

**We need  
your  
support!**



JF&CS gives hope to families in need

With record-setting utility, housing, food, gas, and childcare expenses, many people are feeling the pinch. The economy is also hitting the Jewish community hard, with more moderate-income families needing help than ever before. Jewish Family & Children's Service (JF&CS) gives hope to many of these families, by offering personalized assistance.



## Sunday Program Offers Respite for Families

Now more fun for young people with disabilities because of a new program from JF&CS. The Sunday Respite Program offers individuals with severe neurological issues a chance to gather for an afternoon of swimming, music, and art while their families enjoy some downtime.



The program offers a unique way for participants to enjoy a safe, structured activity on a day when many of them might otherwise be home watching TV. In addition to physical activity, the program is fun and helps defray the social isolation these children feel.

Doreen Cummings, Director of Individual Living and Working Supports at JF&CS, said, "We're excited to be running a program like this in our community. These children are very compromised and many programs are expensive or far from home. This brings people together in their neighborhood. We know they are happy and excited to be there."

Since the program began at the Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center in Newton last summer, 18 families have enrolled. This fall JF&CS will launch a similar program at the Striar Jewish Community Center in Stoughton.

Irene and Gary Gladstone of Needham and their daughter, Erika, age 29, were one of the families in the pilot. Erika, who is nonverbal and has limited mobility, was the first person diagnosed with Rett Syndrome in this country.

"It is unusual to find a program for people like my daughter who need someone with them one-on-one all the time," Irene said, adding, "My husband and I don't have much time without her. I like this program because Erika seems happy and I can tell she enjoys it."

### JF&CS in the News

- \* The *Boston Globe* wrote an article on April 22 titled "Connection Failure," citing our Center for Early Relationship Support staff as experts.
- \* "Studying Passover to ready the seder" was the title of a story that appeared in the *Boston Globe* on April 5, focusing on the Mothers Circle initiative.

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Dear Friends,

When you think of a trendsetter, you might think of someone who is fashion-forward, an early adopter of technology, or someone who is on the cutting edge of business.



JF&CS is also a trendsetter. We not only provide consistently high-quality services that evolve to meet ever-changing needs, but we reach out to the community, instigating positive change by sharing our programs, staff, and research with others.

More and more, human service agencies and professionals look to JF&CS to learn how to tackle some of the most challenging issues facing our community today. We have become a role model and our programs have been adopted by other organizations around the world.

For example, one of our most successful programs, *Visiting Moms*, is now being adopted by a third generation of early childhood development experts. The program, which matches new moms with helpful volunteers, was the model for "Em L'Em" in Israel. Now the National Council of Jewish Women Australia has just launched "Mum for Mum" down under, based on the Israeli program.

A trend is the direction something takes over time. We are working to turn our clients' lives in a positive direction. With your support, JF&CS will continue to stay ahead of our community's needs, developing innovative programs and finding new ways to turn research into practice.

All the best,



Seymour J. Friedland, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

Jewish Family & Children's Service is the leading provider of comprehensive human services, delivering personalized and integrated care that improves people's lives.

## Geriatric Institute Hosts First Symposium

On April 16, almost 200 professionals working in the field of aging gathered at the first JF&CS Geriatric Institute Symposium, "Linking Research to Practice: Advances in Care for Community-Based Elders."

The interactive half-day session brought together a diverse group of professionals from area agencies on aging, senior centers, resident service coordinators, and academia.

The symposium is part of an ambitious undertaking to improve the independence and quality of life of seniors through the application of research, said Kathy Burnes, M.Ed., Project Manager of the Geriatric Institute. "There are not many other organizations doing what Geriatric Institute is doing."

In his keynote address, Harvard faculty member Nicholas Christakis, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., set the stage for the day's events. With a presentation titled "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry," Christakis described the spread of health phenomena in large social networks.

Six panelists then presented research on the current treatment and management of elder care with a focus on translating findings into practical applications and solutions.

Attendees were very enthusiastic about the quality and breadth of the presentations. One professional said, "Thank you very much for organizing and providing this relevant, helpful, and informative day. I'll definitely apply this information to my practice."

## Kol Isha Welcomes New Director

JF&CS is pleased to announce that Satya Montgomery, LICSW, has joined the Agency as director of Kol Isha, our domestic violence program.



Satya Montgomery

Satya brings 12 years of experience in the field of health and safety of women and families. Most recently, Satya was the program director of Coordinated Family Focused Care for BAMS (Brockton Area Multi-Services Inc.). BAMS is a private, nonprofit corporation dedicated to improving the quality of life and sense of self-worth for individuals and families in Massachusetts.

