

Jewish Social Services of Madison CONNECTIONS

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Teaching by example: Together with son Zack, Aviva Kaiser and daughter Hannah have visited residents of senior care facilities for more than four years.



A Family Affair: The Karpes and the Kaisers It's All About the Visit

BY LOUISE GOLDSTEIN, *Volunteer Coordinator/Senior Adult Program Coordinator*

If you have an opportunity to do a mitzvah, (a good deed), you're not supposed to pass it up." Thus David Karpe sums up why he volunteers to deliver menorahs to Jewish nursing home residents each Hanukkah. David, a local criminal defense lawyer, has brought menorahs both to seniors unable to interact with him and to people who were talkative and ready to visit. One resident mentioned how much he appreciated meeting David's young daughter, Michelle.

Aviva Kaiser was looking for a way to involve her children in giving to the Jewish community. The family started delivering menorahs when Zack and Hannah were young. All the residents wanted to hold her two-year old daughter, Aviva recalls. As Hannah grew, she would show everyone what she'd learned in dance class and how far she could do the splits. In many ways she was like a menorah herself, bringing light to people who miss being around the energy of youth. "Our family is back east," remarks Aviva. "We didn't want to lose contact with older people."

Fortunately, the visits often extend beyond the holiday. David continues to visit one resident who shares stories about his interesting life as a small town Jew in Wisconsin. The man now lives where David can wave to him as he walks to and from the courthouse in Madison.

Aviva and her kids continued to visit several of the residents after Hanukkah ended, visiting until the seniors died. In one instance, Aviva remembers how a senior expressed a

longing for matzo ball soup and latkes. The Kaisers went right home, made them, and brought the treats back. You can imagine the surprise and delight on the woman's face. The Kaisers plan to be making visits again this Hanukkah.

There are 48 Jewish seniors sprinkled among 18 skilled nursing care and assisted living facilities in Dane County. These are the more frail, sometimes forgetful members of our community. In all cases, they are a tiny minority, living among those of other religions and cultures.

To alleviate cultural and religious isolation, JSS reaches out to all Jewish residents of these living arrangements at holiday times. Staff and volunteers also bring monthly Shabbat observances to facilities with the most Jewish residents. Unfortunately, nursing home residents are not typically able to get out and attend other community events such as Lechayim. It is for this reason that JSS is always looking for volunteers willing to visit these individuals on a regular basis.

I asked Aviva about the response of residents to the menorahs. "It was never about the menorahs," she replied. "They focused on the visit itself." The gift of time may be the biggest mitzvah of all. Those of us going about our daily lives cannot know how comforting a small gesture can be. The candles of the menorah are beautiful, but the light that shines when one person reaches out to another is brighter by far, and just as easy to kindle.

The first candle of Hanukkah this year is December 7th. If you would like to brighten the life of a nursing home resident, please contact Louise at 278-1808, ext 26 or louisejss@mjjc.net



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We Are Only as Rich as the Poorest Among Us

BY PAMELA PHILLIPS OLSON
JSS Group Work Coordinator/Caseworker

A pseudonym has been used to ensure confidentiality.

A few days after her surgery, Rochelle was under the oak in her front yard waiting for me. Her two cats looked out the window, meowing to enter the conversation. In spite of her illness, Rochelle had taken the time to artfully do her hair, make-up and nails.

This woman has endured so much. For months she had been in pain. Then came pneumonia. Finally, the doctor diagnosed a gall bladder problem and recommended surgery.

Rochelle had become ill during the last stages of training for a good job. Unfortunately, events brought on by the illness meant that she lost the position. Yet, in spite of her circumstances, Rochelle is positive and resilient. She has endured many set-backs in her life and has gained wisdom, skills and knowledge along the way. But, her hopes for a full time permanent job with benefits were temporarily out of reach. She was running out of money and facing months of convalescence.

It was then that Rochelle called Jewish Social Services.

Our work together began with a visit to the food pantry. I was surprised when the staff greeted Rochelle by name and with concern. "I volunteered there when I was feeling well and had time," she told me. "I am not used to being on the receiving end." We went to Hospitality House, a program which matches funds raised by tenants in order to avoid eviction. We had gathered

"Most people view Jewish poverty as an oxymoron and not a major issue."

money from the Housing Help Desk at Dane County Human Services, a rabbi's discretionary fund and a small contribution from Rochelle's aged father. By patching together these resources, we were able to cover the rent for that month. We also got help from MG&E, as well as emergency Food Stamps. JSS made the system work for our client, advocating and negotiating with the bureaucracy along the way.

