

Restoring Hope Across the Generations



Family

Album

Jewish Family Service of Rochester, Inc.

Winter 2005



The Many Faces of Volunteering

A Message from the Executive Director



Photo © 2002 Phil Matt

As the joy of the recent Chanukah holiday lingers, I am reminded of the traditional argument between our sages about how to light the candles. Do we light eight the first night, decreasing each night, or start with one candle and increase each night? Do we celebrate the diminishing oil or the increasing miracle? As you know, our tradition settled on the approach expressed by Rabbi Hillel to add a candle each night until all eight are burning brightly. This is a most fitting metaphor for Jewish Family Service, which strives to help miracles grow in the lives of the people we serve, one "candle" at a time.

You will read in these pages about the miracle of two extraordinary volunteers. For young Molly Yunker, a simple volunteer activity has grown into a deep bond of affection that has changed two lives. For Frank Donsky, doing for others has been the key to maintaining his positive outlook since a World War II injury forced his retirement 30 years ago. We are grateful for what they, and all our volunteers do to make life better for people who turn to JFS for assistance.

We are about to open our long-awaited satellite counseling office. Who knows what miracles of human growth and change may occur there? We do know that our ability to bring our services closer to families who need them has been made possible, not by a miracle, but by the very tangible and extremely generous support of two JFS friends, Carol and Mike Hirsh. We thank you both for your unwavering commitment to JFS and the people we serve.

Also many thanks to all who have already responded to our recent request for funds. If you have not yet contributed, please use the reply envelope included within these pages. Your gift will help keep the Chanukah spirit alive throughout the year by bringing light — and maybe even a miracle or two — to people in need of our help.

Best wishes for the New Year. I look forward to seeing you on March 20th at our annual gala honoring Bunny and Mort Skirboll and featuring Pulitzer Prize winning author and columnist, Dave Barry.

Barry Stein, Executive Director



The 2004-05 Annual Campaign
is now underway and a gift
envelope is attached for
your convenience.

**Please consider giving at the
Family Tree Society level!**

Dave Barry Talks Back

Pulitzer Prize Winning Columnist, Author and Humorist Will Headline JFS Gala on March 20th



You read him every Monday in the Democrat & Chronicle, and you laughed every time. Dave Barry's insightful and hilarious spin on life has made Mondays a little more tolerable for more than 23 years, and he's not done yet! Well actually, he is done — for at least a little while. Dave is taking a writing sabbatical from his column until 2006 — but this will be no vacation.

His new movie, *Dave Barry's Complete Guide to Guys*, is coming out soon and he will be busy

promoting his recently published children's book, *Peter and the Starcatchers* — not to mention preparing for his appearance at the JFS Gala, Sunday, March 20th at Temple B'rith Kodesh!

Tickets are on sale now at \$50 for general seating and \$125 for patron seats — which include a special dinner reception with Dave Barry prior to the event and reserved seating at the main event. A portion of the ticket price is tax deductible.

Long-time JFS supporters, Bunny and Mort Skirboll, are serving as honorary co-chairs for the 2005 Gala. "We are thrilled to be a part of such a wonderful event," says Bunny. "After the success of last year's gala, we knew this year's would be no exception. We love helping spread the word about JFS, and the wonderful work that they have done for so many people for so many years. Not to mention we are huge Dave Barry fans!" The Skirbolls will be honored the night of the event and JFS will be accepting contributions on their behalf. All contributions will be listed in the evening's program and in the next edition of the Family Album. To make a contribution or to purchase tickets, call 461-0110.

Leading the Gala Committee for the event are Lisa Axelrod and Michelle Katon. They invite you to volunteer along with them on the night of the event and become a part of this special evening.

Generation Two Initiative: Caring Adults Advocating for Children

JFS invites college students and senior citizens to take part in an innovative new program called the Generation Two Initiative (formerly CGEL). The program is designed to help first-graders succeed in school by pairing them with young adult or senior volunteers. Volunteers use a briefcase filled with games, books, puzzles and other materials to encourage students to share their feelings, interests and aspirations during weekly, child centered meetings throughout the school year.