Satya is pursuing a doctorate from the Boston College Graduate School of Social Work with a dissertation on domestic violence in the immigrant community. She has a BA in International Relations from Manhattanville College and a master's degree in social work from Fordham School of Social Services in New York.

Satya said, "I am very excited to be working at JF&CS. I have heard wonderful things from the community about all the staff has done and continues to do. It is an honor to be a part of their passion and dedication."

## CERS Symposium Examines Cultural Issues in Home Visits

Today, Boston's population is more diverse than at any point in its history, home to more people from more countries than ever before. Immigrants from 100 countries account for 26% of Boston's total population.

In response to this growth, 150 clinicians, academics, and professionals gathered at JF&CS to examine the cultural issues associated with providing assistance to immigrants in their homes. The "Home Visiting Initiative Across Cultures and Continents" symposium was hosted by the JF&CS Center for Early Relationship Support on April 7.

Debbie Whitehill, LICSW, Director of the JF&CS Lauren and Mark Rubin Visiting Moms Program, said, "We're seeing more and more people who represent different countries and ethnicities. Cultural differences permeate the work we do in our programs."



Debbie Whitehill

**"Once we defined the topic, interest began to build. We clearly tapped into a need for this type of symposium."**

Attendees gathered from a variety of organizations, including early intervention, mental health settings, school systems, hospitals, and other human service agencies.

The conference focused on unique issues relevant to professionals who are making home visits, including cultural views of parenting, domestic violence and safety issues, and coping strategies of immigrant families.

Debbie said, "When you are in people's homes it is a window into their lives. You get a chance to observe more

of the cultural differences and learn more about their situation."

Plans for the conference originally came out of a desire to meet with colleagues from Haifa, Jerusalem, and Beer Sheva, Israel, who are doing similar work. But the plan for a low-key gathering took on a life of its own as word of the meeting spread. Debbie said, "Once we defined the topic, interest began to build. We clearly tapped into a need for this type of symposium."

The well-received conference was both an opportunity for JF&CS staff to network with people from other organizations as well as a chance for many in the community to be introduced to the strength of JF&CS programs. Debbie said, "It was also a wonderful way to connect attendees to the wider world and learn how these types of programs are universally needed."

### Peggy Kaufman Receives Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Partners Award

Peggy Kaufman, M.Ed., LICSW, Director of the JF&CS Center for Early Relationship Support, is the second annual recipient of the prestigious Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Partners Award.

This award celebrates an outstanding individual who demonstrates excellence and commitment to improving maternal and child health. Peggy was honored at the meeting of the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Massachusetts on May 6.



Peggy Kaufman

and children in the Greater Boston community. The JF&CS Center for Early Relationship Support is a center of excellence for direct services, training, supervision, and consultation that focus on the earliest parent-infant relationship.

Cheryl Aglio-Girelli, co-chair of the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition of Massachusetts, said, "Peggy is incredibly generous with her time and expertise and clearly passionate about the important work she is doing through JF&CS in addressing the earliest relationships — moms and infants."

In her work as director, Peggy has made extraordinary contributions to the well being of women

the earliest relationships — moms and infants."

# Celebrating Our Volunteers

## The Simone Lottor Exceptional Service Award

The 2008 recipient of the Simone Lottor Exceptional Service Award is Amy Hearne, who has been an active volunteer with Family Table for the past 15 years. Family Table, part of the JF&CS Center for Family Assistance, is Greater Boston's only Jewish food pantry.

The Lottor Award is presented annually to a JF&CS volunteer whose efforts have made a vital contribution to the community. Amy is being recognized for her enthusiasm, compassion, and commitment to our clients, our community, and JF&CS.

Margie Nesson, M.Ed., Family Table coordinator, said, "Amy is an amazing woman with a soul the size of a mountain. She feels passionately about the work of Family Table and helping the people that we serve." She added, "Amy is very committed to *tikkum olam* (repairing the world). That's the way she lives her life."

Amy got involved in Family Table through Combined Jewish Philanthropies' Young Leadership Development group and served on the original Family Table Board. She was an active, vital member of the Family Table Advisory Committee for many years and currently serves on the Center for Family Assistance Advisory Committee, where she helps with many special projects such as the holiday toy drive and camp scholarship efforts.

Amy is a hands-on person who likes working at Family Table because it provides concrete, immediate assistance to those in need. She also loves the sense of community formed by working with other volunteers and making friends with the recipients, some of whom she has kept in touch with for years. She said, "Everyone comes together there: singles, senior citizens, young families. It's one of the few places in the Jewish community where there is such diversity."

