



**Foundation for MetroWest Awards JF&CS Grant to Sustain Our
Comprehensive Support for At-Risk Families of Newborns**

For Immediate Release: January 9, 2017

Waltham, MA -- JF&CS has received a generous grant from the Foundation for MetroWest to help sustain our comprehensive support services for at-risk families of newborns in MetroWest communities. Services provided to these families include weekly home visits by extensively trained and supervised paraprofessionals and volunteers, a weekly support group for Spanish-speaking new parents, and in-home therapy in English or Spanish for parents in need of clinical mental health services. These services are tailored to the needs of each client and can be combined to provide intensive support to high-need families. Our programs are open to all parents of newborns but we continue to see a large number of families with vulnerabilities such as history of trauma or mental illness, poverty, and homelessness. These families receive parenting and mental health support that is trauma-informed, as well as connections to community resources such as public benefits, food assistance, legal services, and donated baby supplies and equipment.

Based on our experience, we know that many new parents in our service area are extremely isolated. Anxiety, depression, and past trauma or abuse are contributing factors to this isolation. In Waltham alone, we estimate that at least 100 new moms will suffer from serious postpartum depression (PPD) in the coming year based on current PPD prevalence. This puts their new babies at risk for emotional neglect and impaired development. Recent research has provided conclusive evidence that the first year of life is the most critical period of emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth. A secure relationship with a primary caregiver - usually the mother - is essential to healthy development in each of these realms. JF&CS aims to support vulnerable mothers as early in the life of the infant as possible.

Our primary goals are to reduce the isolation that many new mothers experience, decrease postpartum depression, increase parenting confidence, and thereby support healthy child development in the critical first year. By nurturing vulnerable parents and helping them to meet their basic material needs, our services enable them to nurture their babies, providing the essential foundation for lifelong health and resilience.

Visit www.jfcsboston.org for more information about our programs for at-risk families.

About Foundation for MetroWest

Established in 1995, the Foundation for MetroWest is the only community foundation serving the 33 cities and towns in the region. They promote philanthropy in the region, help donors maximize the impact of their local giving, serve as a resource for local nonprofits, and enhance the quality of life for all their residents. Since inception, the Foundation has granted \$11.6 million to charitable organizations and currently stewards more than \$16 million in charitable assets for current needs and future impact. To learn more, please visit www.foundationformetrowest.org or call 508-647-2260.

About Jewish Family & Children's Service

For 150 years, Jewish Family & Children's Service has provided exceptional human service and health care programs, guided by Jewish traditions of social responsibility, compassion, and respect for all members of the community. With an integrated network of more than 40 programs serving communities throughout Eastern and Central Massachusetts, JF&CS helps people of all faiths and backgrounds meet life's challenges. JF&CS programs focus on serving particularly vulnerable populations including children and adults with disabilities or mental illness, new mothers and their infants, seniors living with chronic conditions, and people experiencing financial crisis, hunger, or domestic abuse. Visit www.jfcsboston.org for more information.

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