



# IAJVS Executive Quarterly Report

Vol. 2, No. 2 • April-June 1999

1845 Walnut Street, Suite 640 • Philadelphia, PA 19103 • voice 215-854-0233 • fax 215-854-0212

Written by Genie Cohen, Executive Director • [coheng@jevs.org](mailto:coheng@jevs.org)

Edited by Rachel Friedlander, Administrative Assistant • [friedr@jevs.org](mailto:friedr@jevs.org)

Contributions from Lucy Klain, Project Director • [klainl@jevs.org](mailto:klainl@jevs.org)

## In This Issue

Genie Cohen visits the White House: IAJVS Networking Continues .....	Page 1
IAJVS Staff on the Move, Part I: Grants Update .....	Page 2
IAJVS Staff on the Move, Part II: Conferences and Site Visits .....	Page 2
Upgrading Our Website .....	Page 3
“Strictly Business” Event Held in Five Cities .....	Page 3
Meet the Executive Committee: Interview with Don Simons .....	Page 4
Meetings Update .....	Page 4
Planning Begins for Upcoming IAJVS-AJVSP Annual Conference .....	Page 5
How to Reach Us .....	Page 5

## **Genie Cohen visits the White House: IAJVS Networking Continues**

I’ve spent much of the second quarter of 1999 in sharing our activities with other agencies. My objectives have been to strengthen existing ties within the JVS network and to promote a higher profile for IAJVS at the interagency and national level.

- **April 13-14:** The **CJF Leadership Mission in Washington, DC** gave me the opportunity to attend a White House meeting and hear Vice President Al Gore address Jewish community leaders. The leadership summit focused on three human services issues pertinent to the Jewish community: strengthening Social Security and Medicare; protecting older Americans and expanding long-term care; and renewing the Lautenberg amendment. We also discussed the Title XX Social Services block grant.
- **April 16-19:** At the **Association of Jewish Family and Children’s Agencies (AJFCA) annual meeting in Orlando, Florida**, I had the opportunity to network with the Family Service Executives who are also part of the JVS network, and with other interested Executive Directors.

- **June 4:** I was honored by an invitation to the **White House** for the 1999 **Presidents’ Award ceremonies of the President’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities**. 150 members of the disability community heard President Clinton’s remarks on the importance of making gainful employment available to all, regardless of any physical, emotional or mental challenges. Founded by President Truman in 1947, this Committee is a clearinghouse for private and public initiatives to improve workplace opportunities for persons with disabilities. The 1999 awards honored Joyce Bender, President of Bender Consulting Firms, James H. Click, Jr., founder of the LINKAGES Program, and Laura Hershey, consultant and writer on disability issues. Ms. Bender, Mr. Click and Ms. Hershey all work within their respective areas of expertise to facilitate employment of people with disabilities.
- **June 15:** I met with **Stephen Solender**, Acting President of the **United Jewish Communities (UJC)**, in New York, to promote the significance of IAJVS participation in the newly configured UJC. Stephen Solender agreed that the JVS community is an important network within the larger Jewish community, and offered assistance in trying to bring our voice to the national table. At his

recommendation, I am working with Diana Aviv in carving out IAJVS participation at the General Assembly in Atlanta this November.

- **June 29:** I am delighted to announce that **three agencies are returning to the IAJVS network: F•E•G•S and NYANA of New York, and JFS of Columbus, Ohio.** All of us will benefit from the energy and inspiration of Al Miller, Executive Director of F•E•G•S, Mark Handelman, Executive Vice President of NYANA, Marvin Kuperstein, Executive Director of JFS, and their staff. I visited the beautiful new state-of-the-art facility that F•E•G•S opened earlier this year in SoHo. This is truly an example of architecture as the embodiment of a social service mission. Good luck to F•E•G•S in their new home.
- **First week in July:** I have been appointed to the JCSA Executive Board. I look forward to increasing our network's involvement at the North American level of Jewish communal leadership.

I'd like to include here two July events, because they will have occurred by the time that this newsletter reaches you:

- **July 13:** In light of IAJVS being a changing organization, a task force will meet in Philadelphia to examine the current dues assessment structure, with the objective of reexamining agency dues to create a more uniform and equitable system.
- **July 14:** I am to meet with Jonathan Young, Associate Director for the White House Office of Public Liaison (OPL), along with his OPL colleague Debbie Mohile. Jonathan Young's chief responsibility is disability outreach; Debbie Mohile's is outreach to the Jewish community. I am excited about these White House contacts, which will help us promote IAJVS access across the United States.

