

FAMILY TIES

winter 2009

At JFS, our services reach people of all ages...

For Children...page 8



Literacy & Latkes

Bringing the gift of books to New Orleans children.

For Teens...page 8



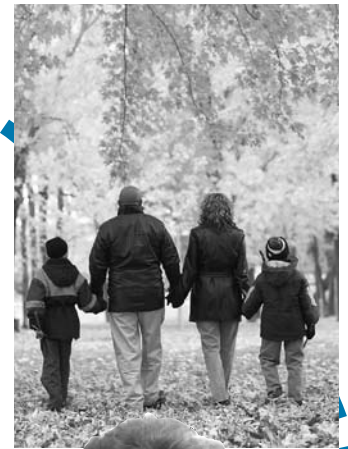
Teen Life Counts

Teaching Teens to ACT...
Acknowledge, Care, Tell.

For Couples and Parents...page 10

Mediation Services

Easing the divorce process for couples and their children.



For Seniors...pages 3,6,11

Homemaker Services

Assisting seniors living alone.

Catch-a-Cab

Helping seniors maintain their independence with transportation assistance.



Lifeline

Providing protection and peace of mind to those living alone and their loved ones.



Services made possible by our generous donors and sponsors...

Thanks to all those who make the work of JFS possible through donations of goods and services

...pages 7, 11, 12



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2009
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If you are interested in serving on the Jewish Family Service Board, please contact Deena Gerber at (504) 831-8475 or email her at Deena@jfsneworleans.org



A Letter From the President

Dear Friends,

It has been over six months since our last newsletter and a lot has changed. Our community has been tested by yet another round of hurricanes, along with a growing financial crisis. The economy has taken a toll on individuals and families throughout our community nationally as well as locally. Fortunately Jewish Family Service has been able to maintain its level and quality of services over the past year and will look to be in a position to continue to do so throughout 2009.

In the wake of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, Jewish Family Service provided financial assistance to a dozen families.

The Agency is taking steps in order to better serve the community. Jewish Family Service is expanding its current office, enabling the Agency to add a psychologist and case manager in keeping with its goal of maintaining service to our community. The Financial Resource Center continues to provide interest free loans to qualified applicants to rebuild damaged homes or businesses as a result of Katrina. In addition, we are currently evaluating avenues to expand the loan program beyond its initial mission. Bikur Charverim, which offers friendly visits to older adults and others, is a new service with five matches (volunteers paired with older adults). The service has been well received and we looking forward to expand it in the coming months.

This year's Chanukah Project is called Literacy and Latkes, a book drive for elementary school students attending at-risk schools. Over 1500 well-maintained books and book store gift cards were collected through the synagogue religious schools and Jewish Family Service. We expect this to be the start of a wonderful annual project.

I would like to thank the Jewish Family Service staff for their commitment and passion to the Agency and our community throughout this past year. Have a happy and healthy new year!

Sincerely,

Jonathan Fawer
President

Homemaker client:

“I don’t know what I’d do without her.”

Marilyn Gaethe sums up the impact that having a JFS homemaker for the past four years has had on her life: “I don’t know what I would do without her.”

Homemaker Valerie Vaughn comes every Friday morning, says Marilyn, “and just does everything.”

Marilyn, now widowed and unable to drive for health reasons, relies on Valerie to take her grocery shopping, change linens, and do laundry and housekeeping.

Marilyn attributes her bad back to years of lifting forty-pound cartons of office paper during her career with the state. Her back pain prevents her from doing many of her chores herself.

Marilyn and Valerie really enjoy shopping together and Valerie also makes sure that Marilyn gets to her medical appointments on time. With a laugh, Marilyn says, “I really slow Valerie down, but she is so patient with me.”

She adds, “Valerie can strip and re-make my bed in seconds flat...nothing is too much trouble for her.”

With the assistance provided by a JFS homemaker, Marilyn is able to live independently, surrounded by her collections of teapots and plates – what her late husband Mervin lovingly called her *tshotskes*.

