

Serving Greater
Stamford,
Greater Westport
and Eastern Fairfield
County

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE of Stamford, Inc.

Reporter

WINTER/SPRING 2016

JFS Receives Funding from MAZON for Senior Solutions to Hunger™

*Help is available for Food-Insecure
Adults and Seniors!*

JFS is proud to announce that it has received a grant from MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger (MAZON) to participate in its initiative: Senior Solutions to Hunger™ to help address the growing local need of providing nutritious food to adults and seniors. There are approximately 145,000 seniors living in the towns in Fairfield County served by JFS, many of whom are struggling to put food on the table on a daily basis.

The goal of Senior Solutions to Hunger™ is to help reduce the barriers keeping vulnerable, eligible seniors from enrolling in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also formerly known as food stamps).

SNAP is a state and federally funded program available to qualifying adults and seniors, 50 years and older.

This \$30,000 grant will enable JFS to broaden our outreach and build partnerships with other social service agencies, educate the senior population through workshops, administer SNAP application assistance and act as a liaison between the client and their local managing government agency. With this assistance, JFS is able to reach a broader audience throughout greater Stamford, greater Westport and Eastern Fairfield County.

According to MAZON, three out of five seniors who are eligible for SNAP do not participate in the program - which translates into 5.2 million seniors nationwide who miss out.

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An Evening with JFS

*JFS Salutes its 37th Annual
Mitzvah Award Recipients*

**Linda Russ and
Sandy Speter**

Special Recognition

Iris Morrison

An Evening with JFS is just around the corner! On Sunday, May 15th, Jewish Family Service will present the 37th Annual Mitzvah Awards to Linda Russ and Sandy Speter for enriching our community through their many years of selfless dedication and commitment.

The event and the 8th Annual Auction will take place at Temple Beth El at 5:30 pm in Stamford.

Special Recognition will be given to JFS' Associate Executive Director, Iris Morrison, who will be leaving the agency this spring to return to Israel.

This year's event is co-chaired by Meryl Japha, Liz Kitay and Janet Welkovich.

Sandy Speter, born and raised in Connecticut, moved to Stamford in 1976. Professionally, she worked as a Programmer Analyst for the New York Telephone Company and ran the lunch program at Bi-Cultural Day School. However, her volunteer work for our community has been extensive. She joined Hadassah where she has been active for over thirty years, serving for three years as president of the Gladys Zales group and three years as co-president of the Stamford Chapter. She is currently vice-president of fundraising



JFS Mitzvah Award Recipients Linda Russ and Sandy Speter

Photo: Alison Wachstein Photography

for the entire Connecticut Region of Hadassah. In addition to serving on the Board of Trustees of Bi-Cultural Day School for ten years, Sandy worked on the Bi-Cultural auction for eighteen years, chairing it for four. She served on the Board of Directors of Westchester Hebrew High School for two years. Over the years, the JCC's Zahal Shalom program, JFS' Russian Resettlement Program and the Chabad House of Stamford have also benefited from Sandy's tireless efforts. This is Sandy's seventh year working on the



*Iris Morrison,
Associate Executive Director*

Photo: Alison Wachstein Photography

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Are You Hungry?

If you are, you likely can raid the refrigerator for a quick bite. Or walk to your pantry for a snack. Not so for many people. A 2014 Gallup poll showed that a staggering 1 in 6 Americans couldn't afford food that year. And people who can't afford food, often settle for the cheapest foods available, which are not the healthiest, and which often leads to obesity.

Americans throw out 30 – 40% of their food supply, worth \$162 billion, while millions of Americans are not sure where their next meal is coming from.

Almost 15 years ago, a young man came to me and told me he wanted to start a Kosher food pantry at JFS. At the time, I almost laughed because no one came to us looking for food, and I couldn't imagine living in Fairfield County, such a need would exist.

I was right. For a while. Then came the recession.

From out of nowhere, dozens of families appeared who could not put food on the table. I knew it was a temporary situation and would go back to "normal" when the recession was over. The recession ended, but normal never came back. People in need found they could turn to us when no one else could help them. A small program distributing a few hundred meals a month has now become a major service which provided more than 24,000 meals last year. Truly staggering.

With the support of the community and some of the local Kosher establishments, we have been able to meet the growing needs, but those needs continue to increase.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read about a grant that JFS has just received from *MAZON, A Jewish Response to Hunger* that will enable us to reach more people, especially the elderly, who often are not aware that they are eligible for such services. We are particularly proud to have been selected as one of about ten JFS' nationwide to participate in this unique program. With *MAZON'S* help, we will be able to help even more people become less "food insecure."

I ask you to remember, on your next trip to the pantry, or the refrigerator, the millions of Americans who don't have anything to eat today, and consider giving some of those snacks to your local Kosher food pantry. Your support will ensure that fewer people go hungry.

Matt Greenberg
CEO

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Not a Building, but Building Blocks

Jewish Family Service may not have its own building, but at 733 Summer Street in Stamford, we have building blocks that with one block at a time we help individuals and families survive and have productive and meaningful lives.

How is that accomplished?

Through our individual and group counseling sessions that help people who struggle with anxiety and depression;

Through our Case Management that helps people down and out who need housing; help with the bureaucracies of the complex government systems that should be there for them; and people who need assistance with the basic essentials of survival;

Through our Employment and Training sessions that guide people to new work opportunities;

Through our Food Pantry that provides food, prescription cards and personal items for the needy day in and day out;

Through our Home Companion program that takes care of the infirm, the elderly, the pregnant mother or a bed-ridden child of working parents;

Through our new Brain Fitness program that helps people with mental exercises to stimulate their cognitive processes;

Through our Crisis Intervention support sessions that help young people cope with unexpected school tragedies;

Through our Jewish Life and Learning support groups and educational seminars for care givers, for the divorced, for the widowed and other issues of daily living;

Through our College and Post-High School individual guidance sessions and group workshops that help graduates make meaningful choices for college or other options;

And through our Camp Scholarship program for needy parents which allows young people to spend meaningful summers at Jewish camps rather than be on the streets or alone at home.

