

# Family MATTERS


Summer 2014, Vol. 3, No. 2

## JFS Celebrates 160 Years and Honors the Golubs

*On May 22, 2014, JFS commemorated a 160-year tradition of giving back to the community by honoring the Golub Family, who are also committed to supporting others.*

Nearly 140 people gathered at miSci in Schenectady to celebrate the agency's rich heritage and to honor the Golubs (Neil & Jane; Jerel & Geraldine; Mona & Marie; and David & Andrea), who received the Anshei Weiss Community Builders Award.

The event raised \$57,000, which will directly benefit individuals and families in the Capital Region who might otherwise not have been able to receive needed services. Through the generosity of sponsors, JFS will be able to provide a range of services including: nearly 200 supervised visits for parents and children who have been separated due to divorce, substance use or trauma; 50 individual or family counseling sessions; 75 crisis intervention visits; 80 in-home counseling sessions for the elderly and disabled; 35 psycho-educational groups; and 50 home visits to the elderly to assess for safety and provide support.

JFS is grateful to the many corporate and individual sponsors including: (Platinum) Charles Freihofer Baking Company; (Gold) Neil & Jane Golub, MVP Healthcare, Nigro Companies, Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, Schuyler Companies; and (Silver) Albany ENT & Allergy Services, P.C., Albany Medical Center, Avila, BAST Hatfield Construction, LLC, BEM Sales & Marketing, Capital District YMCA, CDTA, Fact Finders, Fenimore Asset Management/FAM Funds, Karen & Gerry Hausler, JOH, Law Offices of Bruce S. Trachtenberg, miSci, NBT Bank, Omni Development, SEFCU, and Wilson, Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman & Dicker, LLP. 



Christine Holle (JFS Executive Director), Marie DeBrocky, Mona Golub, Jane Golub, Ira Ganz (Mona's son), Andrea Golub, David Golub, Bob Gumson (JFS Board President) and Neil Golub.



Steve Lobel presents Neil Golub with the Anshei Weiss Community Builders Award.



Honorary CoChair Rabbi Matthew Cutler gives the Invocation.

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## A Message from the Board President

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Like most non-profits, JFS is always looking for volunteers: lend your expertise on the JFS Board of Directors; take a Jewish senior where he or she needs to go and be a driver for Project 5; provide companion counseling for someone coping with a loss; or help with an event or committee. Volunteers usually do not open their hearts expecting anymore in return for their efforts than knowing that they've invested their soul in the assignment. And yet, it's a gratifying experience that teaches great respect for individuals and caring and well being of others. Volunteers learn tolerance and celebrate diversity. They learn to listen and value opinions of others and to work together in cooperation toward a common goal. I don't think for a moment that this is easy stuff. In our fast-paced society, it can be hard for people to stop and really help one another. But check out Page 5 and see how what some of our volunteers are doing and how they are impacting the lives of others. Volunteering at JFS can be a great opportunity to give back to the community.

Bob Gumson



#### We're on a high!

So many good things are happening at JFS. Our 160th anniversary celebration honoring the Golub Family in May at miSci far-exceeded our expectations. With the help of our corporate sponsors, who continue to recognize our vital services and support the agency, and donors who came out in support of our event, JFS continues to make a difference in the live of individuals and families in our community.

And our JFS family is growing! We're delighted to add new staff members who will dedicate their time to helping seniors maintain their independence while living in their own homes and community. Michelle Dannenhoffer-Cau has been meeting with seniors to learn about their needs for assistance and advocacy. Next month Judy Avner joins us to plan recreational activities and programs for seniors.

We are delighted to welcome former board member Jeannie Straussman as the new Haven Program Director. Jeannie has a wealth of experience in mental health services, which will ensure that the Haven bereavement services reach individuals and families in the community who are struggling with loss.

The needs of families in our community are continuous. And we are humbled that JFS continues to be a source for trusted care for so many. Adult children seek our counsel about their aging parents, parents separated from their children due to divorce or substance abuse turn to us for help reconnecting with their children, and families turn to us for advocacy and support when faced with a life challenge.

Your continued support of JFS allows us to continue our important work. We are grateful.

Kindest regards,

Christine A. Holle  
*Executive Director*



## Ask JFS: I'm concerned about my parents.

*My parents are 85 and 88 years old and still live independently at home. I live out of town and only get to see them two times a year, and it seems like each time I see them their health is declining and I am becoming more concerned. Should they move to assisted living? Should they hire a home health aide? Should I take my mother's word for it when she says they are doing just fine?*

**A**JFS fields many calls from adult children who have concerns about their aging parents living on their own. However, jumping directly into a conversation with our parents about assisted living might be a little hasty. Stella Henry, R.N., author of *The Eldercare Handbook* (HarperCollins, 2006) says, "...broaching the nursing home or assisted living topic is probably one of the hardest decisions a child will ever have to make."

