

New Support Group wins Gay and Lesbian Achievement Award from Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

The needs of new babies and questions about their care frequently overwhelm first-time parents. Through our Center for Early Relationship Support, JF&CS works to find ways to help these parents be the best they can be. To meet this goal, the Agency has launched a new support group for gay and lesbian parents, co-sponsored with the Parent Connection at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.

Twelve new parents and their babies, ranging in age from

JF&CS is Pure Charity: John Levy Reflects on His First Year as President

John F. Levy was named president of the JF&CS board of directors in May 2004. A board member since 1999, John has chaired our Finance Committee, the Jewish Values Subcommittee of the Diversity Initiative and served as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Why did you choose to be associated with JF&CS?

I've been involved for six or seven years. The most marvelous thing about JF&CS is that it delivers superior services and is committed to doing it so that the client always holds onto his or her dignity.

Giving Families a Chance to Connect

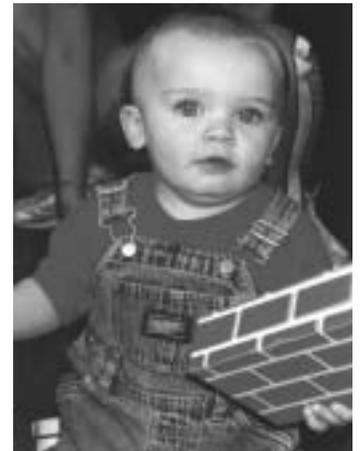
Early Intervention Expands to Shelter

"Child's Play" is a phrase we often use to describe something simple. But for women recovering from drug and alcohol addiction, the simple act of playing with their children is anything but. To help these mothers learn the skills they need, the Early Intervention (EI) program of JF&CS now serves the residents of Celeste House, a nine-month treatment program of the Pine Street Inn.

Celeste House provides the structure, safety and support that addicted mothers and their young children need to heal and make a new start.

All the children at Celeste House have been affected by drug and alcohol abuse either in utero or through neglect. As a result some children have language or motor delays or qualify for services because they lack the basics of food, shelter, and clothing.

When EI staff members began conducting visits at Celeste House they soon found that offering toddler group services was difficult due to the mothers' demanding schedules and the distance to the EI Center in Norwood.



A Slice of the Pie for Family Table

A nationwide class-action lawsuit entitled *Schiller v. Flowers Foods, Inc.* has resulted in a generous donation of \$8,111 to JF&CS Family Table. The plaintiffs' complaint alleged that Flowers Foods failed to ensure the kosher status of certain pie shells. Under the terms of the settlement, the pie crust manufacturer donated \$1 million in cash and \$1.5 million in bread products to Jewish charitable organizations all over the U.S. including JF&CS. It's a healthy "slice of the pie" for JF&CS Family Table, Greater Boston's only kosher food pantry.

Caring for Generations

JF&CS
Jewish Family & Children's Service

Dear Friends,

JF&CS supports people throughout all the stages of life, with programs that serve the needs of newborns, families in crisis, adults with disabilities and seniors. The depth and breadth of our services make being Executive Director a unique and ever-changing job.



We work with hundreds of other service providers; federal, state, and city governments; foundations; national and Massachusetts advocacy and trade organizations; newspapers; and hundreds of people who are seeking or providing information – all with the goal of providing high-quality services to our most vulnerable citizens.

Because of JF&CS's good work, I am fortunate to be involved with developing policies that will have a positive statewide and even national impact. For example, because of our notable senior services, I sit on the Professional Advisory Committee for the Secretary of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the state agency responsible for overseeing geriatric services. This fall, I will also be an official Delegate to the White House Conference on Aging, a national conference that meets every ten years to set national goals.

JF&CS is looked to as a model for other organizations. Our programs, strategic planning, fund-raising, program evaluation and many other activities have garnered national attention. Recently, I spoke about developing world-class programs at a colloquium put on by the Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland. I have also been asked to join the advisory committee of the Training, Education and Job Advancement Center (TEDJAC), an innovative job skills training program within the Olmstead Green Project.

