



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

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*IAJVS is a non-profit network of 29 national and international human service agencies throughout the United States, Canada, Israel, and Argentina. 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.*

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## Executive Director's Message

I am proud to present the first quarter issue of E-Lights. This quarter's issue focuses on technology and its application to programming and staff development throughout the network. Technology has dramatically changed the way we all do business. We are pleased to see that our agencies are developing some fascinating new initiatives in this area. Thank you to the agencies that submitted articles.

IAJVS is in the process of gearing up for the Annual Conference 2006 in Minneapolis. The workforce is experiencing a demographic revolution—the graying of the baby boomer generation. This profound shift is beginning to impact every facet of our environment—from the workforce and retirement system, to volunteerism, and public policy. This year's annual conference will focus on this aging wave and how we must prepare our agencies and our clients to respond to these new challenges. I hope you are planning to join us in Minneapolis May 21 - 23. You won't want to miss the exciting sessions and events we have planned!

Genie Cohen

## President's Message

Spring is in the air and longer brighter days bring flowers and inspiration. But more is in the air; our cyberspace strategies are the feature of this issue of E-lights and I hope you find them enlightening.

For those of you who are attending the conference in Minneapolis, we look forward to seeing you there. All of you will be able to see our showcase materials and some of the proceedings as we make them available online post conference.

I hope you will all slow down and smell the roses and enjoy the moment when it arrives. I want to wish you and your family a Chag Sameach and wonderful family seders.

Happy Pesach.

Karen Goldenberg

## SHALOM Denver Customer/Client Tracking System

On July 1, 2005 SHALOM Denver implemented its new Customer/Client Tracking Database. This system is the product of a two-year process in which the agency's database team evaluated its technological needs, reviewed current products on the market that might meet its requirements, solicited bids from database designers and retained the services of a development company. The database is a web-based system created by CiviCore, LLC using Microsoft SQL and Cold Fusion standard database and Internet development tools. It is accessible from any Internet connection through a secure password-protected site and is maintained through a monthly contract with CiviCore allowing for minor revisions and updates as needed.

Clients, customers, contacts and staff records were formerly being managed through a combination of many different programs and modes including Microsoft Excel, Access, and Word; a D-Base payroll system; and client and customer paper files. This ever-expanding "system" often necessitated double and some-

times even triple or quadruple entry of the same data in order to process information for tracking, evaluation and reporting, resulting in an increased possibility of data entry error and erroneous outcome reporting.

The new database system requires entry of information only once thus both vastly decreasing the time spent entering information and the usage of paper tracking, and greatly improving accuracy of data. The agency has also found that the system facilitates communication between SHALOM staff by providing easy access to client and customer contact information. Security levels are set to allow users to view and edit only the information to which they have been granted access in order to maintain confidentiality per HIPAA and other governing regulations. Automated reporting provides detailed, standardized data with very little effort on the part of the user. The system also includes a search feature that can be used to identify and pull any information that has been entered to be exported to Excel or any other program for further evaluation. With this component in place, "the sky is the limit" as far as the statistics that can be pulled and

reviewed regarding pertinent programs and services.

Staff information and development can be tracked including the capability to determine when staff are due for their next training or certification.

In order for the database to be used efficiently and effectively, a combination of training and then monitoring of data entered is required for all staff that uses the system. So far, agency staff has been trained and are fully operational on the client payroll, funder billing/reporting, customer job and customer billing components of the system. Training in these areas commenced July 1, 2005 and was completed within a few months while monitoring is ongoing. Staff is currently being trained on the client programming and tracking components and will soon be fully operational in those areas. SHALOM has already identified components that could be added to the system to improve efficiency even further, including an enhanced customer contact component



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## SHALOM Denver Customer/Client Tracking System

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and inventory tracking.

Designing a custom database such as the SHALOM Denver Customer/Client Tracking Database has required great communication and support from a skilled database development team, the concentrated dedication of a knowledgeable staff member with at least an informal background in IT systems, commitment from assigned

members of the database planning committee, patience on the part of all staff while systems are being integrated and tested, and enthusiasm from all participants in the project. SHALOM Denver has received great value from the system as it will replace a minimum of the time of three staff members and allow the agency to provide enhanced services for its customers and clients for as

little as one-quarter the price of purchasing a pre-programmed system that met the agency's needs in only most areas.