So in a very significant way and in the spirit of Jewish values and in a Jewish environment, JFS has built its own building, not of brick and mortar but of kindness, gentle care and guidance by dedicated staff supported by committed volunteers and generous donors. It is critical work that JFS does for our Fairfield County community.

Edith Samers
President



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JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE RE-ACCREDITED BY COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION



JFS Staff and Board Members with the COA Peer Reviewers at the final Accreditation Summary Meeting. Front row (l. to r.): Jean Mirabella (COA), Maria McNulty, Beverly Stein, Iris Morrison, Caroline Temlock Teichman, Jodi Maxner, Rebekah Kanefsky. Back row (l. to r.): Paul Gordon, Isrella Knopf, Matt Greenberg, Ilene Locker, Kristin Schmidt (COA), Eve Moskowicz, Carl Rosen.

In January, 2016, Jewish Family Service was officially reaccredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

COA is one of the agencies nationally that provides accreditation to about 2000 community-based, behavioral and human service organizations. It is noted for its commitment to maintaining the highest level of standards and quality improvement. JFS is proud to be recognized as one of these outstanding providers.

COA reaccreditation is an objective and reliable verification that provides confidence and support to an organization's service recipients, board members, staff and community partners. The COA reaccreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of both an organization's administrative operations and its service delivery practices. All are "measured" against a broad range of national standards of best practices. As part of this process, outreach includes responses from clients and other community organizations and interviews with both board executives and staff.

These standards emphasize services that are accessible, appropriate, culturally responsive, evidence based, and outcomes-oriented. In addition, they confirm that the services are provided by a skilled and supported workforce and that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

Because COA reviews and reaccredits the entire organization, not just specific programs, the community that JFS serves can have confidence in the credibility, integrity and achievement of the entire organization. This process is repeated every three to four years.

FOR THE COLLEGE BOUND: *JFS College Ahead!*

Tuesday, March 22, 2016

Claire Friedlander, *College Consultant*

High school students and their parents – mark your calendars for March 22nd and come to the Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue at 7:30 pm to participate in the annual *JFS College Ahead!* program.

This widely acclaimed "must know" informational session features prominent college deans. The key presenters hail from prestigious colleges and universities along the east coast and are familiar with all the changes in the admissions process as well as key factors students and parents need to keep in mind.

Guest panelists will be Greg Zaiser, VP of Admissions and Financial Planning at **Elon University** in Elon, NC; Jennifer Fondiller, Dean of Enrollment Management, **Barnard College**, New York, NY and William Douglas Zander, Director of Admissions, **University of Delaware**, Newark, DE. The evening event is co-sponsored by Jewish Family Service of Stamford, Inc. and the Stamford JCC.

With the many changes underway in the college selection process this year, this program is especially important for students in grades 8 through 11 and their parents. Not only are many colleges utilizing a new Common Application, but the SAT is changing as well. Since most high school students like to prepare well in advance for these important elements of the process, knowing ahead of time what to expect is bound to be helpful.

The first test date of the "new" SAT will be March 5th. Since there will be no on-site registration for taking the SAT, it is important that students and parents pay



attention to high school announcements regarding the dates and process. The College Board has free practice material online for the SAT at www.collegeboard.org as well as rules and regulations involving the test-taking process.

The applications for about one hundred of the more selective colleges and universities are different this year too. Students will be encouraged to submit materials they have developed along with their applications. The process is one that will be addressed by the panelists as they discuss the interview, the importance of school and community activities, volunteering and other facets of high school life that colleges like to learn about from applicants.

Although the guest presenters will cover the vast majority of topics parents and teens want to hear, there will be opportunities to ask questions toward the end of the program. Attendees should arrive early enough to pick up the free materials that will be available on-site prior to the program. There is no fee to attend and reservations are not required.

For more information, please contact Claire Friedlander at 203-921-4161 or email at ClaireF@ctjfs.org.

JFS CAN HELP JEWISH YOUNGSTERS ATTEND SUMMER CAMP THIS YEAR



The question raised by many Jewish parents is "What will our children do for the summer?" The answer is often followed by another question, "Can we afford to send our children to camp?"

Applications for the Ben and Joan Zinbarg - Jewish Family Service Camp Scholarship Program for summer 2016 are now available.

Tight budgets may still restrict the funds families can set aside for 'extras' such as camp, leaving many children unable to participate in the Jewish summer camp experience.

Through this camp scholarship program, financial assistance is once again available for eligible families from greater Stamford, greater Westport and Eastern

Fairfield County who are looking for rewarding Jewish summer experiences for their children.

The Ben and Joan Zinbarg - JFS Camp Scholarship Fund, generously established for this purpose, continues to provide the funding for our program. United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien generously support this program, increasing the number of scholarships we are able to award. Other charitable individuals, who understand the impact of this unique Jewish experience, have also contributed to the camp scholarship program. As a result of their generosity, almost fifty children were able to attend a Jewish summer camp in 2015.

As the number of applications increases, the demand for funds is still very strong.

To quote one of our past grateful recipients, "Thank you so much for the generous camp scholarship. I am so excited for another summer of Jewish and Israeli culture and activities. I look forward to seeing my

good camp friends that I made last summer. Without this scholarship, I would not be able to go to camp for another amazing summer. I really appreciate your generosity."

Research has shown that attendance at a Jewish camp helps to strengthen youngsters' Jewish identity and involvement in Jewish communities, now and into the future.

If you are interested in applying, your child or children must be entering first grade or above in September 2016, plan to attend a Jewish day or sleep-away camp and the family must demonstrate financial need. To obtain an application, please call Maria McNulty at 203-921-4161. The deadline for completed applications is March 30, 2016. All information is kept strictly confidential.

