

# Jewish Family Services Newsletter

In Touch With the Community

Issue 9

February 1999

## Editorial

by Mark Zarecki, Executive Director

### Have you ever had to beg for food?

How humiliated would you feel, not being able to take care of your family? What would you tell your children about how you got the donated food? Friends? The people at the food bank?

One family that accesses the food bank does not tell their children - who are students of a Jewish school - yet, they are encouraged to donate back to the food bank.

What do you tell your 2-year-old who's having a temper tantrum in the grocery store over wanting her favourite cheese that you can't afford to buy?

I often wonder about the media's demonizing of the poor and the stereotyping of them cheating the system. I believe that this more often reflects the middle class value of cheating the system, be it through income tax evasion, paying "under the table" salaries, or more blatant acts. This is not what the needy do; they are too humiliated to even seek help for their families. For them, it is the end of the road.

The next time you feel that these people are cheaters, ask yourself what level of humiliation you would achieve to cheat in seeking help.

We at JFSOC see this on a daily basis. People who are humbled and humiliated and defeated by having to grovel for assistance. Yes, they are Jewish clients...over 130 families, who come to our agency and the Agudath Israel Kosher Food Bank for help.

## Yakov Rabkin - Study Group

Over the past year, Professor Yakov Rabkin from the University of Montreal has been leading a monthly Torah study group in the Russian language, through JFSOC. The immigrants who have participated in this program love Professor Rabkin's style, which coincides with their cultural understanding of Judaism, and encourages questions and answers that meet their needs.

Rabkin himself is a Russian Jew, who was active in the Human Rights movement of the former Soviet Union, and was instrumental in setting up the first Yeshiva in Moscow post glasnost. As well, the government of Israel consulted his advice on how to enhance the Jewish identity of Olim from the former Soviet Union. We are extremely fortunate that he has offered his time free-of-charge, and are grateful to Steve Gordon, who helps with transportation expenses.

## A BENEFICIARY AGENCY OF:

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Regional Municipality of

Ottawa-Carleton

United Jewish Appeal

Ontario Ministry of Health

Friends of JFS

The Trillium Foundation

Canadian Heritage

Mazon Canada

Citizenship and

Immigration Canada

Jewish Immigrant Aid

Services of Canada



## Warm Home Program

A large proportion of new arrivals from Eastern Europe are elderly and have difficulty learning English. They feel isolated and alone. This stress is augmented by trying to adapt to a new culture with new foods and new methods of preparation. Hence the introduction of a new program within the settlement unit - the *Warm Home Program*.

This new initiative brings these seniors together to prepare nutritious, hot lunches, that they share at each others' homes on a rotational basis. Originally conceived as a monthly program, tremendous need and interest quickly doubled the frequency of the get-togethers. With 14 Russian-speaking individuals now attending each luncheon, we are trying to expand the program to weekly. The holdout is a shortage of volunteer drivers.

A portion of the food is provided by the Agudath Israel Food Bank, with JFS staff and volunteers co-ordinating transportation and pick-ups of food. The 50+ participants themselves take turns hosting, cooking, preparing and cleaning up.

The *Warm Home Program* is an exciting, friendly way of meeting the nutritional and social needs of its participants. If you would like to help-out and welcome newcomers to Ottawa, this may be the enriching experience you're looking for - to meet a variety of people from other parts of the world that have been undergoing tremendous change.

### Did You Know....?

- **We have over 50 unemployed Jewish clients, with various skills and expertise, seeking employment!**
- **25% of children in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton live in poverty!**
- **Jewish Poverty has a direct and negative link to Jewish identity. The poor person's child is less likely to be Jewish!**
- **Almost 7% of Ottawa Jewish families are headed by a single parent, the vast majority being single mothers!**

## Chaplaincy

by Jonathan Wouk

For the past two years I have been visiting Jewish residents at Long Term Care facilities. As Community Chaplain, I visit on behalf of the Community. There are now teams of volunteers being organized to visit these seniors, offering contact by the Community... and the residents appreciate the difference. Although my role as Chaplain continues, these Visiting Teams provide opportunities for people to participate in community life in a way that some have not in many years: to chat about old acquaintances, what's going on in the Community, meet young children, hear Yiddish, eat something a bit *heimisch* for a change - Be a Jew among Jews again.

