

Branching Out

Inspiring Families Inspiring Hope

Adopt-A-Family Brings Holiday Cheer

While many families gather to celebrate holidays with an overabundance of gifts, others go wanting at a time that should be a festive observance.

Times are tough for a young widower working and trying to raise two children under the age of 3.

A woman suffering with an autoimmune disease and unable to work still has two young children at home while also caring for grandchildren.

As Hanukkah approaches, families like these can expect some holiday cheer and a helping hand during tough times as part of the JF&CS Adopt-A-Family program. Starting its 15th year, the program was developed as a way for congregations, organizations and individuals to bring cheer to families in need at Hanukkah. JF&CS social workers identify the needs of the family to be “adopted” and supply donors with a “wish list” that may include anything from stuffed animals to such necessities as coats and pajamas.

“The program offers a way to make the season a little brighter for families going through a difficult time,” says Fran Kravitz, social worker. Retail gift cards also make wonderful donations, she says. For more information, contact Fran Kravitz, 314-812-9369.



Sue Rundblad; Cathy Steele, JF&CS President; Sally Katzif, NCJW President and Sherri Goldman, NCJW VP Community Service.

JF&CS, NCJW Join to Help Kids

Board members, staff and volunteers enthusiastically welcomed the opening of a new Kids Community Closet at the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry, a program of JF&CS. A project of the National Council of Jewish Women, the closet is stocked with shirts, pants, underwear, socks and winter coats to be distributed as needed to 5 through 10-year-old JF&CS clients. “We are honored to partner with NCJW in our mutual mission of helping others,” says Sue Rundblad, Program Coordinator-Community Outreach. “Sometimes our families in crisis need more than food.”

Homemaker Help “Priceless”

After an interim stay in a rehabilitation facility, Lillian returned to her Covenant House apartment in need of extra help. Many of the day-to-day activities that most take for granted were challenging to her: dressing, preparing meals, cleaning. And getting out to run errands wasn’t even an option since she no longer drives.

Fortunately for Lillian, help was just around the corner. The JF&CS In-Home Services Homemaker Program offers assistance that

allows a person to function in her own familiar surroundings. “The service is fabulous,” says Lillian, who is visually impaired. “My homemaker knows what to do in the apartment. She’ll cook for me, put the groceries away so I know where to find them and arrange the clothes in the closet so I will know where everything is.”

Three mornings a week Lillian’s homemaker helps her around the house and provides companionship and an opportunity to get out. “They do so much

more than housecleaning. It’s the personal attention.” She praises her homemaker as someone she can relate to and someone who cares. “She can anticipate what I’m going to need and do little things to help me. When we go out she is very protective. These things mean a great deal to me.”

The sliding scale fee allows people of any means to access this service. Lillian says, “For me, that is priceless.” For more information, call Lori Goldberg, 314-812-9333.

Have You Remembered JF&CS in Your Estate Plan? Your planned gift to JF&CS will enable us to sustain our vital services to the community well into the future. Call Barbara Barnholtz, Director of Development, 314-812-9356.



Executive Buzz

Every four years, JF&CS embarks on a strategic planning process. We look at where the most pressing needs are

and think about where our resources can make a difference. The challenge is how to achieve balance in our plan and focus our financial and human resources over the next four years. Is it home health services for the middle class, supportive housing for disabled young adults or transportation services for an elderly population no longer able to drive to medical appointments or to the store?

I frequently hear from individuals and groups about the real needs that affect them on a day-to-day basis. Their stories are compelling and touching. Which needs are not being met now and how might they impact our community in the future? As we go through the planning process, we must consider the needs of the community on multiple levels—from the individual on up.

While JF&CS staff and clients both have substantial input, our board is the group that has to make these critical choices. We encourage those of you who support our mission to share your thoughts and opinions as we begin this important task. Your input is valuable in helping us determine how to best use our resources for the benefit of the community.

This is an ongoing dialogue at JF&CS and in both the local and national Jewish community. We invite those who may have a broader perspective to join in the conversation.

It's something for all of us to think about.

L. Louis Albert

ElderLink Connects Seniors, Services

“What’s the difference between a skilled nursing facility and assisted living?”

“My mom needs help at home but isn’t sure she can afford it. Who can I call?”

“We think our parents need to move but they say no. How do we approach this?”

“Mom seems to be failing. How can we tell?”

The questions vary, but the people who call ElderLink St. Louis have one thing in common: they need direction. The new information and referral service for Jewish seniors serves as a comprehensive resource for older adults, their children and caregivers and professionals who serve that population.

“We are the go-to resource for all services that are available to seniors,” says Lori Zimmerman, MSW, LCSW, Senior Information and Referral Specialist for the program. “Whether it’s a check list for a residential facility, materials on understanding dementia behavior or access

to social opportunities, we are here to provide advice and answers.”

It may be a referral to counseling, a list of home health agencies or help just sifting through the maze of the Medicaid process. “We assess the situation so we can help them understand their options. Then we provide the contact for the services that best fit their needs,” Zimmerman says.

Launched last June, ElderLink, a project of the Jewish Federation administered by JF&CS, is a free service and has proved to be an invaluable resource for the elderly and their families. One follow-up call says it all: “Thank you so much for your help, time and resources concerning my neighbor. He is deeply touched by the care being shown to him, which in turn is giving him hope and determination to care for and about himself.”

For more information, call 314-812-9300 or visit their website at www.elderlinkstlouis.org.

Kornblum Grant Sustains Food Pantry Services

Thanks to the Harvey Kornblum Foundation, an additional, generous endowment to the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry ensures that the food pantry will be able to serve as many clients as possible. The foundation grant supports food pantry staff, including two drivers, which enables the food pantry to reach out to more frail elderly who are homebound. It also means the food pantry can be open five days a week, which gives people more flexibility to access the food and personal care items they need. “Without the Harvey Kornblum Foundation, we couldn’t reach out and help as many people as we do,” says Barbara Barnholtz, Director of Development. JF&CS is grateful for all food pantry donations. For information on donor opportunities, call Barbara, 314-812-9365.

The Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry particularly needs tuna, beef stew, canned soups, canned pasta with meat, canned vegetables, peanut butter, dry pasta, canned fruits. Drop off your food gifts at JF&CS Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Behind the Scenes at JF&CS

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