



# ***E-Lights: An IAJVS Publication for Executive & Professional Leadership***

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***IAJVS is a non-profit network of 28 national and international human service agencies throughout the United States, Canada, and Israel. Our member agencies provide a vast array of services that have a direct effect on the lives of hundreds of thousands of people each year: career management, skills training, rehabilitation programs, health services, and home and community based services.***

### **Message from the President**

I thank all of you for providing such valuable and actionable information on such a wide range of topics in this year-end issue. It is yet another indication of the strength and diversity of our members– and of the great value in sharing our activities across the network. I hope something in this issue will stimulate interesting discussions and follow up with a colleague.

Our 2008 Annual Conference in Boston is just around the corner. *Beyond Job Development– The Employer as Customer and Partner in Workforce Development* is definitely a timely topic. Jerry Rubin and his conference team have put together an outstanding program for us; I look forward to seeing you there.

Best wishes to each of you and your families for a wonderful spring.

Happy Pesach!

Peter M. Bloch

President

### **Message from the Executive Director**

The IAJVS Annual Conference 2008 is approaching fast! This year's theme *Beyond Job Development– The Employer as Customer and Partner in Workforce Development* will examine internal and external challenges and opportunities faced by our network in addressing workforce development in a global economy.

Planning is underway as well for the 2008 Train-the-Trainer initiative, generously sponsored by the Bank of America Foundation. This year's workshop, *Harnessing the Skills of Baby Boomers and Engaging Them in Service to Their Communities*, is designed to build the network's capacities in recruiting, engaging and supporting the 77 million Americans nearing retirement age, who are seeking meaningful opportunities for both service and employment as they age.

We are also very excited to announce that our conference hosts from JVS Boston are coordinating an additional program track, a full day on serving customers with disabilities seeking competitive employment.

Last but not least, you won't want to miss the fantastic Sunday night host reception at the "Top of the Hub" – the Skywalk on the 50<sup>th</sup> floor of the Prudential Center. It promises to be a wonderful evening.

I hope to see you there.

Genie

## GRANT UPDATES

### Louisville JFVS Gets \$1 million Grant for Refugee Business Development

Louisville Jewish Family & Vocational Service has received a \$1 million federal grant to fund a project to increase the number of refugees able to successfully launch and grow small businesses. The renewable, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement, provides \$203,703 per year and includes a \$50,000 micro-loan fund that will generate \$150,000 in loans to about 18 clients each year, according to a press release. The grant will also provide training and technical assistance to refugee entrepreneurs. "For 100 years, JFVS has considered it vital to address the economic, social and cultural needs of immigrants and refugees," Judy Freundlich Tiell, Executive Director of JFVS said. "This grant gives us the opportunity to offer loans for the first time to this population, furthering our efforts to provide immigrants with the tools and skills they need to develop assets in the form of financial, human and social capital."

The project is aimed at microenterprises, which the U.S. government defines as a company of 10 or fewer employees that is owned and operated by someone who qualifies as low-income. The project will be operated in Louisville during the first year and will expand to other areas in Kentucky in the following years. JFVS is collaborating with Community Ventures Corp., a Lexington nonprofit organization that works to help people increase income and build assets through small-business ownership, home ownership and business expansion. Congratulations to JFVS on securing a grant for this worthy project.

### Jewish Community Services of South Florida, Inc. Receives Grant Award for Capacity Building

The Health Foundation of South Florida (HFSF) has generously awarded \$258,000 to Jewish Community Services of South Florida, Inc. (JCS) to support the agency's infrastructure over the next two years. This new JCS Technology Initiative grant is based on a two-phased approach to improve the agency's information technology capabilities, enabling the agency to meet the intended outcomes and enhance its performance while providing the highest quality of administrative, social and supportive services to clients. It is JCS' goal to have an end-to-end technology plan to address the agency's multi-layered technologi-

cal needs.