"Our goal," says Chris Brady, JFS

Director of After School Programs, "is to help the children to strengthen their emotional resources and social skills, and we are seeing great progress so far." Brady heads the program at Rochester City School No. 36 where 54 children and volunteers regularly meet.

The program was researched and developed by local psychologist Dr. Bruce Gilberg while at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Gilberg first implemented the program in the Fairport School District, and now the initiative has expanded into the Rochester City Schools. The goal for 2005 will be to expand into a rural school district.

Volunteers are expected to spend approximately an hour and a half per week with their students. Specialized training is offered throughout the year. *If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or learning more about the Generation Two Initiative, please call Nancy Hiller at 461-0110, ext. 111, or email her at nhiller@jfsrochester.org.*

Corporate and Individual Sponsors for the JFS Gala as of 01/05/05 Include:

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Volunte

By B.J. Yudelson

...Life Changing

"It's been a life-changing experience," says Molly Yunker about her friendly visiting as a Jewish Family Service volunteer. "I never thought I'd be so important to someone unrelated to me. Ruth often tells me that I'm just what she needed in her later years."

When she was a Brighton High School sophomore, Molly first visited Ruth at the request of JFS Volunteer Coordinator, Nancy Hiller. Ruth, whose only living relative lives in Israel, had requested a "friendly visitor." After the initial get-acquainted phone call, the lively 16-year-old got in the habit of visiting her 88-year-old friend for an hour each Sunday.

For the first year, they sat on the couch and chatted, getting to know each other and developing a deeper bond than either of them had expected. Molly talked about school and friends, playing the bassoon, becoming a brown belt in karate. Ruth talked about her past, about losing her parents in the Holocaust, about coming to the United States from Germany in 1941 to join her country-doctor husband who had preceded her.

By the second year, Molly was driving Ruth to the grocery store and beauty parlor. Sometimes they went out for lunch or to the art gallery. Molly kept coming back, Sunday after Sunday, because she found the stories amazing and, more importantly, had grown to love Ruth like a grandmother.



(Right) Molly as a young "friendly visitor". Six years later, Molly's friendly visiting has grown into a granddaughter-grandmother relationship.



Ruth was present at Molly's high school graduation celebration. Even when Molly left home for Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, she continued the every Sunday ritual by telephone. The summer that Ruth had triple by-pass surgery, Molly was home and visited every day, first at the hospital then at the rehabilitation center. She never made a conscious decision to become the steady person in Ruth's life at that critical time; she just fell into it, and it felt right and important.

It's only natural that this compassionate young woman, who first volunteered at the Jewish Home in 7th grade, continues to volunteer despite a busy graduate school schedule. Through a Case Western program, she tutors high school students in math, reading, and SAT preparation. And always, she stays in touch with Ruth, who, at 94, is still mentally vigorous.

"When I come home, she's really excited," smiles Molly. "She says, 'You'd better come see me,' and I always do." Molly explains that she started the "friendly visitor" program to do something good for someone else. "After awhile, I realized I was getting just as much out of it as she was."

"Wherever I am, I'll always volunteer," asserts Molly. "It makes me feel good, it makes other people feel good, so why not?"

ering is...

...A Blessing

"Volunteering is a blessing," claims Frank Donsky, who gives daily thanks for his life and family.

Frank, a disabled World War II veteran, knows how easy it would be to feel sorry for himself. Years ago, as he lay in Walter Reed Hospital recovering from a bullet wound that shattered his foot and led to its amputation, he made up his mind to think positively. "It's too easy to go downwards," he says, "and getting out of that is tough."

Instead, he shares his blessings with those who are less fortunate.

Growing up during the depression, and serving in war-torn Europe, Frank saw children scavenging in garbage pails for food. The image never left. Today he keeps Jewish Family Service's food pantry full. He is always on the lookout for bargains. Sometimes he uses Temple Beth David's tzedakah fund to make his purchases. More often, he dips into his own pocket.

