

THE WHOLE MESHPUCHA

Jewish Family Service of Greater Wilkes-Barre
Winter 2009 Shevat 5769

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The economic crisis has been the most difficult era since the Depression, and many nonprofits are suffering from this situation. On the other hand, the needs of people are increasing, seemingly across the board, and it is not just low income families, but middle class families who are facing severe obstacles in meeting their needs. In addition, those who are retired and relying on IRAs or other pension and retirement sources are facing great challenges in seeking a quality of life that two years ago was very possible, but today has substantially changed. This makes the role of agencies such as Jewish Family Service (JFS) more important, yet the same economic difficulties also affect JFS as they do many others.

In the midst of our annual Friends Campaign, JFS has a goal of raising at least \$36,000, and we are approaching two-thirds of that amount. But the last one third is the hardest, and we need the support of as many people and businesses as possible to achieve success. We thank Suzy Weinman and her Committee for developing the tools necessary to raise local dollars that help support the many services that JFS provides to Wyoming Valley citizens and families.

This being February, Board and staff are beginning to work on the May 13th annual luncheon which will be held at noon at the Woodlands. We are honoring a wonderful supporter of JFS who, for 40 years, prior to her passing in 2008, was a great volunteer who gave everyday to the work of the agency. Sandy Warshal, of Blessed Memory, was a former JFS President who committed time and money to making this community a better place for the most needy. We salute this wonderful woman for enabling this agency to continue to be a full fledged social service agency for so many years.

Celebrating our 121st. anniversary and our 76th corporate anniversary, JFS pledges to focus on the many needs of the people and families who need and require the types of services that this agency can provide in coming months and years.

Susan Yelen
President

Howard J. Grossman, AICP
Executive Director

Friends Campaign

The annual Friends Campaign of JFS is well underway under the leadership of Suzy Weinman and her committee. While the budget says we need to raise at least \$36,000, Suzy wants to reach \$50,000. This cannot be done without the support of everyone who believes in the work and services that JFS provides. We are at about \$22,000 as of this writing, so please take the time to contribute to the financial needs of this agency. We continue to see the devastation caused by the current economic crisis. It seems to be affecting not only low income, but middle income families, and many are coming to JFS, if not for financial assistance, for help in seeking a job. Your participation in this Campaign is vital to allow us to maintain our ability to meet these needs.

Silent Auction

The JFS major fund raiser this year is a Silent Auction. Our goal is to net at least \$18,000. The Silent Auction has already brought some dollars to the agency, but most importantly, many great gifts that have been made available through the kindness and generosity of many businesses and others. As of this writing, we have over 140 gifts, and many more are expected. The final auction day is Sunday, May 17, 2009 at the JCC. Items will be showcased at the JCC after Passover. There is a Board Committee working on this, and they will be reporting on their work at future Board meetings.

Annual Meeting

The JFS annual meeting will be Wednesday, May 13, 2009 at noon at the Woodlands. As usual, the agency will have election of Board members and officers, recognition of our honoree, Sandy Warshal, of Blessed Memory, a tribute book in her honor, and other activities at what always is a wonderful event that is attended by many people. We want to make this 2009 event an extraordinary event since Sandy Warshal did so much for so many people through her long standing commitment to community service. She was involved with JFS as President, to chairing and enhancing the JFS Student Aid Committee, to participating as the Board representative for the Federal Emergency Management Agency Food Program in Luzerne County, to chairing the annual JFS Friends Campaign, to being the first donor for the JFS Naming Rights Program in the Conference Room in honor of her father and mother, and so much more.

Sandy served as a volunteer at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital and was a longtime volunteer at Planned Parenthood. She was past Chairperson of the board at United Hebrew Institute and an Eternal Light Member and officer of the board at Temple Israel Synagogue.

Chairing the luncheon is Board member Sally Lee Sagenkahn, and we are grateful for all the time and work she commits in relation to the JFS mission. The Committee working with Sally includes Allen Reishtein, Steve Libenson, Bruce Fendler, Sally Connor and Evelyn Gurbst.