For more information on the system, please contact Marcie Mott, Office Manager at SHALOM Denver at 303-623-0251 x203.

## Technology Innovations at JFCS Minneapolis

Margaret Macneale has a big job. As Software Coordinator for the 100+ person Minneapolis JFCS agency, she has a hand in all the billing and client information tracking for the agency. She also has overall responsibility for all state and county reporting and for providing detailed, specific information for funders and donors. How can one person handle it all? Macneale uses MS\*Health software.

Since purchasing the software in January 2003, Macneale has been pleased with the software's versatility. "Recently," she explains, "a donor wanted to give an endowment to benefit people with dental needs. Using this program I was able to extract client information pinpointing those people who have sought money for medical needs. It's really a wonderful system that allows us to be specific in finding client demographic information."

The system benefits all counseling staff enormously. Counselors now have immediate access to all case notes providing necessary history when clients utilize different agency services. Billing is also more streamlined.

Macneale is also pleased with the software's pricing - about \$35,000 initially - for unlimited users. The annual user fee comes to just over \$7,000. And training is relatively quick, requiring one, three-hour session.

"MS\*Health," concludes Macneale, "because of its versatility and pricing, really works well for non-profit agencies."

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## Technology Innovations at JFCS Minneapolis

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Another technological innovation for JFCS, is a new online fundraiser, the JFCS Online Auction. Each year in early December the agency hosts a large Annual Benefit and one of the highlights for the last several years has been the silent auction. As the agency celebrates its Chai (18th) Benefit year, Community Coordinator, Amy Litman, wanted to try something new. "Because the Benefit is such a social event," explains Litman, "many people didn't get a chance to really look at all the fabulous auction items, or to bid on them." To solve that problem and engage a younger and broader demographic, Margaret Macneale, Software Coordinator, is overseeing a new online auction.

cMarket will host the e-bay-like auction on their server. "An online auction," says Litman, "will allow our patrons to take their time and look at all the wonderful items that have been donated. It will also allow patrons to track favorite auction items and monitor the bids. And maybe, best of all, it will allow people to spend more time schmoozing at the event!"

## Doing Business in the Age of Technology

The age of technology has fundamentally impacted all aspects of how JVS Toronto does business. It has shaped how the agency communicates internally and with the outside world. Whether sending an email to a colleague next door or half way around the world, electronic dialogue has become the primary way that staff "talk" to one another, share relevant information, request input and reveal key decisions made. The JVS Toronto website has become the agency's main marketing tool – reaching out to clients, employers, community agencies, partners and donors. While JVS is by no means a paper-free agency, it certainly relies more and more on the electronic distribution of resources. The agency spends a lot less on postage compared to a decade ago, and its professional printing costs are on the decline.

In the current funding environment that demands increased accountability and performance-based outcome data, technology has also significantly improved the potential capacity of organizations to efficiently and effectively track program results and impact. For the past three years, driven by its commitment to continuous quality improvement, JVS Toronto has invested in modernizing its technological environment – specifically with regard to its database management system. A task force, comprised of a project manager and key JVS Toronto staff, was created with the purpose of analyzing JVS Toronto's technological needs; developing procedures and implementing recommended changes.

Up until this point, program activities were monitored and recorded in separate non-shareable databases. The task force concluded that there was a critical need to develop a centralized agency-wide database. To this end, JVS Toronto purchased the Canadian license for ETO (Efforts-to-Outcomes), from the American-based company Social Solutions, and initiated a bidding process for obtaining effective IT services from a

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## Doing Business in the Age of Technology

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third-party vendor. The purpose of ETO was to replace nearly all program databases as the repository of key information relating to clients, efforts, outcomes and satisfaction surveys.