During Rochelle's recovery, a volunteer delivered a pot of chicken soup and, on another day, more food, supplies for her cats and, just as importantly, a dose of friendship and a hug. JSS volunteer coordinator, Louise Goldstein also recruited individuals to help with care after surgery and rides to medical appointments and to the synagogue.

Some may be surprised to learn that there are Jewish people in Madison living just one paycheck away from homelessness. According

to William Rapfogel, executive director of the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty as quoted in JEWISH WEEK, "Most people view Jewish poverty as an oxymoron and not a major issue." While the National Jewish Population Survey (www.ujc.org) reports that Jews are more affluent than Americans generally, it also presents statistics on Jews living below the poverty line.

Sometimes the Jewish poor in Madison are elderly, surviving on SSI payments of \$561.78 a month. Sometimes they are individuals challenged by physical or emotional illness. Sometimes they are single parents.

And sometimes, they are previously "comfortable" individuals, some with families, who have been laid off and cannot find suitable work. After unemployment benefits run out, they struggle to make rent or mortgage payments and put food on the table. Business failures are another source of hardship. Anyone could find himself in this predicament. Fortunately, the synagogues and other Jewish organizations try to assist people at these times so that they can continue participating in community life.

This Jewish year marks the 350th anniversary of the first Jewish settlement in America. In 1654, Jewish refugees from Brazil settled in New York. Their dream was to create the first North American Jewish community. Overcoming the anti-Semitism, they were able to succeed.

Today, what a great community we have here in Madison. Thanks to the support of so many, Jewish Social Services is able to assist members of the Jewish community and others in need. When Rochelle recovers her strength, she will be able to seek work again. JSS will be there to help. We are an agency that has the flexibility and staying power to support her comeback and rejoice in her success. For 350 years, members of Jewish communities throughout America have practiced *Tikkun Olam* – repairing the world.



JSS Offers A Sincere

Thank You

for Your Tribute Gifts

The following contributions were recorded between July 16, 2004 and October 31, 2004

IN HONOR OF:

