Judi’s desire to give back has gone beyond just volunteering for JF&CS. She also volunteers for the Friend 2 Friend program through Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters. As a volunteer for the Friend 2 Friend program, Judi is partnered with an adult with disabilities to share their hobbies and passions. Her husband takes part in volunteering for the Friend 2 Friend program as well, and is also involved in JF&CS Bet Tzedek Legal Services. These hands-on volunteer opportunities have given Judi and her family the chance to take an active part in helping build a strong foundation for those around them.

Due to Judi’s experience working with two agencies, she has seen first-hand the vast number of services provided by different organizations in the area. Judi has become very aware of how nonprofits can work together to help a single client in all aspects of their needs. For example, if one agency provides services to counter social isolation, that same client can go to another agency for support in acquiring benefits or financial assistance.

So, when Judi’s friend needed some additional help, Judi directed them to JF&CS. “There’s a huge benefit when multiple agencies help one client,” said Judi. “When a client accesses services from several places, there’s a better understanding that they’re not on an island by themselves. There are organizations out there that can watch out for them if they need anything.”

In some cases, those who need the most help are not always aware of the services that are available. Judi’s unique position gives her the opportunity to be on the lookout for resources that can help the individuals she works with. “Some people don’t know what’s available to them. It can be difficult for them to figure out whether or not they have to pay for a service,” said Judi. “As soon as I found out that my friend needed more help, I got on the phone and started figuring out how to get the services they deserved.”

Two agencies collaborating to build a foundation of well-being can help a client feel like they have a support system behind them. By partnering with one another, organizations can truly fulfill a client’s every need. “As volunteers, it’s important to be aware of what’s out there for those we’re serving. Too often, the people we’re helping don’t really know what’s out there and what all of these organizations can do for them,” said Judi.
Joining Eli’s Team

For Donna Roman’s family, meeting the needs of their youngest son, Eli, has been a years-long struggle. “It has been a difficult and, at times, devasting experience,” said Donna. Eli is on the autism spectrum and faces significant mental health challenges, along with learning disabilities. Additionally, Eli sometimes wrestles with his identity as a child who was adopted.

In early 2017, Eli and his family were in all-out crisis. Within a period of six months, Eli was in the hospital three times for a total of 10 weeks, and that was after five previous psychiatric hospitalizations.

At this point, Eli was already receiving in-home support from JF&CS, which he had been referred to through MassHealth. After his recent spate of hospitalizations, Eli’s in-home team suggested that he work directly with Joan Munnelly, the Autism Navigator at JF&CS.

“Joan was able to help us chart a course,” said Donna. “Eli is lucky to have an amazing team of professionals that are experts in their respective areas. Joan, who is an expert in special education advocacy, quickly became an integral part of Eli’s team.”

Joan works with Eli and his family to improve his educational goals and access. She closely coordinates her efforts with Eli’s school and his team of professionals to ensure that his services are implemented effectively. Together, Eli’s team has fought to make sure that he receives the correct type of therapeutic placement.

“When Joan attends meetings with Eli and us, she adds crucial input,” said Donna. “She represents Eli’s voice, and encourages Eli to advocate for himself.” Joan also reviews Eli’s Individualized Education Plan, reports, and evaluations directly with his parents to improve their understanding of what Eli needs and help them adjust their planning when problems arise.

Eli’s life has transformed dramatically since 2017. With coaching and encouragement from Joan, Donna and her husband made the difficult decision that Eli needed a residential placement to make progress. “It was agonizing,” said Donna. “But the results have been amazing.”

In the last 2½ years, Eli hasn't been in the hospital or ER for mental illness issues at all. He has been able to access his education and has earned almost all As and Bs. “When Eli first met Joan, he had no self-confidence and had told us that he thought he was stupid,” said Donna. “Now, he identifies goals for his future and even said that he would like to go to some type of college program.”

Donna credits JF&CS and Joan for Eli’s progress. “At some of the worst moments for us, Joan was there to help pick us up, dust us off, and cheerlead so we can keep going,” said Donna. “She’s an essential resource, friend, and ally for us, but even more importantly, for Eli.”