Yet, due to the multiplicity of funding bodies – each with their own specific program reporting requirements – staff are faced with the administrative task of updating both program specific data as requested by the funder (i.e. through an external database) and ETO (i.e. agency-wide internal database). To address this reality, JVS Toronto has invested resources to create programmatic interfaces between these environments.

While being an extremely intuitive environment, ETO software, as with any newly introduced software, requires appropriate training and subsequent ongoing monitoring of implementation and usage. Given the over 35 programs that JVS Toronto offers, training was phased in on a program-by-program basis and completed over a one-year period.

The agency's experience suggests that ETO is an effective tool for monitoring qualitative task outcomes that could be replicated in virtually any direct service agency. Its success, however, requires the concerted commitment and active involvement of management in ensuring that the database is utilized as intended.

As with any customizable software environment, one needs to factor in the purchase cost, the software customization/enhancement cost, the implementation cost, as well as the training cost. Not to be overlooked is the cultural cost of introducing technological advances into an environment with varying levels of computer literacy and skills.

## JVS Detroit Goes Online

In today's technological society, many consumers prefer to go online for shopping, banking, bill paying, etc. JVS Detroit has found that its job-seeking clients and business customers are no different. Therefore, the agency recently began using online technology to administer hard skills, aptitudes, work behavior and a variety of criterion-referenced competency assessments.

Internally, JVS is replacing some

of its paper and pencil career development and employment assessments with online tests. This is very appealing to younger, tech-savvy job hunters. It's convenient for everyone as test takers can access the assessments from the Internet at any-time. Results are sent to a JVS professional, such as a counselor, who uses the data to recommend a job search plan or career path.

JVS Detroit is also using online technology to pre-screen and test applicants for its own job openings. For critical positions, candidates who meet the job criteria on paper are asked to take work styles assessments at home in order to gauge their job-worker compatibility before scheduling an interview. "Pre-screening applicants with a valid work style questionnaire before advancing them on helps identify a

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## JVS Detroit Goes Online

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more suitable pool of candidates,” explains Wayne Laviolette, Supervisor, Psychological Services and Training Coordinator. “The assessment data helps to focus and refine the interview process, which saves time and speeds recruitment.”

The agency also uses online assessments to test competency at operating programs such as Microsoft Office. This is another time saver since the assessments can permit the job candidate to prove their level of skill and mastery before moving on in the selection process. All skills-related tests are supervised by various means to maintain the integrity and validity of the results.

Externally, JVS is touting these online assessment capabilities and other services to businesses it counsels on employee selection and development. In addition to the aforementioned services, JVS can help companies perform detailed job analysis to help meet EEOC employee selection standards. JVS can also facilitate 360-degree feedback methods to assist with employee performance evaluations and development.

Just like consumers, companies want the flexibility as to where testing can be conducted. For employers who want to do on-site testing, JVS is helping them set up appropriate testing programs on their premises.

Individual testing can range from

\$60 to \$200 depending on assessment needs. Job analysis costs \$1,900 per job. The cost of 360-degree feedback services varies depending on the number of respondents involved.

The benefits can far out weigh the costs as research shows that adding objective assessment methods can significantly improve the worker-job match. When used for staff development, assessments can help employers develop their existing employees’ skills to meet changing market demands. For more information contact Wayne Laviolette at 248-233-4264 or [wlaviolette@jvsdet.org](mailto:wlaviolette@jvsdet.org).

## From Strength to Strength

Mature workers come to JVS MetroWest with excellent experience and skills. As such, they are certainly a boon to the companies that may seek to hire them. However, a significant number of these well-qualified individuals lack the computer basics that are so necessary to attain a job in this economy.

Other mature individuals come to the agency with a strong back-

ground in computers, but the workplace is seeking younger people to work in technological fields. How can their skills be put to good use?