I am excited about the Agency's work and how connected we are to the rest of the world. I hope that you, along with our staff, board, donors and volunteers, can share and grow this connection.

Sincerely,

Seymour J. Friedland, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Betsy Closs Appointed to Mass. Disabilities Council

Betsy Closs was appointed to the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, a statewide policy advisory group. Betsy joined JF&CS in August 2004 as Director of Services for People with Disabilities.

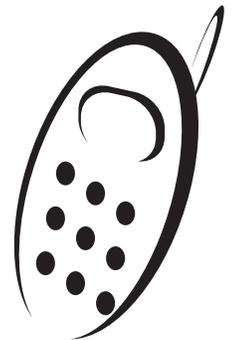
The mission of the Council is to provide “opportunities for people with developmental disabilities and their families to enhance independence, productivity, integration and inclusion.” According to the MDCC’s website, “People with developmental disabilities constitute the most severely under-served population in the Commonwealth.”

Council members are appointed to three-year terms by the governor and include individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members, relatives or guardians, providers and advocates.

Congratulations, Betsy!

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

Put that old cell phone to good use. Kol Isha, JF&CS’s domestic violence program, is launching a cell phone drive for victims of domestic violence. With a cell phone, victims can have a 24-hour lifeline to the help they need.



These donated used phones will be reprogrammed to call 911 and the Massachusetts Statewide Domestic Violence Hotline, SafeLink, without the need for a service plan.

Kol Isha Director Nicole Lesser says, “By hosting a cell phone drive we’re breaking the silence around domestic violence that has created a barrier for victims seeking safety.”

The program will ultimately host over 20 drop-off sites in synagogues and other organizations around Greater Boston. Nicole adds, “So many Jewish women who are victims of domestic violence think they’re the only one. Seeing this in their synagogue gives them strength to come forward to seek help.”

Cell phones are important because abusers often try to prevent victims from calling the police, in many cases ripping the phone out of the wall. A victim may have to hide the cell phone somewhere outside her home or keep it in the bottom of her purse. Nicole said, “We work with each client to figure out a plan that is safe for them.”

In addition to providing a phone to clients, cell phones that are not usable will be taken apart and sold to raise funds that support the services of Kol Isha.

For a list of drop-off locations visit our website, jfcscboston.org. For more information about Kol Isha, or to host a cell phone drive at your synagogue or organization, please call 781-647-JFCS (5327) or email Nicole Lesser at nlesser@jfcscboston.org.

SafetyNet: A Program for Trafficked and Exploited Persons

New Partnership Wins Innovation Award

JF&CS has launched a new initiative to help the victims of human trafficking in Massachusetts. This new program, a collaboration with the International Institute of Boston and the Victims of Violence program, received the Massachusetts Office for Victims Assistance Innovation Award.

It is estimated that more than one million people are trafficked annually around the world; some experts say that number might be closer to two million. To combat this growing problem, Kol Isha has joined SafetyNet: A Program for Trafficked and Exploited Persons. SafetyNet serves victims of abuse and neglect including enslaved domestic workers, victims of prostitution rings, women in servile marriages and exploited laborers.

Kol Isha's role is to serve Russian-speaking victims of trafficking and slavery, with a particular focus on women trapped in servile marriages. Kol Isha's Director Nicole Lesser estimates that as many as half of their clients are mail-order brides from the former Soviet Union.

Clinical Coordinator Marina Lifshitz has taken the lead on the trafficking grant and is now using innovative means, such as a chat room on a Russian Website, to reach victims who are typically isolated by their spouses. Denied access to their passports and ESL classes, these women have often been brought to the U.S. under false pretenses only to become enslaved sexually and domestically.

"Zhensky Golos," Kol Isha's Russian speaking service, offers comprehensive services 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.

