



# Jewish Family Service *today*

SPRING 2006

Volume 6, Number 1

## *JFS Initiates:*

### • Help for Young Children

JFS Child Psychologist Dr. Beth Greenberg's involvement with teachers and parents at the Westborough Area JCC Preschool has grown over the past three years. Beth now has office hours at the JCC to provide individual consultations to families in addition to facilitating monthly parent discussion groups.

Beth's work is cutting edge. Last year the Yale Child Study Center found the rate of expulsion of preschoolers is 3 times higher than for grade school children. Locally, the Together For Kids project in Worcester has found more than one quarter of preschool children exhibit challenging behavior that disrupts the classroom and inter-

*continued on page 6*

### • Help for the frightened

Carol Goodman Kaufman's book *Sins of Omission* opened eyes to the reality that domestic violence occurs all too often in the Jewish community, despite the emphasis on family in Jewish life. Next, Carol decided to do something about it.

She organized the Jewish Domestic Violence Task Force of Central Mass under the sponsorship of JFS. The task force includes rabbis, attorneys, therapists, domestic violence workers, physicians, and community leaders.

In the fall the task force affiliated with the Shalom Task Force, a confi-

*continued on page 5*

### • Help for the grieving

JFS Board member Barbara Kupfer drew upon her personal tragedy to help others through *Life After Loss/Getting On With Life* at JFS. Barbara lost her husband David suddenly in December 2004 from a massive heart attack arriving home from an event at UMass Medical School.

Barbara connected with adults she met who have lost a spouse or partner. Together they started group meetings at UMass and later formed a social support group for active adults over 40 who are widowed. JFS began hosting the meetings in the fall, and providing administrative

*continued on page 2*

## **New Connections, rather than "end of the line"**

*The following was written by Janice Conrad, "Leah's" Guardianship case manager for six years until Leah passed away earlier this year. Leah had lived all her life with her siblings. JFS was appointed guardian for her and a sister when they were no longer able to care for themselves and refusing help.*

Leah was more than a client to me. I remember the day we met when I told her that Jewish Family Service was her legal guardian and I would be her case manager. She wanted to see the paperwork for proof! Her first reaction was that she did not need a guardian and wanted to go home to be with her sisters. Those were troubling days for Leah. She was torn in two worlds. She felt she had abandoned her sisters and that they needed her at home to help out. On the other hand, she was enjoying, for the first time,

*continued on page 6*

### Faces around JFS



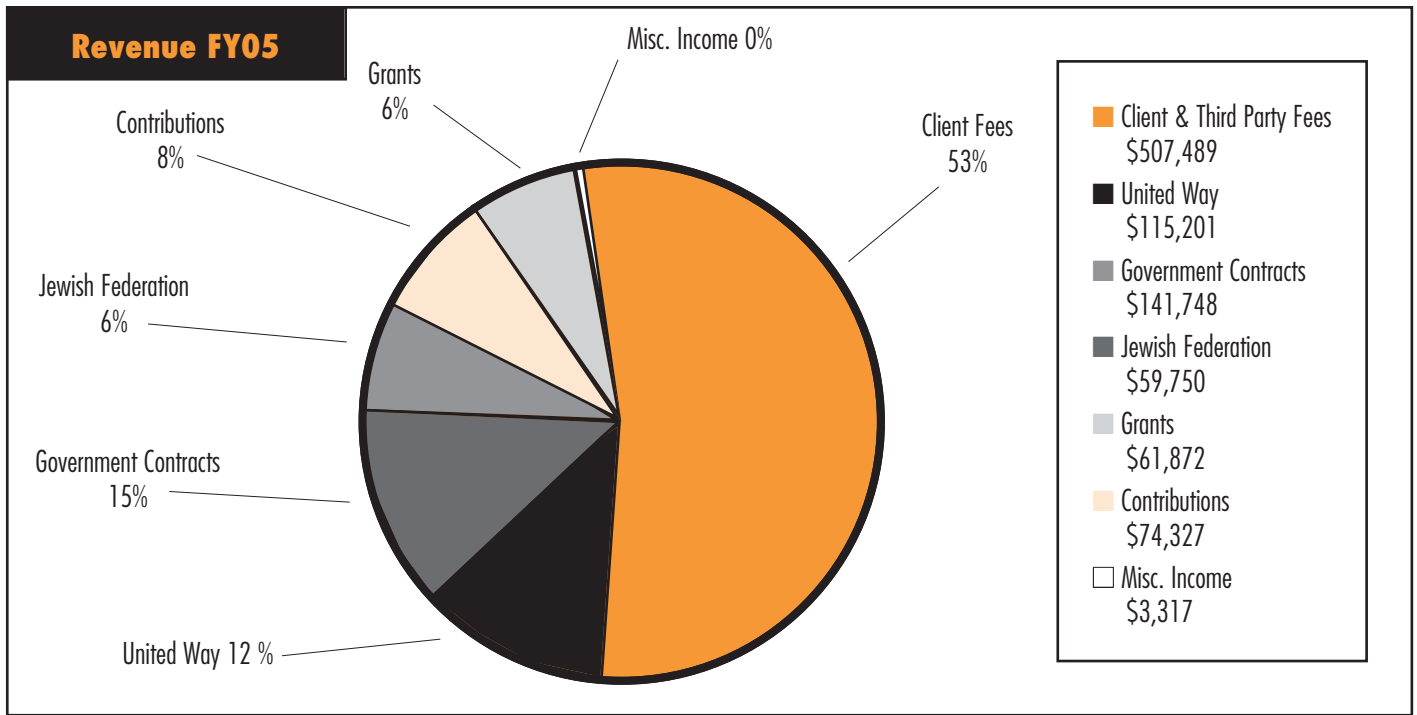
Zelda Schwartz with former JFS President Harold Gurwitz.