Amy's enthusiasm is contagious and she continually enlists new volunteers. Best of all, her children are following her example of "good deeds and acts of



Amy Hearne

loving kindness." Amy began bringing them when they were small and as they have grown, they have continued to help. Her daughter and son both volunteered as their bar/bat mitzvah projects and participated in the Hanukah gift drive.

**"Amy is an amazing woman with a soul the size of a mountain. She feels passionately about the work of Family Table."**

Family Table represents "kindness with a Jewish spin" to Amy and this makes her time there especially meaningful. "I've worked at a town food pantry and this is different because we deliver Jewish items and observe Jewish holidays." She added, "Family Table is a way to stay connected and feel that the Jewish community cares."

### Volunteering with JF&CS

Volunteers are a vital part of Jewish Family & Children's Service. For more information on how you can help, call (781) 647-JFCS (5327) or visit [jfcsboston.org](http://jfcsboston.org) to find out more.

Volunteers

## JF&CS Mourns Alla Denisenko, Youth Outreach Coordinator

Russian-speaking teenagers in the Boston area are mourning the loss of counselor, mentor, and friend, Alla Denisenko.

The Russia native, who was a pillar of the local Russian-speaking and Jewish communities, died February 15 at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center from complications of cancer. She was 56 and lived in Brighton.

Alla joined JF&CS in 1998 as a youth outreach coordinator based at Brookline High, with a caseload of 60 to 70 teens a year, but her role was greater than her title. Ira Schor, JF&CS Director of Operations said, “She was a blend of outreach worker, guidance counselor, social worker, and educator. Alla became a compassionate adult role model and mentor.”

**“Alla’s major talent was opening hearts. Her expertise and talent with teens was extraordinary. They called her their second mother.”**

Part of Alla’s gift was that she was not a 9 to 5 person. She was there 24/7 when the teens needed her and created programs for after school, weekends, and summers. Her compassion and generosity made her a magnet for young Russian speakers who needed help with a wide array of adjustment issues and typical conflicts made more complicated by cultural differences and the stresses of immigration.

“She worked very closely with parents, teens, and school faculty,” said Ena Feinberg, Director of Services for New Americans at JF&CS. “Alla’s major talent was opening hearts. Her expertise and



Alla Denisenko

talent with teens was extraordinary. They called her their second mother and were ready to tell her things they would never have told their parents.”

Born in the Siberian city of Omsk, she moved to Ryazan, where she met her husband, Sergey. She attended a Moscow university, earning the equivalent of a master’s in English language studies. She taught English at a middle school in Moscow and many of her former students remained in touch with her over the years, staying with her in Boston when they would visit the United States. She and her family moved to the United States in 1992, and she started out teaching English as a second language at Roxbury Community College.

Alla’s position at JF&CS grew out of a task force formed to promote the adjustment of an influx of teens from the former Soviet Union. Ira said, “Alla was extraordinarily devoted to these teens and her devotion knew no limits on what she was ready and willing to do on their behalf.”

In addition to her husband, Alla leaves a son, Michael of Brighton; her mother, Elvira Kolesova of Brighton; and a half-sister, Natalya Gomelskaya of Waltham.

# The JF&CS Benefit

## Thank You to All Our Generous Supporters



Benefit Chairs Stewart & Lori Karger of Weston and Gail & David Schechter of Chestnut Hill

What an incredible Jewish Family & Children's Service Benefit! This year's Benefit, held on March 29 at the InterContinental Boston Hotel, boasted so many things—fabulous music, a beautiful room, and especially, an emotional video highlighting the important work that the agency accomplishes.

Through the proceeds raised from the event, JF&CS is able to expand its reach as the leading provider of care and support to more than 30,000 individuals and families each year.

### A very special thanks to the 2008 JF&CS Benefit Sponsors and Auction Donors

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A special thanks to our Auction  
Chairs, Susan Karger and  
Susan Shale

## Sunday Program Offers Respite

*continued from page 1*

Linda and Mark Goldman and their daughter, Jessica, age 28, are friends of the Gladstones and have known each other since their daughters' diagnoses more than 25 years ago. Linda said, "Now Jess has something on weekends that is hers. It gets her out of the house and it's stimulating."

Linda explained that for Mark and her to have three hours together on a Sunday afternoon is a gift. Recently the couple went on a hike in the woods close to their home where they had never been because they could not go with Jessica. She said, "It's good for our relationship to have this time together, and the program is wonderful for Jessica."

