



Currents

SUMMER 2010

The Art of Living 2010

JFCS/East Bay is pleased to announce our fourth annual Art of Living celebration and fundraiser. Please save the date!

Day: Sunday, October 10, 2010

Time: 5:30 to 8:30 pm

Place: the newly renovated Oakland Museum of California, featuring the exhibit PIXAR: 25 Years of Animation

Featured Guests: from Pixar Animation Studios, producer Galyn Susman and animator Andrew Gordon

Honoring: First 5 Alameda County: Every Child Counts

~ Raffle ~

hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and wine
(dietary laws observed)

Looking to support JFCS/East Bay and get exposure for your business at the same time? Join us as a sponsor of the Art of Living. We welcome both corporate and individual sponsors, with a variety of giving levels and corresponding benefits.

To receive an invitation or for information about sponsorship, please contact Lauren Frieband at (510) 704-7480, ext. 777 or lfrieband@jfcs-eastbay.org.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2010 Art of Living!

THIS IS JFCS/EAST BAY

On a daily basis, we at JFCS/East Bay truly see a cross-section of our community.

We visit a young boy living in poverty in East Oakland; help a refugee from Iran find a new home in Concord; locate a caregiver for an older adult in Albany; and teach job-search skills to an out-of-work father in Walnut Creek. Behind every one of these interactions is a story—the ups and downs, the fears and concerns, the accomplishments and joys. These are real lives, real people, being touched by the range of services that JFCS/East Bay provides right here in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

We want you to get to know them. They are your friends and neighbors. They are why we do what we do. These are their stories. Turn the page and read on.

This is JFCS/East Bay.

MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by enduring Jewish values, the mission of Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay is to promote and strengthen the social and emotional well-being of diverse individuals and families throughout the entire East Bay community.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This issue of our newsletter paints a vivid picture of what we do from the most important perspective: through the eyes of our clients. We invite you to take some time to listen to their voices. We hope that you'll be moved and inspired by what you read here, as we are on a daily basis.

In the midst of all the joys and difficulties that come with the cycles of life for all of us, the economic crisis continues to grind on, with far too many people alarmed and demoralized by protracted unemployment. We continue to help a record number of individuals and families through our financial assistance program, Project Ezra. We are proud to have enhanced our services with our new collaboration with Jewish Vocational Service, bringing expert job counselors to our Berkeley and Walnut Creek offices on a weekly basis. This is a first-time effort, one that we hope to sustain for as long as it's necessary.

I am glad to report that our efforts to raise funds to better serve our community's Holocaust survivors have gone well this year. However, we are still challenged to meet the needs of low-income survivors in particular, as many face financial difficulties in affording enough care to remain in their own homes. We continue to maximize funds available through the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany ("Claims Conference"), but will need to rely on the generosity of our own community for several years to come. We are grateful for your support.

Looking ahead, several JFCS/East Bay staff and board members have been participating in the Jewish Community Foundation's Create a Jewish Legacy program, working to strengthen our community's ability to muster the long-term resources needed to realize our full potential. We are eager to engage our friends in discussion about the future we envision for JFCS/East Bay, and we hope to secure legacy gifts that will enable the agency to continue evolving and responding to the needs of the East Bay Jewish community.

Finally, we are undergoing a board leadership transition this summer. We all extend our deep gratitude to outgoing president Ben Hamburg, a skilled leader and passionate advocate for JFCS/East Bay. We are excited to welcome our incoming president, Wayne Batavia, who brings great intelligence, energy, and his perspective as someone born and raised in the East Bay Jewish community. We are extremely fortunate to have such outstanding and dedicated leaders.

I extend all my good wishes to you and your families. May this summer bring you opportunities for relaxation, re-creation, and renewal.

Shalom,



Avi Rose
Executive Director



Avi Rose

Photo by Rufus Diamant/Oakland



The worst part was seeing my daughter's face when my husband hit me for the first time.

I wanted to hold and protect her. I wanted her never to have to see such a thing again. Then it happened again. And again. And then we left, me and Claire. But it wasn't over for her. She'd wake up in the shelter in the middle of the night screaming out. She stopped talking to her friends. She even hit another kid in her kindergarten class. I knew I needed to find help for her, but I didn't know where to turn. Then I heard about JFCS/East Bay, and that changed our lives. Claire and I started seeing Sarah every week about four months ago. Sarah waited patiently through session after session with Claire staying closed up and angry. Slowly, Claire came to trust Sarah, and one day, an amazing thing happened. In one of her private meetings with Sarah, Claire dictated an entire letter to me, telling me how she felt, how scared she was, how sad she was, and how much she needed me. I just can't express what it was like to read this letter—it was hard, it was extremely painful, but at the same time I felt as though a door had opened, and I had my daughter back. Now we're in this together.

— Aida

I'm a survivor.

