

JFS Celebrates 160 Years and Honors the Golubs

JFS is pleased to present the Golub Family with the 2014 Anschel Weiss Community Builders Award. They will be honored at our 160th Anniversary Celebration on Thursday, May 22, 2014 at miSci in Schenectady.

JFS and the Golub Family (Neil & Jane, Jerel & Geraldine, David & Andrea and Mona) share the same long-standing tradition of supporting Capital Region families. Their generous support of not-for-profit organizations embodies the spirit of this award— Serving Humanity with Humility.

"Going back to the days of our grandfather, pre-1930, there was always a strong incentive to help others and do for the less fortunate," said Neil Golub. And giving back is in their DNA. "Helping the community is instinctive and often the result of organizations reaching out for assistance. Sharing with the community, whether corporate or personal, or giving time and effort has always been part of our makeup," added Golub.

The Golubs are also supporters of miSci in Schenectady, and holding this year's celebration at that venue is a perfect and unique setting for connecting with friends and colleagues, enjoying an array of delicious food and supporting the vital services JFS provides for individuals and families in the community.

"We are honored that the Golubs are celebrating our rich heritage of helping those in need," said IFS Executive Director Christine Holle. "It seems natural to honor a family that whose legacy is about giving, especially at this time in the agency's history."

To become a corporate sponsorship, join the honorary committee or purchase tickets, please call JFS at 518-482-8856. Tickets can be purchased online beginning in April at jfsneny.org.

JFS Partners with Haven **Expands Services to Schenectady**



JFS and Haven of Schenectady are pleased to announce their new partnership which will more fully serve the Capital Region. The dedicated and compassionate staff

of Haven and JFS will now offer their services in Schenectady and Albany.

Haven's expertise is in bereavement support services, following a specific program model—companion counseling. The acts of loving kindness and compassion (the highest mitzvah) of Haven's volunteer companion counselors are those same core Jewish values held by JFS. Additionally, the community is strengthened when individuals help each other, and this is one of the values that is central to our mission, making this a wonderful "fit" between our two organizations.

"JFS has long admired Haven's fine reputation in offering bereavement services and we are delighted to welcome Haven's program into the JFS family of services," said JFS Board President, Bob Gumson.

According to Maryanne Malecki, Haven's program director, "Many of Haven's most effective volunteers have experienced significant losses in their own lives. Grief is an individual emotion; sharing experiences and perspectives helps people not only move through their own grief, but also to regain hope in their lives."

Haven will continue its focus on grief and loss, and begin offering its highly-respected bereavement support services throughout the Capital Region. JFS will expand into Schenectady, offering its full complement of supportive human services—mental health counseling, supervised visitation, services for seniors (including transportation for Jewish seniors), and Transitions (integrated support, referral and advocacy to individuals and families dealing with major life events), as well as maintain its main office in Albany.



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A Message from the Board President

I believe that every sunrise is a miracle; that people are on earth to spread G-d's love and kindness and that we all thrive on strong physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual nourishment. JFS's partnership with Haven is "bashirt" (meant to be). It adds strength to our strength "L'Dor V'Dor." We look forward to growing together in the Capital Region and spreading our shared vision of hope and healing following grief or loss.

JFS is further blessed by the enthusiasm our newest board member, Rachael Woren, who embodies the spirit and wholeheartedness of the Jewish values that guided JFS for the past 160 years and counting. Come out to honor the Golub family and celebrate it all with us this May!

Bob Gumson

With Gratitude



When I look back at last year, I am humbled and thankful. So many people showed their faith in JFS. Our donors continued to show their support of the agency and its services through generous contributions. Many new donors demonstrated their confidence in our mission by choosing to give to JFS. The Golub Family accepted our invitation to be our honorees at our 160th Anniversary Celebration. And Haven signed on as our partner so we could expand our service offerings and geographic reach, allowing us to support seniors, adults and families in Schenectady.

The confidence people have shown in Jewish Family Services directly translates into our ability to provide needed services. Last year, JFS touched the lives of nearly 3,000 people. Our staff worked more than 170 clients to help them navigate government entitlements, conduct safety assessments, provide mental health counseling and facilitate family conferences. We provided support and medical advocacy to nearly 110 people who were coping with terminal illness and trauma. And Jewish seniors certainly were on the go. Last year, our volunteer drivers provided over 1150 rides to take seniors where they needed to go. Also notable were the 978 visits that we supervised between children and their parents, who are otherwise separated from biological parents for a range of issues including substance abuse, domestic violence or divorce. Rebuilding relationships between children and parents is critical.

My deepest appreciation goes out to those who generously shared their confidence and financial resources, making it possible for us to provide compassionate, healing services to those in need.

I hope you will join us on May 22, 2014 at miSci in Schenectady to honor the Golub Family and to celebrate our 160 years of helping people in our community.