JVS MetroWest looked at both of these problems, and came up with an innovative and highly successful solution. The agency utilized older workers with strong computer skills to work on a volunteer basis teaching basic computer usage to the population who lacked the com-

puter knowledge necessary to job attainment and retention. Microsoft Word and Excel were taught, each in nine-hour blocks—three sessions of three hours each for each course. Although the agency has three computer labs, they are usually utilized with ongoing instructions. However, there is always some down time in the labs, and it was in this window that the

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## Technology: A Partner In Placement and Programming

It's hard to remember JVS Chicago's operations and programming without computers, list serves, e-mail and everything online. Gone are the reams of paper that were distributed, memos, intake and statistics done by hand, and other pre-technology vehicles that defined work as we once knew it. Today, JVS Chicago is heavily into technology, with almost every staff person having a desktop computer to better accomplish their job. In this era of instant communication and rapid response, it is a must.

Technology has become an essential tool in client training and placement. A computer technology center, devoted to refugees and immigrants, has been launched, free computer usage and community e-mail accounts help clients facilitate their job search, and a new e-Learning program offers laptops and skill building to clients with disabilities.

The marriage of desktop computers and the development of JVS' website six years ago increased staff competence and productivity. A folder on its network, accessed solely by counselors, allows articles, career and job market information and job openings to be distributed to

staff. Questions are answered, problems solved and instructions given in a flash. Flyers are created and brochures written on Publisher and PowerPoint, with updates made to reflect program changes, giving staff tools to increase intake and promote agency programs. The newly created Employer Edition is e-mailed to employers, capturing their attention while marketing services and promoting clients on the website. Staff can do a better job: writing and/or editing resumes as they exchange comments from clients; conducting Internet research; and announcing programs and job openings by contacting individuals through e-mail and client groups via list serves. E-mail communication, beyond individual counseling sessions, enhances the counselor-client relationship, provides timely advice, helps the client focus, and increases the chances of a successful outcome.

The JVS website connects staff to the community 24/7. Employers review confidential profiles, and order resumes or post jobs electronically to JVS' Employer Relations department staff. Less receptive to phone calls and site visits, they increasingly prefer the Internet for job placement. The continued usage of JVS' LOOKING TO HIRE page is indicative of this growing trend in recruitment. Cli-

ents complete an appointment request, which is transmitted to the main receptionist for referral. College and graduate students access and fill out scholarship application forms online which are e-mailed in when completed. These forms are reviewed and easily adapted by the counselor and student in a subsequent personal interview. Other relevant websites feature JVS programs, while links increase traffic and potential users. Contributors make an online donation which is first routed to JVS' bank and then reported back to the agency through its website.

Time today is measured in nanoseconds, requiring agencies to adapt to new ways of doing business, to be responsive to client needs, making them competitive in the fast-paced culture. Time is money, and enabling staff to be more knowledgeable and efficient benefits morale and impacts the agency bottom line. The significant investment made to outfit, upgrade and expand JVS' technological capabilities has been instrumental in helping staff multi-task, improve performance and deliver better service to fulfill the agency's mission.

## JVS San Francisco Bringing People and Work Together Through Technology

Sustainable client outcome success and workforce development policy trends increasingly demand direct linkages between jobseekers and available jobs. JVS San Francisco utilizes multiple levels of technology to meet these needs and fulfill the agency's mission to "bring people and work together."

Given the agency's location near the epicenter of the boom and subsequent bust of the internet economy, it is no coincidence that the agency's most public example of technology, the Technology Access Center (TAC), grew out of the technology training needs and ongoing "digital divide" lessons of that experience.

While the last decade has seen the ebb and flow of the dot-com economy, it is obvious that computers and technology have become an indispensable part of getting a job, for everyone from retail workers to high-tech programmers and even construction. To meet this need, the TAC now comprises a 20-station drop-in computer lab, a career resource library, and an office service center (fax, phones and photocopier) for clients' use. The TAC is open to the public, and a client who just received her Ph.D. may find herself updating her resume right next to a client

who was just released from prison. Indeed, one recent client who had been incarcerated for over 10 years and had never used a mouse was able to use the TAC to write a resume, apply for jobs, and eventually obtain employment, almost entirely through online and computer-based work. Reflective of this broad demographic, JVS requests small monthly user fees to offset the cost of this resource, although no one is turned away because of inability to pay. Computers are equipped with internet access, MS Office applications, current multimedia software like Adobe and Macromedia, typing programs, resume writing and career exploration software, and hundreds of online classes and self-paced tutorials. There are typically two to three classes daily, and over 500 people annually use these labs for intensive training programs in job search skills, English language skills, office technology and information technology skills. In a continuing effort to increase the efficiency of these services, JVS recently distributed user cards to clients to use in a bar code reader, a measure which streamlines client access and helps the agency to track client usage to meet ongoing demands.