Once a month, this octogenarian arrives at JFS with bags of non-perishable groceries for people who qualify for special food assistance. In the highest form of tzedakah, Frank does not know who receives his bounty, nor do they know its source.

Thirty years ago, retirement motivated Frank's voluntarism. For three months, he sat around the house "aggravating everybody." Finally, he set out looking for productive ways to stay busy.

He found them: at Temple Beth David, where he has been Men's Club treasurer for close to three decades; at Rochester



Frank Donsky, pictured with an assortment of food items he regularly donates to the JFS food cupboard.

Photo © 2004 Phil Matt

Psychiatric Center, where he runs a regular bingo game for the patients; and at JFS, where for two dozen years or so, he has opened his golden heart to hungry children and families.

The JFS food cupboard serves approximately 300 clients per year who are struggling with family illness, temporary job loss or unexpected financial expenses. From peanut butter to cereal, from soup to nuts, many of the people that use the food cupboard have undoubtedly benefited from Frank's generosity.

Why has Frank volunteered so consistently for so many years? "It's a challenge," he says, and "being positive, I always accept the challenge." He also likes the feeling of well-being that it gives him. Sometimes he feels as if the people whom he has helped to feed are at the table eating with him, sharing the food he has brought. Other times, he thinks of the Beth David people — many gone now — who have helped him collect and deliver food. "I keep them in my memory," he says.

Frank was married for 57 years. Since his wife Leah died, he has found new strength in his passion for voluntarism and his family. All told, he has three children, five grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren, a blessing for a man who devotes his life to creating blessings for others.

The food cupboard is supported by a generous grant from the Ames-Amzalak Memorial Trust and also receives food from private individuals and organizations.

For information about volunteering or donating food, please call Nancy Hiller at 461-0110 ext. 111.

Plasma TV Falls from Heaven

By Melinda Goldberg

You've probably heard of "Pennies from Heaven," but did you ever hear of a plasma TV from heaven?

Syndicated columnist Dave Barry recently observed that even though men have been shopping for holiday gifts for over 2000 years, they still don't know how to get it right. And how right he is!

Case in point: Rochester area resident, Carl Jordan, recently went shopping for holiday presents with his 11 year old daughter, Diana. After much thought and deliberation, they decided against individual gifts and selected something that the entire family could use and enjoy — a beautiful 60" state-of-the-art plasma TV, with a DVD system and all the bells and whistles you can think of.

They drove home happily knowing that this carefully selected gift would be delivered in a few days and provide endless hours of entertainment. They entered the house ready to tell mom all about this wonderful present that would provide years of enjoyment for the entire family. As they eagerly told her about the extraordinary present, her immediate response was a loud and resounding, "Not in this house!"

Carl and Diana were crushed. What would they do with this wonderful gift? They thought about returning the purchase, but in the spirit of the holiday season, decided that if they couldn't enjoy this fabulous TV, certainly someone else should be able to... but who?

Carl decided to do a web-search for non-profit organizations that serve children. When he came across Jewish Family Service and read about the extensive services we provide, he knew he had found the right place for the TV.

Upon calling JFS, Carl and Diana were delighted to learn that the agency was about to open a counseling satellite office, which would make a perfect home for the large, plasma TV. The TV will be set up in the conference room of this new office, where it will be used for video



presentations and educational sessions. (See *Satellite Office story on page 7*).

JFS thanks the entire Jordan Family: Carl, his wife Edie and his daughters Diana and Valerie for their very generous donation. Not only did their philanthropy succeed in restoring peace and harmony to the Jordan household, it will undoubtedly benefit the hundreds of children, families and individuals who participate in programs through our satellite office.

Plasma TV's from heaven? While you may not have a 60" plasma TV to donate, JFS gratefully accepts stocks, bonds, life insurance policies and even checks! Many other types of donations are also eligible for tax deductions.

To learn more about donating both traditional and non-traditional gifts, please call me at (585) 461-0110, ext 123. You may also email me at mgoldberg@jfsrochester.org.