Through the Health Foundation's Technology Award, JCS will enhance its efficiency, including: improvements in data collection, maintaining client electronic files, billing, and outcomes reporting. This effort will serve to improve the way JCS currently operates and will potentially increase the agency's capacity to improve services to more clients, thus further expanding JCS' reach in the South Florida community while ensuring services are accessible and readily available. JCS will now have the capacity to improve the delivery of social services to all cli-

ents while promoting the quality of life and maximum achievement of potential within the community as a whole.

"Ultimately, the goal is to have a technology system that will allow JCS to collect demographic data, integrate financial and operational components and allow for the ability to provide efficient and effective services to clients," said Sylvia Goldsmith, Executive Vice President/COO of JCS.

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## **Jewish Community Services of South Florida, Inc. Receives Grant Award for Capacity Building**

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This project has been in development since 2005 and JCS is very excited to see it coming to fruition. Through an RFP process, JCS identified an IT consultant organization which understands that human services organizations face constant challenges from changing government regulations, evolving funding source requirements, and increased fiscal respon-

sibilities forcing them to re-engineer service processes, reporting processes, and billing processes. The IT consultant organization has begun the design and implementation of an integrated, quality IT system to be applied agency-wide, which is expected to be operational during third quarter 2008. JCS is aware of the tremendous hard work that will be required but is pleased at the pro-

gress being made and optimistic for the future of the agency's ability to improve the way in which it serves individuals and families in the community.

If anyone would like further information regarding JCS's experience and the arduous process of capacity building, call Eve Mart, Director of Grants Development at (305) 899-1587, ext. 176.

## **PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

### **Louisville JFVS and Workforce Development**

As a community based organization and human services provider, JFVS has historically been involved in the business of training and workforce development. Workforce Development is defined as the coordination of schools, employers, government, and community based organizations to provide an integrated delivery of programs, including training, that help individuals to become suitably and gainfully employed, assist employers in securing human capital and sustain organizational productivity and mobilize the community to achieve and maintain economic vitality.

In recent years, the agency has increased its concentration on these services. For example, last year, JFVS became a part of Kentuckiana Works and the federally funded One Stop Career Center operation. This enabled JFVS to further expand its workforce development role. Collaborations can be useful in the sharing of expertise, leveraging access to other resources, and building program resilience. JFVS is also very proud of its Micro Enterprise Development program in which refugees and immigrants gain business training to either start or expand a small business. In fact, JFVS just received a \$1M federal grant to expand this program. It includes collaboration with Lexington's Community Ventures Corporation. In addition, JFVS is one of the authorized local providers to train homecare workers who assist the elderly. Finally, JFVS's monthly Neighborhood Career Conversation series is geared toward helping participants to develop their "soft skills." Soft skills include team work, communication, and other relational skills. Research suggests that soft skills can often be more important than technical skills in influencing work performance and success.

JFVS is so proud to be continuing its legacy of providing programs and services which ensure that clients remain well-trained, confident, and marketable workers in this ever-changing economy. For more information on workforce development contact Bob Tiell at (502) 452-6341, ext. 230 or visit [www.jfvs.com](http://www.jfvs.com).

## JVS Boston Launches New Career Network

More than 50 professional women attended the JVS Jewish Women's Career Network's (JWCN) kick-off event in October, *Networking Matters: Creating Your Own Entourage*. The network is part of Career Moves, JVS's division serving Jewish and other professionals. The evening featured practical tips and advice on how to network more effectively from two speakers from the Career Moves Advisory Committee. The JWCN is a Career Moves initiative that brings Jewish women of all ages together for networking, mentoring, and information around careers. It offers brown-

bag lunches in downtown Boston; career-building workshops; on-line and in person networking; access to the CareerMoves@JVS LinkedIn group; events with speakers on pertinent issues; and an upcoming series of financial planning workshops.

The JVS/CJP Jewish Women's Career Network, formerly known as the Jewish Women's Mentoring Network, aims to support and enhance career development for greater Boston Jewish women of all



*Julie Foley networking with Julie Unger, JVS Career Networks specialist*

ages through programs, leadership development, networking and mentoring opportunities. If you would like to learn more about the JVS/CJP JWCN community, please contact Julie Unger at [junger@jvs-boston.org](mailto:junger@jvs-boston.org) or 617-399-3117.

