

CONNECTIONS

Jewish Social Services of Madison

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Howard Sweet spearheads the JSS Foundation For the Future campaign



Howard Sweet “Immense human depth”

Ask Howard Sweet about his family tree, and he pulls out a thick genealogy book, tracing roots from his grandfather’s grandfather in Europe to branches full of familiar Madison names.

Howard grew up in a little house on Jefferson Street, “close enough to the *shul*, that whenever they were short-handed, me, my two brothers and father formed the *minyán*,” he recalls. His parents, Harry and Esther, opened the Triangle Superette on State Street in 1935, where, as a kid, Howard stocked shelves. A spate of uncles, aunts and cousins owned other small groceries around town.

However, Howard preferred the law, and wound up an estate and trust specialist “as an accident.” Because he was a student during a major estate tax law reform, he became an instant expert, soon recruited by Gordon Sinykin and (now judge) Shirley Abrahamson. Today he practices at Hurley Burish & Milliken, S. C.

Though Howard’s parents had always been active in the Jewish community, he had not. Instead, he came to know Jewish Social Services through clients who received help that was delivered “in a really quality way,” he says. Then, when his own mother was ailing and failing in Florida, he himself called JSS. “The JSS social workers have immense human depth.”

Now Howard is on the JSS Board, at the helm of the Foundation For the Future endowment

initiative. Along with professional expertise, he brings years of experience with the Capital Times Kiddie Camp and Meriter Foundation, a quiet confidence and endearing smile.

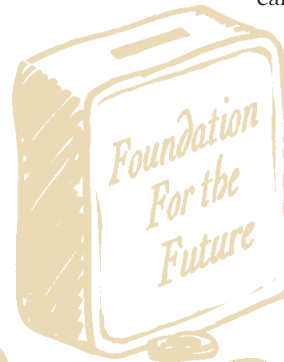
“I’ve seen the financial need that JSS has to go into the future,” Howard says. “The annual giving keeps us going, but I could see we needed a financial foundation – if we were to lose a grant, if there was a drastic cut in funding or to underwrite an important new program.”

The Foundation campaign aims to raise one million dollars by the end of 2006, to be held as principal and invested so that 4% can be used annually. Donors have three years to satisfy their pledges.

His commitment is personal. “My parents taught me that it’s a mitzvah to do *tzedakah*, to help others – not only a commandment, but a wonderful thing to do, the right thing to do.” They were devoted volunteers, and generous “within their limited means,” he says. Every Friday before lighting candles, his mother would put a coin in the little metal box for charity, and he did the same. “I hope I’m doing what my mother would have wanted me to do.”

Outside of work, Howard travels lands afar and brings home eclectic art. He’s also picked up the trumpet he played in junior high – “It was a forty-year layoff,”

he notes – for a “glam-spacy-pop” band called Earthling Invasion.



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Future Force

Twenty-three volunteers joined to launch the Foundation For the Future campaign in April. A highly generous gift of design and printing services from an anonymous donor made it possible to tell JSS’ compelling story in a manner worthy of the cause. For information or a pledge packet, please contact Howard (hsweet@hbmlaw.com, 257-0945) or JSS President Judy Sidran (JudySidran@aol.com, 256-4774).

How Did It Ever Come to This?

Deciding to Escape from an Intimate Partner

By BARBARA SPIERER, ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What follows is a composite, written in a way to protect the victims of domestic abuse whom we've served. Most individuals who live in abusive situations are women, but men can also be victims.

She appeared at my office door one morning. As soon as I shut the door, she began to weep. She showed me the bruises and winced when she moved her neck. He had done this to her the night before and this time she was so scared that she could no longer dismiss it as a momentary event.

This time, after all the talks we had before and after her family and friends continued to beg her to take the children and leave, it looked like she was ready – ready to stop blaming herself for causing his explosions, ready to admit that he had a serious problem and this just might happen again, probably even worse next time.

People who know someone in an abusive relationship are often quick to judge the victim. “How could she possibly stay? She’s intelligent and educated. Why doesn’t she just take the children and leave?”

None of us should ever judge. The reasons for staying are many. They range from the shame of admitting that this is happening to the fear that he will kill her as she is trying to leave. Sometimes he is a

respected, even powerful member of the community and she is sure that he will get custody of the children, that nobody will ever believe her. After all, he will have the money for a high-powered attorney and she won’t. If he wins, then the children will be with him, without her to protect them.