And, thanks to her homemaker, her quality of life has much improved.

The homemaker program is supported through a very generous grant from The Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, The United Way of Greater New Orleans, and Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans.

For information about JFS homemaker service and how it can improve your quality of life or that of a friend or relative contact Julie Hoffman, MSW, GSW, at 831-8475.



Comprehensive Listing of JFS Services

JFS offers a variety of programs and services for the entire community as well as guidance and psychotherapy for individuals and families, all facilitated by our highly trained, experienced staff of therapists and counselors. For more information about any of the listings below, please call (504) 831-8475. Pre-registration is required, and a sliding fee scale is available upon request.

Counseling – guidance and psychotherapy for individuals of all ages, couples and families

Information & Referral – for a wide variety of mental health resources and social services in our community

Adoption – home studies and follow-up supervision

Teen Suicide Prevention – a school-based suicide awareness and prevention program called “Teen Life Counts”

Refugee Resettlement – for elderly refugees from the former Soviet Union who were resettled by JFS

Holiday Services –

Passover Food Baskets: holiday food and ritual items for Jewish families in financial need, nursing home residents, and others who need help in celebrating holidays

Rosh Hashanah Gift Bags: For older adults and the homebound

Literacy and Latkes: Book drive for schools and families in need

Financial Assistance – cash grants to Jewish families and individuals in crisis

Interest Free Loans – for rebuilding homes and businesses

GROUPS

Techniques for Expressive and Reflective Writing – a writing group for adults, focusing on reactions to stress and physiological and psychological well-being

Girl Power – a self esteem group for pre-adolescent girls

Parents of Troubled Adults – a support group for parents of adult children who suffer from mental illness, substance abuse or other difficult circumstances

SERVICES FOR SENIORS

Homemaker – home help and transportation

Lifeline – electronic emergency response system

Case Management – assistance in planning for long-term care

Catch-a-Cab – taxi coupons for older Jewish adults

For help with any of the listed services call 504-831-8475.

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MISSION STATEMENT

Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans is a social service agency dedicated to preserving, strengthening and enhancing the well-being and self-sufficiency of individuals and families at every stage of the life cycle.



A Letter From the Director

Dear Friends,

My social work background is in working with older adults and their families. One of the lessons that I learned early in my career is that many elderly and chronically ill people suffer from loneliness that can be as painful as any physical illness. People who at one time had full social and family lives find themselves alone when they are not able to go out as much as they used to, when lifelong friends pass away, and when family members move out of town.

In order to fill some of this void, JFS has embarked on a new friendly visiting program, Bikur Chaverim. This program matches volunteers with seniors in order to create lasting and meaningful relationships. We hope that volunteers will commit for a one year period to make twice-monthly home and telephone visits. Toby Bonnett, LCSW matches up people based on mutual interest. She trains volunteers in the art of visiting and maintains a supportive presence. It is our wish that rewarding relationships will nourish the hearts of all involved.

Another lesson that I learned recently, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, is that JFS must be a first responder in many kinds of emergencies – whether they are natural disasters, emotional distress or financial crisis. As our country experiences this economic recession, be assured that our agency is prepared to help. While every situation is different, we are committed to working with individuals and families to develop a plan that is tailored to their specific needs. Small grants and interest free loans, along with counseling and future planning, are available. If you know someone who needs our help, please encourage them to call.

Best wishes for a good 2009.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deena". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Deena Gerber
Executive Director

What we've been doing...

