

THE WHOLE MESHPUCHA

Jewish Family Service of Greater Wilkes-Barre
Winter 2008 Shevat 5768

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As we head into the deeper part of winter and 2008, everyone is concerned about the state of the economy. What does this have to do with JFS? It impacts clients who have already been hard hit with rising costs for utilities, gasoline prices, and other every day costs of living as well as the job market and the loss of income for those who have invested in the stock market. The demand for our emergency financial assistance is strong in these times, and the needs of clients who require counseling and case management generally rise during difficult national economic times.

On the other hand, many of the traditional programs of JFS continue at the pace they have been in the past. These include the following, among others:

- Student Loans and Grants
- Kosher Home Delivered Meals
- Holocaust Survivors Program
- Sarah's Table(food pantry)
- Kids Care Club
- Caregiver Assistance Program
- Small Business Assistance Program

The above examples are only a portion of the JFS mission that has been defined by the Board of Directors. JFS continues to seek the support of many people and businesses as part of our annual Friends Campaign that is well underway. As of this writing, we have reached 74% of our goal of \$36,000. We need many others to contribute to help us reach this important function that assists in meeting the needs of our clients.

Part of our role is to reach out to the State and the nation. This means participating in such activities as our executive director being a new Board member of the Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition, being active with our national organization, the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies (AJFCA), and in other ways.

This newsletter is dedicated to the spirit and enthusiasm that is represented by all of the clients that we serve, the donors who help us achieve financial goals, and the many men and women who we rely on to focus attention on the needs and aspirations of the people we serve.

Steve Libenson
Executive Director

Howard J. Grossman, AICP President

JFS Commends Mazon Foundation

The recent grant announcement of an award to Jewish Family Service of a grant from the Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger for an anti-hunger educational campaign in Luzerne County is another step in the process of broadening the activities of the agency. The officers and Board commend Mazon for their continuing hard work to encourage actions to lessen hunger in the nation and for their support of the work of JFS organizations. The grant work has begun and will continue through this fiscal year.

Kids Care Club (KCC)

Lucille Keegan, JFS Kids Care Club Coordinator has been working on both projects for the KCC program and the development of applications for funding of other KCC projects. Lucille has been coordinating this program for several years and works with many school and community groups to enable thousands of youngsters as early as kindergarten to become acquainted with service learning and doing good deeds for the community. Projects benefit less fortunate youngsters and/or senior citizens.

Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition (PJC)

As a new Board member of PJC, Howard J. Grossman, executive director of JFS noted that "this statewide affiliation will help move JFS toward involvement in state policies and actions that affect the Jewish community and others. I look forward to reporting back to the Jewish community here and to the JFS Board on issues that are critical to the future of the Commonwealth." Mike Sand, an associate of Grossman, is the current chair of PJC.

Senator Ray Musto to be Honored by JFS at Annual meeting

On May 5, 2008 at a 12 noon luncheon, the annual meeting of JFS will be held at the Woodlands. The Annual Meeting Committee under the chairperson of Sally Lee Sagenkahn , recently met to plan this important event. The honoree for the event will be State Senator Ray Musto who has been so supportive of the work of JFS and the entire Commonwealth. He was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in a special election to fill his late father's unexpired term in 1971 and was re-elected to four consecutive terms. On April 9, 1980, he won a special election for the 11th U.S. Congressional District.

In November 1982, he was elected to the Senate of Pennsylvania to serve the 14th Senatorial District. Senator Musto was re-elected in 1986, 1990, 1994, 1998, 2002, and 2006. Senator Musto served as Senate Democratic Caucus Secretary, from 1997 to 2004, a leadership position voted by fellow Democratic senators.

Senator Musto has been instrumental in obtaining funding for Kids Care Club, a program initiated by JFS over four years ago that helps less fortunate children and/or senior citizens. He was the prime supporter and advocate for grandparents raising grandchildren in this community, raising funding to support a coordinator for that function, and helping to sponsor major regional conferences on this topic. He is assisting the Jewish Community Center in working on an application to provide funding for a forthcoming project dealing with overnight camping accommodations at Holiday House. Senator Musto has contributed time, energy, and support of the work of many organizations, furthering the economic development, environment and many social services for many years, and stood tall for the slogan that has been so

representative of this entire regional community- the **Valley With A Heart**.

The event will have a charge of \$30 per person and tables of ten can be arranged. Please contact Lisa of the JFS staff for any questions. There will be an ad book honoring both the 75th corporate anniversary of JFS and Senator Musto.

Friends Campaign Goal is \$36,000

The goal this year for the JFS annual Friends Campaign under the leadership of Steve Libenson and Sandy Warshal is \$36,000. This event is a way for the entire community to help meet the needs of needy people and families and brings forth hundreds of donations, large and small. In order to meet these needs, the goal is an important factor in making sure that various services that JFS traditionally provides are capable of being provided. The annual campaign has been a part of the JFS program for several decades. Anyone desiring to make a contribution that is tax deductible may do so either by check or through a VISA or MASTERCARD credit card. You may phone in the credit card information to Lisa Morgan of the staff.