## JVS MetroWest Creative Maturity Expo

Jewish Vocational Service of MetroWest (JVS) held the first annual *JVS Creative Maturity Expo* on Sunday, October 28, 2007. A program of the Ronald I. Coun Center for Creative Maturity, the event was designed to assist members of the 50-plus generation in "redefining life's potential" as they explored pre- and post-retirement options and opportunities. The all-day Expo, which drew more than 400 attendees, featured three keynote speaker sessions, sixteen seminars and workshops, information tables, exercise classes and free health screenings.

Featured speakers included David Bornstein, author of *How to Change*

*the World*, which tells the stories of people around the globe who are solving many of the world's most difficult problems through a growing wave of "social entrepreneurs" – individuals with initiative, creativity and determination that are reshaping the world for the better. Mr. Bornstein gave voice to how the power of one person's creative ideas and passionate drive can make a difference and bring positive change to people around the world. *Maximizing Your Total Brain Fitness* was presented by Dr. Jane Martin, Co-Director, Neuropsychology Testing and Evaluation Center at Mount Sinai School of Medicine. She discussed ways to boost brain power and keep mem-

ory sharp as we age. Howard Stone, noted speaker and co-founder of *2young2retire*, spoke about skipping retirement and moving on to discovering one's later life callings and passions.

As a follow-up to Howard Stone's presentation, JVS counseling staff offered a seminar that invited attendees to explore exciting retirement alternatives and offered introductory one-to-one life coaching sessions. Seminar topics and workshops covered a variety of topics including: Creative Travel and Volunteer Opportunities; Tax Planning; Protecting Retirement Income; An

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## JVS MetroWest Creative Maturity Expo

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Update on Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia; Stress Reduction and Pain Management; Elderlaw; Medicare; Osteoporosis; Home Safety Tips; Home Care Services; Relationships; and Transitioning from the Family Home.

The Creative Maturity Expo was sponsored by a private foundation

grant, along with financial sponsorship from eight community businesses, and included the participation of eleven MetroWest sister agencies and other community organizations, including the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services. Through the Expo, JVS took the lead agency role in the community in highlighting and targeting services for baby boomers and enhanced the agency's image in serving this population.

Plans are underway for the second JVS Creative Maturity Expo to be held in the Fall of 2008. For additional information, contact Caren Ford, Assistant Executive Director for Program Services, (973) 674-6330, ext. 228, or [cford@jvsnj.org](mailto:cford@jvsnj.org).

## YouthAbility Students Give Freedom Writers an "A+"

YouthAbility is a program of JFSA Cleveland that serves disabled, disadvantaged and at-risk youth ages 14-26. Originally part of the national IAJVS YouthAbility initiative, JFSA Cleveland has successfully continued this program for the past five years.

On October 9, 2007, teen participants from around the Cleveland area gathered to meet *Freedom Writers* actress and real-life student Maria Reyes and her former classmate, Sue Ellen Alpizar. The motion picture *Freedom Writers* is based on the amazing true story of one brave high school teacher who succeeded in inspiring her troubled and apathetic students to aim for excellence and encouraged them to express themselves through writing. The program participants found the meeting with the

women to be eye-opening and stimulating. The women's message was impactful and inspiring. One student shares her impression below:

*"I am going through all sorts of problems at home and listening to them made me feel so much better. If all 150 of those students can get through it, then I can too. When I left the field trip, I felt relieved from stress. I learned so much from this experience. One thing that really touched me was when Maria told us that no one else can control our lives. Now I can hold my head up high and be proud of who I am. Now I have set goals and will achieve them no matter what. I don't care what anyone says – it's all in my hands*

*and I have faith. As long as I tell myself I can do it – then I can do it!"*

This unique event gave students

***"Now I can hold my head up high and be proud of who I am. Now I have set goals and I will achieve them no matter what."***

the opportunity to meet other young people who have faced challenges that they are presently facing, but have succeeded in confronting them. JFSA was proud of the strong impact the program had on the participants and looks forward to offering more inspiring events in the future.