Melinda Goldberg recently joined the staff of Jewish Family Service of Rochester, Inc. as Director of Development. She is responsible for the overall development and implementation of the agency's fundraising activities. This includes overseeing the annual membership campaign and steering the recently created major gift effort.



Photo © 2004 Phil Matt

Undergraduate Scholarships

In cooperation with funding from the Jewish Children's Home of Rochester, NY, Inc. Scholarship Fund, JFS will award approximately \$6,000 in academic scholarships to Jewish undergraduate students from Monroe County this year. To be eligible, students must maintain permanent local residence and attend an accredited undergraduate institution. Recipients are then selected according to academic achievement and financial need. Individual scholarships typically range from \$400 to \$1,000. *Please call 461-0110 ext. 128 to apply.*

“The Explosive Child” Author Wows JFS Audience

Dr. Ross Greene Offers Insights and Techniques for Dealing with Angry and Non-compliant Children



The connection between JFS and the teachers and parents of the Rochester community is a strong one. For years, JFS has brought to Rochester the biggest, brightest and most

renowned child behavior experts in the country — and this year was no exception.

Based on the overwhelming success of Dr. Ross Greene’s previous lecture, the decision was made to bring him back for an encore. But would four years diminish Rochester’s interest in Ross Greene’s ideas and methods? The answer was an overwhelming NO!

Over 500 teachers and parents attended this year’s November 4th conference at Temple B’rith Kodesh, with some making the trip from as far away as Ottawa, Canada. Ross’ unique teaching approach and brand of humor made what many might have expected to be a formula-driven, behavioral-method workshop, into an engaging, well thought-out plan of action for teachers and parents who repeatedly deal with explosive children.

“It’s not every day that someone like Ross Greene comes to town,” says Susan Sparer, a special education teacher in the East Irondequoit School District (and also this editor’s mother!) “His book is a best seller for a reason. His methods work, and he is one of the most thought provoking speakers I have ever heard. It’s too bad his books were not around when my son was growing up.”

JFS is already planning the next community-wide conference scheduled for November, 2005 — so stay tuned for what’s ahead. *If you have ideas or suggestions about speakers you would like to hear, please do not hesitate to call Phil Sparer at 461-0110 ext.107.*

Satellite Office Generates New Visibility for Counseling Services

Jewish Family Service is thrilled to announce the opening of a satellite office in the Pittsford Place Office Building (formerly the Lauer’s Building) at 3300 Monroe Avenue (across from Pittsford Plaza).

We expect this location, in the heart of the Jewish community, to:

- make JFS counseling and outreach services more accessible to children, adults, and families in Brighton, Pittsford, Perinton, and other southeastern suburbs;
- attract new clients who will benefit from JFS’ counseling expertise in family relationships, parenting, teenage depression, risk-taking behaviors, mental health, stress management, caregiver support, divorce adjustment, and other vital issues;
- enable JFS to broaden its work with schools and youth organizations in suburban areas.

The licensed clinical social workers available by appointment at the new location are well known for their expert and compassionate care. *Please call 461-0110 to schedule appointments with Janet Kowal, Ph.D., LCSW; Michele Mendelson, LCSW; or Regina Gonek, LCSW.*

A satellite office has been on JFS’ “wish list” for years. We are grateful to Carol and Mike Hirsh, trustees of the Joseph and Anna Gartner Foundation, whose exceptional generosity has enabled us to realize our dream of strengthening our counseling services by bringing them closer to the people who need them.

JFS Seeks Financial Support for Counseling Satellite Office

So you just heard the good news. Carol and Mike Hirsh have stepped up to the plate and laid the foundation for our satellite office. We now ask you to join with others in making our new office a comfortable and welcoming place for your friends and family members.

While the Hirsh’s gift covers a significant portion of the monthly rent, cash donations are necessary to cover the \$14,000 in start-up expenses for furnishings, artwork and equipment. *Please help us in this effort by calling Melinda Goldberg at 461-0110 ext. 123 or email mgoldberg@jfsrochester.org.*



Photo © 2004 Phil Matt

JFS Welcomes New Board Members

JFS welcomes Arlene Schenker, Marc Fleischer, & Lisa Axelrod to the JFS Board of Directors. We look forward to their years of dedicated service to JFS.