Anti-Hunger Educational campaign Continues

With the grant from the Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger, JFS has been publicizing the need for a continuing anti-hunger campaign in Luzerne County. Two brochures have been completed, one designed for adults and one targeted to youngsters, and this information has been forwarded to key entities such as school districts, general media, and others to broaden the informational base that tells the story of hunger and what can be done about it in the County.

Some of the information found in the brochures is noted below as techniques and ideas that can be applied in coming months.

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- **TALK ABOUT IT!** Talk to you family and friends about what you know about hunger.
- Invite speakers to address issues related to poverty and hunger
- Write letter to local politicians, newspapers, local business leaders , producers of TV news programs about the knowledge you've gained and what can be done to eliminate hunger.
- Join an organization working to end world hunger and share your experiences with everyone
- Organize a fundraiser:
 1. Have a healthy bake sale
 2. Hold a flea market
 3. Organize a walk-athon
 4. Have a community auction
 5. School dance-athon
 6. Fast – give up one meal a week or junk food for one week and donate the money to a cause
 7. Car Wash

8. Birthday donations – ask people to make a donation to a charity, rather than buy a gift

Benefits CheckUp Program Launched

Through a grant from the Blue Ribbon Foundation, JFS is undertaking a demonstration of Benefits CheckUp, a program designed to enhance opportunities of senior citizens to apply for federal grants that they might not have known about unless the support of JFS and others involved in this initiative were not available. The program has a national context through the National Council on Aging, and is being administered by JFS staff member Lisa Morgan. The agency has purchased the Organizational Edition, which enables JFS to be highlighted and the survey form used to collect information made suitable for local use. JFS is contacting many agencies, asking for their partnership, including, but not limited to, the Area Agency on Aging for Luzerne and Wyoming Counties, the Elder Issues Coalition of Luzerne and Wyoming Counties, The STEPS to a healthier Luzerne County, the Wilkes University School of Pharmacy, Temple Apartments, B'nai B'rith Apartments, Jewish Community Center and others.

NORC Program to be Started in the County

Through a grant to be received by JFS from the Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition (PJC), a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC) program plan will be started. B'nai B'rith Apartments will be the entity to encourage an aging in place strategy through the NORC, and this original federal program is now

designed to be important to mid sized cities in Pennsylvania, in addition to the federally funded Philadelphia and Pittsburgh programs. The planning for the Wilkes-Barre NORC should begin this spring, and then when the plan is completed, it is hoped that implementation funding can be found in subsequent years. More on NORC in coming issues of the Newsletter, and through general releases in coming months.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference

The third annual Grandparents Raising Grandchildren conference will be held May 8, 2009 at Genetti's in Wilkes-Barre, thanks to the work of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Intergenerational Coalition and State Senator Ray Musto. The Coalition is chaired by JFS Executive Director Howard J. Grossman and meets monthly, with a conference planning committee headed by Craig Lukesh who works as Development Officer for the Wyoming Valley Children's Association. The Conference will feature a series of panels that deal with important issues facing grandparents and other relative caregivers as well as state Legislative and Administration officials. Senator Musto has been a great leader in making sure that grandparents and grandchildren receive the benefits of services and support with the assistance of Coordinator Joe Clapps. For anyone interested in this topic Joe Clapps can be reached at 822-1158.

Many JFS Programs Continue

Many of the long stranding JFS programs continue as key indicators of what is needed in this community. Counseling and case management are two such services, and what has been identified as strong needs are ways to counter the emotional distress that is facing many families due to the current financial crisis. It hits not just the pocketbook, but the mindset and creates a distress level that has not been seen since the Depression. This recognition factor is critical to meeting the challenges in the months ahead and intervention and prevention are twin steps that need to be reaffirmed by the JFS staff and its counterparts across the nation.

Here are fourteen major programs of service offered by JFS as it advocates for the betterment of the people of this Valley.

- COUNSELING
- RESETTLEMENT
- KIDS CARE CLUB
- STUDENT LOANS AND GRANTS
- HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SUPPORT
- KOSHER HOME DELIVERED MEALS
- JEWISH FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION
 - CASE MANAGEMENT
- EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE /HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE
- SARAH'S TABLE (FOOD PANTRY)
- CAREGIVER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
- SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE
- JEWISH HEALTH & WELLNESS
 - BENEFITS CHECKUP