Anyone wishing to help support the Camp Scholarship Program should contact Matt Greenberg, CEO, at 203-921-4161 or email mgreenberg@ctjfs.org

REFLECTIONS ON NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS – 2016

Ilene K. Locker, Director
Employment & Training

As I write this article fresh into 2016, my thoughts turn to New Year's resolutions. By the time this goes to press, many may already be "history"; more likely they are latent. Fortunately, there's no shortage of opportunities for a fresh start, be it a new week, new month, new season, even the option of two new years (Jewish and traditional calendars)!

For those who are in transition and looking for work or are considering a shift in career direction, it is especially important to seize one of these occasions in 2016 to act on these resolutions.

Where to start? Look over those resolutions. More often than not, they relate to your passions. If they don't, or you can't identify or think you're devoid of such emotions, it's time for some introspection. Defining passion as a powerful or "strong feeling of enthusiasm or excitement for something or about doing something" (Merriam-Webster) -what compels you? Examine what makes you happy. What are the activities, types of issues, causes, people, and organizations that energize you? Being able to articulate this information sets in place some of the basic elements for an employment search. With this self-awareness, it is easier to focus on which types of jobs are most appropriate for you.

One useful tool to hone in on the kind of job you want and how to strategically get there is the *Career Tracks* exercise. Developed by the Office of Career Services at New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, it provides a means to explore positions that inspire you, and create career "tracks" that can be pursued. The basic steps are:

BRAINSTORMING

Begin by collecting a minimum of 50 job descriptions that have appeal, either because of the employer or the job itself. Cast a wide net and focus on what resonates with you.

ANALYSIS

Find the common elements in the job descriptions you selected. It should clarify the kinds of work and organizations that attract you, as well as show the requirements for these positions. During this phase, a second party, such as a trusted friend, may be enlisted for additional input and to share ideas.

SYNTHESIS

Using the data already gathered, develop potential job tracks that create parameters



A seminar titled, "Senior Lifestyles and Injury Prevention," presented by Tracy Evans covered safety and injury prevention in the home, workplace, and awareness of the outside environment was held at JFS offices for participants in the SCSEP program.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a federally funded program designed to provide job skills training and job development services to low-income residents who are ages 55 and older. These funds are through Title V of the Older Americans Act.

SCSEP participants gain work experience in a variety of community service activities at non-profit and public facilities, including schools, hospitals, day-care centers, and senior centers. Likewise, it provides over 40 million community service hours to public and non-profit agencies, allowing them to enhance and offer needed services they could not otherwise afford.

For qualified participants, this training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities. Supportive services and access to resources are also provided as needed to assist in the efforts to be job ready. The objective is to provide the resources so that clients are successful in their search for employment.

around and frame career interests. During this process, job seekers need to take stock of their skills, qualifications and experiences as they relate to these potential tracks. Any gaps can best be identified with a clear view of the requisite skills, experiences and qualifications for a particular position.

APPLICATION

Within this framework, the foundation is in place to make strategic steps and develop an action plan on how to become better educated about and how to pursue these opportunities.

"Go for it" with purpose and follow your passion. "There is no passion to be found playing small – in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living" – Nelson Mandela (Idealist Careers, *Stay Inspired during the Holidays*..12/24/15).

JFS can provide you with the resources to help you help yourself and to improve upon and learn new skills; assist you with sorting out various options and identifying transferable skills; serve as a coach and cheerleader. For more information, and/or to schedule an appointment, contact Ilene K. Locker, Director of Employment and Training at 203-921-4161 or iklocker@ctjfs.org.

AN EVENING WITH JFS – 37th Annual Mitzvah Awards & Special Recognition – *continued from page 1*

JFS Auction – to as co-chair and four as chair. Among the many awards she has received, Sandy has been honored by Hadassah (Woman of the Year and National Leadership Award); UJF (Volunteer of the Year); and Westchester Hebrew High School (Distinguished Service Award). Sandy and her husband Moshe have four children and eleven grandchildren.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri, **Linda Russ** arrived in Westport, via New York City, in 1995. She is a veteran print and broadcast journalist and author by profession, having worked for many years as writer/producer on ABC's Good Morning America and editorial positions for CBS News and WABC/TV Eyewitness News. Linda has written *Teenspeak: A Bewildered Parents Guide to Teenagers* and was ghost writer of Joan Lunden's nationally syndicated newspaper column. She also worked for four years as PR/Marketing Director at Bi-Cultural Day School. Since moving to the area, Linda's impact as a lay-leader is just as impressive. She has been on the Board of Trustees of Bi-Cultural Day School for almost eight years, on the executive committee for four, and currently serves as Vice President. Linda joined the Board of Directors of UJA/Federation Westport Weston Wilton Norwalk six year ago, serving as both co-chair and chair during that period. When the Federation merged and became the Federation of Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County, Linda remained on as co-chair, providing leadership and continuity to the organization for two years through the challenging merger process. She is a graduate of the Behrend Institute for Leadership, a lifetime member of Hadassah and a member of AIPAC's Capitol and Congressional Clubs. In the past, she also served for four years on the Board of The Conservative Synagogue. Linda and her husband, Len, have two adult children.

After eleven years at JFS, **Iris Morrison** will be leaving our agency to return to Israel, where she lived previously for twenty three years. Iris joined the JFS staff as Associate Executive Director, after serving as Assistant Executive Director at the UJA/Federation of Westport, Weston, Wilton and Norwalk. Acutely aware of the importance of JFS in the community, Iris worked to help create ties and partnerships between JFS, other agencies, lay leadership, individual donors and congregations. With her excellent organizational skills and focused attention to detail, Iris oversaw many of the day-to-day operations of JFS, helping to raise the bar on efficient functioning of the agency. She edited JFS' newsletter, coordinated the re-accreditation process three times, supervised the Continuing Quality Improvement activities and oversaw the initial implementation of the new client database system. Since she has been at JFS, Iris has been the force behind *An Evening with JFS*, and brought her skills to bear for the Saul Cohen-JFS Lecture as well. Always quick with a smile or a joke, Iris often became the "go to" person if there was a problem or someone needed help or guidance. Her intuitive sense of what to say or do extends beyond staff to the board members and community members with whom she interacts on a daily basis. We recognize Iris for her many contributions to JFS as she begins this new chapter in her life.