Stephen Slaten, Executive Director of JFS, and Rabbi Seth Bernstein, President



Debbie Steigman, JFS Vice President, and her husband Dan.



# Who You Help with Your Contributions:

JFS provides Counseling to over 800 families per year, for a wide range of problems effecting children and parents, including the turmoil of divorce and remarriage. 95% of our clients report improvement in the problems that brought them to treatment, as well as how they feel and function.

Over 450 adults attend the Probate Court mandated Children Cope With Divorce parent education program each year. Over 90% report they learned something new to help their children.

Over 20 families Mediate divorce and postdivorce settlements, decreasing conflict detrimental to children.

JFS is court appointed Guardian each year to over 120 elders who are no longer able to make decisions on their behalf. Within the first six months of being under guardianship, all wards live in a safe environment, have their medical needs attended to, and their finances secure.

Over 60 elders and their family members are helped by Geriatric Care Management to identify and arrange community resources, transition an elder to a new living arrangement, and/or mental health counseling. Many more elders and caregivers attend group programs in the community. Over 100 callers annually are provided information

and resources over the phone pertaining to the care of an elder.

As a licensed Adoption agency, JFS provided home studies and post-placement supervision to ten adoptive families.

The Club, a social group for developmentally delayed adults, has a membership of 30.

The Baby Food Club delivers infant formula and baby food to many local food pantries for distribution to hungry families. The Tzedakah Fund and food coupons help clients who meet eligibility criteria with basic needs.



## Help Grieving from page 1

and clinical support.

The members find it makes a difference getting together with others who have shared this tragic experience. They have a monthly "meet, greet and eat" at JFS, and plan several activities for the coming month – dinner, movies, cultural activities, hiking.

Membership has grown to over 100. Some were devastated by the sudden death of a partner; others struggled though a spouse's prolonged illness. They find themselves talking about things that are difficult to share with other friends or family; the prolonged emotional toll or the unwelcome chores of figuring out the finances or dealing with a business.

JFS social worker Elaine Kapperman provides a more traditional bereavement group for those who are interested, or counseling.

A similar group from the Boston area is now joining Life After Loss.

Activities are posted on the JFS website, [www.jfsworcester.org](http://www.jfsworcester.org).



# A Special Thank You to Donors in Calendar Year 2005 (1/1/05 - 12/31/05)

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Please inform us if there are any errors or omissions, and accept our apologies.


*Award Winning Website*  
**[www.jfsworcester.org](http://www.jfsworcester.org)**  
 has been completely redesigned by Wakefly with the able assistance of JFS Board members Jon Baer and Ken McDonnell. It is created as a convenient vehicle for people to access the help they need through JFS and community-wide.

The site has been chosen as this year's winner of the KOVOD AWARD for Excellence in Website Design by the Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies at their annual conference in April.

Along with details on JFS services and activities, the site provides links to valuable information and resources on mental health, adoption, divorce, elder services, domestic violence, guardianship, and financial need.



Also highlighted are Worcester's "No Place For Hate" campaign and Dr. Beth Greenberg's "Parenting Puzzles", a Q&A column providing solutions for parents.



## JFS Welcomes

The Guardianship Team welcomes two new case managers, **Diane Kerrigan** and **Keegan Hoey**. Both are recent award winners and graduates of the Consortium Gerontology Studies Program.

Attorney **Tom Murray**, of Murray and Murray, is now providing legal representation for the program. Tom has served on our Guardianship Advisory Committee, and formerly was First Assistant Register of the Worcester Probate and Family Court.

**Cynthia Horan**, LICSW has joined JFS as a Child and Family Therapist. Cindy comes to us from the Central Mass Special Education Collaborative where she worked with students and families at North High School for ten years. Prior to that she was a clinician at YOU, Inc. and has served as a Board member of Daybreak.



JFS Board member Hinda Swartz with new JFS therapist Cynthia Horan




JFS Guardianship Team celebrating Susan Clifford's 25th Anniversary. Left to right: Renee Harrison, Michelle Sheerin, Janice Conrad, Sue Clifford, Diane Kerrigan, Keegan Hoey.

### *Congratulations to:*

**Susan Clifford** on her 25th anniversary at JFS. Sue has dedicated virtually her entire career to serving senior citizens, helping each individual deal not only with his or her own physical and psychological aging, but also with a dizzying array of family, financial and other circumstances that could leave even the most vigorous among us exhausted and depressed. Since 1989 Sue has served as case manager in the JFS Elder Guardianship Program. In 2001 she was promoted to Coordinator of the Guardianship Program. Earlier, she supervised JFS's homemaker services.