Kindest regards, Christine A. Holle Executive Director



My mother lives out of town. Over the past six months, I have become increasingly concerned about her. She is not as attentive to her personal care as she used to be. Her eating habits are erratic. She is not taking care of the house like she used to and I suspect not managing her finances and bills in a timely fashion. When I have spoken with her, she is resistant to having anyone come into her home to provide assistance. At what point do I "take over" and make her accept help or even move her to a living situation where some of these issues will he addressed?

There are several components to your question, but the first concern to address is safety. Often times people confuse physical safety with their reaction to personal hygiene, cleanliness and nutrition issues. However, if a parent's laundry is stacked up, this is not a safety concern. As difficult as it may be to face, the real concern in terms of safety is competence, not

aesthetics. For example, if the parent has lost cognitive functioning to such a degree that there is a fear of dangerous behaviors such as wandering, misusing the stove, etc., then the current living situation may not be viable. If an older person's immediate physical safety is in question, then one must respond.

While an older person is entitled to choose the standards of how he/she handles cleanliness, if a life threatening physical illness results from how the parent has decided to live then an adult child needs to act. This does not necessarily mean moving a parent into assisted living. Most senior adults do best when they are allowed to remain in their homes. Knowing the personality of one's parent, an adult child needs to use negotiation as much as possible to help the parent maintain a sense of control over his/her life. This

may mean slowly integrating a caregiver coming into the home. It's important that an adult child choose the most crucial issues to address—fixing everything is not likely to be possible. Similarly, every solution might not be available. It's important to check if a service is available and affordable before trying to negotiate it with a parent.

Aging is usually a gradual process. Adult children often make the mistake of watching parents deteriorate, taking action only when the crisis arrives. The key is for children whose parents are still relatively well to enter into a dialogue about what will happen when and if the parent is not okay. This gives the senior adult an opportunity to be part of the planning process and retain some control versus insisting on assisted living or a nursing home placement at the first sign of loss of abilities.

JFS Welcomes New Board Member

Born and raised in the Capital Region, **Rachael Woren** is entering her third year as the Assistant Director of Camp Givah. She has a Masters from Brandeis University in Hebrew Education and has been an educator and a member of the administrative staff at Hebrew Academy for the past three years. She is also the founder of the new Jewish singles group, JSCD (Jewish Singles of the Capital District). Rachael is also very active in the NextDor group of the Jewish Federation.

Rachael chose to join the board of JFS because the Jewish community is a big part of her life. She would like the Jewish community here in Albany to grow and prosper and looks forward to bringing new ideas to JFS, including to help spread the word among Jewish families about what an amazing organization JFS is here in the Capital District.



Rachael Woren

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Project 5 Dispatcher Claire Halpin Retires

When 90-year-old, Mimi Slawsky, a World War II veteran, needed to go to the eye doctor, she picked up the phone and called Project 5 for a ride.

On the other end of the line was Claire Halpin, the program assistant and dispatcher for Project 5. A call from someone like Mimi set into motion a series of steps that resulted in a call back to Mimi telling her who will pick her up, the kind of car they drive and what time they will arrive.



Claire came to JFS in 2006 as a volunteer and was part of the team that helped create Project 5. Two years later she was hired as the program assistant and dispatcher—matching volunteer drivers with Jewish seniors to take them where they need to go.

For Claire, the favorite part of her job wasn't just linking seniors to needed transportation; she derived immense gratification from talking to the seniors, hearing their often personal stories and even helping them through a rough patch. "Our passengers really appreciated being remembered from one ride to the next," Claire recalled. She would ask them about doctor's appointments, luncheons and shopping. "I liked to let them know someone cares enough not to just 'fluff' them off."

SENIORS DON'T WANT TO BE A BURDEN

"It's not that our senior passengers don't have local family and friends who can drive them. They prefer the independence afforded through Project 5. After an initial intake, they can simply pick up the phone and schedule their own ride, without being a burden on relatives or friends," said Sally Bratspis, Program Coordinator.

Each year over 100 Jewish seniors use Project 5, and since the program began in 2006 we've driven nearly 350 passengers. "Do we have enough drivers to cover from morning minyan to after a show at Proctors?" asks Bratspis. She answers with a resounding, "No. We're always looking for drivers so we could serve more seniors."

"Our drivers sign up for anything from giving a once-a-month ride to taking a senior to a weekly appointment," says Claire. "The key for us is to match passengers' needs with driver's availability, so seniors get to where they want to go and volunteers feel gratified (versus overwhelmed) by their service. It's rewarding to know we are providing such an important service."

WHY VOLUNTEER?

After coordinating countless rides for seniors, Claire left us with an appeal for potential volunteers, "There comes a time in everyone's life when they have to give up their car keys. And when that happens, whether you are in a gorgeous house or one room apartment, you are stuck. Even driving once every other week can bring joy to someone whether it's taking them to the grocery store, the mall or a doctor's appointment. It's a mitzvah."

If you are interested in making sure Project 5 can continue to take Jewish seniors where they want to go, please contact us and become a volunteer driver: 518-482-8856 or info@jfsneny.org.

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