

Branching Out

Inspiring Families Inspiring Hope

Jewish Food Pantry Hopes to Relocate, Expand

Where do you store 42,000 pounds of food? Or 18,000? Or even 10,000 pounds? While those quantities from the St. Louis area food bank fluctuate each month, depending on the USDA allocation, either way, it's a lot of food—food that comes in and out of the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry (HKJFP) that is necessary to serve its clients each month.

The fact is the lower level of JF&CS wasn't designed to accommodate a food pantry that serves 5,000 people per month. Shelf space is limited as is refrigeration. The passenger elevator isn't equipped to handle freight. In other words, "This building was not designed to house food in the quantities we have," says Joan Robinson, MSW, MAEd, Program Manager of the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry.



Longtime food pantry volunteers Sue Rosen and Neil Dunski prepare orders that serve 5,000 clients per month.

In September the number of food pantry clients climbed to 5,000. Robinson attributes that to the economy and long-term unemployment. "This is an unprecedented time in responding to hunger in our area."

The reality is that the food pantry has outgrown its current space. To remedy that, the HKJFP is in the process of relocating to a warehouse facility that will accommodate growth and result in a more efficient operation. "We will be able to operate more effectively as a food pantry. It will give us the ability to process prepared foods donated by restaurants and others," Robinson says. Food they might throw away could potentially be repackaged and provided to hungry families. "You have to have the capacity to handle it properly."

Robinson praises the "phenomenal support" from the Jewish community. "The pantry is a lifeline for so many," she notes.

And the pantry is a lifeline for so many. One client put it into perspective: "I can't do anything but say thank you," she said tearfully, "but I can give you a hug."

CAPP Adds Harassment Component

It's hard to fathom a child in middle school being viciously assaulted, but when it happened in a local school district with which JF&CS has a relationship, school officials contacted Jennifer Bernstein, coordinator of the JF&CS Child Abuse Prevention Program (CAPP), for assistance. CAPP is a successful program offered to schools, daycares, community organizations and others to teach child safety, abuse recognition and prevention.

In order to fill this urgent need, Bernstein's staff quickly developed a 30-minute sexual harassment program to present to the student body. "It is a simple program that talks about what you can do if you're sexually harassed," Bernstein says. It also provides an opportunity to make students aware of how they might be crossing the line.

"We present to small groups of students, boys and girls separately. It's a natural outgrowth of our Safe Touch and Safe Teen programs for younger students, only geared to older kids," Bernstein says.

The program addresses different types of harassment, how to deal with those situations and what to do if you're a victim. "We discuss the difference between flirting and sexual harassment and the fact that boys can be sexually harassed too, something students are always surprised to hear," Bernstein says.

Bernstein says the interactive format encourages healthy discussion. "Feedback from school counselors tells us that this program is a good way to get the discussion going. It starts with our program, but they have to continue talking about it at school," she says.

Have You Remembered JF&CS in Your Estate Plan?

Your planned gift will ensure our ability to provide vital services to the community.

Please call Barbara Barnholtz, Director of Development, 314-812-9365.



Executive Buzz

What will the JF&CS of the future look like? We can't really know, but we do know that a changing demographic prompts us to address

our future with regard to our staff, board members and volunteers.

We know the oldest segment of the Baby Boomer population has just begun to reach retirement age. Over the next 10 years, those numbers will grow significantly. A second trend projects that the Millennial segment of the population (those currently in their 20s) will constitute 50% of the work force by the year 2020. The result? Fewer Baby Boomers and more Millennials.

We have begun to think carefully about the impact of this major generational shift on our future. Factors such as how we use technology will change along with expectations related to family/work balance, work at home arrangements and more. The Millennials approach to leadership and community involvement will reflect the influences of their generation.

To a great extent, the thoughts and feelings of the Baby Boomers have defined the work of our agencies in the community. With the demographic transition, we anticipate a great change in program priorities, the approach to problem-solving and the manner in which work is carried out.

A glimpse into our future gives us the opportunity to identify our next generation of workers, leaders and volunteers and seek their input as we navigate our changing course.

As always, we welcome new perspectives and invite you to join in the conversation.

L. Louis Albert

Michelle Librach Heads Youth Leader Board

It's only been one year since the inception of the JF&CS Young Leader Board, YLB, but newly elected president Michelle Librach praises a core group of next-generation leaders who have committed their time and talents to the agency.

"We're really just starting out, but we've been successful so far. It takes time to get the word out about who we are," she says. The YLB is an outreach effort to identify and engage a younger support base for JF&CS.

Librach, a 26-year-old Indiana University graduate, was elected president in June and now represents a younger demographic on the JF&CS board. "It's my first board and a learning experience for me," she says. Her role is to bring the perspective of her contemporaries to the table.

"Our goal is to raise awareness of JF&CS programs and services and to get the next generation involved in the Jewish community, people in their 20s and 30s, giving back and preparing to take on leadership roles," she says.

JF&CS couldn't hope for a better example. Librach, a St. Louis native, is currently

working toward her master's in secondary education while teaching Spanish at Whitfield School. At her first job for five years now, she also plans international community service trips for students, meshing with her passion for travel, and serves as an assistant varsity dance coach.



She plans to make JF&CS the beneficiary of one of Whitfield's monthly service drives. "It's a way I can incorporate many aspects of my life," she says.

Librach says YLB plans include reaching out to college students in St. Louis and developing programs for youth groups as a way to get high-school students involved. "As president I hope to get people of my generation to care about getting involved, to help them recognize the intrinsic motivation you get from doing something for others," she says.

Since getting involved with JF&CS, Librach says, "I've grown attached, it's part of me now. I don't think I could ever not help out."

Variety Recognizes JF&CS

Variety the Children's Charity has recognized JF&CS among seven partner agencies with the 2011 Stellar Performance Award in the category of Behavioral Counseling. Each year, Variety recognizes outstanding collaborative efforts that focus on the whole child. Variety's annual allocation of more than \$600,000 is spread across 81 partner agencies to fund programs that directly impact children with physical and mental disabilities. JF&CS is proud to partner with this organization that has served children locally for almost 80 years.



Jan Albus, Variety CEO, presents the Variety Stellar Performance Award to JF&CS President Fred Steinbach.

Behind the Scenes at JF&CS

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