

# Family MATTERS

Summer 2013, Vol. 2, No. 2

## JFS Honors Jerry and Ilene Sykes at our Annual Celebration

*Nearly 200 people helped raise more than \$30,000 on June 6, 2013 at Shabbos House.*

At the event Jerry and Ilene Sykes received the Anshel Weiss Community Builders Award, which bestows the agency's highest honor for outstanding leadership and a commitment to improving the lives of individuals and families in our community.

Longtime friend Dick Kotlow gave remarks about the Sykes saying, "Their commitment to the community encompasses both the Jewish community and many other organizations of the Greater Capital District."

In accepting their award, Jerry Sykes said that he and Ilene learned generosity from their parents: "Ilene and I both grew up with parents who gave time, energy and money to support their synagogues as well as many other charitable causes in their communities and they always encouraged us to follow their lead."

Ilene and Jerry owned and operated The Party Warehouse since 1989. During those years, they enthusiastically supported many not for profit organizations throughout the Capital District.

In addition, Ilene and Jerry served on numerous Boards of Directors. Ilene is Past President of the Sidney Albert Albany Jewish Community Center, Congregation Beth Emeth, and Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York. She is currently President of Hillel at the University of Albany. Jerry is Past President of the New York State Museum Institute and was on the Board of Capital Repertory Theatre and Saint Anne's Institute. He currently is on the Endowment Board of Governors of Jewish Federation of Northeastern New York and is a board member of the Daughters of Sarah Foundation and Shabbos House.



### ABOVE

Robert Gumson (JFS Board President), Ilene Sykes, Jerry Sykes and Christine Holle (JFS Executive Director) greet guests as they arrive at Shabbos House.



### LEFT

Dick Kotlow offers remarks about the Sykes' commitment to families in our community.



### LEFT

Rabbi Israel Rubin and Rabbi Scott Shpeen visit among the guests.

### INSIDE

President & Executive Director Messages 2

ASK JFS: Coping with Depression 3

Meet the New JFS NNORC Nurse 3

JFS Remembers Ian Arcus 4

JFS Celebrates 160 Years 5

Eat, Drink & Be Jewish Comedy Night 6



## Family MATTERS

is published by Jewish Family Services of Northeastern New York (JFSNENY).

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### OFFICERS

Robert Gumson  
*President*

Linda Cohen  
*Vice President*

Clara Simon  
*Secretary*

Ira Lobel  
*Treasurer*

Jocelyn Dax  
*Assistant Treasurer*

Stephen A. Ribner  
*Immediate Past President*

Christine A. Holle  
*Executive Director*

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Brian Daniels

Dr. Marvin Garfinkel

Glenn Liebman

Bill Nathan

Alfred M. Norek

Karen Setzen

Deborah Rosen Zamer

Please contact us at:

JFSNENY

877 Madison Avenue  
Albany, NY 12208

P 518-482-8856

F 518-489-5839

E [info@jfsneny.org](mailto:info@jfsneny.org)

[jfsneny.org](http://jfsneny.org)

JFS receives funding from:

Supported by  
Jewish Federation  
of Northeastern New York



## A Message from the Board President

As a legally blind child growing up in the 60's, my local synagogue Hebrew school program found it necessary to defer to my grandfather to prepare me to become a Bar Mitzvah. So in essence, I was denied an early gateway to structured education in my faith. Throughout my life I always felt like I'm still catching up. But while lacking some basic foundations, I have always been driven by a pervasive, almost intuitive, sense of Jewish values.

My work on the JFS Board of Directors is a constant indicator of how much compassion, caring, hope and kindness comes directly from the hearts of other board members, staff and volunteers that I surround myself with. Our daily work at JFS helps seniors live dignified and healthy lives at home with their families; supports individuals and families coping with family or interpersonal conflicts, illness, disability, bereavement, and loss; and educates our entire community on cutting edge concerns of the day. I may not have had the classic textbook Jewish education, but my faith in people and in JFS reminds me how enriched we can all be with just the right amount of loving kindness to share.

Bob



## Tradition!

Apples and honey at Rosh Hashanah. Baby naming ceremonies. Couples standing under a chuppah when they get married. Families honoring their loved ones at a yahrzeit. Comfort is found in traditions and they endure throughout history.

As JFS embarks on its 160th anniversary we're reflecting on our own traditions. In 1854, we were a small, volunteer staffed agency that resettled Jews fleeing religious persecution and provided homes for Jewish seniors. This began our long tradition of responding to the needs of the Jewish community.