A Commitment to Changing Lives

Dear Friends,

Throughout my tenure as Interim CEO of JF&CS, I have had the opportunity to witness the lengths that staff go to in order to help those in need every day. I recently sat in on a meeting of direct service staff across the agency where they shared current cases and success stories. I was told about clients that entered the agency through different avenues with different needs. In this meeting, I heard about people who had come looking for help in domestic abuse situations, while others needed help applying for and acquiring the benefits to which they’re entitled.

One client I heard about has stayed with me. She and her children fled an abusive relationship two years ago, and she has never received the court-ordered child support owed to her. She was unable to financially care for her children and worried about the coming holidays, but after turning to JF&CS for help, our staff was able to guide her in getting back on her feet after being left with emotional and physical scars from her abusive relationship.
“It’s Time to Leave an Impact Through Giving”

For Barbara Wasserman and Andrew Pearlstein, philanthropy felt like the missing link needed to complete their family. “We had a realization years ago that we had worked hard and raised our family, but the one thing we hadn’t done enough of was give back,” said Andrew. “We’ve really stepped up our involvement, commitment, and philanthropy the past six years.”

With three grown children, Barbara and Andrew found themselves with more time to dedicate to causes they feel passionate about. Barbara and Andrew were first introduced to JF&CS through friends who recognized how their skills could benefit the agency. Barbara served on committees, attended our annual Women’s Breakfast fundraiser, and volunteered to provide supervision to graduate students working towards their social work license at JF&CS. Andrew served on multiple committees and was eventually nominated to the Board of Directors. Now, Andrew is president-elect of the Board.

After getting involved and seeing first-hand what JF&CS accomplishes, they felt a connection to the agency that inspired them to make a legacy gift. They saw just how many services JF&CS provides that can help individuals and families throughout their lifetime. “There are so many needs that JF&CS addresses. When you work with the agency, you have the opportunity to make a direct impact,” shared Barbara.

By naming JF&CS as a beneficiary of their Donor Advised Fund, Barbara and Andrew further strengthened their commitment to JF&CS by making a contribution that will allow us to continue building a foundation of well-being and resilience in the future. “By making a planned gift, we’re making a statement that says the work JF&CS does matters and we’d like it to be available to all in the community,” said Andrew. “Once one becomes connected to an organization, the philanthropy follows naturally. JF&CS makes you want to take part in volunteering as well as giving back.”

Barbara and Andrew consider philanthropy to be part of their Jewish values. “Growing up, it felt like it was an obligation to be philanthropic, but it goes further than that today,” said Andrew. “We want to be a model for our kids. They’re growing up and making their own decisions. It’s not about whether or not they want to give back, it’s about how they want to give back,” said Barbara.

Joining the Tree of Life Society is their way of leaving their mark on a cause they care so much about. “At this stage in our lives, we’ve been around long enough to have worked hard and learned a lot, and now it’s time to leave an impact through our giving,” said Barbara.

“It’s our way of showing our connection to the cause, and it helped that the process was so easy,” said Andrew. By joining the Tree of Life Society, Barbara and Andrew are helping the future of JF&CS and everyone who comes to us in need. “We’re expressing our commitment to JF&CS by making sure that it continues its work and remains a healthy organization going forward,” said Andrew.

It’s easy to name JF&CS as a beneficiary.

Go Online: Access your financial account online and add Jewish Family & Children’s Service as a beneficiary. Our tax ID number is 04-2104356.

Contact your plan administrator: Request a beneficiary designation form. An attorney is not needed to make this type of gift.

Call us: Jill Snider, MPA, MA, Senior Philanthropic Advisor, is here to help! Contact Jill today at jsnider@jfcsboston.org or 781-693-5059.

How You Can Help

Improve People’s Lives

Thanks to the generosity and vision of our committed donors, dedicated volunteers, and talented staff, JF&CS has provided a safety net to so many throughout Massachusetts for more than 150 years.

Yet, our work is far from done. There are still too many people who require the services and sensitivity of our staff. There are still many innovative programs yet to be developed to help people live better.