## **IAJVS Staff on the Move Part I: Grants Update**

Following the first full quarter of the IAJVS Welfare-to-Work grant, the RETAIN program (Regional Employment and Training Initiative) is up and running. Four of the six participating agencies — Boston, Minneapolis, North Shore, and Philadelphia — are already working with hard-to-place individuals. The programs in Middlesex and MetroWest will be under way in July 1999. IAJVS staff made their first site visits to Boston and North Shore and was excited to see the programs in action! Staff from all of the participating agencies will have the opportunity to network and learn from each in the upcoming RETAIN conference to be held October 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> in Philadelphia.

The success of IAJVS' disAbility Employment Initiative has resulted in a three-month grant extension—until September 30, 1999—with additional funding provided to enhance our job placement activities. Through March 1999, the five participating agencies—Boston, Chicago, Gulf Coast, Philadelphia, and San Francisco—provided computer-based training to more than 73 individuals with disabilities and placed 18 of those individuals in jobs.

## **IAJVS Staff on the Move Part II: Conferences and Site Visits**

If we continue our current pace, we will need to install airport-style “arrival” and “departure” video monitors in our office! Here's a list of all our destinations during the second quarter.

### **April 1999**

- **Promising Practices Conference**

### **May 1999**

- **Department of Labor / Rehabilitation Services Administration Joint Conference**
- **Multi-site Grantee meeting for Welfare to-Work**
- **Site Visit to Philadelphia (DEI monitoring)**

## June 1999

- Site Visits to Boston (DEI and WtW monitoring) and North Shore, MA (WtW monitoring)

We plan to continue making site visits and attending conferences in the near future:

## July 1999

- **JETTCON (Joint Employment and Training Technology Conference)**
- Site visit to Middlesex, NJ (WtW)

## August 1999

- **Welfare-to-Work Partnership Conference**  
**Lucy Klain**, IAJVS Project Director, **will be a panelist** on the session on implementing programs in the health care sector.
- Site visit to Chicago (DEI)
- Site visit to Gulf Coast (DEI), and hotel inspection for the annual conference

## September 1999

- Site visit to Minneapolis (WtW)

IAJVS is truly on the go for its members!

## Upgrading Our Website

Improvements to the IAJVS website keep moving forward. We recently hired Melissa Levy Communications to provide the technical know-how to take our site to the next level. IAJVS' new Technology Task Force will continue our efforts to keep the site on the "cutting edge". If you have any ideas or would like to participate on the task force, please contact us at [iajvs@jevs.org](mailto:iajvs@jevs.org). And make sure to visit our new site at [www.iajvs.org](http://www.iajvs.org) starting on August 1, 1999.

## "Strictly Business" Event Held in Five Cities

**Strictly Business**, a combined fundraiser for and showcase of JVS programming and the achievements of individual JVS clients and corporate supporters and partners of JVS agencies, is catching on across the JVS network. **Strictly Business** is a luncheon event with a keynote speaker, an awards presentation, and sometimes a video screening. **Thus far in**

**1999, five Strictly Business events have been held, in Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and San Francisco. Collective attendance exceeded 2300 people;** local attendance ranged from 175 to 830. In 1998, JVS Los Angeles and JVS Metropolitan Washington, DC hosted events. [Ed. Note: please inform us of any unintended omissions!]

**1999's five programs have honored 14 former clients and 5 local businesses.** (Other businesses have been recognized for being financial or in-kind event supporters. Atlanta also gave these honorees the opportunity to recognize their own selected employees during the program.)

**JVS programs that touched the lives of "Employees of the Year"** included computer training, outplacement and transition management, vocational literacy and ESL, and welfare to work assistance. Populations served included people with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, senior workers, youth, and women reentering the workforce. The 14 former JVS clients are now employed in fields that span the workplace: administration, office management, computer and mailroom operations, systems analysis, financial planning, telemarketing, customer service, employment counseling, filmmaking, airport security and automotive design.

**Businesses receiving awards** were retailers **Marshalls** (Atlanta) and **Meijer, Inc.** (Detroit), **AT&T and Lucent Technologies**, and **Acme Markets** (Philadelphia), and the **San Francisco Zoo**. Their much-valued support to their local JVS agencies includes: promoting workforce diversity; providing workplace training; and hiring a wide range of non-traditional employees such as refugees, at-risk youth, and workers with disabilities, disadvantages, or special needs. IAJVS salutes their significant contributions to the JVS community.