The Social Action Committee of Agudath Israel, in conjunction with Jewish Family Services, has had Visiting Teams going weekly to Versa-Care (the nursing home with the largest Jewish population outside Hillel Lodge), since November. With approximately 150 Jewish seniors living in non-Jewish institutions within Ottawa-Carleton, there is still a tremendous need to develop connections with members of our community – to stave off the isolation and loneliness that permeates these people's lives.

Lisa Bogdonov, Director of Development at Jewish Family Services, is presently organizing ***Gutten Tog***, where teams of people from all walks of Jewish life visit residents at Long Term Care Facilities around the Region. There's one in your part of town, and most of these elderly defy the common stereotypes, as do the facilities themselves, so you're bound to find a good match.

Women and men – with or without their children, students and retired folk, grandfathers, affiliated and not...the Jewish Community needs to reach out to its members who cannot get out to participate in Community life. As the Visiting Teams develop, they will be doing a lot more than just visiting: holiday activities, musical performances, noshes, Shabbat activities, outings (if only out on the grounds). Whatever your special interests and talents, you will certainly find opportunities to exercise them as you participate in this highest of Mitzvot.

## A Tribute

by Eva Esrock, *Seniors Services*

I would like to pay tribute to a distinguished gentleman, who came to JFS in 1996 to volunteer for the Friendly Visiting program.

Being relatively new to the city, I had never heard of **Sydney Abbey**, but in a very short time, he made a deep and lasting impression on me: with his warm manner, his erudite and witty comments, and his concern to share some of his hard-won free time with seniors less fortunate than himself.

Until ill-health prevented him from continuing, Sydney's visits comforted and enlivened the world of an elderly, housebound gentleman who shared his sense of fun.

Some years later, I met Rhoda, Sydney's dynamic and dedicated wife, and was quickly aware that this was a very special couple, whose combined genius and capacity for caring and doing was a force to be reckoned with. Here, Tikkun Olam was a way of life.

Sydney, we will miss you. To Rhoda, Michael and David, and your families, we extend our heartfelt sympathy for your irreparable loss.

JSU-Hillel and JFSOC are presenting a series of workshops entitled:

### **Interdating and Intermarriage Where Do We Go From Here?**

This interactive series is ideal for interdating couples or anyone interested in discussing the issues.

Mar. 10 - A Community Perspective  
Mar. 17 - Examining Your Relationship  
Mar. 24 - Exploring Conversion

All programs take place on Wednesdays at 7:30pm, 1774 Kerr Ave., Rm.232

Please RSVP to JSU-Hillel, at 562-5800 ext. 3095

A contribution of \$6./person or \$10./couple would be appreciated.

## Being a Volunteer

**It's not for money,  
It's not for fame,  
It's not for any  
personal gain.  
It's just for love of  
fellow man,  
It's just to lend a  
helping hand.  
It's just to give a  
tithe of self,  
That's something you  
can't buy with wealth.  
It's not for medals won  
with pride,  
It's for that feeling  
deep inside.  
It's that reward down  
in your heart,**

**It's that feeling that**

**you've been a part**

**of helping others far**

**and near**

**That makes you be a**

**volunteer!**

**(Author Unknown)**

On Sunday, February 11, 1996 at 3:00pm, Sharon Dittus directed an interview with Mark Zarecki of Jewish Family Services and Mohammed Hagi-Aden of the Somali Centre for Family Service (SCFS), highlighting the unique relationship between these Jewish and Moslem (Author Unknown) Carleton.

JFS has been "mentoring" SCFS over the past 6+ years offering support, direction and advocacy on behalf of their community, to planning and funding organizations. Providing administrative support, supervision, and assistance in developing a network within their community, JFS has worked from the spirit of Tikkun Olam to help build the Somali's community vision and provide direct service to their constituents.

Please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Bev Groshen, at 972-2225.

The relationship between these Jewish and Moslem groups right here in Ottawa, is an exciting, healthy and unique model of cooperation and harmony between two religious groups with a history of conflict and animosity. How proud we are to be setting such an example of community building.

