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NEWS FROM THE GREATER WORCESTER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE SUSTAINS ELDERS



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Foundation nurtures County's only elder guardianship program

Foundation grants and guidance are helping the Jewish Family

Service (JFS) of Worcester sustain the only elder guardianship program serving Central Massachusetts.

Through its case managers, the agency manages the affairs of elders who are no longer competent to make their own decisions.

Overseeing its clients' financial, health and housing needs on a 24/7 basis, the agency often works in concert with clergy, health care professionals, nursing homes and lawyers. "We strive to be the final trustworthy, dependable person in our client's life," says Stephen Slaten, Ph.D., executive director of the agency.

In 1986, the Worcester JFS became the first agency in the state to assume the role of court-

appointed guardian and is today one of the state's largest providers of such care. Serving 100 elders at a time, most of whom are indigent, the agency writes off 70% of its fees for guardianship services. Program revenues from state contracts and grants from such organizations as the United Way have leveled off or declined while case management and legal activities have increased in volume and complexity.

"The Foundation has been an important resource for us," says Dr. Slaten, "providing annual grants of \$15,000 for the past five years and also helping us do strategic planning to ensure the future of our program." ●