Today, seniors still turn to us for a range of services that enhance their well-being and enable them to remain independent. Young families turn to JFS for support and guidance to help them rebuild or repair their relationships, as do parents who need help balancing the needs of their children with those of their aging parents.

JFS is proud of our enduring traditions. In the coming year as we celebrate our history with a number of exciting events, we hope you will join us and become a part of our tradition of helping the Jewish community.

Kindest regards,  
Christine

## Can You Help Fulfill Our Wish?

Year after year, JFS prioritizes the needs of our clients, but now our own home needs attention. We are appealing to the community to help with overdue capital improvements. Our wish list includes: purchasing new couches for our waiting rooms; installing an elevator to improve client accessibility to our second floor; replacing our back door which takes in water when it rains; tiling the floor near the back door; replacing worn out carpeting throughout the building; updating our ten-year-old paint job; and replacing mismatched cabinets in the staff kitchen.

If you would like to help, please contact us at 482-8856. Thank you!



## Ask JFS: Coping with Persistent Depression

**C** Is it normal to continually feel depressed? I have a good marriage, and have a decent job and many friendships. My parents live in the community and I visit them all the time, partly to see them, but mostly because I am concerned about their wellbeing. Despite this, I don't feel joy about anything. Every day feels like I am just going through the motions. At what point is depression so persistent that I should get professional help?

**A** People often tell themselves that they can manage through a bout of depression on their own, but if they have experienced several symptoms over a period of time, it is recommended that they seek professional help.

"Life can be challenging, but it's not "normal" to feel a lack

of interest or pleasure in most activities and to feel depressed most of the day, nearly every day," says James Sautter, Clinical Supervisor at JFS. "When these symptoms persist it can impact relationships with family and friends, and even worse, disrupt employment," added Sautter.

According to the Mayo Clinic, "Depression isn't a weakness, nor is it something that you can simply "snap out" of. It is a chronic illness that usually requires long-term treatment." They also encourage people to remain positive—most people with depression feel better with medication and psychological counseling.

The most common reason that people seek counseling from JFS is because they are feeling

depressed or are experiencing anxiety. "We work with clients to overcome potentially negative, dysfunctional thinking, which can significantly impact a person's self worth and day-to-day mood," says Sautter. "We talk through the obstacles that are preventing someone from enjoying activities, and help them set goals in order to overcome these barriers," Sautter added. Counseling with people who are depressed needs to be engaging and active in order to be effective. Yet, it is critical for clients to feel that they have a sense of control over the process. They need to articulate the goals and specify the time frame, or else healthy change will take longer or won't happen.

It's important that clients focus on feeling better versus worrying about being depressed.

## Meet Judi England

When JFS hired Judi England we got a gold mine. Judi is the Senior Education Coordinator for the NNORC, which is a Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community that helps seniors "age in place" in the comfort of their community and their relationships. JFS provides social work services, health and wellness services and social and recreational activities in the Albany NNORC.

Judi joined our team to engage the "junior seniors." "Being a Junior Senior myself, I understand how important it is to maintain good health and an active life," says England. This is where JFS is so fortunate. Judi has a rich career that includes nursing, program development, corporate wellness, instructing yoga, and coaching on fitness, nutrition, meditation and mindfulness. She is also a weekly contributor to the Holistic Health Blog for the Albany Times Union.

The overall goal of Judi's work is to empower people by providing tools to take care of their own health and wellness. And the residents in the JFS NNORC truly benefit from Judi's lifetime career in healthcare. "On a given day, I could do a home visit with a house-bound senior to monitor his or her blood pressure and medication; I could be out with the seniors on our weekly walking group; or I could be teaching a chair yoga class, which began this month and has over 30 participants," said England.

"I've always been personally and professionally motivated by making a healthy lifestyle accessible to all," added England.



Judi England  
Senior Education Coordinator



# JFS Remembers Former Board Member Ian Arcus

Jewish Family Services recently lost a dear friend. Ian Arcus was a very familiar name and face at JFS. He served on our board for 20 years and as president from 2003-2005.

It was Ian's commitment to family relationships (*shalom bayit*) that led to the development of our now highly successful Supervised Visitation program. This program provides a safe, neutral and secure framework in which children can rebuild relationships with their parents.

"Ian was a true visionary," says JFS past-president Steve Lobel. "That vision, particularly as it related to supervised visitation, opened many doors for our agency in the community." With the development of this program, Ian was instrumental in putting JFS on the map as a full-service human service agency.