## Student Support Program - Update

by Lauren Shaps, Student Support Supervisor

- ☺ Staff of the Student Support Program have been busy providing service to students and their families in the day schools and afternoon schools of the Jewish Community. Working closely with students, teachers, parents, and administrators, a myriad of issues impacting on the psycho/social welfare of the child have been and continue to be addressed.
  - ☺ This past Fall, the Student Support Program took the lead in encouraging growth and change on a systemic level, by partnering with the Board of Jewish Education on the first citywide professional development day for Judaic Studies staff. Over sixty educators from all of the BJE affiliated schools attended a full day program on the theme of "Creating a Classroom Community". Workshops focussed on adapting the classroom experience to meet the needs of children struggling with alternative learning styles and behavioural challenges. Feedback, both verbal and on a formal evaluation form, was extremely positive, and it is hoped that this will become an annual event.
- Referrals to the Student Support Program can be made by calling Lauren Shaps directly at 722-4124.**
- ☺ The Student Support Program has undertaken the creation of a Critical Incident Team. An initial gathering of mental health professionals from throughout the Jewish community provided an opportunity to review the skills necessary for crisis intervention. A subset of that larger group is now meeting to formulate procedures for the team. The team will then be on call for debriefing following the unfortunate occurrence of a tragic event. This is a service which we hope will not be needed; however, experience has shown the importance of being prepared.
  - ☺ Four successful matches between "volunteer mentors" and a youth in need of some special attention are up and running. Much like the Big Brothers or Big Sisters program, these adults devote a minimum of two hours a week of volunteer time to the youth that they mentor. These relationships are mutually rewarding: the youngsters benefit from the undivided time and attention of an adult, and the volunteer has the fulfillment of knowing that they are making a difference in the life of a child. The child's family also benefits from a few hours of respite, and from seeing their child connect in this positive relationship.



In lieu of Mishloach Manot for Purim, Beth Shalom West Synagogue encouraged congregants to make donations to the Ezra Emergency Fund. We thank Rabbi Finkelstein for his leadership, as well as all the families who followed that lead and contributed so generously.

### BECOME A FRIEND OF JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

- A Friend \$36
- A Governor \$180
- A Life Governor \$1,000

Help us in meeting the needs of the Jewish Community.

#### FRIENDS OF JFSFUND

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## Soul Parenting

Jewish Family Services, in conjunction with Catholic Family Service, has initiated a support group for single mothers entitled *Soul Parenting*. With 2 meetings already under our belts, participation is growing and feedback is glowing.

A supportive environment for single mothers to share their challenges and triumphs, this monthly "coffee-chat" program offers opportunities to socialize, network and recharge as parents. Periodic special interest programs are also evolving from the group's creativity and direction, including the following upcoming events. For more information, please contact Donna or Lisa at 722-2225.

**Family Law Act** - A professional from the Department of Legal Aid will be addressing the audience on such topics as: mediation/arbitration/adjudication, custody and access, support, property, wills, and the legal misconceptions surrounding separation and divorce.

**Monday, March 15/99, 7:00pm, 1774 Kerr Ave., 2nd Floor.**

**A Passover Seder** - For single people, with or without children, co-sponsored by Agudath Israel Synagogue and Mr. E's Kosher Catering. Our text of choice will be *The Telling* (the Women's Haggadah).

**Wednesday, March 31/99, 6:00pm, 1400 Coldrey Ave.**

Dear Mr. Zarecki

I would like to wish you and everybody at Jewish Family Services a happy Hanukkah.

I would also like to thank you Mr. Zarecki, for bringing Iris into my life. I so look forward to seeing her every week. I just can not say enough about Iris.

She makes me feel good about myself, she never judges me and she also helps me see my problems more clearly and then they do not seem as frightening.

Thank you,  
Anonymous.

To Jewish Family Services,

My name is Elisha Zarecki. I just had my Bar-Mitzvah on Dec. 26, 1998. I want to donate \$118.00 to J.F.S. so that other Bar/Bat-Mitzvah boys and girls can have a nice Simcha. For example, the money could be used for Bar/Bat-Mitzvah lessons, a set of Tefillin, a Taalit, a suit or dress appropriate for synagogue.

I hope that you will publicize the new fund so that other fortunate people will also give generously to make the fund grow.

My idea for a name for the new fund is: **The Bar-Mitzvah Wish Fund**, but perhaps you will suggest another idea.

Thank you,  
Elisha Zarecki



.....

Elisha was proud of his Bar Mitzvah and wanted others to be able to share in this Jewish right of passage. Having established a fund to enable less fortunate girls and boys to have an equally meaningful experience, he is now challenging others to help make someone's Bar/Bat Mitzvah special.

**If you know of someone who needs help, call Mark at JFSOC, 722-2225.**

## Attention All Volunteers!

JFS is busy launching the new *Gutten Tog* project, where volunteers from the community will be visiting Jewish residents at Long Term Care Facilities (see article on page 2). If you have a couple of hours to spare once a month or once a week, please call Lisa at 722-2225 to participate.