Services for Holocaust Survivors

JFS receives funding from the Jewish Conference on Material Claims Against Germany to connect Holocaust survivors to essential social services. Call Janet Sunkin at 461-0110 ext. 112 or email jsunkin@jfsrochester.org for more information..

JFS Special Gifts

We are very grateful to *Maurice Goldman* who named JFS as a beneficiary of his life insurance policy. Maurice was a long time JFS supporter and was featured in the aging services segment of our agency video. Maurice passed away this past June.

The JFS Major Gift effort continues to move forward with recent pledges from *JFS President, Michael Harf*, and *President-Elect, Don Onimus*.



Access JFS — 24 Hours a Day!

Jewish Family Service is pleased to announce the recent overhaul of its website, www.jfsrochester.org. The site is an online portal to all of the important programs and services JFS provides our community each and every day. You will find information about upcoming major events, conferences, and workshops, how to adopt a child, JFLE schedules, staff contact information, volunteer opportunities, and so much more.

“One of the best parts of our new website, is that we now have the ability to accept annual contributions as well as donations online,” says Barry Stein, JFS Executive Director. “It is our hope that this new service will make giving more convenient for existing donors, and at the same time open the door for new friends.”

We hope you will visit the new JFS website and share your thoughts with us about how we can continue to enhance its effectiveness.

FREE INITIAL CONSULTATION



**AT OUR NEW SATELLITE OFFICE
FOR YOU, A CHILD OR AGING
LOVED ONE.**

CLIP & SAVE

CLIP & SAVE

Psychic “Mystified” Guests at Family Tree Society Party

When guests arrived at the beautiful home of Kevin and Rachel Glazer on October 13th, many had no idea what to expect. The invitation to this year’s Family Tree Society event hinted that something interesting was going to happen, but what? Was it a magician? Perhaps someone was going to contact the other side? Did the tarot cards included in the invitation mean they would be getting their futures revealed to them? After all, it did say that they would be traveling to another dimension.

This year, guests were treated to an evening of mysticism and intrigue, led by Psychic Medium Spiritual Life Coach, Barbara Konish.

Mouths were open, eyes were glued and spouses nodded in disbelief as Barbara rattled off personality traits, characteristics, and personal information based on the “aura” of each lucky (or not so lucky) participant.

“The psychic was fantastic,” said Melinda Goldberg, JFS Director of Development. “Everyone in the room was mesmerized by what she was doing — including me! It was a great way for me to get to know many of the people who care deeply about the future of this agency.”

The Family Tree Society is designated for all JFS donors who give at the \$500 level and above. Each year, as a way of saying



Rachel & Kevin Glazer share a “spiritual” moment alone with Barbara Konish (right). Middle photo: Peter Lovenheim (far left), Doug Miller and Sally Hirst (right) pause for a photo with old friend, Melinda Goldberg. Bottom photo: Barry Stein, JFS Executive Director, presents a print to the Glazers in recognition of their contribution at the Poplar Level of the Family Tree Society.



“thank you,” members are invited to a special party to acknowledge their generosity and the important work that JFS is able to do because of their support.

For information on the other associated benefits of the Family Tree Society, and how you can join, please call Melinda Goldberg at 461-0110 ext. 123.

Jewish Family Service of Rochester

Here’s what you get when you join
THE FAMILY TREE SOCIETY

TABOR OAK – \$5,400 and above

- Customized indoor or outdoor tree, with personalized plaque
- Framed, original piece of artwork, commissioned for the Family Tree Society
- Invitation to annual Family Tree Society social event

SYCAMORE – \$3,600 - \$5,399 and
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- Invitation to annual Family Tree Society social event

CEDAR – \$1,000 - \$1,799 and
ACACIA – \$500 - \$999

- Invitation to annual Family Tree Society social event

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SEE STORY ON PAGE 3.

**FOR MORE INFO CALL
461-0110**

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