Experts agree that seniors thrive best when they can remain active and independent in the comfort of their own home. The caveat is that they do so in a safe and affordable way. While many seniors unrealistically believe they can take care of themselves for the rest of their lives, their children or other family members can be instrumental in identifying if there is a problem and instigating change.

Rather than assume your parents can no longer care for themselves at home, your first step would be to have a specialist evaluate your parents and their living condition and determine if there are any safety issues. JFS provides an array of in-home services for seniors including evaluations such as this, which can provide peace of mind for you and your parents. Once you obtain an evaluation, JFS can work with family

caregivers and the patient's doctors to develop a plan that is best for you and your family, whether at home or in a facility

Since you are out of town, we also recommend that you have regular conversations with your parents about what their future holds. If you have siblings, make sure you're all on the same page and not giving Mom and Dad conflicting messages. When checking in on your parents you will have less resistance if you make it your problem ("I am concern about you") rather than telling them what they have to do.

The most important thing to do is to act early. A majority of adult children neglect to have these critical conversations with their parents until a crisis situation arises. The result is often confused elders, disorganized children and a chaotic family. ●●

## Thank You Al Norek for Serving on Our Board

This year, we bid a sad farewell to long-time board member Al Norek. Al and his wife Meryl have moved to Walnut Creek, California to spend more time with their son Josh, his wife Maggie and their children Ava and Jakey.

Al joined the JFS board in 2000 and in his 14-year relationship with the agency he committed considerable time and resources to helping ensure both the continuation and future growth of our Agency and its programs and services. Al was highly invested in helping people who were coping with a traumatic life event, so he founded the JFS Norek-Moses Transitions Program—a vital service that provides support and medical advocacy to people facing a health crisis, loss of a loved one or other significant trauma. Al was also a key member of committees that were tasked with revising the agency by-laws, updating our personnel policies, bringing JFS into compliance with the New York Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act and providing counsel on a range of legal matters.

We are fortunate to have had such a committed, inspiring member on our Board. The staff and board will miss his can-do attitude and hands on problem solving that he brought to his work with the agency. ●●





# The JFS Family is Growing!

This spring we welcomed **Michelle Dannenhoffer-Cau** as the Outreach & Community Care Coordinators to the NNORC. Michelle has been providing both short-term case assistance and longer-term case management services to seniors in the NNORC.



Michelle has spent her entire professional career in the non-profit sector. She has served as coordinator of public library outreach, advocacy, and programming for LaGrange Library Association in Poughkeepsie, NY; volunteer coordinator for Hospice of Naples in southwestern Florida, and most recently as social work service coordinator for Eddy SeniorCare PACE in Schenectady, NY—a unique program designed to help frail adults live independently in their own community. She is delighted to be working with the Jewish Family Services NNORC program where she can continue the important work of helping seniors age in place.

Michelle has also recently completed the certificate program in Positive Psychology, having studied under renowned psychologist and author Tal Ben-Shahar, former faculty member of Harvard University. Positive psychology is the scientific study of optimal human functioning. “Its goal is to increase not just human happiness, but human flourishing,” said Michelle. “I hope to have the opportunity to share its many helpful principles, tools, and techniques with seniors in the community.”



The Haven program has a new director. **Jeannie Straussman**, a clinical social worker, has joined JFS to coordinate grief, bereavement and loss services in both JFS locations in Albany and Schenectady. Formerly a member of the JFS Board of Directors, Jeannie was the Regional Director of the NYS Office of Mental Health Central New York Office and Clinical Coordinator of the NYS Office of Mental Health Disaster Response. She has extensive experience in providing services and education for people coping with loss throughout the life cycle and during times of crisis and disaster.

Jeannie and her husband Jeffrey, a professor at University at Albany, live in Center Square in Albany. Their daughter Deborah lives in New York City. “As a JFS board member, I gained great respect for the services that JFS provides the community. I’m looking forward to expanding the Haven services throughout the Capital Region,” said Jeannie.

When seniors in the NNORC want to partake in a social and recreational activities, they’ll turn to **Judy Avner**, our new Coordinator of Social Engagement for the NNORC.

Judy is the former Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association for NYS. She is retiring after 19 years with the Association. Prior to that she worked with Governor Mario Cuomo. Judy has had a lifetime of planning personal and professional events and those skills will translate perfectly to planning interesting activities for seniors.