For more information, contact Marina Lifshitz at 781-647-JFCS (5327) or mlifshitz@jfcsboston.org.

New Support Group *continued*

a few weeks old to just under a year, meet weekly in a Jamaica Plain community center to discuss a range of parenting issues, relationship issues, lifestyle changes, new mother issues, work and family issues.

Debbie Whitehill, Director of the Visiting Moms Program, said, "People that don't have a chance to talk about the stress of having a new baby feel more alone and question themselves more. Clearly we know we have met a need because the group has been so well attended."

Debbie added, "It's a wonderfully safe place to share new parent adjustment issues, some of which are specific to being in a lesbian or gay couple and some of which aren't. It's comforting to know you're not alone."

The group is open to parents with babies under the age of one and is offered free of charge. To register or find out more, please call the Parent Connection at 617-667-BABY (2229).

Early Intervention *continued*

JF&CS Developmental Specialist Elizabeth Walsh sought out and received a grant from the Shishmanian Foundation to establish a community play group in the Plainville Methodist Church, which is walking distance from the shelter to meet the needs of Celeste House residents.

In this new play group, children ages 12 to 36 months meet weekly to finger-paint, sing, play with toys and, best of all, laugh with their mothers. In addition to fine and gross motor developmental activities, the group includes parent support and discussion on a wide range of parenting and child development topics.

Elizabeth said, "I feel like the group gives the women a place to just be a mom, where the only rules are that they have to play. It's a chance to be kids themselves and to enjoy doing things they might not have done as children."

The program at Celeste House is another example of the willingness of JF&CS and its staff to go the extra mile and find an effective solution to helping meet the needs of parents and children at risk.

Celebrating Our Volunteers

The Simone Lottor Exceptional Service Award

The 2005 recipient of The Simone Lottor Exceptional Service Award is Vicky Lyon.

The award is presented annually to a JF&CS volunteer who has made a vital contribution to the community. Sanford Lottor established the award in 2002 in honor of his late wife, a dedicated JF&CS volunteer.

Vicky has devoted countless hours and expertise to the Center for Family Assistance Mitzvah-to-Mitzvah program, which she co-founded in 1996 while president of the National Council of Jewish Women. Compassionate and determined, she has helped needy families celebrate the joy of their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah by providing financial support for the occasion.

Vicky hopes through this award that the project will gain exposure and, in turn, be able to help more people. She said, "We hope that every Bar/Bat Mitzvah child will think of the other children who can't afford to have a ceremony."

Relying on referrals from Family Table, local rabbis and word of mouth, Mitzvah-to-Mitzvah provides a \$500 contribution to needy families. Vicky said, "I want people to know that they can come to us, even if they're only in temporary need. We're happy to help."

Funding is raised through private donations as well as the rental of Mitzvah baskets, bimah arrangements for families having Bar/Bat Mitzvahs to display during services. The baskets come in all different styles for different seasons and tastes. All gifts go directly to families in need, whose anonymity is protected.



Vicky Lyon

“Vicky has devoted countless hours and expertise”



All children should enjoy their Jewish coming-of-age, even when their family lacks financial resources.

Vicky currently serves on the steering committee for the Dress Connection, a new project of Mitzvah-to-Mitzvah, which matches girls with a donated almost-new outfit for their special day. In its first six months the program collected 100 dresses. She said, "That's been a wonderful part of this project, one mitzvah begets another."

Vicky was also one of the original steering committee members of the Daniel Connection which provides supportive services to hospital patients and their families. Vicky has a life-long commitment to helping others. With a Master's Degree in Mobility for the Blind, she works as an Orientation and Mobility instructor for blind children grades K through 12. She lives in Newton Center with her husband and their three children.

Overcoming Obstacles

One Woman's Story of Homelessness

For many of us, life doesn't always turn out as we expect. For Mrs. B. (name changed to protect her privacy) this is especially true. At the age of 79 she found herself homeless and living in a shelter. Fortunately through the assistance of JF&CS, she is now living in her own apartment. She said, "I'm so grateful. JF&CS has been so good to me. When I needed somebody they put their hand out."