And then there are the financial considerations. He won’t leave the house. If she leaves, will she lose any claim to it? Where will she go? Will the children have to be pulled out of school? Will their future be destroyed? Soon, it just seems safer to stay than to go. Next comes the rationalization, it won’t happen again because she will redouble her efforts to keep the peace. *Shalom Bayit.*

We continue to talk, everything else on my schedule forgotten. The police should be called. She is afraid. There is no turning back if she does this. Her injuries must be examined, arrangements made for shelter, for securing legal advice, for going to the house and packing the bare necessities – a myriad of things to do. It is overwhelming; but she knows that JSS will be there for her, that we will do whatever it takes to make sure that she and the children are safe.

This story has a happy ending. Mom and the kids are safe and they are thankful. The road ahead will not be an easy one, but the feeling of relief builds confidence. The future holds promise.

If you question whether your partner is abusive, know that you can call upon JSS for confidential support and help.

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Be A Place To Come To, A Friend to Confide In

One in three women – including Jewish women – will experience abuse in her home some time in her lifetime. If you suspect someone you know is in trouble, you can help, and possibly save a life. Depending on their situation, get them thinking about:

A safety plan

To ensure physical safety in case violence should escalate, plan an escape route, signal a neighbor, teach the children when and how to call for help. To devise a plan, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline (1-800-799-SAFE), Shalom Task Force (1-888-883-2323), or Jewish Social Services at 278-1808.

A support system

Decide on a safe place with a JSS social worker, trusted friend, family member, rabbi, therapist or other abuse survivor who can listen reflectively and not be judgmental of the victim or the abuser.

Preparation

Be ready for the moment when possession of extra keys, phone numbers, important papers (birth certificates, passports, immigration papers, marriage license, insurance policies) will make the transition to a new life easier.

A financial plan of action

Money set aside in a secret account or hiding place is essential for escape, a job is essential for an independent life.

Excerpted from Jewish Women International's Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community. For more information, visit www.jewishwomen.org.

JSS Offers A Sincere

Thank You

for Your Tribute Gifts

The following contributions were recorded between January 1, 2004 and April 30, 2004

IN HONOR OF

Ron Arm & Linda Jameson

Trude Arm

Eve Becker

Mark and Ilene Laufman

Beverly Bernstein, happy birthday

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

Jeff Cohen, engagement

Lowell and Julia Lakritz

Fadey Feyman

The Fromstein Family

Jonathon Meir Greenspan, birth

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

Jewish Social Services

June Klein

Bea Levine

Harry Kaiser, happy 92nd birthday

Anonymous

Bill and Bobbie Malone

Sylvia Sugerman

James and Nancy Youngerman

Lowell & Julia Lakritz,

Bar Mitzvah of grandson

Bob and Sandy Schwartz

Abraham Landsman

Howard Landsman

Abraham Landsman, happy 90th birthday

Barbara Spierer

Louise Malamud & Steven Schoenberger,
engagement

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

Bill and Bobbie Malone, holiday greetings

Sylvia Sugerman

Michelle Minkus & Michael Heifetz,
engagement

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen
Francie Smith Saposnik

Ralph Musin, speedy recovery

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

Zachary Pekarsky, Bar Mitzvah

Sherwood Malamud and Barbara Spar
Malamud

Donald and Kathleen Miner

Judy Pierotti, speedy recovery

Robert and Sandy Schwartz

Judy & Dan Pierotti, birth of granddaughter

Bob and Sandy Schwartz

Renee & David Richmond

Marsha and Gary Seltzer

Gary Seltzer, speedy recovery

Steven H. Morrison and Goldie Kadushin

Barbara Spierer

Ronald and Betsey Scharlack

Sylvia Sugerman

Sidney & Marrian Schwartz

Michael Schwartz

Sylvia Schwartz, get well soon

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

Ben and Judy Sidran

Ruth Bronston

JoAnn Skloot, happy 60th birthday

James and Nancy Youngerman

Francie Smith Saposnik

Anne Altshuler, David Sulman
and Family

Mary Horlick

Harry and Leah Sweet

Barbara Spierer

Celia and Rick Margolis

Birth of Clara Sweet's great grandson, Cody

Betsy and Bezalel Haimson

Clara Sweet, happy birthday

Betsy and Bezalel Haimson

Lewis Toppel, happy 60th birthday

Arnold and Sharon Ruben

Harry Webne-Behrman, happy 50th birthday

Jill Maidenberg and Richard Thal

Dorothy and Herbert Weiner, happy anniversary

June Klein

Emily Whitesel, Fulbright scholarship

Rose and Len Steinig

IN MEMORY OF

Sherman D. Ansell

Lois Ansell

Louise Becker

Eve Becker

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.