The need for people like you to become a part of the JF&CS family is greater than ever. When you volunteer or donate to JF&CS, you’re investing in the future health and well-being of the community. You’re ensuring that the essential services we provide will be there for all who need them, now and for the next 150 years.

www.jfcsboston.org/donate
www.jfcsboston.org/volunteer

Tax-Smart Giving

IRA Required Minimum Distributions: The “IRA Rollover”

The IRA charitable rollover is now permanent and is a terrific way to make a tax-free charitable gift using your qualified retirement plan.

If you are age 70½ or older, consider using required withdrawals to make a gift to Jewish Family & Children’s Service. The transfer counts as part (or all) of your required distribution. There is no deduction for your gift, but you save on taxes because no tax is due on the withdrawal and the distribution is not taxed as income.

• Simply instruct your IRA custodian to transfer funds directly to Jewish Family & Children’s Service.
• Let us know how much you are transferring, as well as the contact information for your custodian, so we can track those funds and thoughtfully acknowledge your gift.

For more information on qualified charitable distributions, please call our Office of Gift Planning at 781-639-5059 or email Jill Snider, Senior Philanthropic Advisor, at jsnider@jfcsboston.org.
Meeting the Basic Needs of Holocaust Survivors

“Jewish victims of Nazi persecution should never feel forgotten,” said Lora Tarlin, director of Schechter Holocaust Services. Too often, survivors are left to suffer due to financial insecurity, social isolation, and age-related difficulties. Their increasing physical, emotional, and cognitive challenges often revive traumatic events they endured as children and young adults, which exacerbate their difficulties. Poverty-related stress can also be triggering for survivors, as it reminds them of their deprivation during the Holocaust.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany funds 78 percent of our Schechter Holocaust Services (SHS) program, which provides services and advocacy that lightens this stress for survivors and aims to support their physical and emotional well-being. JF&CS is the only agency in Massachusetts funded by the Claims Conference and is also the only agency that works directly with survivors. While some agencies provide educational resources about the Holocaust, JF&CS offers individuals person-centered, trauma-informed care.

For Sasha*, an SHS client, a case manager stepped in to help her in her time of need. Sasha had broken her pelvis, but due to her poor financial situation, the hospital wanted to send her home after only a couple of days. Sasha also had dementia and faced a language barrier when communicating with others. She spoke Russian as her primary language and had no family living in the area to translate for her when she needed to speak to doctors.

Had Sasha gone home, she would have been unable to care for herself. She was injured and only received a few hours of homecare a week through JF&CS. These few hours of homecare were enough to help her when she was healthy, but with a broken pelvis, she would need around the clock care. Sasha had already suffered a lack of medical care as a child, and now the hospital was attempting to send her away in a state unfit to take care of herself.

When SHS heard about her situation, they knew they had to advocate for her. Sasha’s case manager reached out to a pro bono attorney in order to convince the hospital that their patient needed and deserved care, despite her financial situation. With the help of her lawyer and advocate, Sasha was able to stay at the hospital for the duration of her six-week healing process. Her advocate helped translate her needs to doctors and nurses and got her the legal help she needed. Although lengthening her stay was a huge accomplishment, the hospital refused to move Sasha to the rehab wing. Each day, someone had to bring Sasha to her physical therapy, which still put unneeded strain on her by moving her farther distances than necessary.

This struggle is not uncommon for survivors. Poverty effects the resources they’re able to access, such as medical care, which harms their well-being. “It shows how the system falls short, even with MassHealth assistance. There is so little help for those who need it in navigating the system,” said Lora.

Victims of Nazi persecution also struggle with social isolation that inhibits their connections to those who could assist them as they age. In addition to advocating for survivors, SHS also holds a monthly social gathering that helps counter isolation. By giving survivors access to events where they can socialize with other survivors, they are able to build friendships and know that they are not alone.

“Survivors started their lives scared; they shouldn’t have to end their lives frightened. We want to bring peace to them and their families,” shared Lora. By standing up for those who can’t advocate for themselves, SHS drastically improves the lives of those who need it most.

More than 270 survivors are helped by JF&CS each month, enabling survivors to live full, happy lives and age with dignity.

A Better Future for Those with Parkinson’s

Steven Robbins and his family are no strangers to philanthropy. Their father taught them the importance of giving back to their community. “My dad always said it was better to give than to receive. He was a big proponent of giving back,” shared Steven. When Steven’s father was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease, the Robbins family directed their passion for improving the lives of others to those who are affected by the disease.