Force, and Rabbi Benjamin Samuels of Congregation Shaarei Tefillah in Newton provided a day long training for rabbis and area professionals who work with domestic violence.

A program is being planned this spring for teenagers on "Healthy Dating Relationships" led by Rebecca Chernin. Rebecca is a Clark University Senior, who is featured in the Jewish Women's International video on dating violence, "When Push Comes to Shove, It's No Longer Love." Plans are underway for other community programs to make it safer for victims of domestic violence to come forward. 


## Helping Others through Family, Connection and Passion

The JFS Child and Family Counseling Program is acknowledged in the professional community for outstanding work with families in turmoil and conflict, to the credit of Zelda Jacobson Schwartz.

Zelda served as the Director of Family Therapy at Jewish Family Service of Worcester, Inc. from 1985 until her retirement in 2005. Zelda herself has a family history with JFS as her father, Irving Jacobson, served as Treasurer of JFS.

Zelda inspired her colleagues to involve clients' family members in treatment, capitalize on their strengths, and help them navigate difficult life transitions. Trained at the Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy, Zelda brought professionalism and passion to her work in strengthening family life regardless of the structure of the family. Zelda developed expertise in working with all different family structures, including divorced and reorganized families, and multiple generations.

She brought the Children Cope With Divorce program to Massachusetts, which was part of the Probate Court pilot project on mandating educational programs to divorcing parents. She did not shy away from bringing together parents in conflict in order to help their children. Zelda served as a consultant and educator for other professionals in the areas of family functioning.

On September 25, 2005 the agency dedicated the Zelda Jacobson Schwartz Counseling Program & Zelda Jacobson Schwartz Endowment Fund to support counseling at JFS. 

## Frightened from page 1

dential and anonymous Jewish domestic violence hotline in NYC. Staffed by people in the orthodox community, the trained hotline volunteers allow the caller to safely open up about her situation. They provide the caller with referrals to important resources in Central Mass from information provided by JFS – therapy, legal, shelters, financial, spiritual. Flyers have been posted at most Jewish organizations.

In January, Lisa Goodman Twerski, Clinical Director of the Shalom Task



# Jewish Family Service of Worcester, Inc.

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Older Americans Act

## Connections *from page 1*

being her own person. She also loved the friendships that she made, especially with a college intern at JFS, Heather.


Leah went to live at Golden Pond in Hopkinton, an assisted living that was as tranquil as its name. Here she enjoyed a beautiful room with a view of the pond. Heather bought Leah a bathing suit and they would go swimming once a week in the indoor pool. She said she felt like she was living in a hotel. Leah was a progressive woman, despite being brought up in a strict, orthodox home. She had a good listening ear and always an opinion about anything we would talk about.

It was during her stay, at Golden Pond that her younger sister died. Her first words were "it should have been me. I was older and maybe if I had been home it would not have been so hard." That was Leah, kind, compassionate and caring. She went to the funeral and was happy to see many family members.

Her older sister went to the Jewish Home and Leah decided she should go as well. Leah gave up her "hotel" and pool for the confines of a nursing home to be with her

sister. Daily, Leah would go upstairs and visit, and she was quick to tell me that her sister was not the same. When her sister died, Leah went into a depression being the only sibling left of her family. She continually talked of her family and forgot the hard times and only talked of the good times.

I experienced my first Passover Seder with her; I learned a bit of Yiddish; and I treasure the potato latke recipe she gave me, but my main reason for writing this is to say that Leah was happy. In my job, often when elders go to a nursing home they have said to me, "this is the end of the line". In Leah's case it was the beginning of a whole new world for her.

Leah's recent illness took us all by surprise. Over the weekend it was so heartfelt to see staff coming in to see her, Peter, the nurse, coming in on a day off to check on her and hold her hand; Dr. Trugman and her wonderful nurse practitioner Katie in tears, all a testimony to the way Leah touched people. Leah had her troubled days, but in all she was happy. Her funeral was made more dignified and compassionate by the presence of Rabbi Seth Bernstein. Leah always worried who would do her eulogy, since her family was all gone. Leah got her eulogy. I will miss you. 

## Help Children *from page 1*

feres with learning.

Beth's presence allows her to work effectively with the parents and teachers of these children, improving the children's social and emotional development. The WAJCC finds this service adds value to their early childhood program.

Beth can observe a child in his or her classroom setting due to concerns about the child's functioning at school. Such concerns have ranged from problems with inattention and impulsivity to questions of selective mutism, an anxiety-based disorder that is characterized by a child's refusal to speak in specific settings.

Parents who have been unable to attend the parent group meetings have arranged meetings with Beth at the WAJCC or at JFS. She has also started a parenting advice column, "Parenting Puzzles", on the JFS website ([www.jfsworcester.org](http://www.jfsworcester.org)).

When ongoing counseling is warranted, parents enter into a formal counseling relationship with Beth at JFS, often using their health insurance. 