I survived the Nazis. I survived the move to a new country. I survived the death of my wife. And I did it all on my own. I never wanted to be a burden on others. I didn't want their sympathy or their help. But losing my daughter? That I couldn't bear. That I couldn't do alone. I'd been going to JFCS/East Bay's social events for Holocaust survivors for a couple of years, but I'd never once opened up to their staff members. Never once had I shared my whole story, told of all my losses. And now I needed them. So one day, I just walked into their office without an appointment, and there was Rita. She welcomed me in, and just listened. I talked longer than I had in years. I told her everything. She mourned with me, she supported me, she helped me through it. Now I know where I can turn. Now I know I don't have to be alone.

— Samuel

We went through such difficult times in Afghanistan—we lost friends and family members, our home, and all of our possessions.

Like so many, we fled our home during Taliban rule and ended up in a refugee camp in Pakistan. When we finally got cleared to come to the United States, we had no idea what to expect. There's no way to compare a camp in Pakistan to an apartment in Concord. But I suppose the thing that surprised me the most was that Mahboba, our Afghan case worker—the woman who helped us learn how to function in our new community—worked for a Jewish agency. Nothing in our past experience had prepared us for how welcomed we were by the staff and volunteers at JFCS/East Bay. They were so open and supportive and so willing to do anything they could to make our new lives work for us. They've taught us how to take the bus, how to make doctor's appointments, how to enroll the kids in school. They've helped us deal with the stress and trauma of losing our homeland. And with JFCS/East Bay's help, we've built ourselves a new home here.

— Farid

It started with the scary phone calls.

Sometimes we even saw my ex hanging around across the street. And then one day he walked right up to me and the kids and started ranting and raving and threatening all sorts of stuff. I really believed that he would end up hurting us, so I called 911. When the police showed up, I could tell that they weren't really taking me seriously. I've had my own issues in the past, but this was real—this was my kids' safety. So I called Amy, my JFCS/East Bay case manager, and within twenty minutes she was there. The first thing she did was take the kids aside and calm them down. They were terrified, crying. Then Amy spoke with the police for a long time, and they listened to her. She got them to really pay attention to the situation in a way that I just couldn't do. And then she gathered me and the kids together and we just talked the whole thing through. It was such a relief to have her there to help the kids realize that none of this was their fault. Amy spent three hours with us that evening, and has worked with me and the kids on a regular basis ever since then. She's got my back.

— Fran



We do the best we can at the East Oakland preschool where I teach. Really, we do.

But honestly, I often felt like the best we could do wasn't good enough. Some of those kids, they just needed more than we could give them. When one of them freaked out about something as normal as clean-up time, I didn't get it and I didn't know how to deal with them. Those kids, the ones we couldn't deal with—they just got kicked out of preschool. I have no idea what happened to them next. Then this consultant from JFCS/East Bay, Rachel, started coming in a couple times a week. At first, we were annoyed about having her butt in and try to tell us what to do. What's this white, Jewish woman got to do with these kids' lives, with my life? But we watched her play with the kids, really talk to them, try to figure them out. We listened to the kinds of questions she asked them, the way she spoke to them, and we learned. The first time I was able to talk a kid down from a freak-out, I was amazed—and proud of myself. It was like learning a new language, figuring out how to support these kids and really trying to understand their behavior. Rachel has taught us so much about how kids develop and how we can encourage positive behavior. We are so thankful to have her with us. And these kids? They have a chance now.

— Linda

Two years ago, I thought I had it all. A home, a stable job, health insurance—you name it.

Then I lost my job, and with it my insurance. Eight months without income, and my house was gone too. Picking up the pieces was the hardest thing I have ever gone through. I was so lucky to finally find new work, but with a horrible salary. I scrambled to locate a room for rent, but couldn't even afford the security deposit. I didn't know what I was going to do—so I called JFCS/East Bay, looking for any kind of help I could get. I ended up talking to Nancy. I was embarrassed and scared, and she was so patient and understanding. She told me that they could help with the deposit and part of my first month's rent. That's just what I needed to get back on my feet. And she even got me some grocery store gift cards to help out with my food expenses. Every month is still a struggle to make ends meet, but I'm holding down this new job and paying my rent on my own now. Without JFCS/East Bay's help, I think I would have ended up on the streets.

— Joanna

Three years ago, I was a serious mess.

Well, most of my life I'd been a serious mess. My mom is a drug addict. I love her dearly, but in all honesty, she was never a parent to me. I took care of her. I made sure she was safe. I made sure she ate. I didn't go away to college because I knew she wouldn't survive on her own—I needed to be there for her. I didn't have friends; I didn't have my own life. But then when I was twenty-two, I realized that something had to change. I couldn't keep my life on hold any longer. I found an amazing therapist at JFCS/East Bay named Valerie who has helped me so much. I've discovered what relationship boundaries are! Valerie taught me how to identify my own feelings and pay attention to my own needs. She helped me develop strategies so that I could have a healthy relationship with my mom without enabling her unhealthy behavior. And I'm so excited now because I feel like I'm finally ready to go out into the world on my own—I'm moving to Colorado; I'm going to college. I'm so proud of myself.

— Rose



For weeks I felt like I was under water.