Lillian Abrams

Daniel and Ruth Siegel

Ron Arm and Linda Jameson, for their help to me

Trude Arm

Naomi and Dennis Bahcall, 50th wedding anniversary

Darlene and Stuart Schwartz

Eve Becker

Diane Becker Krasnick and Marc Krasnick

Janice Beers

Paul and Sophia Moroz

Anna Bentley

Steve and Lillian Abrams

Carla Blum

Tillie Fischer

Betty Bodenheimer

Daniel and Ruth Siegel

Olivia Abigail Boland, birth

Robert and Judith Rubin

Anne Celnicker

Mary and Edward Celnicker

Julie Cushman, with appreciation

Beatrice R. Levine

Cherie Mandel Diamond, with appreciation

Marc Kornblatt

Nancy Dodge

Belle Friedman

Vivian Edelman

Eileen Bruskwitz

Rebecca Ebins and Adam Gross, engagement

Corlie and Sol Blumenfeld

Andrea Epstein and Nicholas Johnson, wedding

Marshall and Susan Shapiro

Sol and Jane Frank

Helen Frank

Al Goldstein, 80th birthday

Alan and Harriet Hyman

Ruth and Sy Levey

Louise Goldstein, JSS Volunteer Program

Bruce Thomadsen

Robert and Sharon Goldstein

Jane Kapusta

Sue Goldstein

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

Irwin and Robert Goodman

Alan Orenberg

Mary Graye and Is Fine, anniversary

Ruth and Sy Levey

Dolores Gruen, birthday

Michael and Karen Ostrov

Mitch Grunes, birthday

Julius and Sylvia Grunes

JSS, wonderful mitzvat

Beth Israel Center Women's League

Al and Dolores Kanner, 50th anniversary

Karen and Harry Roth

Rosa Karlin

Paul Grossberg and Dean Ziemke

Lillian Kay, 90th birthday

Natalie Borenstein

Sarah Schmidt

Rose Kimmel, speedy recovery

Belle Spitz

Roz Kopelberg, speedy recovery

Robert and Judith Rubin

Sandy and Bob Schwartz

Merilyn and Joel Kupferberg

Devra and Lester Breslow

Marcus and Sheila Cohen

Abraham Landsman

Judy and Howard Landsman

Our Parents

Alexander and Maria Lapidus

Ilene and Mark Laufman, daughter's engagement

Joel and Marilyn Kupferberg

Kimberly Laufman and Andrew Abrams, engagement

Ilene and Mark Laufman

Lechayim Volunteers

Sara and Ron Ben-Ami

Susan and Jonathan Lipp, anniversary

Julius and Sylvia Grunes

Victoria Meyer, happy 90th

Betsy and Bezalel Haimson

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Joel Minkoff

Joel Minkoff

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Charlotte and Ralph Musin, 55th anniversary

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Lester and Ann Druck

Bob and Sandy Schwartz

Dave Ottenstein, 80th birthday

Sandie Ottenstein

Ruth and Howard Schutzbank

Bob and Sandy Schwartz

Allen Paschen, speedy recovery

Sylvia F. Epstein

Sandy Porter, special birthday

Corlie and Sol Blumenfeld

Gerry Randy, get well

Corlie and Sol Blumenfeld

Arden Rice, Bat Mitzvah

Barbara and Dan Esser

Lisa and Harry Webne-Behrman and family

Continued on page 4

Thank You for Your Tribute Gifts *(continued)*

Amy Rosenthal

Alfred and Maxa dai Frank

Karen and Harry Roth, new granddaughter

Marcus and Sheila Cohen

Lowell and Julie Lakritz

Roy Rotter, 80th birthday

Alan and Harriet Hyman

Judith and Robert Rubin, new granddaughter

Joel and Marilyn Kupferberg

Merrian and Louis Rifken, 90th birthdays

Donna and Marty Rifken

Elaine and Erwin Sackin, 65th anniversary

Jeff, Judy, Steph Kravat and

Jen and Matt Connery

Francie Smith Saposnik

Belle Friedman

Jill Maidenberg and Richard Thal

Francie Smith Saposnik, new granddaughter

David and Rhoda Berman

Lowell and Julie Lakritz

Renata Laxova

Robert and Judith Rubin

Gary Seltzer, get well

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

Dan Siegel, 65th birthday

Lowell and Julie Lakritz

Armand Simon, 80th birthday

Alan and Harriet Hyman

Sonia Slemrod, speedy recovery

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

Ellen Sorrin

Judy and Ben Sidrin

Barbara Spierer

Steve and Lillian Abrams

Jane Brotman-Austin and Stephen Austin

Jill Maidenberg and Richard Thal

Paul and Sophia Moroz

Barbara and William Spitz, birth of grandson

Marcus and Sheila Cohen

Sandy and Bob Schwartz

Norton and Lois Stoler

Gabriel Spitz, birth

Lowell and Julie Lakritz

Jim Stein, 40th birthday

Adam Zoll and Elyse Fineman

Leonard and Rose Steinig

Ruth and Sy Levey

Adel Stern

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Ida Swarsensky

Betsy and Bezalel Haimson

Howard Sweet

Judy and Ben Sidran

Sophie Sweet

Sidney Sweet

Sylvia Thal

Tony and Jenny Maidenberg

Peter Williams, 60th birthday

Rose and Leonard Steinig

IN MEMORY OF:

Pearl Actor

Kathi Johnson Rock and Michael Rock

Bessie Barkoff's parents

Bessie Barkoff

Max and Louise Becker

Eve Becker

Diane Becker Krasnick and Marc Krasnick

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Arnold and Verjel Beiler

Theodore Berg

Nan Herrmann

Livia Bergen

Kurt Bergen

Lynn Berman

Marcus and Sheila Cohen

Jane Eisner

Rochelle and Sherman Frank

Betsy and Bezalel Haimson

Rick and Celia Margolis

Sandie and Dave Ottenstein

Kenneth and Joan Riggs

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Brother, Benjamin, sister, Bernice

and Mother Dear

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Patricia Mary Johnson

Kathi Johnson Rock and Michael Rock

Albert Kaplan

Barbara Roth

Continued on page 5

Thank You for Your Tribute Gifts *(continued)*

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Jack and Judith Ladinsky
Renata Laxova
Herbert and Marcia Lewis
Max and Esther Ticktin
Marjorie Winkler