An Evening with JFS, a social and community event as well as a fundraiser, will offer a relaxed dinner and both a silent and live auction as well. Items will include theater tickets, Disney Park tickets, Judaica, jewelry, art, vacations and Yankee tickets! Not surprisingly, Sandy Speter will be doubling as honoree and auction chair!

Co-chair Meryl Japha shared her thoughts: "The best part of *An Evening with JFS* is the opportunity it gives the community to come together to celebrate the outstanding work of those being honored and the chance to support this gem of an agency which changes peoples' lives, one individual at a time." For more details or to attend, please call JFS at 203-921-4161 or visit www.ctjfs.org.

4TH SAUL COHEN – JFS LECTURE

Dr. Leonard Felder, *Featured Speaker – a hit!*

Lynn Saltz, *Marketing Coordinator*

In an auditorium at the Ferguson Library, close to 300 people listened attentively to Leonard Felder, Ph.D., a prominent psychologist and prolific author, speak about a topic that truly resonated with the audience.

Dr. Felder's presentation on November 5, *When Difficult Relatives Happen to Good People*, was a lighthearted, humorous, yet highly practical exploration of creative ways to deal with family members who are complicated or who have baffled and challenged others in the past. With the Thanksgiving holiday following shortly after the event, Dr. Felder's advice couldn't have come at a better time!

This lecture is offered through the generosity of Mimi and Saul Cohen. It is a gift they give annually to a grateful community at no cost.

Dr. Felder, a licensed psychologist in West Los Angeles, has written twelve books on Jewish spirituality and personal growth that have sold over one million copies and have been translated into 14 languages. His newest book is titled, "Here I Am: Using Jewish Spiritual Wisdom to Become More Present, Centered, and Available for Life."

He has appeared on over 200 radio and television programs, including *Oprah*, *The Today Show*, *CNN*, *The CBS Early Show*, *NBC Nightly News*, *National Public Radio*, *Canada AM*, and *BBC London*.

Mimi and Saul Cohen said, "Sponsoring an annual lecture provides an opportunity to bring the community together... and to broaden awareness of JFS... as well as experience an evening of learning. The momentum and interest in the lecture grows every year, with people looking forward to the event and telling others about it.

This year, Len Felder's talk brought in many members of the Jewish community who had not previously attended. We were very happy with the success of Dr. Felder's talk and success for JFS! We couldn't be more pleased to see the growth in awareness and support for JFS through the annual lecture - which we hope to continue to provide for many years to come."

A select group of generous JFS donors were thanked with a Patrons' Reception prior to the Community Lecture and had the opportunity to meet Dr. Felder in a more intimate setting. A book signing and dessert buffet followed the community lecture.

As part of this program, a gathering of Jewish Twenties & Thirties (JFS' JTT group) met for dinner and cocktails in a private home the evening before the lecture, where they got to *schmooze* with Dr. Felder and discuss balancing 'work and life challenges as a young Jewish adult.' Dr. Felder also met with students from the Connecticut Jewish High School.



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JFS is deeply saddened by the passing
of Ron Gross.

**Ron was a long-time, dedicated and
 committed supporter of JFS.**

**He served on the
 Board of Directors
 as a member and an officer.**

**In 2006, he was awarded our annual
 'JFS Evening' Mitzvah Award.**

He will be dearly missed.

**The Board and Staff sends their
 deepest sympathies to his wife, Grecia,
 and his entire family.**



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A special thank you to all who contributed
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This years' annual campaign has been a great success
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Your gift allows JFS to continue to provide support
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 munity who are faced with difficult life challenges
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If you have not yet made a donation and would like
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In honor of the birth of Carol and Wil Brewer's granddaughter

In honor of the birth of Jessica and Adam Batkin's daughter

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In honor of the birth of Judy and Adam Rin's first grandchild

In honor of the birth of Leah Wallick and Elliot Bassin's new son Bryce Jacob

In honor of the birth of Lee Fanwick's great-granddaughter

In honor of the birth of Nancy and Mark Funt's new grandson

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In honor of the birth of Izzy Lustig's granddaughter

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WHY GIVE A LEGACY GIFT TO JFS?

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For additional information about making a gift, please contact Matt Greenberg, CEO, at 203-921-4161 or mgreenberg@ctjfs.org

THE MANY FACES OF GRIEF AND LOSS

Eve Moskowitz, *Director, Clinical Services*

There are many different scenarios that elicit feelings of loss and grief, from the loss of a loved one through death or divorce to the loss of one's health or prosperity. Each kind of loss affects each person in a different way. However, it is important to remember that all feelings of grief are valid, no matter the loss, and that most often the recovery process looks similar.

Too often people measure their loss, perhaps judging that the loss of an elderly parent is not as significant as the loss of a young person. The one difference is that the loss of a young person through tragedy can affect the community at large.

In her work on death and dying, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross outlined five stages of grieving. The first reaction to loss is often the inability to feel anything, ...to feel numb, with a robotic-like reaction. This stage is that of shock and DENIAL. It can last from a few days to a few months. The depth of this denial stage can be affected by the nature of the loss. For example, the death of an elderly parent or one ailing with an illness is far less shocking than the loss of a loved one through a tragic and unexpected accident, where being unprepared for the loss heightens the denial.

Once the denial dissipates, the next stage is usually ANGER - sometimes, turned outward and sometimes inward, thus blaming oneself. Anger is the process in which one tries to find a reason or explanation for the loss. Anger is usually the secondary emotion that covers fear and sadness.

The next stage of grief is frequently BARGAINING, the exercise of trying to make a deal with fate, in an attempt to get some control back. This stage doesn't generally last long. When the reality surfaces again, it leads to extreme sadness and the stage of DEPRESSION. Feelings of depression can lead to disturbed sleeping, crying, changes in eating habits, and thoughts of ending one's life. People typically seek counseling at this stage, as depression affects daily functioning most dramatically. The last stage of grief is ACCEPTANCE, the beginning to finding how to live with the new norm and perhaps find lessons in the experience. According to Kubler-Ross those who are grieving go through all stages of grief, but not always in order and at times they cycle back and forth.