## **JVS Toronto Offers Enhanced Communication for Mandarin and Cantonese Speakers**

Employers and internationally trained professionals alike have identified issues around pronunciation as a key barrier to securing and retaining employment commensurate with the skill level of foreign speakers. JVS Toronto's job development and employment counseling staff have heard this message time and again from employers and clients. This is particularly apparent in immigrants whose native languages are Cantonese and Mandarin. In response, JVS Toronto has developed a pronunciation program to provide unemployed, underemployed and displaced workers with enhanced pronunciation skills and strategies to improve their communication in the context of their job search or job maintenance. This involves strengthening their ability to hear and feel how to modify their speech to communicate more clearly, and achieve a more North American sound.

JVS began piloting this pronunciation program for Native Chinese Speakers at its Markham location in January 2008. Markham is a multicultural community with higher than average income and education levels. The town of Markham is one of two places in Canada where Caucasian is the minority race. Chinese, South Asian, Filipino, West Asian and Korean make up the majority of the population. There has been tremendous interest from people who work for Chinese speaking employers and want to improve their pronunciation skills in order to be able to work in an English speaking environment. To date there are 80 people participating in this program in eight different classes (each class has a maximum of 10 participants) and there is currently a waiting list of 32 individuals interested in participating in the next program.

JVS has had curriculum developed for this first language group which focuses on the issues specific to Mandarin and Cantonese speakers. Chinese-speaking newcomers, for example, often have difficulties pronouncing the sounds "l", "r" and "th". In addition, Chinese languages are tonal, so speakers lack the ability to make changes in stress on syllables typical of the English language.

Many internationally trained professionals have achieved a solid level of English language competency in their reading and writing; however, their pronunciation and intonation patterns do not follow North American norms and this leads to a great deal of confusion for both the Canadian-born employer and the newcomer. Intonation errors can lead to the perception that the speaker is being rude, lacks confidence or is bored.

*Intonation errors can lead to the perception that the speaker is being rude, lacks confidence or is bored.*

The challenge is also compounded by the fact that very often, employers and HR firms use a telephone interview as an initial screen of potential candidates. This is a challenge for both the internationally trained job seeker and the employer. For the employer, time delays in answers, combined with an unfamiliar accent contribute to the impression that the candidate does not possess the skills he has listed in his resume. For the job seeker, a lack of awareness of the importance attached to this initial interview, a lack of familiarity with common, acceptable set expressions and the lack of visual clues, can contribute to unsuccessful experiences. Communicating on the telephone is a well-documented contribution to communication breakdowns.

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## Innovative Initiatives in Minneapolis

Reflecting back on 2007, the Minneapolis JVS division of Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis is pleased to have served over 2700 individuals. The agency's wide variety of initiatives served a multitude of people, from those contemplating careers, to high school students making college choices, to seniors over fifty-five looking to gain marketable job skills. The oldest senior employment participant is 86 years old! Along with the programs that JVS has conducted for years, such as career counseling, vocational rehabilitation and welfare to work, JVS is proud of some of its newest initiatives.

### The West Hennepin Community Outreach Program

Just west of the suburbs of Minneapolis, in an area where some people still keep horses on their 20 acre spreads and others may have their closest neighbors half a mile down the road, JVS discovered a

number of people in need of employment services. These people, many of whom are low-income, live a more rural lifestyle, and often find it inconvenient and problematic to go into the cities for job assistance. Mary Bahneman, Program Coordinator at JVS, is helping unemployed and underemployed residents in a 125 square mile area via a portable program that brings career assistance closer to home. Mary has forged several partnerships including one with a food shelf and another with the Interfaith Community Outreach (ICO) program, a non-profit, community-based human service organization that serves low-income families. Mary has established office hours at these two locations, making it easy for people who visit the food shelf and ICO to receive job search assistance on site. JVS also partners with libraries and community centers enabling people to access services in their neighborhoods. "Searching for employment is stressful enough. If I can make it

*"Once the children are well cared for parents feel secure enough to seek satisfying employment..."*

slightly easier on people by offering these valuable services more conveniently, I can help them improve their lives." In 2008, Mary projects working with over 100 clients and she expects to build new partnerships with employers in the West Hennepin area. The county funds this program.