Sadye Schackter

Harry Schackter

Dr. Ben and Belle Schulak

Murray and Susan Katcher

Hyman and Rebecca Schuster

Donald and Sue Schuster

Continued on page 6

How Tributes Help

We appreciate when you honor and remember others with a gift to JSS. Gifts that are unrestricted in nature allow JSS to use them where the greatest needs exist.

Every donation means a great deal to us. We have made every effort to make sure our thank you lists are accurate and complete, but if we have inadvertently neglected to list your name, please let us know. Call Sherry Minkus, 278-1808. Thank you.

Thank You for Your Tribute Gifts *(continued)*

Nadine Schuster Shapiro
Donald and Sue Schuster

Harry Shapiro
Irving Shapiro

Larry Shapiro
Marjorie Winkler

Marion and Robert Silvers
Kenneth Opin and Jan Silvers

Joyce Stanton
Harriet Stanton

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Karen McCarthy

Howard D. Popper and Family

Celeste Robins

Fern and Barry Silverman and Family

Bertha Sossin

Barbara Spierer

Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman

Thank You

to Vehicle Donors

Contributions were recorded between October 1, 2003 and September 30, 2004

Gordon Crandall

Keith Feiler

Sheila Fields

Arthur Glenberg

Jerrold Gross

Vincent Holmes

Erica Kesin Richmond

Zev Kianovsky

Marlene Schlimgen

Stuart Mondschein

Pamela Robbins

David Simon

Ester Sweeney

It All Adds Up

You've probably seen the display ad with the tow truck pulling a huffing and puffing car, asking you to "turn your *tzoris* into a mitzvah – a charitable gift to Jewish Social Services." And well over a hundred of you have heeded the call. The JSS vehicle donation program turned four years old this year and has brought the agency over

\$40,000 that we have put to work assisting our clients.

Donors over the past year are listed in this issue. We thank all of you for thinking of us. Most of the vehicles have seen better days. But, when sold at auction, it all adds up. Of course, we wouldn't refuse a newer

Jaguar or a Maserati if you were thinking about upgrading. But any drivable car, truck, camper or boat is gratefully accepted and recycled. So, before the snow flies, give JSS a call and we will take that vehicle off your hands before it gets in the way. With title in hand, please call Sherry at 278-1808 ext 12.

Did you know..?

- In the Fall, 2002 issue of Connections, we described Larry Shapiro as a JSS volunteer with a “heart of gold.” Larry, of blessed memory, proved that once again by leaving a bequest to JSS so that our work may continue.

The JSS Annual Report describes how our clients in 2003, “reflected a broad cross section of our community.”

- 12% people of color
- 25% disabled
- 9% public sector employees
- 35% private sector employees
- 38% retired
- 15% unemployed

Jewish Social Services of Madison

Judy Sidran, *President*

Steven Morrison, *Executive Director*

Barbara Spierer, *Associate Executive Director*

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Christine Pavelko, *Designer*

Janice Beers, Louise Goldstein,
Pamela Phillips Olson,
Contributing Writers

RUSSIAN CORNER

Coming to America

Like so many émigrés who arrive after the age of 60, Ludmila Radovanskaya found it especially challenging to transition into life in America. Anyone of any age finds it difficult to replace the known with the unknown, leaving friends, family, culture and familiar language behind. However, school age children and working adults soon find themselves with structure to their daily lives, natural connections with others, and ample opportunity to practice English.

For Russian speaking seniors, it's a different story. As Ludmila tells it, “In Ukraine I worked as a head bookkeeper. After work, I took care of things at home and socialized with my friends. My age and lack of fluency in English prevent me from working in this country. Although I attend English classes several times a week, I often find myself sitting at home feeling lonely.”