Or like a ton of bricks was sitting on my chest. It was the most severe depression I'd experienced in my sixty-eight years. My doctor prescribed some medication, which started to bring me back, but I knew that it was time for some in-depth therapy. I wanted to understand what was going on with me, and I wanted to see if I could avoid this deep of a dive in the future. On a friend's recommendation, I called JFCS/East Bay's Suse Moyal Center for Older Adult Services and got introduced to Sheri, who has lots of experience with cognitive therapy. Over a year's time, she helped me change my thinking, identify when my thoughts were distorted, relate to people in different ways, and modify my behaviors. I needed to learn skills such as creating task lists and actually following through on what I had decided to accomplish. This therapy totally improved my outlook on life. I feel so much more engaged in what I'm doing. It's like I'm really alive for the first time in years.

— Stuart

I only moved to the East Bay a few months ago from southern California.

Down there, I had been working as a television writer, before getting laid off. I was hoping to find related work here, but as everyone knows, jobs are few and far between. More than that, I didn't really know what I was doing. My resume was several years old and I always felt extremely uncomfortable in job interviews. Then my rabbi told me about JFCS/East Bay's new employment services program. I could see an employment specialist from Jewish Vocational Service right here in Berkeley. At my first appointment with Laurie, she helped me identify what kinds of jobs I should be targeting, and then she worked with me to clean up my resume and make sure it was appropriate for those specific positions. She also had lots of networking suggestions and pointed me to conferences and forums where I could start to develop contacts. And we did lots of practice interviews together! All of this has made a huge difference. I feel so much more confident about my skills and how to present myself. I'm getting interviews and when I land my job—as I know I will—I'll be putting in a thank-you call to Laurie!

— Peter

*JFCS/East Bay is here to help.
For more information, please call
(510) 704-7475 or visit
www.jfcs-eastbay.org.*

ONGOING SUPPORT GROUPS

For more information, please check our website at www.jfcs-eastbay.org. Fees vary; pre-registration required.

Bereavement

Support and guidance for relatives and friends who have lost a loved one.

For information, please call Helene Linker at (510) 704-7480, ext. 745.

Café Europa

A social and cultural program for Holocaust survivors, their adult family members, and friends.

For information, please call Rita Clancy at (925) 927-2000, ext. 257

Chaverim

A social and educational group for Jewish adults with developmental disabilities.

For information, please call Melanie Wartenberg at (925) 927-2000, ext. 626.

Expressive Art Therapy for Women Over 50

A supportive and relaxed environment to explore transitions and health.

For information, please call Lisa Yordy at (510) 558-7800, ext. 716.

Living with Chronic Illness

A group for people managing chronic illness and disability.

For information, please call Karen Lottman at (510) 704-7480, ext. 210.

Long-Distance Family Caregivers

For adults caring for older relatives or friends who live out of this area.

For information, please call Lisa Yordy at (510) 558-7800, ext. 716.

Making Relationships Work

A workshop for newly committed or recently married Jewish and interfaith couples.

For information, please call Helene Linker at (510) 704-7480, ext. 745 or Robin Keller at (510) 704-7480, ext. 762.

Single Parents of Teens

A ten-week support group for single parents of teens exploring the particular issues of parenting alone.

For information, please call Rikki Sudikoff at (510) 704-7480, ext. 761

Refugee & Immigrant Support Groups and Educational Workshops

JFCS/East Bay offers regular social meetings, support groups, and educational workshops for individuals and families in the Russian, Afghan, Latino, and Bosnian communities.

For information, please call Barbara Nelson at (925) 927-2000, ext. 226

YOU Can Help Shape our Community's Future

Join our family of supporters in making a difference for East Bay residents in need. Please make a gift today.

Celebrate a *Simcha*

Sweeten life's joyous occasions with special gifts in honor of:

- Births & Birthdays
- B'nai Mitzvot
- Engagements & Weddings
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Honor the Memory of a Loved One

Honor those who have touched your life by giving *tzedakah* in memory of their generous spirit.

Give a Gift of Stock

Did you know that JFCS/East Bay accepts stock as donations? Please contact Lynn Simon for details.

Leave a Legacy

Please consider making a planned gift to help ensure JFCS/East Bay's work into the future. Bequests, life-income gifts, trusts, life insurance, and retirement plans are among the many kinds of planned gifts that can perpetuate your support. We can work with you and your professional advisors to implement the planned gift most appropriate for your unique personal and financial goals.

To learn about making a gift to JFCS/East Bay or joining the Kavod Society

please contact Lynn Simon at **(510) 704-7480, ext. 760** or **lsimon@jfcs-eastbay.org**.

Simply want to make a gift online? Go to **www.jfcs-eastbay.org**.

THANK YOU JFCS/EAST BAY SUPPORTERS!

KAVOD SOCIETY

Members of our Kavod Society (Society of Honor) are dedicated supporters who contribute \$1,000 or more each year to JFCS/East Bay. This generous commitment enables us to act upon the Jewish values of compassion, community involvement, and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) in the work we do.

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or lsimon@jfcs-eastbay.org.

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Berkeley, CA 94704
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Fax: (510) 704-7494

CONTRA COSTA OFFICE

1855 Olympic Blvd., Suite 200
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
Phone: (925) 927-2000
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SUSE MOYAL

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