### Childcare Assistance

How did an agency that's known for delivering employment, training, and career development services get involved with a \$7 million childcare program? In 2005, Hennepin County, which includes Minneapolis and surrounding suburbs, chose JVS, the employment division of JFCS, to administer its Basic Sliding Fee Childcare pro-

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## JVS Toronto Offers Enhanced Communication for Mandarin and Cantonese Speakers

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Studies have shown that comprehension is greatly affected when speakers place the stress on the wrong part of words and by incorrect intonation. It is actually these challenges rather than accent that

impede effective communication. Fortunately, studies have clearly demonstrated



that intonation and clear speech can be taught and improvements can be measured over time.

For more information please contact Anat Wertheim at [awertheim@jvstoronto.org](mailto:awertheim@jvstoronto.org) or call 416-787-1151 x223.

## Innovative Initiatives in Minneapolis

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gram (BSF). This program administers childcare assistance for eligible families. “Once the children are well cared for,” explains Caalynn Schiro, JVS Program Manager, “parents feel secure enough to seek satisfying employment or work or attend an educational program that leads to employment.”

Larry Greenbaum, JVS Division

Director adds, “At first glance, the BSF program may not seem like a match for a JVS, but when you look at how key childcare is to self-sufficiency, you see how clearly this program fits with our mission of positively impacting people through employment and educational services.”

### CVS/pharmacy

In November 2007, JVS, as part of an IAJVS initiative, embarked on a career training opportunity

with CVS Pharmacies in Minnesota. The Photo Lab Technician Training is a 120-hour internship program designed to prepare trainees for employment as photo lab technicians. Minneapolis JVS was one of the first JVS agencies to launch the program, and JVS opened this opportunity to various groups within JFCS. For more information contact Carla Richert at [crichtert@jvsmn.org](mailto:crichtert@jvsmn.org) or call 952-417-2118.

## Program Spotlight: STRIVE Israel

750,000 Israelis are considered to be chronically jobless. These individuals are not simply out of work, but rather, due to a variety of social, cultural and physical barriers are excluded from the country's workforce and dependent on entitlements. As a response to the needs of this group JDC, in partnership with the Government of Israel, has launched *TEVET*, a major new initiative to help these chronically unemployed Israelis overcome the barriers to employment they face and to fulfill their potential for independence.

Disturbingly, almost one-third of Israelis not in the workforce are aged between 22 and 34 -- approximately 220,000 young adults in all. Although two-thirds have at least twelve years of education and are excellent candidates for

employment the culture of dependency in which they have grown up—many represent a second or third generation of poverty—presents social barriers which must be removed. In addition, many come from problematic homes or have not served in the IDF (Israeli Defense Force), barriers which leave them unprepared to enter the Israeli workforce. The result is a future of unemployment or low paying menial jobs, leaving little chance for a productive or fulfilling career path.

STRIVE (Support and Training Result in Valuable Employees) was first developed in East Harlem, New York in 1985, where a STRIVE center was established to help people with significant barriers to employment achieve economic

independence through work. The program's innovation was its emphasis on providing participants with soft skills, immediate placement and long-term follow-up in the workplace.

The STRIVE model in Israel targets young Israeli adults who are between 22-35 years old, who have not participated in the labor force for a period of six months or longer and who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Through its unique approach, STRIVE works to integrate these young adults into the workforce, assisting them in developing a career path promoting mobility and self-sufficiency.