No matter what the loss, how sudden or unexpected, the grief process is real and needs to be recognized and supported as a "normal process." There are steps one can take to help with the course of grieving. First, it helps to acknowledge the grief. Allow it to take presence in your life with the understanding that it is time-limited and will become manageable. Try to maintain some routine in life, while getting rest and eating properly. Seek professional counseling, keep a journal of feelings and experiences and reach out to friends and loved ones for help. Take time to make important decisions while respecting the process. There is no time line and everyone grieves differently and at different rates.

Jewish Family Service offers counseling services on an individual and group basis for all who are grieving and have suffered a loss. With flexible hours and the ability to accept most insurance plans, we are ready to help you in times of need. Please contact Eve Moskowitz, LCSW, Director of Clinical Services to schedule an appointment at 203-921-4161, ext 122.



Jewish twenties and thirties



On Thursday, January 21, Jewish Twenties and Thirties (JTT) hosted Dinner & Drinks with conversation, led by Rabba Yaffa Epstein. Rabbi Epstein is the Director of Education, North America for the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies. She received Rabbinic Ordination from Yeshivat Maharat and holds a Law Degree from Bar-Ilan University. Held at a private home, the evening included the opportunity for the JTT group to socialize and share meaningful discussion. For more information about other upcoming JTT events, please contact Leah Schechter at LSchechter@ctjfs.org

ACHI - An Update

Eve Moskowitz, *Director, Clinical Services*

A little over a year ago, Jewish Family Service introduced one of its newest programs, ACHI, Hebrew for 'My Brother.'

The inception of the program began with a young man who met the mother of an adolescent in the community who was concerned about her son. She described him as bright and funny, but isolated socially, struggling to find his way in high school. The young man and adolescent boy met and the connection they developed, cultivated by the parent, became a mentor/mentee relationship. After a year of what evolved into a friendship, involving activities and guidance, the adolescent began to thrive, with new found self-esteem and abilities to make friends and successfully begin to plan for college.

The mother and young mentor approached JFS with the idea of a "big brother" program. JFS recognized the need for such a program, and happily developed ACHI.

The young adult/mentee flourished and went on to college to successfully integrate into his new environment. He still keeps in touch with his mentor and his family.

Several young adolescents have also already benefited from this program - as have their mentors - and their families.

To quote one grateful parent who wrote to her son's mentor, "I know in my heart that had you not entered our lives when you did I really dare not think what might of happened to him. There are no words in my heart to thank you. You saved two lives... mine and my son's."

As the second phase of the program begins, recognizing a need in the community for such a program JFS continues to offer ACHI and is looking to expand the program to include additional teen boys in need of such social guidance. The program serves teen boys aged 15 to 18, who are not suffering from major learning or spectrum disorders, yet battle with social skill deficits and/or bullying. The referrals to the program come from schools, therapists, pediatricians and parents.

In the near future, JFS will be offering a similar mentorship program for girls with like issues in their social environment.

The Director of Clinical Services, together with a seasoned Psychiatrist from the Stamford Community, provides the mentors, who are post-college graduates, with a training including safety parameters, the development of communication skills and sensitivity training. All mentors are required to undergo background checks and physical examinations, as mandated by State regulations.

After the family completes an application, describing their teen's attributes, limitations, issues, hobbies, habits, academic and social performance and health, and after the parents meet with the Director of Clinical Services, JFS matches a mentor to the mentee. The parents of the teens are then given the opportunity to vet the individual mentors. Once the parents agree with the match, the mentor and mentee meet.

The commitment between the teen and his mentor is for at least six to twelve months with a minimum of bi-monthly meetings. The mentee and mentor spend time doing things that the mentee enjoys, (i.e. sports, spectator and individual, movies, food, restaurants, art, music, fishing, etc.) the cost of which is usually deferred to the families. In the event the family cannot meet the financial obligation, arrangements can be made through JFS for financial assistance for particular activities.

The Director of Clinical Services provides supervision throughout the program as well as maintaining monthly contact with the ACHI parents during the mentorship to evaluate progress. JFS is always available for any issues that may arise.

For further information about ACHI, please contact Eve Moskowitz, Director of Clinical Services, JFS, 203-921-4161 or emoskowitz@ctjfs.org

It Takes a Village!



Kate Albrecht (second from right), Fairfield County Site Director of Community Plates, delivered food donated by Trader Joe's to Matt Greenberg (far left), CEO of JFS, for distribution at JFS Fresh Produce Day. Samantha Mauro, (far right), Marketing Assistant at Community Plates, and Steve Albrecht help to unload fruit and vegetables from the van.

JFS is now a drop-off site for Community Plates! As a part of its mission, Community Plates helps to eliminate hunger by directly transferring fresh, usable food that would have otherwise been thrown away by restaurants, markets and other food industry sources to food-insecure families. JFS will be accepting food donations once a month.

For food assistance, please contact Rebekah Kanefsky, JFS Case Manager, at 203-921-4161 or rkanefsky@ctjfs.org

JFS Receives Funding from *MAZON* *continued from page 1*

The JFS Kosher Food Pantry and Fresh Produce Day are already helping those who require food assistance, and eligible clients of those two programs will be offered help with SNAP enrollment as well.

In addition, JFS' core services, such as case management, employment and training, home companion, information and referral, crisis and emergency assistance and housing and employment referrals, facilitate our efforts to identify seniors at risk and those eligible for SNAP assistance.

The JFS Case Management staff will also be reaching out to other agencies throughout the community who may be providing other services to seniors and adults to help identify those who are in fact eligible for SNAP benefits, but who are challenged in some way from applying.

As part of our mandate for this program, JFS will be offering **SNAP Enrollment Workshops for professionals, seniors and adults** on the second Tuesday of every month at 11:00 am in the Westport office (431 Post Road East, Suite 11) and the second Wednesday of every month at 2:30 pm in the Stamford office (733 Summer Street, 6th Floor). These workshops are geared to inform the public of this program and help determine and identify which individuals might be eligible for this assistance.