B'nai Mitzvah Project Ideas Being Collected

Under the leadership of President Steve Libenson, a collection of project ideas is being sought that could eventually be carried out by Jewish students in the community. While such projects already are accomplished, this idea would be designed to help advance JFS services and assist the various programs that help people and families in Wyoming Valley. The list is being compiled by Executive Director Grossman, and will be presented to the JFS Board at a subsequent meeting.

Ron Eliran to Return to Wyoming Valley

A committee representing JCC and JFS recently met to plan a jointly sponsored concert, featuring internationally known entertainer Ron Eliran who appeared last on

November 11, 2007. The 2008 appearance will be Sunday, November 16th, at the JCC from 2-4 PM. It is expected that a number of sponsors will be secured so that a very limited fee can be charged. Whether in an intimate club or in a big hall like Madison Square Garden, Eliran is a distinctive voice who brings love, nostalgia, humor and showmanship to an international stage as he tours throughout the world, performing in a variety of languages. Most recently, he was a guest performer at the "Budapest Festival of Freedom" where his original composition became the Festival's official song. Eliran also wrote both lyrics and music for the Broadway hit show "Don't Step on My Olive Branch," and for the widely acclaimed show "Nightsong", in both of which he starred. He has long been considered "Israel's Ambassador of Song and has captivated audiences on Israeli and American TV as well as live performances in international venues.

Food will be available following the concert, and special performances are being planned to help make this event a very festive and memorable occasion with a theme "It's a Small World."

Feinstein Foundation Challenge

Through his Feinstein Foundation, Alan Feinstein, a Rhode Island philanthropist, has offered a Challenge Grant of \$1 Million, each year, to be divided among organizations that use it as a fundraising spur to raise money to fight hunger.

As you are aware, Jewish Family Service has maintained a food pantry, Sarah's Table, for many years. In addition, year-round, we provide financial assistance to individuals and families and raise funds for Passover food items, which helps needy families in our community purchase specialty items. Through the generosity of the "Valley with a Heart" we have also been able to help families who wish to go to the Seders at the Jewish Community Center.

Only money raised during March 1 – April 30 will apply towards this Challenge. Your gift can be unrestricted or restricted for our Passover fund. You may also donate food items for our pantry, which will count towards the Challenge.

JFS Part of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Coalition

For several years, a Coalition of agencies has been meeting to help provide assistance to the many families in this community where grandparents are raising grandchildren. Howard J. Grossman, executive director of JFS is the chair of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Intergenerational Coalition. The Coalition meets monthly, has over fifteen agency or organization members, receives reports on various support groups in Wilkes-Barre, Hazleton, and new groups being formed in Scranton and Wyoming County. A major regional conference on the entire topic will be held May 30th at Genetti's in Wilkes-Barre. State Senator Ray Musto has been a strong advocate and leader in the development of this process and has supported many actions that have helped grandparents facing the need to raise their grandchildren. For more information, contact the JFS office.

Nominations being Sought for JFS Board

With the turn of the New Year, thought is being given to the nominating process for the JFS Board. A call to the community is being placed to encourage volunteers who would like to be considered. A list of potential names is being compiled, so anyone interested should contact the JFS office and indicate if there is the possibility of your being considered. The JFS Board meets monthly except July and August, usually at the JCC the first Wednesday of the month, at 7 PM. Current board:

Steve Libenson, **President**
1st. **Vice President**, Susan Yelen
2nd. **Vice President**, Michael Polgar
Treasurer, Alan Weinberg
Recording Secretary, Sheree Klemow

Corresponding Secretary, Tammie Harris

BOARD MEMBERS

Sally Connor, Joe DeVizia, Dan Falkowitz*, Bruce Fendler, Dan Fierman, Irwin Gelb, Evelyn Gurbst, Esther Gutin, David Harris*, Patty Heller, Pearl Kaufman*, Rich Kramer*, Elly Miller*, June Nelson*, Judi Newman*, Julie Norton, Stan Pearlman*, Allen Reishtein*, Sandy Rifkin*, Connie Roth*, Sally Sagenkahn, Dorrie Shapiro, Robert Smith*, Dr. Linda Trompetter, Sandy Warshal*, Suzy Weinman, Len Wilson*, Janice Yelen

*Life Members

Have you heard about JABA??

JABA is an independent, privately funded, educational institute established by members of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Jewish community. JABA teachers and facilitators are committed lay professionals who have volunteered their time to enhance educational offerings to the region's busy adults. You can contact Dr. Jennie Congleton at info@jabanepa.com.

JABA's unique adult learning opportunities include sessions on topics such as:

- the Jewish tradition of joy and thanksgiving
- celebrating Shabbat at home with family and friends
- raising teenagers in a Jewish home
- celebrating your family's rich interfaith traditions
- the essentials of Jewish literacy
- thinking Jewishly about family problems

JABA offers courses that meet for one to two weeks, for one-hour sessions on Tuesday evenings (7-8pm) or Sunday mornings (9:30-10:30am). There is no "registration," just come when you wish.