



JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

SEPTEMBER, 1994

NEWSLETTER

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Our Experts – Questioned, Quoted and Consulted

"We used a snapshot of her numbness as a healthy model of grief and it's not," Linda Rothschild, quoted in a *Times-Picayune* article by Joan Treadway, entitled "The Way Jackie Showed Her Grief."

"Evidence exists that stricter gun laws will reduce the suicide rate. Wouldn't it be worth our efforts to find out?" Sue Daube stated in a letter to the editor, published in the *Times-Picayune*.

"We live in a very homophobic society, and there are literally thousands of parents who have thrown their children into the streets, which is unconscionable." Linda Rothschild, quoted in an article in the *Times-Picayune* on "Growing Up Gay."

"I have yet to meet a widow who does not talk about loneliness – but it doesn't have to overwhelm them," Deena Gerber, quoted in a *Dialogue* article entitled "When a Spouse Dies – Learning to Live Again."

Dear Members and Members to Be

This Newsletter is our annual report to you, and it is my last as executive director of Jewish Family Service. As I said in my Jewish Voice letter to the community, one of the things which has touched me most is the grass roots support JFS has in the Jewish community. Whenever we have sent out a plea for assistance, you have responded by the hundreds. There are those who give us \$250 each year and more. And there are hundreds of people who give us \$25 each year. All of you are needed to keep our enterprise going. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

L'Shanah Tovah and God Bless.

Julanne R. Isaacson

The Mike Brener-JFS-Outreach Fund

Mike Brener has generously created The Mike Brener-JFS-Fund for Outreach to Intermarrieds & Jews by Choice in the Jewish Endowment Foundation.

Please send donations to this fund to the Jewish Endowment Foundation, 234 Loyola Avenue, Suite 806, 70113.

The Mike Brener Lecture on
Outreach To Intermarrieds & Jews By Choice
presents

INTERMARRIAGE: CHALLENGES & CHOICES

with Ester Perel

Workshop for Interfaith Couples
Sunday, November 13, 1994, 1-5 p.m.
JCC Uptown

Lecture (Open to All)
Sunday, November 13, 1994, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
JCC Uptown



Ester Perel

Ester Perel, originally from Belgium, is well known as a therapist, trainer and lecturer in Europe, Israel and the United States. In private practice in New York, she is also a training and program consultant with the 92nd Street Y. Ms. Perel has done extensive work in ethnic and religious intermarriage, has authored a number of articles on marital communication among intermarried couples and has been a guest on various TV programs including the Oprah Winfrey Show.

JFS Called on to help with Suicide Aftermath

In May, right before the end of school, the suicide of a popular 15-year-old student sent shock waves across school lines throughout our community. Students, parents, friends, relatives, and school staff alike were experiencing not only the sense of sorrow and loss, but also the legacy of shame, fear, rejection, anger, guilt, denial, blame, and anxiety that normally follow in the wake of such a tragedy. Devoted and dedicated leaders of an excellent school, concerned about the feeling of shock and turmoil among their many students and parents who were affected called us to help. They wanted postvention, a term that refers to action taken to provide short term grief counseling following a suicide, with the goal of preventing additional suicides and helping survivors deal with the loss.

Two groups were held at the school: one for students only and another for parents, including the parents of the deceased student, as well as any students who wanted to stay for this group.

The goals were to help students and adults understand and begin the grieving process. We also wanted to prevent further suicides by identifying people who were at increased risk, and referring them for further professional intervention. Screening was done for symptoms of extreme emotional distress and the need for psychological assistance. Suicide survivorship can trigger many psychological conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, separation anxiety, disturbance in interpersonal relationships, substance abuse and school failures.

Many people present expressed feelings of guilt. These feelings were validated and normalized. It was stressed that suicide is a complex, multi-determined act by a complex individual, for which others cannot assume responsibility. Grief resolution after suicide may take as long as two years and longer. The anniversary of the suicide and other special occasions may rekindle the initial acute grief.

Those people who seemed to have a continuing need for counseling were referred.

This postvention experience was an example of school and community working together to provide reassurance, sense of security after a suicide, protection for other at-risk people, and facilitation of the process of recovery.

JFS invited to be presenter at Jewish Outreach Institute

Jewish Family Service was honored to be an invited presenter at the recent meeting of the Jewish Outreach Institute in New York City. Sue Daube, JFS Family Life Education Coordinator, and Dr. Sidney Furst, the market researcher who conducted our focus group on the needs of intermarried couples spoke on "Discovering and Responding to the Needs of Intermarried Families."

The Jewish Outreach Institute, directed by Dr. Egon Mayer, of the City University of New York Graduate School, is the only national organization embracing all streams of Judaism, devoted to preserving the Jewish continuity of interdating couples and intermarried families, and promoting their inclusion in the Jewish community. The theme of the conference was *Making Outreach Work*.



At the Jewish Outreach Institute (l-r) Courtney Nathan, Dr. Egon Mayer, Executive Director Jewish Outreach Institute and foremost researcher on intermarriage, Sue Daube, Julianne Isaacson. Sue Daube was an invited presenter at the Institute, where she and Dr. Sidney Furst presented "Discovering and Responding to the Needs of Intermarried Families."