"With funds through *MAZON*, we will expand our reach to vulnerable seniors in our community by connecting them to available resources," said Matt Greenberg, CEO of JFS. "Seniors often don't realize that benefits are available to them, and this initiative will help us assist a broader group of older adults in our catchment area."

For additional information about the programs or to request a workshop at your organization, please contact Rebekah Kanefsky, JFS Case Manager at 203-921-4161 or email SNAP@ctjfs.org.



SHABBAT MEAL DELIVERY PROGRAM

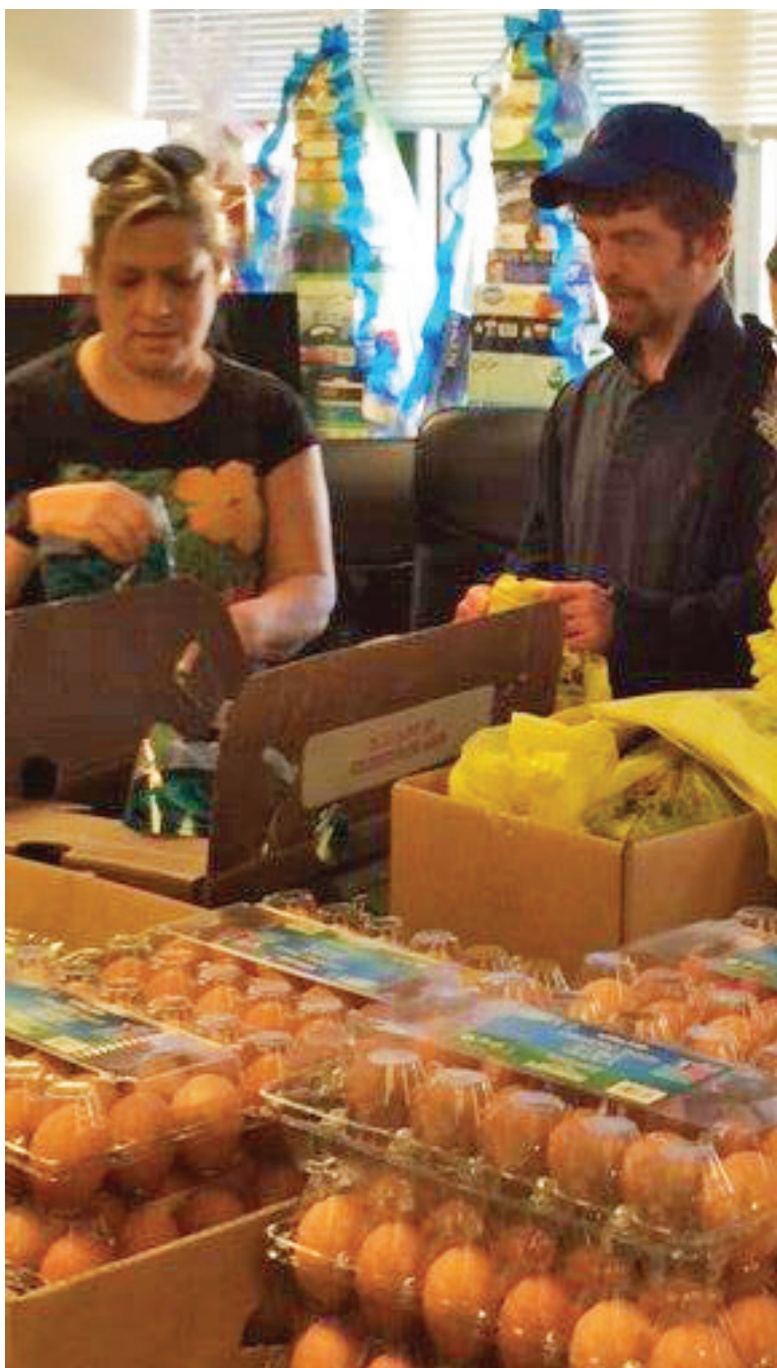
Beverly Stein delivers a completely prepared Shabbat meal to JFS client, Irving Griffler, to enjoy on Friday night. JFS has introduced a home delivery program to assist homebound clients, both seniors and disabled, with food deliveries of pre-packaged Shabbat meals generously donated by 613 Restaurant in Stamford. Beverly, a current member of the JFS Board, coordinates the program which has been running successfully since August 2015, providing nearly forty deliveries of food each month.

In addition, holiday food gift bags, perishable and non-perishable items from the JFS Kosher Food Pantry are provided to those who require this service. Currently, the program is assisting clients in need from the Stamford community. To request home food delivery, please contact Rebekah Kanefsky, Case Manager, at 203-921-4161 or rkanefsky@ctjfs.org



(L to R) Nicole Granskog, Community Impact Coordinator of the United Way of Western Connecticut, stands together with a JFS client and Jeri Appel, JFS volunteer, at the JFS Kosher Food Pantry Fresh Produce Day.

The monthly program, JFS Kosher Food Pantry Fresh Produce Day, offers perishable food items to clients in need. JFS clients are able to 'shop' for fresh fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, eggs and breads donated by the CT Food Bank, Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County and Community Plates. Feeding over 30 households through this event, JFS is pleased to expand its existing pantry services to now offer perishable items in addition to the existing non-perishable goods that have been available since the Kosher Food Pantry opened its doors 13 years ago.



Dovi Zucker, Friendship Circle Adult participant, assists JFS volunteer, Liz Kitay, in sorting and preparing food donations for Fresh Produce Day, a monthly JFS Kosher Food Pantry event. The produce event provides food for over 30 households each month, offering donations of fresh produce, meat, breads, eggs and dairy donated by the CT Food Bank, Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County and Community Plates. If you would like to volunteer to sort and set up the food, please contact Rebekah Kanefsky at 203-921-4161.