The Robbins family was first introduced to the Charlotte & Richard Okonow Parkinson’s Family Support program at JF&CS through family friends. After visiting, they saw the unique services that exist to help those with Parkinson’s. Through therapeutic programming, such as chorus, dance, and family support groups, JF&CS provides unique and invaluable services that address day to day life with Parkinson’s. “This service really wasn’t available when my dad was diagnosed,” Steven said. “When we visited JF&CS for the first time, we felt so hopeful after seeing how happy and friendly all the participants were,” said Doris Robbins, Steven’s mother.

“Our program gives people a chance to be together without focusing on the disease. The groups are therapeutic and designed to address symptoms, but the experience of simply having fun is more prominent,” said Anne Muskopf, Director of Okonow Parkinson’s Family Support. Social connections are an important aspect of living full, meaningful lives with

*Sasha is a name changed to protect privacy.
JF&CS Client Wins Asylum Case

For Rosa*, the Greater Boston area was a haven from the violence that plagued her community in Central America. However, after years of living in Massachusetts, she was apprehended by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in January 2019 for overstaying her visa. Denied bail, Rosa was separated from her two young children. To make matters worse, her abusive ex-partner received temporary custody of her older child after her detainment. With the threat of deportation looming, Rosa felt utterly devastated.

Rosa was a longtime JF&CS client, so when news of her arrest spread to our office, her contacts in the agency sprang into action. “We immediately powwowed,” recalled Janet Segal, the Director of our legal services program. “We had to figure out what we could do to help.”

Janet joined with Karen Garber, the Program Coordinator of our bilingual program for young children and parents impacted by trauma and mental health challenges, to devise a strategy to assist Rosa. Together with other JF&CS colleagues, they identified two areas in which they could be of service: Rosa’s custody battle and her petition for asylum.

To aid in the custody case, Janet Segal secured the help of Boston College Legal Services LAB, a community legal services office housed within Boston College Law School in Newton. Attorneys from LAB immediately filed papers in court seeking to protect Rosa’s custody interests while detained by ICE and following her release, if and when this was to occur.

Initially, JF&CS could not help Rosa on the asylum front because her family had already hired an immigration attorney on her behalf. However, after Rosa’s initial hearing, which she lost, the attorney the family had hired was no longer involved in her case.

At this point, Karen Garber made a concerted effort to get Rosa the best legal representation available. Karen reached out to her contacts at Greater Boston Legal Services, a renowned legal services organization, and urged them to take Rosa on as a client. “Karen was such a strong advocate for Rosa,” said Janet Segal. “She was relentless.”

Ultimately, one of the immigration attorneys at Greater Boston Legal Services agreed to represent Rosa. After a hard-fought battle, Rosa received a hearing and was granted asylum in June. Upon her release, Rosa was almost immediately reunited with her children.

While everyone at JF&CS is thrilled that Rosa will be able to stay in Massachusetts, Karen Garber notes that “winning the asylum case is not ‘happily ever after’—it is the beginning of a new chapter with new challenges to overcome.” As Rosa continues to face life’s obstacles, we are confident that she has the tools she needs to persevere.

“Name changed to protect privacy.

1. www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/u-s-unauthorized-immigrants-by-state/
2. 4. www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/access_to_counsel_in_immigration_court.pdf

Parkinson’s, and participants can help their bodies while also enjoying the value of arts and music in a social setting.

The Okonow Parkinson’s Family Support program provides support for the whole family. “JF&CS gave us a much better understanding of the disease through the educational programs that we participated in,” said Steven. “They helped us understand what was going on, and we want other families to have the same opportunity.” Through weekly support groups for care partners, family members can share their experiences with others who are in the same situation. “This group is my lifeline,” said a care partner attendee. There are also quarterly education and networking groups, where all family members are welcome to hear from expert speakers in the field of Parkinson’s disease.

“JF&CS is in a unique position. First, we offer programs for the whole family and, secondly, we are able to follow along with the progression of the disease because of the other resources we have within our agency,” added Anne. Participants can access the free advice of CJP SeniorDirect and the care management of Your Elder Experts, for example, as part of the surrounding support for the challenges that arise with Parkinson’s.