Former JFS Executive Director Anshel Weiss describes Ian as a kind-hearted soul who gave of himself in ways in which people were unaware, often helping clients on a pro-bono basis, and opening his heart and home to JFS' board of directors. "Ian was a wonderful advisor to our staff, taking the time to sit, talk, explain and give good direction, especially with the situations faced by the disadvantaged and disheartened parents who were involved with our visitation program."

One of Ian's final acts of generosity and support was to request that donations in his memory be made to JFS. The outpouring from Ian's family, friends and colleagues has been tremendous. Countless donors provided personal messages to the Arcus family that described Ian as 'gentle', 'a real mensch', 'thoughtful', and 'a person who will make a lasting impression on people's lives'.

Ian represented the values that are at the heart of JFS—*kavod* (respect), *rachamim* (compassion) and *kehillah* (community). His commitment to his family, his profession and his community were a testament to his character, and he will be missed by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him.



---

## JFS Thanks Board Members for Their Service and Commitment to Families

JFS' Board of Directors is integral to its mission, offering a wealth of personal and professional knowledge and experience that serves to guide and inform both JFS' services and its role in the community.

JFS extends its deepest appreciation to the following outgoing JFS board members:

**Judy Rettig** is a retired physician who has held a number of positions with New York State and Albany Medical College. Judy's creativity and tireless commitment to JFS has been invaluable in helping to raise awareness of our services and develop educational programs to help families in the community.

**Doug Schwartz** is the Lead Pulmonologist at the Samuel S. Stratton Albany VA Medical Center. As a member of the JFS Board, Doug was active on a number of committees including Program and Service, Annual Celebration and Nominating.

**Evelyn Loeb's** career has included Diversity Trainer, Holocaust Educator, School Social Worker and Educational Consultant. Evelyn's role on the Board has been to advocate strongly for delivery of sound clinical services, as well as provide educational programming for the community.

It is with deepest gratitude that JFS acknowledges the service of these three distinguished members of the Board of Directors and extends sincerest wishes for continued success in their future.

# Join Us in Our Year Long Celebration



It's hard to believe JFS has been helping families in the Capital Region for 160 years. That makes JFS older than the car (1920), but younger than the steam engine (1698). We are slightly older than the telephone (1876) and way older than the frisbee (1948).

Imagine our founding volunteers going to a home visit on a horse, or how far families had to walk to get the services they needed. Transportation and communication have come a long way, but

many of our services have remained the same. JFS social workers visit with seniors in their homes every day and families come to our offices for professional guidance. At the core of our services, and something that has endured for 160 years, is that we are guided by the Jewish tradition of repairing the world.

Look how far we've come...

**1854** A small group of volunteers worked together to help new immigrants and their families who came to Albany from Europe.

**1875** JFS created a home for the aged and infirm, which was later expanded to care for orphaned children.

**1937** JFS helped German refugees, placed children in foster care, helped families search for relatives, and provided a range of resettlement services including housing, employment, healthcare and citizenship.

**1900** Social services were developed and volunteers were replaced with professional staff.

**1948** JFS expanded its capacity by providing employment and financial counseling services.

**1965** JFS continued to assist new Americans with financial help, food, household goods, and furniture.

**1987** Serving the elderly was in the forefront as JFS initiated support programs at the Ohav Shalom Apartments.

**1974** JFS integrated services to the wider community, instituting programs at Daughters of Sarah, local high schools, SUNY and other groups with critical needs.

**1993** Services to the Jewish community were expanded to include JCCs, day schools, and bereavement counseling.

**2000 - Today** JFS launched the Supervised Visitation program, which has tripled in size. Services to seniors remain a priority as JFS is the lead agency in caring for seniors in the NNORC (Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community). Counseling, both in-home and at JFS remains a primary service for the community.



Jewish  
**FAMILY**  
Services

Northeastern New York

877 Madison Ave.  
Albany, NY 12208

[jfsneny.org](http://jfsneny.org)

---

NON PROFIT ORG

US POSTAGE

**PAID**

PERMIT #587

ALBANY, NY

---

JFS Presents a 160th Anniversary Event

# Eat, Drink and Be Jewish: The Funny Side of Family Traditions

**Come and laugh your kepele off!**

**Starring Comedian David Glickman**

He's Clean! He's Clever! He's Kosher! You'll crack up at Glickman's wit & humor, funny Jewish jokes & music that includes *Can't Buy Me Lunch*, *Everything's Coming Up Moses*, and *Hooray for Hanukkah*.

**October 26, 2013**

7:30 p.m.

Steamer 10 Theater, Albany

Details at [jfsneny.org](http://jfsneny.org)