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## Program Spotlight: STRIVE Israel

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STRIVE Israel offers a rich basket of services, including attitudinal training coupled with long term follow-up for chronically unemployed individuals. A preliminary assessment of all participants is carried out, followed by an intensive month-long seminar in preparation for employment, emphasizing soft skills which are not job specific but which will be useful throughout the working world. STRIVE staff then assist participants to find suitable employment, followed by feedback and group activities to ensure that course graduates receive the support needed to succeed and remain in long-term employment. Having proved themselves in the workplace for at least six months, participants then receive professional training to encourage career advancement. Ongoing follow-up is provided for an additional two years, and STRIVE participants return to STRIVE and utilize the program's services as needed, throughout their careers. This ensures that they will be committed to working as a way of life, which can eventually lead to social mobility.

STRIVE's central program partners are the local municipalities in each location. In addition, STRIVE also cooperates with the National Insurance Institute, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Israeli Employment Bureau and local non-profit organizations.

STRIVE Israel was launched in Tel Aviv by JDC TEVET in January 2006 and in Haifa in 2007. A third STRIVE center is due to open in Jerusalem in 2008. Approximately 350 participants have already successfully completed the course, of which 70 percent have found employment. These graduates are now working in fields as diverse as banking, telemarketing and administration. In addition, a significant number of large Israeli companies have pledged their support for STRIVE by becoming potential employers, including Bank Hapoalim, Bezeq, Haifa Chemicals, Arkia, Visa and Netvision.

For more information on this program contact Sam Amiel at [sama@jdc.org.il](mailto:sama@jdc.org.il) or 972-2-655-7962.

*Almost one-third of Israelis not in the workforce are aged between 22 and 34 -- approximately 220,000 young adults in all.*

## Recovery: New Hope for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

*Debby (not her real name) hears voices. When they distress her, she becomes uncontrollable, demonstrated by throwing chairs, punching holes in plasterboard walls, and sweeping items off of desks and tabletops. She is unable to go into the community without 1:1 staffing; she is unable to live in a group home without incident, thus requiring a 24-hour personal aide. Sometimes, when she gets very sick, she must go to the hospital. There, because she is mentally retarded, emergency room staff medicates her, but rarely do they provide talk therapy because of her intellectual disability. So she remains a virtual prisoner to her mental illness, unable to be in the community, live in a group, attend a day program, or work without incident or stigma.*

JEVS Human Services (Philadelphia) has recognized the need for intervention to provide appropriate support for individuals like Debby, dually challenged by mental retardation and mental illness, to engage in a recovery process. Such dual diagnoses are prevalent. The full range of mental illnesses that exist in the general population may co-exist in persons with intellectual disabilities. National estimates are that 30-35 percent of persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities also have a psychiatric disorder.

Despite the prevalence, programming is scarce. An individual's mental health disorders may be incorrectly attributed to intellectual disabilities and go untreated. Disruptive behaviors may be erroneously interpreted as the person demonstrating their choice to not participate in a program. Asked to leave settings while the causes of their behaviors go unattended, these individuals wind up segregated or isolated, too often requiring one-on-one care or care of even greater intensity. Dually diagnosed individuals also tend to cycle in and out of emergency rooms and psychiatric wards, where staff lacks tools for effective treatment. Unable to cope with disabling mental health conditions, with a lack of goals and inadequate services, these individuals often respond with increasingly aggressive and challenging behaviors. Most have little opportunity for a productive life. Their disorders interfere with whatever hopes they may have for education, work, recreation, community and home life, and they drain the resources of the overworked MH/MR systems.

JEVS developed a program pilot model to help dually diagnosed individuals better manage their mental illness and move forward on a path to recovery through use of Illness Management and Recovery (IMR), an evidenced-based program from the resource toolkit developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrators (SAMHSA). IMR program modules will be tailored by the original author and psychologist, Susan Gingrich along with Kerry Arnold, behavioral specialist, and JEVS staff, to be easily understood and followed by individuals with co-occurring MH/MR. Coordinated IMR training and supports will be wrapped around the individual by the therapist, day and residential staff, and others. Cross-trained staff will help individuals learn to manage their mental illness, acquire critical life and social skills, develop and achieve personal goals, and move toward employment and community integration. Committed to provide service to the most challenging individuals, the team will work with programs to change the culture of isolating individuals because of the challenges they present. Results indicate that individuals become more stable in recovery, less likely to relapse and more able to cope with environmental issues; so they can move on to settings of their choice: day programs, vocational programs, employment or volunteer activity.