- **Parents of Troubled Adult Children Group:** Meets monthly with guest speakers at Congregation Gates of Prayer. Call Toby at 831-8475 for dates of future meetings.
- **Bikur Chaverim volunteer visiting program:** Volunteers visit an older adult friend, matched through the JFS friendly visitor program. Call Toby at 831-8475. The program is underwritten by Jewish Endowment Foundation.
- **Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Training Group:** Focus is on emotional regulation; distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness and mindfulness. Call Kimberley at 831-8475.
- **Rosh Hashanah ritual bags:** Gift bags, containing an apple, honey cake, and challah, were delivered to 156 recipients by 30 volunteers.
- **Northshore Office:** Worked with the New Orleans Saints Play It Forward Foundation and the Dr. Phil Foundation to disburse funds to programs serving the needs of children in the area.
- **Trainings attended:**
 - Managing Chronic Pain
 - Psychotropic Medication Management
 - EMDR training
 - Therapeutic Horticulture
 - Genograms
 - Asperger's and Medication
 - Instilling Hope
 - ADHD and Sexual Abuse
 - Working Effectively with Clients with Dementia and their Caregivers
 - Laughing Yoga
 - Cultural Diversity
 - Dialectical Behavior Therapy



Helping...
Healing...
Training...
Serving...
Learning...

Lessons from the Text

Ben Zoma said,

“Who is wise? The one who learns from all people...

“Who is mighty? The one who subdues the evil inclination...

“Who is rich? The one who rejoices in his portion....

“Who is honored? The one who honors other human beings....”

Pirke Avot 4:1

Need + Response = LIFELINE

In business jargon, synergy between need and response has been achieved in the Lifeline program. But that's not all! Lifeline, a very successful program at Jewish Family Service, is a program of heart and compassion.

On one side is the increased need for Lifeline services, as large numbers of older adults are now living in New Orleans without the support once offered by their children who moved away after Katrina. With the larger number of people in need comes the mandate to get the program to those who need it most.

Match that need with the skills of Marilyn Asher Kline, Lifeline Coordinator, and Jane Levine, its marketing manager – both hired this summer – and Lifeline is ready for major growth in its ability to serve the community.

Moreover, both Marilyn and Jane are not just bright and energetic business people; they are committed to and have a great passion for performing acts of loving-kindness. These newest JFS staff members bring value-added skills to the program with their caring concern and experience.

Marilyn knows very well the fierce independence that the elderly desire and that Lifeline makes possible.

After a career spent in business and marketing, Marilyn stopped work to help care for her elderly parents, following her father's heart attack several years ago. She says, "For a year and a half, I helped my parents live independently, so I know exactly where older people are coming from. They want to make the decisions (about their life) and they want to remain independent.

"Lifeline gives an extra layer of protection to older people living independently, and it provides peace of mind to children that their parents will be helped in times of emergency," adds Marilyn.

Similarly, Jane has a sales and marketing background and feels honored that she has the opportunity to use her skills now to promote Lifeline; she notes, "There is nothing worse than falling in your home, not being able to get help, and feeling so frightened; the Lifeline response system prevents that from happening."

Join the Lifeline Volunteer Corps

With the expected increase in the number of Lifeline clients comes a need for volunteers to play an expanded role in the program.

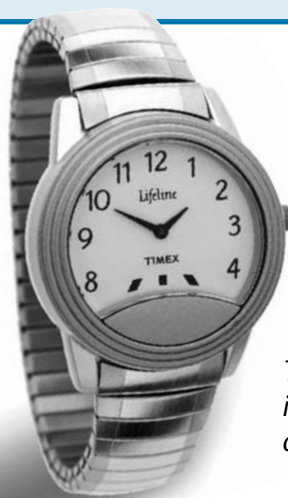
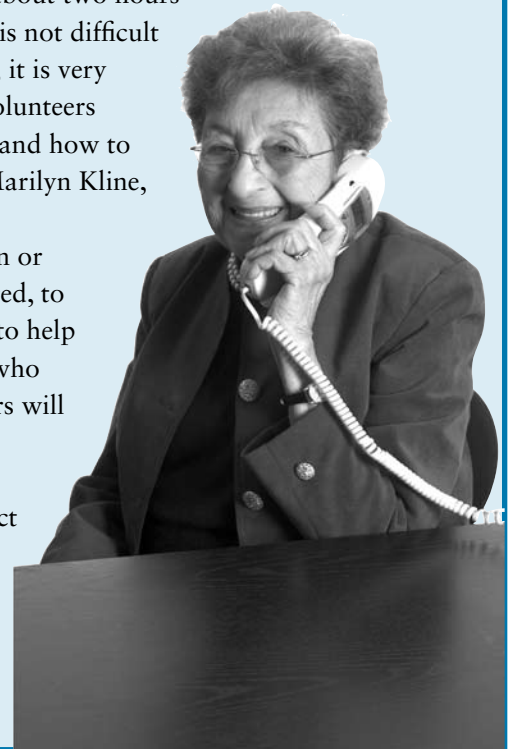
Until now, "Work at Home" volunteers called each subscriber once a month as a reminder to test the equipment. These calls provided a personal touch, establishing a bridge of communication between JFS and the subscribers.