One of the other technology resources that not only meet the needs of clients, but also the requirements of local employers, is JVS Jobs Online. Three years ago, JVS designed and built Jobs Online, a web-based job posting service to streamline the job search process and subsequent interactions between employers and jobseekers. Jobs Online, which currently has over 9,000 local job postings, is accessible anytime and from any location, free of charge, through JVS' website. Job seekers may create an online resume and cover letter, search targeted job postings through a simple search, as well as apply for jobs online and receive targeted job announcements by e-mail. On the opposite side of the equation, employers are able to post jobs, search targeted resumes, contact job candidates online, receive notification of applications and even set up initial interviews through this resource. Jobs Online is a project of the JVS Employer Services Department and has been cited by both employers and clients alike as offering key usability features like the benefits of managing their own accounts and the ease of communication as the reasons

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## The Use of Technology at JVS Boston

Information Technology is central to most JVS functions and has been an integral part of program design at JVS Boston for the past several years. Much of the agency's skills training focuses directly on the use of technology (MS Office, Accounting software, and Medical Office software), or uses technology as a key component of training delivery through a variety of multimedia packages. JVS maintains 6 computer labs, designed for hands-on client skills training, plus two additional open-access Career Resource Libraries. The agency's Education and Job Readiness and Placement staff use technology as a tool for education and job search, as well as using internally developed tools to track client and employer data.

JVS IT staff is involved from the start of the process of new program design, including evaluation and specification of new training software, program-specific technical staff training needs, program deployment planning and development of milestones and outcome standards for program reporting. Examples of major initiatives JVS IT have completed in conjunction with existing programs include:

- An interactive, web-based

career planning application designed as a key component of a course which was 50 percent classroom time, 50 percent distance learning;

- A database for tracking enrollment, purchase plan and individual and match contributions to individual development accounts; and
- A career ladder tool that works interactively for employment specialists to input next step job information as they place clients and see some of the typical career paths at various employers.

Across all agency services—including training, job search and education—JVS' database software is used to track client needs and progress, resulting in the creation of an "Individual Career Plan" or ICP for each client.

JVS has two key databases, The Employer Account Management System (TEAMS) and the Career Management System (CMS), which were internally developed as part of the creation of the Center for Careers and Lifelong Learning. TEAMS is used to track and report key data about the employers the agency works with on several levels, job placement, partnerships, worksite training and development. CMS is used to track all client-related information, including contracts, goals and objectives, out-

comes, barriers to employment and their associated support needs.



*JVS staff member and client using training software.*

Staff training is a regular component of JVS' IT programs. It includes not only job-specific training for staff on using the internal network and database systems, but also more general staff development training on Microsoft Office applications. JVS has kept the overall cost of its infrastructure down by utilizing a number of grants it has received. These have included greatly discounted or free versions of Lotus Notes and Domino Server for the email and database infrastructure, Microsoft Office and Windows Operating Systems, and an innovative grant of laptops from the Beaumont Foundation, specifically for the use of clients with disabilities in JVS' skills training programs. The agency has also greatly benefited from the use of volunteers on a wide array of projects, including database design, reporting, website design and staff training.

## From Strength to Strength

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classes for the mature population were scheduled.

What were the results of this experiment? The benefits to those who participated in the classroom instruction are clear. Participants gained an understanding of the basics of Word and Excel, acquired basic computer literacy, familiarity with the keyboard and the mouse, and developed a degree of confidence in their ability to work with a computer and to learn new skills. In addition, they learned a skill that was invaluable to a successful job search.