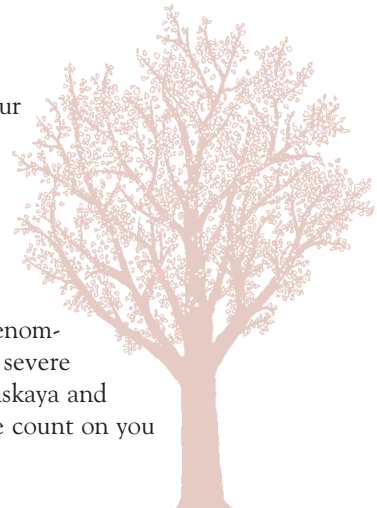
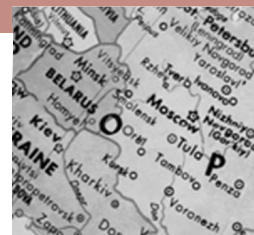
Ludmila, along with five other Russian-speaking seniors, recently attended an outing to Olbrich Gardens organized and led by JSS. “I was so appreciative of the opportunity to go somewhere so beautiful and enjoy the company of others,” she commented. The afternoon was so successful that this group of new friends decided they will meet on a monthly basis and encourage others to join them. Ludmila goes on to say, “It's important for us to have the opportunity to socialize and see the city we live in. I feel that the staff of JSS understands what we're going through and these outings play an important role in our lives.” Ludmila also enjoys attending Lechayim programs and is especially appreciative when JSS offers her vouchers for cultural events that she could not otherwise afford.

Ludmila Radovanskaya feels so fortunate to have “landed” in Madison.

Calling All Friends

Like so many charitable organizations, JSS finds the end of the tax year to be a crucial time. The annual Friends of Jewish Social Services campaign constitutes 80% of our fundraising income. About half of our Friends make their commitment between December 1 and December 31 each year. Those who donated to Friends last year and haven't yet given in 2004 contributed \$55,000 a year ago.

The arrival of refugees from the former Soviet Union has slowed greatly. However, JSS continues to serve many of our new Americans who arrived in years past. All Jewish Family Service agencies are feeling the effect of governmental cuts to their resettlement budgets and JSS is no exception. Every time we help a refugee successfully complete the citizenship exam, the individual is no longer a refugee and government support dries up. Last year, JSS had to absorb a \$20,000 cut in funding because of this phenomenon. Next year we are losing another \$20,000 because of severe Federal cuts in older refugee grants. Yet, Ludmila Radovanskaya and others count on us to be there when they need us. Can we count on you so that we are there to answer the call?



A Good Tutor: More Priceless than Rubies

BY LOUISE GOLDSTEIN

Volunteer Coordinator/Senior Adult Program Coordinator

In high school Gary Sponholz became enamored with Russian culture, politics and language. Though he wanted to be a teacher, life took him down a different path. By volunteering for Jewish Social Services, Gary found a fulfilling way to combine his interests.

How did you get started volunteering with English as a Second Language?

I began with Jewish Family Services in Milwaukee a couple of years ago, when I was studying Russian, tutoring a 17-year old girl. It was summer, so I arranged for her to meet with her future high school teacher, and we got the books she would be using so she could get a head start. Now she's at UW-Milwaukee. When my job took me to Madison, I contacted JSS to continue tutoring.

Who have you tutored here?

I started with a young couple. He's a mason and we went together to a "start your own business" course at the Community Action Coalition. Now he has his own business on evenings and weekends. It gave me a really good feeling to help in such a practical way.

My next learner's goal was to pass the citizenship exam. He took the practice exam frequently, using it to determine what he needed to learn. He was very motivated and had me record parts of the test to practice his pronunciation. He took the exam earlier this year and is waiting to hear from Immigration.

How are you currently volunteering?

I'm tutoring a young man in my field, computer software. The goal

is to improve his English so he can break into the job market. We do mock interviews and discuss newspaper job ads. For instance, something might look promising but it's in Marshfield, and he has no idea where that is. We work on technical language and how things are done here. He has tremendous experience from Russia and I think will contribute a lot.

What's really funny is that it turns out a conversation partner I had, to practice Russian, is his wife! So we already had a connection. They've invited me to parties and I've had the chance to socialize with other Russians. I enjoy them so much! And it's good because it puts them in the position of knowing the language, while I'm the one learning.

I love teaching, the interaction with people and helping. It's fun, and I get as much out of it as they do, maybe more.



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Jewish Social Services of Madison

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