Mrs. B. was a mother of four young children, living in a beautiful home in Newton, when her husband died suddenly. She describes herself as a very traditional wife and mother. Left to raise the children on her own, she tried to be both mother and father to them and denied them nothing. She said, "I sent three to college and graduate school, forgetting I would need money myself."

Eventually, she was forced to sell her home and move to an apartment. A pleasant, intelligent woman with many medical problems, her funds continued to run out and she couldn't afford to live in the apartment anymore. She said, "I should have applied for senior housing but I didn't want to face it."

With no family other than her children, she had few options. Her daughter on Long Island urged her mother to move in with her but Mrs. B. didn't want to leave the area in which she has spent her entire adult life. Despite misgivings about her son-in-law, she decided to move in with her other daughter



JF&CS is the safety net for thousands of people throughout Greater Boston.

south of Boston where she lived for nine months. The situation there soon became intolerable and she was very unhappy. The couple became emotionally abusive, forcing Mrs. B. to stay in her room for up to 23 hours a day. She was completely isolated. She said, "I never thought I'd have these problems."

Luckily, a friend told her about JF&CS. She said, "They are life savers – encouraging, supportive, and compassionate. They are wonderful people."

She met JF&CS case manager Selma Mirsky, and began to see her on a weekly basis. She said, "From then on I had somebody who understood." Mrs. B. felt as if Selma was trying to help her see what was going on in her life, "without interference, without pushing." She said, "I can't express

my gratitude to Selma. She made me feel less alone."

In addition to providing emotional support, Selma made sure that Mrs. B.'s basic needs for food, medicine, clothing and emergency housing were met and helped her deal with the range of emotions – anxiety, stress, uncertainty, guilt, shame – provoked by the crisis.

Mrs. B. lived at the Pine Street Inn for five months on a special floor for women over the age of 50 and eventually qualified for a one-bedroom apartment in Newton. She feels incredibly lucky and happy to live there and said, "I was able to stick it out because of JF&CS. They were there when I had nobody."

With her housing crisis resolved, Mrs. B. is able to think about what is next for her. She said, "I feel like my life is beginning again."

John Levy *continued*

Beyond that I cherish how much the staff gets out of its volunteers and the volunteers get out of the staff. The symbiosis is remarkable. I have worked at many charitable organizations and this one is just different. We are able to hear each other and we are better for it.

What do you think are the key elements in making JF&CS effective?

The first thing is that the Agency is truly committed to a values system. Those values are historic Jewish values. We have an obligation to be charitable, to deliver services with dignity and to have respect for others. We employ a group of social workers and these values are part of their training and somehow it permeates up and down the organization and makes it strong.

The Agency is 140 years old. My grandmother and mother were involved in JF&CS. I am a third generation volunteer, but I didn't come to it because my family was active. If you look at who is involved today, a certain percent have a historic connection but that's not what really holds them. Of all the charities I know, JF&CS is the only one which is a pure charity. Working for us does not help get your kids into college; it does not put your name on a plaque or bring you personal aggrandizement. You do it just because it is the right thing to do.

What has been your focus during the first year of your presidency?

When I took the job I was asked what my goals were for my tenure. I believe that if the organization is being well run the transition to a new president should be seamless. We are on a continuum of improvement. It's a self-learning process in which we continue to examine what we are doing well and what we're not and consciously meet and talk about it.



John Levy

What are your long-term hopes for JF&CS?

My long-term hope is that we continue to do what I call pure charity and that the community recognizes that we deliver the highest quality services; and in turn that the wonderful response from our clients makes the community want to see us thrive.

What has been your most meaningful experience with JF&CS?

