



# Family MATTERS

Spring 2015, Vol. 4, No. 1

## When Transitions Create Opportunities

When an organization has existed as long as Jewish Family Services—161 years—we're bound to experience transitions and change. Over the years we have become quite adept at managing and evolving through a range of transitions. The economy has certainly ebbed and flowed since 1854; countless board members have donated their time and expertise, leaving a lasting legacy on the agency; and many dedicated staff have started and finished their careers at JFS, making a positive impact on the clients we serve. Through all of this, we have maintained our identity and upheld our mission to strengthen individuals and families as they cope with their own life transitions.

Here we are, today, embarking on another change and transition. We have a new, energized Director of Programs and Services (Daniel Godfrey) and our Executive Director (Christine Holle) has left the agency to pursue a career in finance. Changes in leadership can be anxiety provoking, but we see ourselves meeting this change with great success. It creates an opportunity to build on our foundation while expanding services to meet the needs in our community. Just as we are seeking new leadership for the day to day administration of the agency, we are also going to actively seek out new Board members to help guide us through the years ahead. If you may be interested, or know of someone who is looking to make an impact on the community, please let Robert Gumson or Scott Hollander know. We can always use talented and dedicated people.

As we look at the current services, there are many successes to build upon. JFS offers extensive services

to seniors both within and outside of the Jewish community. As lead agency in the Albany NNORC (Neighborhood Naturally Occurring Retirement Community), we provide supportive and health education services so that seniors can maintain their independence in the comfort of their home and community. Our volunteer transportation service, Project 5, takes Jewish seniors where they want to go, also fostering and maintaining their independence. In the coming year, we will be implementing educational programs that promote positive mental health within the senior community and improve access to counseling services for seniors when and where needed.

Counseling Services at JFS have been meeting the mental health needs of individuals and families since our formation. At JFS, we utilize a counseling approach that is culturally sensitive, collaborative, respectful and assists each person to identify and implement strategies which can be most effective in resolving identified issues. Our vision is to become a resource for individuals and family members across the lifespan. Our existing Counseling Program provides social work services to homebound seniors. We will expand this initiative to allow us to provide more in-home and in-office counseling for seniors. We would also like to provide counseling and assistance to family members of seniors as they often need support as they navigate caring for an aging parent.

Through the Counseling Program, we are committed to providing greater access for individuals and families to receive affordable and high quality services for a wide variety of social and adjustment issues including addictive behaviors, adjustment/life stage issues, anxiety, depression, marital conflict, parent/child relationships, school/work problems. We will be increasing our participation with health insurers so that more people can receive affordable care.

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## Family MATTERS

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## Transitions *Continued from page 1*

JFS has a well-established and respected court evaluation/therapeutic visitation program. These critical services help parents and children whose family is severed by marital discord, substance abuse, or domestic violence. In the coming year, we will use our expertise in helping families rebuild relationships by reaching out to youth and their families, with particular emphasis on serving the Jewish community.

As dedicated professionals we are acutely aware that decisions made about "service delivery" affects real people with real needs who often have limited options for other services. This process, though sometimes difficult, can also be dynamic and exciting. We plan to approach these transitions with the same sensitivity that we have in the past 161 years.

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions related to the needs of the community and what services you would like to see provided through JFS. And, again, the same holds true with suggestions for new members for our Board of Directors. Please feel free to call us at 518-482-8856.

## A Message from the Board President



I'm assuming we are all thinking Spring? Spring is a passage into renewal: a transition period from darkness of winter into light and hope of a new season. We plant our garden, we clean our homes to get ready for Pesach. We invite family, friends and strangers to our table for the Passover feast where we can once again tell our story of passing from the darkness of Egypt into the light of a land filled with milk and honey.

JFS too is going through a transition period. We recently said farewell to our Executive Director, Christine Holle, who served our agency in many capacities for nearly 25 years. We wish her well in her new endeavors. As we recruit for a new visionary leader, we welcome our Interim Director, Scott Hollander and our new Director of Programs and Services, Dan Godfrey. New faces, new ideas and new energies at JFS are always welcome because they continuously reinvigorate the roots we planted and seeds we sow. This is "Spring Training" for Jewish Family Services. We build our team by cultivating new contributors and talent with our current staff of proven veterans. Spread the word throughout the Capital Region; our team is looking forward to a great season. We are here for you and the community. We look forward to provide excellent services with our current programming, and as always look for suggestions from you on how we can better serve.

*Bob Gumson*



## Ask JFS: Could my dad be depressed?

*My parents are in their early 80s and thankfully they are physically healthy enough to live on their own without much assistance. Despite this, I am becoming increasingly concerned about my dad. A few months ago he caused a minor car accident. No one was hurt, but it really scared him. As a result he elected to give up driving, letting my mom take over. Even though he made this choice on his own, he has since been in a slump. He is less social with friends and family and he is not participating in his hobbies. (He used to be an avid reader.) My mom doesn't really notice a difference in his behavior, but I am concerned that he is depressed. Isn't depression common in older adults? At what point should I insist that he (they) get professional help?*

**A** Everyone feels blue or sad now and then, but these feelings don't usually last long and pass within a couple of days. When a person has depression, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning, and causes pain for both the person with depression and those who care about him or her. Doctors call this condition "depressive disorder," or "clinical depression."

Important life changes that happen as we get older may cause feelings of uneasiness,

stress, and sadness. For instance, the death of a loved one, giving up the keys to the car, or dealing with a serious illness can leave older people feeling sad or anxious. After a period of adjustment, many older adults can regain their emotional balance, but others do not and may develop depression.