JFS KICKS OFF PASSOVER FOOD DRIVE

Rebekah Kanefsky, *Case Manager*

Individuals and families in need of assistance at Passover can once again rely on JFS to provide them with traditional food staples necessary for Passover observance.

Continuing its tradition of coordinating the collection and distribution of over 250 bags of basic Passover foods, JFS is already working with members of local participating synagogues and Jewish schools that are running food drives and collecting donations. A team of dedicated volunteers will personally deliver the Passover food bags. Groups of volunteers from each of the synagogues and Jewish schools are being assembled as the holiday approaches.

The Passover Food Drive has grown, and this year, JFS will operate this event in cooperation with Maccabi JCC Cares and J-Serve programs.

Chaired by Risa Goldblum and Liz Kitay, the bagging and distribution event will take place at the JCC on April 17th, in collaboration with the teens participating in the J-Serve program. Liz stated, "I am thankful to be a part of this project...It is wonderful to see the community come together for such a valuable cause." This is Risa's second year as chair of the event, and her dedication to this project continues to help make this important community tradition so meaningful.

JFS coordinates the distribution and delivery of these 250 food bags throughout our service area, also supplying the bags and greeting cards to accompany the items. The basic Kosher for Passover staples will include a one pound box of matzah, a jar of gefilte fish, a small jar of horseradish, matzah ball soup and

mix, a jar of borscht, a bottle of grape juice and a can of macaroons.

Marina Sapir, a veteran JFS volunteer assisting in the event explained, "These Passover food bags are very important to the recipients. It gives them the feeling that others in the community care about them and that they are not alone..."

As part of the event this year, two food drives will be held during two Sundays at the Stop & Shop Supermarket, 2200 Bedford Street. On March 20th and April 3rd between 11 am – 2 pm, youth from many of our local Jewish groups will assist JFS in collecting food donations at the entrances of the store. Food collected at those events will then be brought to the JCC for bagging and distribution on April 17th. This new initiative of supermarket food collections is another way that the community-at-large can join this *mitzvah*.

Keeping Passover or a Kosher home can be a challenge for those who are experiencing financial hardships. Especially in these difficult times, a family who wishes to keep Kosher may require some assistance. All year round, as well as during Passover, Jewish Family Service operates a Kosher Food Pantry for those in need.

If you are aware of anyone in the community who might benefit from our assistance, please contact rkanefsky@ctjfs.org or call 203-921-4161. All requests and referrals are kept strictly confidential.

LEARNING MITZVOT AT A VERY EARLY AGE



Claudia Brenner, JFS Donor Relation Coordinator, visits the JCC Sara Walker Nursery School to collect boxes of food donated by the school's children to the JFS Kosher Food Pantry. Claudia explained to the children how their food would help people in the community. Sandi Waldstreicher, Director of the JCC Sara Walker Nursery School, proudly looks on. Thank you, boys and girls, for all your kind help!

Donate your car
and help support JFS



Proceeds benefit JFS

For additional information and to find out how you can support JFS contact Erika Garcia at 203-921-4161 or erikag@ctjfs.org

SENIOR SERVICES

Can You Hear Me Now?

Isrella Knopf, *Director, Senior Services*

Almost 40 million Americans have hearing loss. It is considered the third-most prevalent chronic medical condition amongst seniors and older adults, after arthritis and hypertension. Hearing loss is often gradual and, therefore, something to which one adapts. You may not notice it for months, or even years. Then one day, you notice you no longer hear the birds singing. Unfortunately, the longer you ignore it, the harder it is to treat.



There are many negative impacts when hearing fades. Relationships suffer as people with hearing loss are more likely to avoid social situations and have difficulty in engaging in and following conversation. Everyday tasks can be a challenge. There can be daily frustration, irritability, and stress in a person's life. In extreme cases, isolation and depression can develop.

Hearing loss doesn't only affect your quality of life. The auditory system is a conduit to the brain. When the ears have lost their fine-tuning ability and are no longer sending clear messages to the brain, it makes it difficult for the brain to make sense of the environment. Though the ears detect sounds, we need the brain to make sense of these sounds, to process and interpret what these sounds mean. The brain is what translates sounds. It is the brain that actually "hears."

The auditory center of the brain not only plays a role in processing incoming information, but, of course, is directly responsible for memory as well. When nerves and the areas of the brain responsible for hearing are deprived of sound, they become deprived of stimulation. Without input, the sound processing area of the brain may change in structure. They atrophy and weaken - making recovery more difficult. As the hearing channels are no longer effectively used, it is difficult for the brain to remember common everyday sounds. Essentially the brain "forgets" the sounds, and over time becomes unable to understand them. Research shows that hearing loss in some older adults appears to be associated with a faster rate of cognitive decline than people without hearing loss, and they may also be more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain hearing.

If possible, you may want to get your hearing tested annually, in case there is a problem of which you are not aware. At the very least, it is important to have your hearing tested as soon as you notice some hearing problems. Don't put it off. You can take steps to make sure your brain is operating smoothly, and the road begins with your ear. The sooner you act when you suspect hearing loss, the better your hearing will be in the years ahead. For the overwhelming majority of people with hearing loss, professionally fitted hearing aids offer great benefit. A hearing aid will stimulate brain activity so the brain will not need to "learn" to hear again. Remember, protecting your hearing means you will also be protecting your brain.

CASE MANAGEMENT

FOOD INSECURITY AMONGST OUR SENIOR POPULATION AND HOW JFS CAN HELP

Rebekah Kanefsky, *Case Manager*

Food Insecurity can hide itself well. Jane* was a successful business woman running her own business for about twenty-five years. Sadly, when the recession hit, things took a downward turn. As she entered into her senior years and, nearing retirement, she found herself spending her savings to save her business. Upon finally retiring, Jane realized that she only had enough savings for a few months' of living expenses. Like many seniors on a fixed income with little-to-no liquid assets, Jane began to find herself in a challenging situation - should she pay rent or utilities this month? Should she pay the car insurance or the phone bill? And of course, there was food. With all the crucial living expenses to consider, Jane became what we have come to know as "food-insecure." Month after month, she found herself in the compromising situation of having no money left for food.