At one time I served on a for-profit board with a brilliant board member who always called on management to provide statistical rather than anecdotal evidence. But I find that as human beings we respond with vigor when we are affected emotionally. If we are lucky enough to have a client come to a board meeting and tell her story, 90% of the time by the end of her presentation the tears are running down my cheeks. The greatest motivation

comes from the anecdotal evidence. Our clients believe that what we do is important enough to come and speak in front of 100 people and tell a story that is emotionally raw. They do it to as a way of returning in a small way the gift we have given them.

What would you like to share with JF&CS volunteers or people thinking of volunteering?

I cannot thank the volunteers enough. When I talk about the relationship between volunteers and staff, it really is both, not one or the other. In one of our areas we had significant issues. One of our volunteers gave a report that was so good it blew me off my chair. But she could not have done it without the staff being open enough to share with her. To those thinking about volunteering I would say this is the place where you will walk away feeling phenomenal about the contribution you gave in time and energy.

About John Levy

John served as Waban Inc.'s first President and CEO from 1989 until 1993. Waban was the parent company of BJ Wholesale Club. He now runs a retail consulting and investment business. He is a long-time Trustee of Newton Wellesley Hospital, former chairman of its Finance Committee, and is director of its physician hospital organization. He also serves on the boards of several software, biotech and retail companies.

John received his BA in English from Trinity College in 1969 and his MBA from Harvard Business School in 1973. A Waban resident, John and his wife Gail Rothenberg have two children, Sara and Scott. John enjoys golf, tennis, racquetball, squash and automobile racing.

Jewish Family & Children's Service

Annual Meeting — May 10, 2005

On Monday May 10th we held our Annual Meeting at our Waltham Headquarters. "Building a Civil Society" was the focus of this year's meeting and speakers included Milton Little, President of United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Ruth Paris, Assistant Professor, Boston University. JF&CS Board Member Betsy Rosen was honored for her outstanding service and nine new Board Members were installed.



Milton Little, President of The United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Sy Friedland, Executive Director of JF&CS



JF&CS President John Levy with JF&CS Board Member Betsy Rosen

JF&CS New Board Members



Elisabeth D. Babcock



Julie Riven Jaye



Stewart A. Karger



Ginny Strauss MacDowell



Michael V. Orlov



George Pelz



Alan Pinshaw



Mathew Rosenthal



Donald Wertlieb

Welcome

2005 Women's Breakfast

Over 250 women attended the JF&CS Women's Breakfast on May 5th at Belmont Country Club. This year's breakfast chaired by Pamela Lesser, raised a record \$95,000 for the award-winning Center for Early Relationship Support (CERS), which provides critical programs and services to new parents and their babies. The keynote speaker, Heather Unruh of Channel 5, discussed post partum depression and her personal challenges of raising a newborn. A special thanks to all of our donors for coming and supporting CERS.



Heather Unruh of Channel 5 with Event Chair and JF&CS Board Member Pam Lesser

CHAI Celebration raises over \$650,000



Our CHAI Celebration Event Chairs: Joan & Steven Belkin, Joan & Ted Cutler and Judi & Douglas Krupp (l to r).

Over 300 people attended the Community Housing for Adult Independence (CHAI) event on May 18th at the Four Seasons Hotel Boston. Thanks to the leadership of our Event Chairs, we raised over \$650,000 for CHAI's programs, which support adults with disabilities. At this year's celebration, we were thrilled to present the first-ever CHAI Hero Awards to Hope & Joe Albert and Nancy & Mark Belsky. These two very special couples have worked tirelessly to promote the mission of CHAI on behalf of people with disabilities in our community.

save the date

To learn more about these Events, please call the development office at 781-647-JFCS (5327).

* Family Day Sunday, October 2nd

JF&CS will be holding a Family Day from 12-4 p.m. to showcase our programs and services and introduce the community to our Waltham headquarters. For more information, please call Liz Carey at 781-647-5327.

* JF&CS Black Tie Saturday, November 12th

Our largest annual fundraiser to support all of our programs and services. For more information, please call Michelle Bishop at 781-647-5327.

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