JFS offers Education to the Mental Health Community



Gloria Steinem

Through the generosity of the Dotty Gold Nathan Fund, Jewish Family Service will co-sponsor a breakfast, at which Gloria Steinem, speaker at the Dotty Gold Nathan Lecture the previous evening, will address mental health professionals. Ms. Steinem is the author of several books including the 1992 best seller *Revolution from Within*, a book on self-esteem. She co-founded *Ms.* and *New York* magazine and lectures widely on feminist issues.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23



Stanley Seigel

Mr. Seigel is co-author of a new book *UNCHARTED LIVES: Understanding the Life Passages of Gay Men*. He is a family therapist and former director of education at Ackerman Institute of Family Therapy in New York City. He will offer a workshop for mental health professionals on development and dynamics in families of gays and lesbians, and a lecture for the public.

WATCH FOR THE DATE!

News of the Soviet Emigres

The Scherbakovs, Victoria, Sergey, and their two daughters aged 14 and 9, arrived in December, 1993. Victoria, who ran an English language school in the Soviet Union, is working as a teacher's aide and plans to become a certified teacher. She is also employed by JFS to teach English to other emigres. Sergey Scherbakov, who was in human resources in the Soviet Union is working at FNBC in human resources. Our case manager, Irene Gurievsky, reports that the Scherbakovs are very happy here.

The Glotser family arrived April 29, 1994. Mikhail and Tsipaleya are the parents of Lev, who has a wife, Yelena, and two sons, aged 10 and 7. The boys enjoyed JCC Day Camp this past summer. Lev is an architect, who is being re-trained as a CADD operator. Yelena is a physicist.

AN ADOPTION STORY

Joel Abrahams and Gloria Manucia contacted Jewish Family Service in February, 1993 to begin the process of becoming adoptive parents. Less than six months later, they became the proud parents of Katherine Sarah. According to Joel and Gloria, "Katie is the most outstanding baby in the whole universe!"

Jewish Family Service has placed three babies during the past twelve months. **We encourage any Jewish couple who might be interested in adoption to call us. 524-8475**



Joel Abrams and Gloria Manucia, proud parents of Katie, "the most wonderful baby in the universe."

The Agnes & Michael Levine Memorial Fund has been created through a recent bequest. This fund is dedicated to financial assistance for JFS clients. Please send contributions to this fund to Jewish Family Service, 2026 St. Charles Avenue, 70130.

Adoptive Parents Get Together

There was great enthusiasm among the thirty Jewish adoptive parents who convened at Ellie Wainer's home in January. Their adopted children ranged in age from 2 to 31, but they found much in common. The group met again in April and heard moving presentations by three Jewish adult adoptees. Many ideas for future meetings emerged.

The next meeting, which will be in the fall, promises to be very exciting. Debra Goldstein Smith, Director of the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, who has spoken and written extensively on adoption issues, will speak about how to develop Jewish identity in adopted children.

Anyone wishing to join the group should call Roberta Hirsu at 524-8475.

How We Help . . . Sometimes People Are Stuck

David and Linda, who had been dating for two years, came to Jewish Family Service for help with their relationship. They described their relationship as good but stagnant. Both were afraid to make a commitment. After ten counseling sessions which focused on improving communication and building intimacy, David and Linda decided to become engaged.

Sustaining Members

A special thanks to our Sustaining Members

- Paul & Arlene Barron
- Mr. & Mrs. Roger Bissinger
- Mr. Mike Brener
- Herbert & Sandra Burstein
- Ms. Ann C. Fishman
- Woldenberg Foundation
- Charles & Cathy Glaser
- Mrs. Louis Glazer
- Goldring Family Foundation
- Mr. Warren A. Goldstein
- Mr. & Mrs. Julian H. Good, Jr.
- Mr. & Mrs. Louis Good, Jr.
- Dr. & Mrs. Harry Greenberg
- Mr. & Mrs. Jay Handelman
- Dr. & Mrs. Robert B. Haspel
- Mrs. Jimmy Heymann
- Ms. Andrea Huseman
- Dr. & Mrs. J. E. Isaacson
- Mr. & Mrs. Marvin L. Jacobs
- Dr. & Mrs. Ross Jacobson
- Mr. & Mrs. Herman S. Kohlmeyer, Jr.
- Mr. & Mrs. Paul Kullman
- Dr. & Mrs. Edward Lazarus
- Mrs. Louise L. Levy
- Dr. & Mrs. Richard W. Levy
- Dr. & Mrs. Walter Levy, III
- Mr. & Mrs. Lee H. & Doris Meltzer
- Dr. & Mrs. Sanford Paillet
- Dr. & Mrs. Stuart I. Phillips
- Julie Schwartz & David Radlauer
- Mrs. Bettie G. Redler
- Mr. Zollie Richberg
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert Schenk
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert I. Shepard
- Mr. & Mrs. Edward H. Sherman
- Mr. & Mrs. I. Wm. Sizeler
- Ms. Elizabeth A. Steiner
- Mr. and Mrs. Saul Stone
- Miss Honnah Streiffer
- Mr. Ben Weiner