After seeing the unique service that JF&CS provides, the Robbins family was inspired to help make a difference. They decided to fund Parkinson’s outreach at JF&CS in order to leave their mark on the agency that inspired them. The Robbins want other families to experience the same support they have witnessed. “I always had this feeling of wishing my husband could have experienced that, but I’m so happy that I can help others in some small way,” said Doris.

In supporting Parkinson’s outreach, the Robbins are spreading awareness of the impact of the Okonow Parkinson’s Family Support program. With a focus on outreach, program staff are able to connect with providers and people living with Parkinson’s through individual meetings, presentations at symposia, and participation at community wellness fairs. “These programs are a true gem; we want to make sure they’re not a hidden gem,” said Anne.

Undocumented Immigration Snapshot

• The Pew Research Center estimates that there were 250,000 undocumented immigrants living in Massachusetts in 2016, which accounts for 3.8% of the state’s population. 1
• According to Pew, 6.1% of K-12 students in Massachusetts in 2016 had at least one parent who is an undocumented immigrant. 2
• Nationally, only 37% of all immigrants and 14% of detained immigrants go to court with legal representation in their removal cases. 3
• Detained immigrants are 11 times more likely to pursue relief, such as asylum, when they have legal representation and are twice as likely to obtain relief than detained immigrants without representation. 4
JF&CS Receives Two Grants from DPH to Support Parents in Recovery from Opioid Use

We are proud to announce that JF&CS has received two grants from the Department of Public Health (DPH) to support mothers and families who are impacted by opioid use. These two grants were awarded as part of DPH’s FIRST (Families in Recovery Support) Steps Together initiative, which provides seven sites across Massachusetts with the resources and knowledge needed to make a positive change in the lives of families affected by parental opioid use disorder. One grant created a Training and Technical Assistance team at JF&CS that will support all seven sites, while the second grant recognizes and enables us to expand an existing JF&CS program that supports moms in recovery as a FIRST Steps Together site.

Last year, over two thousand people in Massachusetts died due to opioid use. The number of opioid related deaths in the state is now two times higher than the national average, and Massachusetts is among the top ten states for opioid deaths. With the rising rate of opioid use, there’s a greater chance of pregnant and postpartum mothers having to juggle addiction and motherhood. Many individuals who suffer from substance use disorder don’t seek out help, whether it’s due to a lack of resources or the stigma around opioid use.

In response to the opioid crisis, JF&CS created Project NESST® in 2011 with a grant from the Hawk Foundation to support pregnant women and mothers of young children in their recovery. Through this home visiting program, our staff focus on the intersection between recovery and parenting in order to help both the mother and child. Mothers are matched with a maternal recovery specialist, an individual in recovery herself who has received specialized training. Maternal recovery specialists are able to support mothers through their unique perspective of understanding what participants are going through. In addition to maternal recovery specialists who help through peer support, Project NESST also has clinicians who focus on the psychological issues and struggles that impact recovery and parenting.

The FIRST Steps Together sites set themselves apart through their focus on providing peer-based intervention, which supports mothers in both aspects of their lives. There are multiple components that go into the home visiting program that allow family recovery support specialists to help with the parent-child relationship, recovery support, and care coordination for those involved.

Due to our experience and success with recovery and parenting programs, JF&CS was also chosen to be the home of the new Technical and Training Assistance team of the FIRST Steps Together initiative. "One of the things that was clear was that there were a lot of other programs at JF&CS that would support this work. Having this linked to the Center for Early Relationship Support’, which runs various home visiting programs, the Infant-Parent Training Institute, and Project NESST, we felt like JF&CS really understood what was needed from a training perspective," shared Debra Bercuvitz, Director of FIRST Steps Together at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH).

The Training and Technical Assistance team works with all seven direct service sites throughout Massachusetts and focuses on sharing knowledge and best practices, while also providing support for the development of each site. “The technical assistance and training means that we can really share all that we’ve been able to learn from one end of the state to the other,” said Amy Sommer, Director of Project NESST®.