You are right that depression is a common problem among older adults, but it is NOT a normal part of aging. In fact, studies show that most older adults feel satisfied with their lives, despite having more physical ailments. However, when older adults do suffer from depression, it may be difficult to recognize, so it often goes unnoticed and untreated. Further, it is often overlooked because they may be less willing to talk about feelings of sadness or grief, or they may show different, less obvious symptoms, and doctors may be less likely to suspect or spot it.

There is a good chance that your father is grieving the loss of his freedom and independence, something that is very common after an older adult stops driving. Sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish grief from major depression. Grief after loss of a loved one or a significant life change is a normal reaction to the

loss and generally does not require professional mental health treatment. However, grief that lasts for a very long time following a loss may require treatment.

Your best option is to compassionately express your concern to both of your parents. Be sure to approach them at a time when they are relaxed and therefore more receptive. If you have siblings, perhaps you enlist their support. They may be resistant at first, but often times a "trial run" may allay any fears. For example, you could suggest one appointment with a social worker or psychologist. Describing that first appointment in a positive way will help break down barriers to resistance to getting help.

Having depression for a long period of time is not a normal part of growing older. But it is a common problem, and professional help may be needed. JFS clinicians have expertise in issues surrounding aging and caring for older adults. We are available for assessments as well as to provide short and long term treatment.

We are here to help. Please call us if you have concerns about an aging parent: 518-482-8856. 

# JFS Introduces Talented New Staff



Daniel Godfrey

We are pleased to announce the addition of **Dan Godfrey** to our team. Dan is a licensed clinical social worker and is our new Director of Programs and Services. He has held a variety of leadership positions with local nonprofit organizations, most recently at Equinox Inc., and prior to that, the Center for Disability Services.

In his short time with the agency, Dan has made a positive impact on clients, staff, partner agencies and JFS programs. The breadth of his experience is ever-present. "Throughout my career I have been a strong and tireless advocate for the provision of the very highest quality of human services and programs. People deserve programs that are effective, culturally sensitive, respectful of their strengths and needs, and assist them to attain the highest possible quality of life," said Dan.

In addition to leadership and clinical skills, Dan will be a regular contributor to agency publications and newsletters. You'll likely read about his solution-focused, strengths-based approach in working with youth, adults, individuals, families and couples. We are privileged to have such a knowledgeable, compassionate team member.

We are equally happy to announce the addition of **Lisa Gally** to our team. Lisa is the new program coordinator for Project 5, our volunteer transportation service that takes Jewish seniors where they want to go. We think Lisa is perfect for this position. She's recently held part-time administrative positions at St. Peter's Hospital Emergency Room, where respect and diplomacy with patients were a must. Early in her career she was a teacher's assistant and substitute teacher coordinator at Hebrew Academy in Albany. This, along with her involvement in a range of activities at Ohav Shalom gives her unique connections to our local Jewish community. "Now that both of my children are in school, I have been looking for a position within a Jewish organization," said Lisa. "When I heard about Project 5, I knew it would be a great match." Lisa is a hard-working team player who enjoys learning. She has already established great relationships with both the volunteer drivers and the senior passengers. We're sure that this invaluable service will flourish under her leadership.



Lisa Gally

## You Shop. Amazon Gives. JFS Smiles.

Did you know that every time you shop on Amazon.com you could be making a donation to JFS? And it doesn't cost you extra to do so? It's true.

When you shop on AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchase to the charitable organization of your choice—JFS! Smile.Amazon.com is the same as Amazon.com—same low prices, huge selection and big convenience.

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Simply go to smile.amazon.com on your computer or mobile device. Log in using your amazon.com username and password. On your first visit, enter "Jewish Family Services of Northeastern New York" (our whole name) in the "Select Your Charity" box. After that, JFS automatically receives donations based on your eligible purchases.

### Does JFS Benefit from AmazonSmile?

YES! Even though 0.5% doesn't sound like much, it certainly can add up if hundreds of people designate JFS as their charity on smile.amazon.com. If you have any questions, please give us a call. We would be happy to tell you more about this valuable program: 518-482-8856.

*Sorry, but since donations made by your purchases are from the AmazonSmile Foundation they are not tax deductible by you.*



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# NNORC

Breakfast Club

*Tax issues. Legal documents. Probate. These topics are not for the timid, but learning about them is beneficial, especially for seniors. The NNORC Breakfast Club is a monthly forum that gives seniors an opportunity to come together, nosh on a bagel, socialize and learn useful information. Guest speakers from the community volunteer their time to help simplify complex topics, provide new information and stimulate discussion. If you would like to learn about the NNORC Breakfast Club, please call 514-2023.*

## Medications: What's New and How do Drugs Interact?

If you are a senior taking one or more medications, this NNORC Breakfast Club is for you. In this presentation, Jennifer Cerulli from the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences will discuss new medications as well as how drugs work together—both the positive and negative interactions. How do you know if you are taking the latest drug for your condition? Do you know how an over-the-counter drug interacts with a prescription medication? Join us for a stimulating discussion and become empowered in managing your medications.

Jennifer Cerulli, Pharm.D., RPh, AE-C is Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice at Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. She is the Director of MyMedZ Personal Medication Review Service.

**June 10, 2015**  
**9:30–11:00 a.m.**

**Albany Jewish Community Center**  
**340 Whitehall Road**  
**Albany, NY**

**Bring your questions,  
concerns and friends. A light  
breakfast will be available.**

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