This program is presented under the umbrella of Family Circle, a resource and support center for families who care for children with special needs at home, which is managed by JF&CS with financial support from the Help A Little One Foundation.

In a nice connection, the respite program employs three residents with disabilities from the JF&CS Community Housing for Adult Independence program. "It's fantastic to see someone with a mild disability showing up for work every Sunday and swimming in the pool with a peer who has a severe disability," said Doreen.

Since the participants are physically compromised and mostly nonverbal, the success of the drop-off program depends on a staff committed to safety. Both mothers praised co-coordinator Pat Ludwig, the hands-on manager and assistant director of Individual Living and Work Supports, for the caliber of the staff. Linda said, "Pat has worked really hard and they've hired great people."

Both mothers feel that the continuity over many Sundays is one of the program's strengths. Linda said, "I can drop Jess off and feel comfortable the staff knows how to take care of her." She added, "It's been good for me to let go a little bit and see that she would be fine. It's been a valuable experience for all of us."

Respite activities take place at the Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center in Newton from 1 to 4 p.m. Reservations are required and accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. There is a nominal fee of \$30 for each session.

## Hope in the Jewish Community

*continued from page 1*

While Jews are largely viewed as an affluent minority, this is not a complete picture. In reality, American Jews experience poverty at rates similar to their non-Jewish counterparts.

"When we speak about our work in the Jewish community, many are shocked to learn how many people we are helping," said Wayne Kessler, director of JF&CS Center for Family Assistance.

The Center for Family Assistance at JF&CS has seen an increasing number of families that are unable to make ends meet, especially moderate-income families who no longer have access to the credit that once provided a buffer during difficult times.

As one client put it, "I never thought I would be in this position, having always considered myself to be a giver, but because of my illness, I had to ask for help."

Over the past 15 years, JF&CS Family Table food pantry program has grown from serving 36 Jewish families (70 individuals) every month to 162 Jewish families (346 individuals).

Some of the people seeking assistance once held esteemed positions in the community and are now experiencing disability, serious illness, divorce, unemployment or underemployment, domestic violence, or the death of a loved one.

The Agency's case managers help hundreds of callers navigate the maze of benefits programs, billing departments, and health insurance agencies. The level of assistance is tailored to each individual's situation and can range from a grant for a job training program, a one-time mortgage payment, a full tank of home heating oil, or a loan for start-up business expenses.

And a parent whose child received a camp scholarship said, "Because of his special needs, for the last several years my son has been withdrawn, had no friends, and had very low self-esteem. This year's Jewish camp experience, made possible by your grant, changed his life."

Unfortunately, cuts in federal programs coupled with increasing need have meant that many service providers like JF&CS have a shrinking pie and more and more pieces to be given out. Fundraising continues to be a challenge, complicated by the climate of secrecy surrounding Jewish poverty. Despite these issues, JF&CS provides timely, personalized assistance to those most in need.

To donate or learn more about the JF&CS Center for Family Assistance, please contact Director Wayne Kessler at (781) 647-JFCS (5327) or [wkessler@jfcsboston.org](mailto:wkessler@jfcsboston.org) or give directly on our website [jfcsboston.org](http://jfcsboston.org).

# 2008 RECENT EVENTS

## \* Annual Meeting – May 21, 2008

At the 2008 Annual Meeting on May 21, Harvey Greenberg was named JF&CS president-elect. Harvey has been a board member since 2001 and currently serves on the Executive Committee of the JF&CS board and is a member of the Human Resources Committee. He received the President's Award in 2007, which recognizes extraordinary leadership shown by a member of the board of directors.

We are also thrilled to welcome our two new board members, Margo Davis and Robin Neiterman.



Harvey Greenberg



Margo Davis



Robin Neiterman

## \* JF&CS Women's Breakfast

More than 260 people attended the JF&CS Women's Breakfast on May 15 at the Belmont Country Club. This year's breakfast, co-chaired by Dana Miller and Rebecca DeFranc, raised \$119,000 for the award-winning Center for Early Relationship Support (CERS), which provides critical services to new moms and their babies.



Executive Director Sy Friedland, Event Co-chairs Dana Miller and Rebecca DeFranc, and CERS Director Peggy Kaufman

Wendy Mogel, clinical psychologist and author of *The Blessings of a Skinned Knee* was the keynote speaker. She emphasized the importance of living a balanced life in the midst of a culture that thrives on competition and materialism. Guests were also addressed by a CERS client who shared her personal story of postpartum anguish and the way in which CERS helped her when she had no one else to turn to.

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