## Donations Made Between December 8, 1998 and March 1, 1999

### EZRAFUND

Abrams, Jonathan  
Adarson Tzedakah Foundation  
Appel, Freda  
Appel, Toby  
Bercuvitz Family Foundation  
Berkeley, Angela  
Black, Warren  
Bogdonov, Lisa  
Bogdonov, Paul  
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London Life Employees' Charity Trust  
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Mader, Philippe  
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Pellatt-Miron, Reissa  
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Terkel, Valerie

### RUSSIAN STUDY PROGRAM

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### RUSSIAN CENTRE

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### ROSH HASHANAH FUND

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### CHANUKAH FUND

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Black, Philip  
Black, Shelley  
Naor, Eric

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Krym, Mr. & Mrs.  
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Narwa, Danny & Mark  
Presser, Ms. M  
Silver, Mark/Marcus, Susan  
Zarecki, Mr. & Mrs. M.  
Zeligman, Dr. & Mrs. E.

### CHAPLAINCY FUND

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### JEWISH IMMIGRANT EDUCATION FUND

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Ottawa Board of Education  
Robbins, Lila

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Shinder, Jason  
Shinder, Reisa  
Spergel, Marla  
Spergel, Mark  
Steingarten, Linda  
Weidman, Carol  
Wohl, Rhea  
Zeligman, Dr. E

## JFSOC Funds

The following is a list and description of the Funds under Jewish Family Services of Ottawa-Carleton. For a minimum contribution of \$10. to any of these funds, a card will be sent to convey the appropriate sentiment, celebrate a special event, or mark a milestone in someone's life. All donations are acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes. To make a contribution, please call Myra, at 722-2225.

**Bar Mitzvah Wish Fund** - created by Elisha Zarecki in honour of his Bar Mitzvah, funds are allocated to needy children to enhance the celebration of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

**Chaplaincy Fund** - supports visits to Jews in long term and chronic care facilities.

**Ezra Fund** - this is an emergency poverty relief fund, including food vouchers and emergency services.

**Friends of JFS** - this fund has a committee which allocates money towards critical and creative programs that the agency wishes to establish.

**General Donations of Goods & Services** - represents donations of furniture, dishes, clothing, etc.

**Holiday Funds** - different funds exist to help needy Jews celebrate particular holidays in a meaningful way. These include: *Rosh Hashanah Fund, Chanukah Fund, Purim Fund.*

**Jewish Immigrant Education Fund** - created by Dr. Walter Hendelman in honour of his birthday, he distributes funds to help with education costs for immigrant children.

**Koved Fund** - established to support "seniors helping seniors" programs and services.

**Lara Esrock Foundation** - this fund is directed to help Lara with assistance at her mother's discretion.

**Mitzvah Meal Fund** - this fund helps offset costs of the Kosher Meals on Wheels program.

**Passover Fund** - supports an annual seder for new immigrants in the Russian and Hebrew languages.

**Russian Centre Fund** - funds are used to guarantee programs, resource materials, equipment and services that enhance the Jewish identity of Russian immigrants living in the Ottawa-Carleton area.

**Russian Study Program** - supports a monthly Torah study program in the Russian language.

## On behalf of our clients, JFS thanks the following for their donation of professional services:

Jon Braun  
Mark Cantor  
Dave Feldberg  
Dr. Dale Fyman  
Robby Greenberg  
Dr. Esther Guiot  
Dr. Harry Prizant  
Dr. Stan Shiff  
Hakim Optical  
Ottawa Hadassah-WIZO  
Dr. Zeligman

A special thanks goes to Mr. & Mrs M. Feldman for their very generous donation of office furniture for the new home of JFSOC, as well as to Mr. Henry Pass for his donation of an organ to the Russian Resource Centre.

One of the Just Men came to Sodom, determined to save its inhabitants from sin and punishment. Night and day he walked the streets and markets preaching against greed and theft, falsehood and indifference. In the beginning, people listened and smiled ironically. Then they stopped listening: he no longer even amused them. The killers went on killing, the wise kept silent, as if there were no Just Man in their midst.

One day a child, moved by compassion for the unfortunate preacher, approached him with these words: "Poor stranger. You shout, you expend yourself body and soul. Don't you see that it is hopeless?"

"Yes, I see," answered the Just Man.

"Then why do you go on?"