Sadly, Jane is far from alone. In the United States, one in seven seniors live in poverty and 5.4 million seniors are food-insecure. This has a tremendous impact on general health and well-being. Food-insecure seniors are 40% more likely to experience congestive heart failure. Not surprisingly, food-insecure seniors are 60% more likely to experience depression. Hunger feeds into mental and behavioral health issues and is clearly impacting our seniors on a profound level.

Ten thousand baby boomers are turning 65 every single day, and a majority of them report that they do not have enough money to support themselves once retired. Research on retirement conducted in 2015 found that Baby Boomers, aged 55 to 65, have not saved enough for their retirement. They want to have \$45,500 in annual retirement income, yet they've accumulated nest eggs that would generate only \$9,150 annually...a large gap between what those nearing retirement say they need to live on and what they actually have saved.

What does that mean? Simply put, short-falls in cash once they are on a fixed income. Many of those like Jane are finding themselves each month without the security of

knowing that they can afford even their most basic needs and living expenses.

That is where Jewish Family Service comes into the picture. We assisted Jane with access to the Kosher Food Pantry, emergency funds, Shabbat meals and information and referral - which helped her navigate the daunting bureaucracy and secure additional benefits such as 'energy assistance.'

JFS is here for the community serving those who need us most. In its thirteenth year, the Kosher Food Pantry continues to serve those in need. Of the nearly 800 people served by the pantry during 2014, almost 200 were seniors! In 2015, that number increased to 30% of those served - and the numbers continue to rise.

Jewish Family Service is proud to have received a \$30,000 grant from *MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger*, a national food relief organization. JFS is one of only thirteen human services agencies selected nation-wide to receive this funding, which began on December 1, 2015 and runs through November 30, 2016.

The *MAZON* grant initiative, called *Senior Solutions to Hunger™*, hopes to decrease the percentage of food-insecure adults and seniors aged 50 and above through increased access to state-funded food benefits, thereby, prompting their connections with pantries and other food resources.

(PLEASE SEE MAZON ARTICLE ON PAGE 1)

Along with the additional services already provided by case management, clients like Jane can receive the help they need when they need it most.

You are our best eyes and ears in the community. If you know someone like Jane who is food-insecure and could benefit from enrolling in SNAP, and/or who is struggling financially and needs our assistance, please have them call Rebekah Kanefsky at JFS as 203-921-4161.

* names changed in order to protect confidentiality
Statistics from Kaiser Family Foundation, NFESH, NCCA, AARP

JFS is a fully accredited, licensed, non-sectarian social service agency and a member agency of



Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies

Connecticut Council of Family Service Agencies

Council on Accreditation



Stamford Chamber of Commerce • Norwalk Chamber of Commerce • Business Council of Fairfield County

SAVE THE DATE

Don't Miss this Important Program

*Jewish Family Service and
The Stamford Jewish Community Center
Present*

“Taking Care of Yourself in Retirement – How to Stay Healthy, Wealthy and Wise”

Thursday, June 2
at 7 p.m. at the JCC

Keynote speaker followed by 3 break-out sessions:

“Reinvent Yourself”

alternative careers,
educational opportunities,
volunteering

“Brain Fitness”

overview of JFS's own
one-on-one program

“Strategies for Financial Fitness”

individual planning
including critical
Medicare choices

PROGRAMS

JFS New Beginnings

Mondays – 7:00-8:00 pm

Location: Westport JFS office,
431 Post Road East, Suite 11

Support group for separated
or divorced. To register, contact
Nadja Streiter at 203-921-4161 or
email at nstreiter@ctjfs.org

Let's Talk

Thursdays – 11 :00 am **Free**

Location: JCC Stamford,
1035 Newfield Ave

Seniors talk about common interests
and concerns. A JFS counselor
facilitates the group. Contact Connie Cirilo
Freeman at 203-487-0983
or cfreeman@stamfordjcc.org



Do a Mitzvah – **Volunteer!**



(left), Jodi Maxner, Job Developer, Abby Kohut and Ilene Locker, Director of Employment and Training at JFS pose for a congratulatory photo following the workshop.

In early September 2015, Abby Kohut, a national career expert and author of *Absolutely Abby's 101 Job Search Secrets*, was the speaker at *How to Impress: Before, During and After You Get In the Door*. Co-sponsored by the Employment & Training and Counseling Departments at JFS, the program attracted a group of very interested job seekers determined to learn from Ms. Kohut's experiences on a successful job search.

SEND A JFS TRIBUTE CARD



Tribute cards are sent to commemorate a bar/bat mitzvah, graduation, wedding, birthday or any other simcha or life transition of a friend or relative. They can also be sent to a family or friend who has lost a loved one. There is no fixed amount for a donation for a card to be sent on your behalf. The inscription notes that you have made a donation to JFS and for what purpose.

Please call **921-4161** to arrange for a card to be sent.



Happy Purim

from the Board and

Staff of JFS



ORDER A MITZVAH BASKET FOR TZEDAKAH!

ADD A
BEAUTIFULLY
DECORATED
BIMAH
BASKET
TO YOUR
SIMCHA

Bimah baskets and centerpieces are uniquely and colorfully designed to fit the décor of your event. They are filled with 'faux food', symbolic of the food that is donated to JFS' K kosher Food Pantry. The proceeds the agency receives from supporters who purchase baskets are used to help families and clients who turn to JFS for assistance.



For additional information, please call
Claudia Brenner at JFS: **203-921-4161**
or email cbrenner@ctjfs.org



Let JFS help you make your home sparkle for Pesach!

JFS' Residential Cleaning Service can help you get the job done. Trained and supervised cleaners provide regularly scheduled and seasonal cleaning.

Prices are competitive or slightly lower than the competition.

Revenues generated help JFS provide quality social services to those in need, in addition to offering employment to unemployed individuals in our community.

For additional information, please
call Jodi at (203) 921-4161 or email
residentialcleaning@ctjfs.org

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