The benefits to the instructors included a boost in self-esteem, a sense of being useful and productive, and the opportunity to stay active and sharp during their job search. In addition, they were able to develop and hone new skills, improve their proficiency with the software that they were teaching—the most effective way to learn something is to teach it to others—and develop new experience with which to expand their resumes. And they enjoyed themselves in the process.

There was no cost to the agency in this exchange of skills. Rather, one group was given the opportunity to pass its strengths to the other, making the most of down time in a lab, to the benefit of all.

## JVS San Francisco Bringing People and Work Together Through Technology

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for the continuing growth of this resource.

Agency staff, from front-line employment specialists to upper level management positions, serves as the conduit through which employers and clients are connected. In this context, JVS' internal information technology is a crucial tool in the sharing of individual and aggregate information across the agency's 60

employees. While JVS began tracking client records in 1989, the JVS client and employer database has grown in depth and breadth over the years to become a comprehensive source of information on clients, employers, volunteers, and programming. There are currently over 27,000 clients, 8,000 employers, and 1,100 volunteers in the Access database. Staff members, who conduct client assessments, perform employment counseling,

and gather business and volunteer information, enter data into the system through on-line forms. This initial entry of information is critical as the data gathered in this system allows for counselor sharing, automated reporting for fundraising and grants management, and internal analysis and performance measurement tracking. The database, which tracks client demographics, classes attended, job salaries,

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## **JVS San Francisco Bringing People and Work Together Through Technology**

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and information, helps staff to ensure continuity for individuals clients, as well as improve global efforts and programming across the employer-client spectrum.

The same basic client lesson that stresses staying up-to-date with technology skills in order to create future success also translates to agency planning and program development. Through barcode tracking mechanisms in the TAC, the growth of Jobs Online for employers, and the continuous tracking of client and employer information in the database, JVS has sought to use technology to guide programming and staff development into the future. However, the continuous change and innovation implicit in technology requires an ongoing commitment to innovation. JVS San Francisco is currently implementing and planning for new technology enhancements, such as the integration of NAICS and ONET sector and occupational codes into the database and the evaluation of customer relationship management software as part of an ongoing commitment to ensure the ongoing applicability and sustainability of technology across the client-employer spectrum.

## **JFS of Dallas: Serving Evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita**

Just three days after Hurricane Katrina hit, Jewish Family Service of Dallas began assisting evacuees. Although the media coverage focused primarily on the local evacuees at the Convention Center, about 20,000 to 30,000 evacuees were staying in Dallas area hotels or crowded temporarily into friends' or family's homes. Most thought they would be returning home within two to three days. But it soon became apparent that returning quickly to New Orleans was not an option. JFS actively reached out to the many agencies and organizations it routinely works with, asking them to direct evacuees to the agency for help, and the information spread by word of mouth. Many evacuees arrived with nothing, needing food, clothing, and bedding. Others needed emergency medical or dental care, or they were running out of prescription medications. Some had no money for gasoline. Others simply came to the office and wept.

Few people truly understood the scope of the disaster in those first days. But with daily planning meetings to resolve problems as they arose, the flexibility of JFS' professional and support staff, appropriate use of emergency resources, and the help of the community, staff met the needs as they presented themselves. After making sure each evacuee had emergency food, clothing, personal hygiene items and at least a short-term place to stay, JFS began to connect people to the support systems they needed. Some evacuees had been in the middle of diabetes or cancer treatment when the storm hit. Others had sick children in their arms, or family members who required psychiatric care and medications. Turning to its community for help, JFS found doctors and dentists

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## **JFS of Dallas: Serving Evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita**

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willing to donate their time for the evacuees. Evacuees were helped to connect to the Red Cross database to locate family members and friends.

Even during the first days after the storm, evacuees began using JFS' Job Search Resource Center. At that time, many evacuees thought they would be returning home soon and were just interested in a short-term job. Others began looking for career positions immediately, and met with job counselors to help make connections to employment opportunities. Most of the hurricane evacuees who came to Jewish Family Service for help had been employed in New Orleans, self-sufficient, and able to take care of their own families. In fact, many had also been caring for their elderly or ill parents.