"I'll tell you why. In the beginning, I thought I could change humankind. Today, I know I cannot. If I still shout today, if I still scream, it is to prevent humankind from ultimately changing me."

Elie Wiesel, *One Generation*

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Ms Bogdonov:

My name is Elayne Schacter and I am the Program Manager for Adults and Seniors at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre. In the two months that I have been employed at the centre, I have worked together with Valerie, Beverly and Sema at your office, to try and create a relationship which would benefit the seniors in our community.

You can well imagine how I felt when I read your newsletter at the Agudath synagogue last Saturday. Your article from Marlene Cherun indicated the lack of change our community has had over the last 18 years. In the article you mentioned the overburdened centre and lack of a seniors room. I took it personally because I have made the seniors my number one concern since taking over this job. I thought that JFS would be more supportive of our work at the centre. The encouragement of the people I have had the pleasure of working with, made me believe that we were moving forward.

I question how our common goals seem to move on parallel lines as we struggle to work as one. The community needs both of our resources to create a wonderful environment for the young and older seniors. I hope that in the future we can support each other instead of making negative connotations at each others expense.

## Response

Dear Elayne,

Thank you for your letter and comments regarding our article entitled *Notes for Seniors*, which appeared in the January 1999 issue of Jewish Family Services Newsletter. It is regrettable that you felt both personally and institutionally defensive over the content of that article, and that you misunderstood its intent.

The article was originally written over 18 years ago, and was reprinted to highlight the stagnancy in our community's ability and willingness to change it's priorities and direction regarding services to the over 1700 Jewish seniors among us. It was intended as a self-examination of our own agency, criticizing our own efforts at change, and pointing out the incredible need that still exists.

In no way was any agency serving seniors berated for its efforts, including the Soloway Jewish Community Centre, and nor should they be. The 50 or 60 seniors attending the programs we have been running together for 20 years are not the issue. The issue remains "What are we doing to reach out and serve the other 1700 isolated and marginalized seniors in our community?" We are not suggesting that you or anyone else is at fault. We are, however, asking the question, with the hopes of shifting the paradigm of the way our agencies, institutions and individuals look at service delivery to the almost 20% of our community that is elderly.

Lisa Bogdonov  
Director of Development

### Wanted

Computer to be used for research, education and advocacy for environmental work. IBM compatible, Pentium (any speed), with sound and graphic compatibility for Internet, CD Rom drive, 15" colour monitor. Printer. Please call 722-2225, x411.

## Coming Events:

Watch for the following programs, workshops and special events:

- Adults for Lively Leisure  
Mar. 25, Apr. 15  
noon-2:00pm  
Soloway JCC
- Meet & Greet (for all, ages 55+)  
Thursday, Apr. 22  
10:00am-noon  
Soloway JCC
- Gutten Tog - Visiting Volunteers  
General Information Session  
Tues., April 22/99, 7:30pm  
JFS Boardroom
- Warm Home Program  
Monday, April 12/99, 12:30pm  
Monday, May 3/99, 12:30pm
- Soul Parenting  
Monday, March 15/99, 7pm  
1774 Kerr Avenue
- Singles' Seder  
Wednesday, March 31/99, 6pm  
Agudath Israel Synagogue
- Russian Seders  
Wed., March 31/99, 6:30pm  
Thurs., April 1/99, 6:30pm  
Machzikei Hadas Congregation
- Interdating & Intermarriage  
Wednesdays, Mar. 10, 17, 24  
7:30pm  
1774 Kerr Ave., Room 232
- Russian Resource Centre Drop-In  
Thursdays, 3:30-7:00pm  
JFS Boardroom
- Passover Gift Basket Program  
March 28, 1999

The following have generously contributed to this publication. Please patronize our sponsors ... and tell them where you saw the ad:

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## Profiles of People Seeking Employment:

- Canadian female with diploma in Automated Office Management and 15 years office experience, is looking for administrative or office management position.
- English-, French-, Romanian-, Hebrew- and Spanish-speaking male with B.A. in Economics and 22 years experience in business, retail and real estate is looking for an appropriate full-time position.
- Newcomer to Ottawa with 24 years experience in technical, maintenance, installation, assembly and supervision within the industries of telecommunications, electromechanics and electronics in the Ukraine and Israel, is looking for related opportunity.
- Retired Engineer and Mathematics Lecturer is providing private tuition for students wishing to upgrade their Math skills. Tutoring is also given for high school and University entrance examinations.