**Keynote speakers, representing higher education, private industry and public service**, were: **Betty Seigel**, President of Kennesaw State University (Atlanta); **Verne G. Istock**, Chairman of the Board, Bank One Corporation (Detroit); **Kathleen Connell**, Controller, State of California (Los Angeles); **Pat Croce**, President, Philadelphia 76ers (Phila-

delphia); and **Les Biller**, Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer, Wells Fargo (San Francisco).

**Funds raised by Strictly Business** benefited [careers@work](#), the employment services department of JF&CS Atlanta, vocational training scholarships offered by JEVS Philadelphia; job training and placement programs at JVS San Francisco, and overall JVS agency activities in Detroit and Los Angeles.

On a lighter note, it is interesting to see how the different printed programs for **Strictly Business** interpreted the same basic design of a day-by-day calendar page with “Strictly Business” scrawled across it in bright red, handwriting-style lettering. The IAJVS office collection includes bi-fold programs, tri-folds, and one bound with a ribbon through two punched holes. **JVS Detroit also included an array of thought-provoking statistics describing “every year at JVS”**. We truly have abundant creativity within our JVS network! Congratulations to all our **Strictly Business** agencies for their hard, successful work.

## **Meet the Executive Committee: Interview with Don Simons**

Don Simons originally joined the Board of JVS Los Angeles in the late 1970s at the encouragement of a close friend then serving as JVS President. In the two decades since, his involvement has included membership on several committees and terms as Treasurer and JVS President, from 1988-90.

Don attended his first IAJVS (then known as the National Association of Jewish Vocational Services) meeting in 1989 in Miami at the specific request of then Executive Director Ethel Taft. He was the first Board President from Los Angeles to participate at the national level of JVS affairs. When Ethel originally raised the idea, Don had never heard of NAJVS, but he agreed to go because he was intrigued by the possibilities of what he might learn. In Miami he was inspired by the programs and activities of the other affiliate agencies. “It was an exhilarating experience, because I saw there were different models out there. It opened up new area of possibilities for us.” After the

meeting Don implemented some of these ideas, sending a fundraising letter to JVS friends, making and deepening community contacts, and establishing a long-range planning committee.

Don finds it gratifying to be involved with an organization that has such a concrete impact on the lives of its clients. He encourages others to become involved as JVS lay leaders. “We’re on the front lines of a lot of exciting new developments in the employment field, and in helping people to realize their full potential. I think that in meeting our mission there’s lots of room for somebody who would like to make a meaningful contribution and have the sense of fulfillment themselves in helping others to achieve.”

Now retired from the practice of business transaction law, Don spends his professional time as a mediator and arbitrator. Don serves as a board member of several professional associations as well as the Board of JVS Los Angeles. In his free time he enjoys improvisational acting, and, with his wife Bette, pursues outdoor physical activity and keeps up with four young grandchildren in California and New York.

## **Meetings Update**

- **Executive Directors Council  
October 9-10, 1999 • Chicago**

Detailed information will be mailed out to all EDC members later in the summer.

- **Welfare to Work Grantees  
October 18-19, 1999 • Philadelphia**

As per the grant requirements, representatives from all six participating agencies will update and share ideas with colleagues.

- **IAJVS-AJVSP 2000  
February 27- March 1  
St. Pete Beach, Florida**

Save the date! Don’t miss out on excellent programming and a beautiful location. Registration packets will be mailed in late autumn 1999.

## **Planning Begins for Upcoming IAJVS-AJVSP Annual Conference**

On August 6, AJVSP officers will gather in Philadelphia to get an early start on programming for the 2000 IAJVS-AJVSP Annual Conference. The group consists of Richard Rotberg, President; Len Schneider, First Vice President; Linda Ehrenreich, Treasurer; and Gladys Siff, Secretary. Genie Cohen will join them for part of the day to coordinate planning between AJVSP and IAJVS.

### **How to Contact Us**

**Genie Cohen**

215-854-0235 • [coheng@jevs.org](mailto:coheng@jevs.org)

**Rachel Friedlander**

215-854-0233 • [friedr@jevs.org](mailto:friedr@jevs.org)

**Lucy Klain**

215-854-0281 • [klainl@jevs.org](mailto:klainl@jevs.org)

**IAJVS fax**

215-854-0212

We welcome your comments and suggestions.