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## Recovery: New Hope for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

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Even more than the impact on the individual consumer, the overarching goal of this approach is *systemic transformation*, leading to a broader understanding within the MR/MH delivery systems that individuals with challenging behaviors may have a serious mental illness which can be identified and treated by staff with appropriate skills and individuals with co-occurring disorders may participate in a mental health recovery process that helps them develop tools to manage their illnesses so they may live a meaningful and productive life.



The recovery orientation is consistently reinforced through a number of venues across a variety of settings. Specialized psychiatrists and clinical staff raise the level of expertise with a skilled team approach using proven treatment practices. Training, supervision and modeling are integral to the process, reaching across programs and services. The adaptation and implementation of Evidence Based Practice for dually diagnosed individuals benefits the entire delivery system, making IMR modules available for broad application to aid system transformation. For more information, contact Marian Baldini at [baldim@jevs.org](mailto:baldim@jevs.org) or 215-854-1871.

## F·E·G·S's Network of Services for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

When the New York Society for the Deaf (NYSD) merged into F·E·G·S in 2006, F·E·G·S already had a long history of serving individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. With the merger, F·E·G·S was able to significantly expand the programs and services to the deaf and hard of hearing community which include a range of Clinical Service Programs, a Sign-Language Interpreter Staffing Service, Communications and Vocational Programs and a portfolio of low income and special needs housing units operated through four affiliated housing corporations.

F·E·G·S serves almost 700 deaf or

hard of hearing consumers annually through specialized mental health, rehabilitation, and employment services. The agency's work in this area began in the late 1970s, when F·E·G·S, in partnership with Junior High School 47, worked with adolescents who were deaf and had emotional problems, to help prepare them for high school and their future careers.

The F·E·G·S Work Services Division has worked for several decades with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, helping many to obtain competitive employment. The Division operates a communications skills program that includes training in American

Sign Language and acquisition of other skills necessary to gain and maintain employment, as well as case management to individuals who are deaf and have behavioral or developmental disabilities.

The 1990 opening of the Robert Rau Residence in the Bronx – named in honor of a long-time F·E·G·S Board member and past President – marked one of the first intermediate care facilities designed for individuals who have severe developmental disabilities, and who also have visual and hearing impairments.

Today, F·E·G·S residential

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## **F·E·G·S's Network of Services for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

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services have grown to include a portfolio of more than 250 special needs housing units. These services offer a range of assisted care, from daily visits to 24-hour-a-day supervision to consumers who are deaf, deaf-blind, elderly, and who have developmental or psychiatric disabilities.

One of these residences, Tanya Towers, was the first of its kind when it opened in 1974. The residence honors Tanya Z. Nash, who served as the Executive Director of the Society for 35 years. Throughout her long career, she was a passionate advocate for the civil rights of individuals who are deaf. She helped many deaf Jewish immigrants coming through Ellis Island before, during, and after World War II – a time when deaf individuals were routinely denied entry to the U.S. because of fears they would not be able to support themselves.

In 2007, F·E·G·S was recognized by the Hebrew Association for the Deaf on the occasion of its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Association was instrumental in the formation, in 1911, of the Society for Welfare of the Jewish Deaf, which later became the New York Society for the Deaf.

F·E·G·S also offers an array of specialized counseling and support programs to consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing:

- A New York State licensed Counseling Center and Chemical Dependency Clinic – serves consumers with screening, evaluation, and verbal and medication therapies for those with emotional or psychiatric disabilities; and with individuals who have a substance abuse problems.
- A Ryan White Program helps people with HIV/AIDS with case management, counseling, education, outreach, and advocacy.
- Part of Intensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation Training (IPRT) services, is the IPRT/Deaf and Hard of Hearing Track – the only program of its kind – to help consumers gain the skills they need to achieve their personal, educational, housing, employment, and independent living goals.
- Day Habilitation services, through F·E·G·S Developmental Disabilities Services, provide a rich variety of clinical services and an array of community volunteer opportunities to further develop socialization and independent living skills.