What makes this program unique is how resources are shared. “One thing we’ve brought to this project that’s different from other similar projects is really finding ways for us to not just be supporting sites, but for the sites to benefit from each other’s experience and to share their challenges with others,” said Clare Grace Jones, Director of Technical and Training Assistance at JF&CS. The Technical and Training Assistance team travels throughout the state to effectively support the direct service sites, in addition to utilizing an online platform that encourages sites to engage with each other.

The collaborative focus of FIRST Steps Together is what makes the program so successful, despite the distance between sites. Each site has different experiences and hurdles, but they can share what they learn with other program managers. "It makes us part of a network. If we have questions about something we can reach out to the other sites and ask how they solved the problem, or how they would address specific challenges. It’s been really nice to have people who are doing the same work that we can reach out to and connect with,” said Amy. There’s also collaboration between DPH and the Technical and Training Assistance team. They’re able to communicate to come up with new ideas and push the program forward. “We have this incredible team that takes our vision and figures out how to implement it. We’re so lucky to have such a capable team that is making this happen on a practical level," said Debra.

"The opioid crisis is still affecting millions of people, especially parents with young children who will bear the impact of this crisis for years to come. There’s a need for this service and FIRST Steps Together funding has allowed us to expand our staff so we can serve even more parents in recovery,” said Amy.

With the help of the First Steps Together initiative, mothers are being supported through their recovery without being judged. Maternal recovery specialists provide an understanding shoulder to lean on when mothers are struggling to balance their health and their family. They have the opportunity to share their feelings about parenting joys and challenges, as well as receive the encouragement they need through their recovery.

Thanks to DPH, Project NESST can help even more moms in recovery through home visits, recovery coaching, parenting support, and connections to community-based services. With professional training and reliable support from the Technical and Training Assistance team, the FIRST Steps Together sites can make a positive impact in their communities.
JF&CS Events

ANNUAL BENEFIT — Wednesday, April 3, 2019
Event Co-Chairs: Kimberly & Gary Creem and Alexandra & Jody Simes
The annual Benefit raises critical funds to ensure that resources are available to support the innovative and comprehensive programs that JF&CS provides to the community.
1. Left to right: Event co-chairs Gary & Kim Creem, Interim CEO Carl Zack, event co-chairs Alexandra & Jody Simes
2. Barry Shrage and Ellie Svenson
4. Jeff & Marci Katz, Jessica & Chuck Myers
5. David & Jessica Aronoff, Laurie & Richard Glikich

WOMEN’S BREAKFAST – Thursday, May 30, 2019
Event Co-Chairs: Lauren E. Rubin and Lori Shaer
The 2019 annual Women’s Breakfast celebrated 30 years of the JF&CS Center for Early Relationship Support® and honored CERS director Peggy Kaufman.
6. Event co-chair Lauren E. Rubin, Guest Speaker Betsy Johnson, Director of CERS Peggy H. Kaufman, and event co-chair Lori Shaer
7. Betsy Cohen, Lorri Owades, and Peggy Lowenstein
8. JF&CS Board President Jamie Grossman, Melissa Weiner Janfaza, Roberta Weiner, and Ginny MacDowell
9. Cyndi Jones, Gail Schechter, Margie Seligman, and Marsha Katz
10. Laure Garnick, Robin Schreier Scari, and Wendy Simches

CHAI CHAMPIONS – Sunday, November 3, 2019
Event Chairs: Laurie & Paul Gershkowitz
A biennial event recognizing five individuals who share the JF&CS mission to promote community, housing, access, and independence (CHAI) for people of all abilities.
11. Interim CEO Carl Zack with CHAI Champions Jeff Karp, Mark Kelly, Julie O’Brien, Sammi Robertson, and David Rosenberg
12. Event chairs Paul & Laurie Gershkowitz and Interim CEO Carl Zack
13. Julie & Steve Weil
15. JF&CS Board President Jamie Grossman, Rabbi Marc Baker, and Andrew Pearlstein
Please save the date and join co-chairs

Ginny & Roy MacDowell and Lisa & David Sands

at the Jewish Family & Children’s Service

Annual Benefit honoring Jamie Grossman

for her dedicated and distinctive service to JF&CS.

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel

138 St. James Avenue, Boston

6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

For more information, visit www.jfcboston.org/Benefit