Continued on page 4

Thank You for Your Tribute Gifts *(continued)*

Max Becker

Eve Becker

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Kurt Bergen

Lauren Chatham

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Arlene and Hershel Rotter

Helen Frank

Arlene and Hershel Rotter

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Charlotte Martin

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Claudia and William Haus

Marsha and Gary Seltzer

Mickey Haskin

Leon Jack Haskin

Brother, Benjamin, Sister, Bernice, and

Mother Dear

Annette Howards

John Patrick Hunter

Betsy and Bezalel Haimson

Ken Kaiman

Corlie and Sol Blumenfeld

Helen Karp

Robert and Sandy Schwartz

Betty Keegan

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

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Seth and Leslie Perelman

Max and Gerda Wald

Myrna Williamson

Harry Prager

Deena and Peter Williams

Howard Priluck

Dictionary of American Regional English

Therma Princer

Don and Karla Bukstein

Fred and Molly Chlupp

Gerald and Sylvia Goldstein

Julius Rottman

Marsha and Gary Seltzer

Irv Saposnik

Beverly Bassin

Lawrence and Janice Bensky

Richard Bowman and Judith Ross

Marcus and Sheila Cohen

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Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman

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and Family

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Barbara and Daniel Esser

Harvey Temkin and Barbara Myers
Temkin

Harvey and Bonnie Wendel

Jean Wein

Anna Heifetz

William & Grissie Weiner

Ida Swarsensky

Rita Young

Belle Spitz

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Volunteer Services

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Vehicle Donations

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Connections

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Christine Pavelko, *Designer*

Janice Beers, Louise Goldstein,
Barbara Spierer, *Contributing Writers*

Group Hugs to Lauren Meyers

Sadly, we said farewell to JSS Group Work Coordinator Lauren Meyers on June 4. Though only with JSS for a short three years, Lauren's impact on JSS and our clients was significant. Never one to grab the spotlight (she even nixed a photo here), Lauren was an able and sensitive facilitator. With her help, our clients were able to derive comfort in bereavement groups and in the *Powerful Tools* groups for caregivers.

We were fortunate to have such a perceptive social worker sharing daily responsibilities of case work and supportive one-on-one counseling, the bedrock of our agency.

Lauren's work on mental illness was breakthrough. She staffed a Jewish community task force on mental illness, and initiated a program to educate and sensitize the Jewish community. She created our co-sponsorship with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill for the workshop on planning for the future with loved ones who have mental illnesses.

Fortunately, Lauren will continue to use her gifts and knowledge in private practice. We and our clients will miss her greatly, but we are happy that others will have access to her intelligence, insights and loving kindness.

Did you know..?

- The senior adult seder held at Oakwood Village and conducted in both English and Russian, had 102 participants this year. Countless volunteers cook, bake, register, usher, clean up and generally lift all our spirits. JSS Board member Denny Geller and Beth El member Pam Robbins are two of the Oakwood staff who make this event happen.
- CUNA Mutual Group donated \$500 to the JSS Emergency Grants Fund in honor of their employee Bobbie Lazarz. Among her many volunteer contributions, Bobbie is a JSS past president and familiar face at the monthly Senior Shabbats.
- Thanks to Cops and Sentry, some hungry people will feast on Passover food. They again donated their unused items to JSS, a portion of which we pass on to Second Harvest.

RUSSIAN CORNER

A Passion For Life

By JANICE BEERS, M.A., JSS RESETTLEMENT COORDINATOR



Feodosiya Litash emigrated from the Ukraine to Madison in 1994 at the age of 68. At the time, her life was typical of seniors adapting to life in America. She lived with her daughter for six months, while waiting for a subsidized apartment. She enjoyed caring for her grandsons, reading Russian magazines and crocheting.