Judy has been in the Albany area for over 30 years and certainly knows her way around day trips, historical sites, etc. She is also active in the community. She teaches second grade at B’Yachad, the collaborative Hebrew School of Ohav Shalom and Temple Israel and is currently First Vice President on the Board of Trustees of Congregation Ohav Shalom and Board of Directors of Friendship Circle.

“I am in the right age cohort for this position. I hope to plan and choose activities and programs that appeal to a broad range of senior citizens,” said Judy. “And honestly, I like to have fun.”



# Making a Difference at JFS

If you've ever volunteered, you've discovered what a worthwhile and rewarding experience it can be. When you give back, you make a positive change within your community and within the lives of individuals.

Did you know that one in four Americans volunteer? Last year, 64.5 million Americans volunteered nearly 7.9 billion hours of their time. The estimated value of this service is nearly \$175 billion.\* The reasons people volunteer vary (see below), and at the core is that volunteering is a win-win—for the person and for the organization.

Volunteers are an essential part of JFS, particularly for our Project 5 senior transportation program and Haven bereavement counseling program. The motor behind Project 5 is volunteer drivers who take Jewish seniors where they want to go. Volunteers can work as little as once a month or several times in one week. The beauty of this program is that it's flexible for the volunteers.

Haven is JFS' new bereavement support program in which trained, volunteer companion counselors provide individualized support and encouragement to help people through the grieving process. Volunteers help people with a range of loss including death of a loved one, but also with loss of a job, end of a long term relationship or marriage, or other difficult life transitions.

While the volunteer needs for these programs are specific, we also have volunteers who help with administrative tasks in the office, as well as with marketing and events. For these projects, we match your skills, availability and passions with the assignment.

*Want to give back to the community, meet new people, or lend your expertise? Call JFS and become a volunteer: 518-482-8856.*

## Elaine Raad – Volunteer Companion Counselor

We were fortunate when Elaine called us to volunteer for Haven. Elaine is a recent graduate of the Maria College nursing program. She is an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) and recently shadowed a nurse at Community Hospice, which confirmed her desire to help the elderly and those coping with end-of-life.

As an LPN, she brings medical knowledge to her role, but more importantly, the recent passing of her mother gives her the capacity for compassion and empathy to help people through their loss. Elaine has been matched with a woman who is grieving the loss of her husband. She hopes her life experience can help this woman through her loss.



## Why Volunteer?

- To give back & lend a helping hand
- Use your skills to benefit others
- Gain a sense of achievement
- Repay a kindness
- Experience personal growth
- Explore personal interests & passions
- Meet new people and build friendships
- Uncover hidden skills and talents
- Enrich your education & build your resume
- Have fun
- Gain confidence
- Spend quality time away from your normal routine
- Contribute to a cause you care about
- Get to know a community
- Make your mom proud (our favorite)

## Arielle Rosen – Volunteer Administrative Assistant

Arielle came to JFS because she wanted to help at an organization that is guided by Jewish values. When she learned our agency history, and how we helped orphans and Jewish immigrants, she knew she found the right place to volunteer.



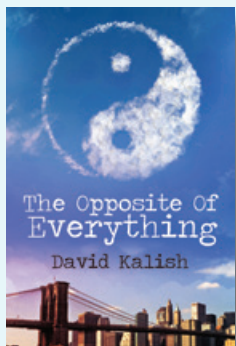
Arielle has been helping with the front office, filing, scheduling, calling clients to confirm their appointments, etc. She recently took on some assignments in our marketing department, helping to promote and upcoming event. "She's a quick study," said Monica Tan JFS Marketing Manager. "As a young person immersed in the Internet, I was confident that Arielle could post our event on various website calendars."

Arielle is pursuing a Master of Social Work at University of Albany in 2015. Volunteering at JFS allows her to experience the inner workings of a social service agency and its impact on the community.

JFS and Your Albany NNORC Present...

## Local Author David Kalish

With Lale Davidson, SUNY Adirondack,  
Creative Writing Professor



Inspired by his own brush with cancer and divorce, author David Kalish makes a comedy out of his painful past in his debut novel, *The Opposite of Everything*. Come and hear David Kalish and Lale Davidson explore David's writing journey and how he transformed his personal struggles into a dark comedy.

This is a must-attend event for book lovers, aspiring writers, and anyone who has ever struggled to keep the faith in the face of adversity.

**DATE** Wednesday, August 6, 2014

**TIME** 3:00 p.m.

**PLACE** Albany Jewish Community Center

**RSVP** 514-2023 or [info@jfsneny.org](mailto:info@jfsneny.org)

**FEE** Free