- Through F·E·G·S Internship and Volunteer Services, college students who are deaf or hard of hearing received supervised internships, many subsequently joining the F·E·G·S staff.



*F·E·G·S is proud that its services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals received special honors and recognition this past September, as the New York Mets marked Deaf and Hard of Hearing Awareness Day at Shea*

- A Senior Recreation and Support Program for the Deaf offers socialization, recreation, and education opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing older adults. Participants offered these praises: “This program gives us the chance to socialize with our friends who are deaf, and helps keep the deaf community together.”.... “Many people come here for help with problems at home or problems with insurance, Medicare, or taxes. We’re very happy to have this place, and we’re grateful for F·E·G·S’s support.”

For more information contact Maureen Conroy at [mconroy@fegs.org](mailto:mconroy@fegs.org) or 212-366-8056.

## Louisville JFVS Career Conversation Series

Louisville Jewish Family & Vocational Service career specialists are hosting a monthly series through 2007-2008 for individuals interested in current career issues facing workers and employers. Topics focus on trends and developments in the contemporary workforce such as career fitness and the skills movement in today's labor force, baby boomers' role in the changing workforce, and learning to balance work and family life in today's non-stop world.

Bob Tiell, Director of Career Services at JFVS, believes this series offers a real value to those wanting to stay on the cutting edge of issues impacting the global workforce. This series is also designed to provide participants the opportunity to help JFVS celebrate its centennial in 2008.

"In a fluid and global economy, people need to be attuned to a variety of career and workforce trends and to think strategically," Tiell said. "This series is one more step in the effort JFVS makes to give individuals direction and confidence to move them forward on their career path."

The format of the series is designed toward the convenience of the participants. Each session consists of a brief overview on a specific topic, lasting only one hour either before or after normal business hours (7:30 a.m. or 5:30 p.m.). The style is informal and conversational, giving attendees a comfortable setting to learn and participate.

The first session of the series was a success, focusing on the topic of "Career Fitness." Participants were advised to think of career fitness in terms of physical fitness only as applied to one's career status. Participants discussed how equipped they were to face the changing workforce and how to position themselves to make a career move. The session concentrated on passion for one's chosen profession, why lifelong learning is crucial to career development, how current skill sets can translate constructively for the future, and the importance of keeping employment search skills sharp.

January's session focused on the topic of "Now That You've Discovered Your Strengths, What's Next?" Participants learned how to bridge personal strengths with a successful career path. February's program was titled: "The Changing Workforce: Cross Generational Communication". Future topics will include:

"The Organic Career"

"Your Career Story: The Power of Narrative"

"The Portfolio Driven Employment Search"

"Work-Family Balance: A Mental Health Imperative"

For more information about the series or JFVS Career Services, contact Bob Tiell at (502) 452-6341, ext. 230 or visit [www.jfvs.com](http://www.jfvs.com).



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**WHO WE ARE:** The International Association of Jewish Vocational Services (IAJVS), a not-for-profit membership association, links 28 social service agencies in the United States, Canada, and Israel that provide a wide range of educational, vocational, and rehabilitation services.

**WHAT WE DO:** Through our member agencies, individuals seeking to improve their lives gain access to a vast array of services such as career management, skills training, rehabilitation programs, and health services. Each year, the IAJVS family of agencies—with a combined budget of over \$395 million—serves more than 350,000 individuals from across the social strata, including persons with disabilities, dislocated workers, people changing careers, recent college graduates, welfare recipients, refugees, older workers and the elderly. Since its founding in 1939, the IAJVS network has assisted over 16 million individuals, from both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

**OUR MISSION:** The International Association of Jewish Vocational Services strengthens the capabilities and capacity of its member agencies to increase economic self-sufficiency, independence and build a productive work force of its constituent clients.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**2008 IAJVS Annual Conference**

**Royal Sonesta Hotel, Boston**

**June 1-3**

**For more information**

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