That all changed when she was diagnosed with lymphoma. Chemotherapy treatments made her increasingly more nauseous and weak, so weak that she fell, broke her hip, underwent hip replacement surgery and spent a month at Oakwood's Hebron Nursing Home in rehab. Shortly after returning home, Feodosiya again fell and rebroke her thighbone. Her white blood count was too low for surgery. She went back to Hebron, probably now permanently, and was told she would never walk again.

Feodosiya spent the next year in bed, so ill she couldn't eat and was tube-fed. But she made the best of the situation. "I didn't know much English and had to communicate with the staff in the nursing home, so I taught myself how to speak, read and write English." By the spring of 2003, much to the surprise of her doctors, nurses and physical therapists, Feodosiya stood up by herself.

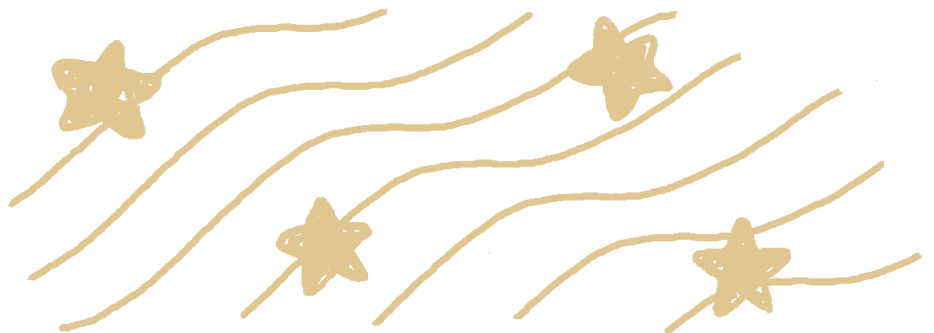
Then she decided to go for her U.S. citizenship. She studied independently and with the JSS citizenship instructor, and thanks to much support from her daughter Tatyana Swanson, on February 14, 2004, Feodosiya was sworn in!

In six months she was able to move to Tabor Oaks Assisted Living. "The most important factor in my healing was my attitude," explains Feodosiya. "I ignored everything the doctors and nurses told me and decided I would live. I couldn't have survived without the help and care I received from the staff of Hebron, ElderCare and Jewish Social Services."



Ten years after her resettlement, Feodosiya is proud of her achievements. "Not only am I a citizen," she explains, "I have discovered a hidden talent" with ceramics in art therapist Denny Geller's studio at Oakwood. Says Denny, "Feodosiya has a passion for life and shows this through her art. Busy hands seem to be her motto. Working with her in the art space is a joy to me and all the residents."

Feodosiya Litash, 78, proudly displays her very own stars and stripes.



Double Joy Score

By LOUISE GOLDSTEIN,
VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR/SENIOR ADULT PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Ross Shenker is a West High School freshman who regularly visits a Jewish Social Services client in an assisted living facility. He contacted JSS two years ago to do a Bar Mitzvah project.

Why volunteer with a senior?

I thought volunteering with a senior would give me the most interaction at a mature level, rather than working with children. I thought I could have an impact on someone's life and do something that really mattered.

How often do you meet?

We meet one night a week for an hour and a half. Sometimes we have to reschedule for the weekend if I have a lot of homework or I'm in a show. She's very understanding.

What do you do during your visits?

First I help out around her room. I might put her laundry away, straighten up, cut coupons, whatever she needs. Then we play

a game like Boggle, Scrabble or cards. We talk about what we've done that week, our families, and she tells me stories from her life, before I was born. I'll tell her about a show I'm in and she'll tell me about something that happened where she lives. It's just like conversation at a dinner party.



Have you ever thought about stopping?

No, to stop would be giving up a friend. We've established a relationship, it would just be wrong to stop. I'm happy doing what I'm doing, and it's not a chore. It's not

hard; it's simple, easy and fun. There's no reason to stop.

What do you value most about visiting?

For me, it's her sense of humor, she has a good sense of humor. I want to be sure she doesn't lose that. For her, it's being able to vent, to have someone sit and listen to a whole sentence. Sometimes it takes her a long time to say things and people don't always wait for her to finish.

Have things changed over two years?

She's become very comfortable with me. My eyes have been opened to what life for senior citizens in the U.S. is like. Facilities can be lonely places, the food isn't very good and they're very expensive.

It's changed the way I think about my life. I want to be sure that my parents have a good quality of life, if they ever have to go to assisted living. They deserve our respect and care, they made the world for us today. Seniors have things to say that can surprise you and teach you.

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