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



WHERE THE MONEY GOES



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO THIS YEAR

Deena Gerber, BCSW

Received the highest rating for teaching from the students in her class at Tulane School of Social Work, spoke to the Senior Citizens at the JCC on "The Lively Mind," to Slidell Hospice staff on Judaism, to Gates of Prayer on "Children and Death," reviewed "Conscience and Caring" for ORT, and Betty Friedan's "Fountain of Age" for Temple Sinai Outreach to Seniors, spoke on "Money and Marriage" to National Council of Jewish Women Moonlighters, presented a workshop on "Caregiving" to a corporation in Picayune, Mississippi, presented "The Reality of Retirement" to two shifts of employees at the Times-Picayune, attended a workshop on "Time Effective Therapy."

J. Douglas Brackenridge, BCSW

Has maintained a full caseload of marital, individual and adolescent psychotherapy cases, pinch hit in the Teen Suicide Prevention Program at McMain Senior High School, is excited about moving back into New Orleans from the Northshore and looks forward to a new year of professional growth.

Linda Rothschild, BCSW, ACSW

Attended the national convention of the American Association of Suicidology as well as the Summer Institute, which focuses intensively on assessment and treatment of suicidal adolescents. She has acquired state of the art training in suicidology and has used this knowledge on behalf of the community at the following presenta-

tions: Tulane School of Social Work; panel on suicide for The Louisiana Violence Prevention Task Force conference on "Understanding Violence as a Public Health Issue;" WSMB's "What's Happening New Orleans;" Mary Beal's "Perspectives in Black" on Channel 4; confirmation class and parents at Trinity School; groups on grief for parents and students at Sacred Heart for those affected by a recent suicide of a 15 year old student. She runs a bereavement group and continues to handle a varied caseload and to coordinate the teen suicide prevention program.

Sue Daube, BCSW, ACSW

Our FLE Coordinator, Sue Daube, attended the national convention of the American Association of Suicidology, along with Linda, to acquire the updated knowledge needed to oversee the Teen Life Counts Suicide Prevention Program, presented the TLC Program at Gates Of Prayer Religious School, and to faculty at Riverdale School, and was a guest lecturer at Tulane University School of Social Work in the "Death, Dying, & Grieving" class, is training our new Outreach Coordinator, Courtney Nathan, organized a well attended lecture and workshop by Esther Perel.

Sue was invited to be a presenter at the national Jewish Outreach Institute where she collaborated with Dr. Sidney Furst, who conducted our intermarried focus group research last summer. The two delivered a presentation entitled "Discovering and Re-

sponding to the Needs of Intermarried Families."

"Laugh Your Way to Better Health," a popular FLE program developed by Sue, was presented several times this year.

Sue was also responsible for a very successful visit last fall by Anne Brenner, author of *Mourning & Mitzvah*, which included a patron party, a public lecture, and a workshop for mental health professionals.

Roberta T. Hirsu, BCSW

Has resettled two families from the former Soviet Union, placed two babies for adoption, organized a group of Jewish adoptive families, attended a two-day workshop on "Time Effective Therapy," been in a "Leadership Training" program at Gates of Prayer, and maintained an ongoing clinical caseload, an adult therapy group, and supervised a beginning social worker. She also has represented JFS at the LA Coalition for Adoption meetings, the primary focus of which are to promote the highest ethical standards for adoption in LA and to communicate these standards to the state Legislature.

Courtney Nathan, MSW

Since starting work at JFS in March, has led two 6-session workshops for intermarried couples, developed a Chavurah for interfaith couples, arranged the Outreach Family Picnic in Audubon Park, developed the Jewish Information Line which began June 1st and offers a 24 hour message detailing the goings-on in the Jewish Community. She also developed an educational program "Your Faith or Mine" which took place on July 31, featuring Dr. Sidney Furst of New York as moderator.

In June she attended the Jewish Outreach Institute's conference on outreach to learn more about national outreach, trained in working with interfaith families and Jews-by-Choice and learned more information on Outreach and Intermarriage. She has been using the information received at the conference to begin working on program development for the fall, including the return of Esther Perel for a lecture and workshop.

She also attended a workshop *From Darkness to Healing*, on utilizing the lessons of the Holocaust for therapy, about which she wrote an article for *The Jewish Voice*.

Clinical Staff of Jewish Family Service

Deena Gerber, BCSW, Executive Director

Doug Brackenridge, BCSW, Clinical Social Worker, Child, Adolescent and Family Therapist

Sue Daube, BCSW – Family Life Education Coordinator

Roberta Taylor Hirsu, BCSW — Casework Supervisor and Adoption Coordinator, Family, Individual, and Group Therapist

Courtney Nathan, MSW, – Clinical Social Worker/Outreach Coordinator

Linda Rothschild, ACSW, BCSW – Clinical Social Worker and Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Jackie Silverman, BA, Lifeline/Homemaker Coordinator

Ellie Wainer, B.A. Volunteer Coordinator, Teen Suicide Prevention