Some of the evacuees worked for national companies who were able to provide Dallas-based jobs. But most needed to look for new employment and, for some, even new career fields. JFS helped the evacuees access the benefits they were due through the Red Cross, FEMA, and other organizations. And by using the Job Search Resource Center and meeting with career counselors, many hurricane evacuees were able to find work in Dallas and become self-sufficient once again.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of hurricane evacuees now in Dallas are continuing to face the long-term effects of the loss of relatives, friends, home, possessions, job, and even community. While the initial outpouring of goods, funds, and genuine concern and care was crucial—and greatly appreciated—the need is ongoing. And given current conditions in New Orleans and other Gulf cities, the agency anticipates the need to continue for a long time to come.

JFS is continuing to see evacuees at the office. Some have become clients in the clinical or gerontology department. Others continue to use job search resources, visit the Food Pantry, or attend a support group for hurricane evacuees. JFS also sees evacuees who are newly referred to the agency, to assess their situation and determine what help can be provided. JFS has partnered with Richardson ISD, local churches, and other agencies to provide Thanksgiving and holiday meals to more than 300 evacuee families.

In addition to programming at the main office, JFS has an on-site presence at several North Dallas apartment complexes housing more than 160 evacuee families. At those sites, the agency offers job-skills counseling, job placement, mental-health and social services, plus the provision of winter coats, transportation assistance, and prepaid mobile telephones for those without telephone service.

For more than 50 years, Jewish Family Service has been there for the community, for short-term needs and long-term as well. Now it is here, also, for some of the newest Dallasites—those who came to the city in the late summer of 2005, fleeing from the wrath of the nation's most devastating natural disaster.

## Welcome to Minneapolis!

The ice is gone and Minneapolis has rolled out the carpet for the IAJVS 2006 Annual Conference to be held at the Hilton Minneapolis Hotel. Jewish Family and Children's Service and its JVS division are pleased to be the host agency. The agency welcomes you to the land of 10,000 lakes. May is a beautiful time to visit Minnesota, and Minneapolis offers a wealth of activities and events.



A highlight of the conference will be the Sunday evening dinner cruise aboard The Paradise Lady, a luxury yacht on the Mississippi River. Thanks to Wells Fargo Bank for its generous support of this event. While dress will be casual, the experience will be elegant. The captain has promised a tour of a lock and dam, sights of rustic cliffs, and a spectacular view of the Minneapolis skyline. All of this will combine with drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and dinner. Kosher and vegetarian options will be offered. Eager for a preview? Check out [www.paradisechartercruises.com](http://www.paradisechartercruises.com).

Plan to arrive early or extend your stay to explore the Twin Cities Metro area or more. The newly expanded Walker Art Center that opened this past year is a world-renowned contemporary museum. The Mill City Museum on the river captures Minneapolis' history and takes you through a flour milling experience. Next, take in the sights of the Stone Arch Bridge, a cultural icon, and St. Anthony Falls, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, an unconventional Frank Gehry architectural creation, is worth your visit. On Friday and Saturday evenings, Osmo Vanska will conduct the Minnesota Orchestra in a concert featuring Sibelius. And, you will be a light rail ride away from the famous Mall of America (MOA). For sports enthusiasts, the Minnesota Twins will host the Cleveland Indians at the Metrodome on Tuesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:10 PM, and at 12:10 PM on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Minneapolis and St. Paul offer great cuisine. There are also many restaurants within walking distance of the Hilton. For the adventurous, a visit to nearby St. Paul offers a tour of famous Summit Avenue, the St. Paul Cathedral, the State Capitol, the Science Museum of Minnesota, and the St. Paul Gangster Tour that takes you to the notorious 1930's when St. Paul was a haven for mob bosses. Or, rent a car and go antiquing in the quaint logging town of Stillwater, or drive to Lake Minnetonka and soak up the small town charm of Wayzata and Excelsior.

JF&CS and JVS looks forward to seeing everyone in Minneapolis.

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**WHO WE ARE:** The International Association of Jewish Vocational Services (IAJVS), a not-for-profit membership association, links 29 social service agencies in the United States, Canada, Israel, and Argentina 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.

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