Now, volunteers are needed to install the Lifeline equipment in clients' homes and train them how to use it.

"We need friendly volunteers who, on an as-needed basis, can visit a client and spend about two hours doing the installation and training. It is not difficult to learn how to install the equipment; it is very user-friendly. Lifeline staff will give volunteers thorough training in how to install it and how to explain its use to the clients," notes Marilyn Kline, Lifeline Coordinator.

This is a great opportunity for men or women, especially those who are retired, to volunteer within the community and to help JFS deliver excellent service to those who need assistance. In addition, volunteers will be reimbursed for their mileage.

If you are interested in joining the Lifeline Volunteer Corps please contact Marilyn Kline, Lifeline Program Manager, at (504) 831-8475 or via email at marilyn@jfsneworleans.org.



The water-resistant Timex watch, with a built-in Lifeline button, is a fashionable alternative available for purchase by Lifeline subscribers.

LIFELINE continued on page 7...

It is Jane's role to meet with health care professionals who work with older adults and the homebound and to inform them about Lifeline and its benefits.

In addition, Lifeline is offered on a sliding-scale fee basis, so even older adults of limited means can benefit from the service.

But what sets the JFS Lifeline program apart from other response systems? Marilyn explains that it is the personal attention and follow-up that makes this program different: "Every morning we receive reports of every incident that occurred the day before; these incidents require varying degrees of attention. If a client loses the Lifeline button, we get her a replacement button that same day. If another client has several falls, we ask the social worker to call and see if they can offer any help. Whatever the need is, we respond." By subscribing to Lifeline, clients also have access to a continuum of care that includes other sliding-scale services for older adults, as well as case management and counseling.

Now that word is spreading about Lifeline's benefits, the number of requests for service is increasing, and with it the demands on staff time. That is why Lifeline is putting this call out for volunteers to expand their role (see sidebar on page 6).

"We need more volunteers," says Marilyn. "Jane and I, and Jan Miller, our third staff member, make a great team. And I want to publicly commend Jan for the tireless work she did after Katrina, retrieving all the flooded equipment. She was also so extremely helpful to me in my first months here, steering me in the right direction and sharing her extensive knowledge of Lifeline."

"With the community's help, we can improve the quality of lives of so many older people in New Orleans and bring peace of mind to their children at the same time," concludes Marilyn.

Lifeline is supported by a generous grant from The Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, The Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, Ameri-cares, and United Way.

For more information on the Lifeline program, call Marilyn at (504)831-8475.

For all your support, we say "thank you" to...

Congregation Gates of Prayer

for providing space for the monthly group, Parents of Troubled Adults; and for providing space, and great energy and talent of the Confirmation Class to decorate, pack, and prepare for delivery of the Rosh Hashanah bags for our older adults.

Harrah's Casino

for providing a fabulous venue for our very successful four-agency fundraiser, Winners and Spinners.

Jewish Community Center, Goldring-Woldenberg Campus, Metairie

for providing space for continuing support and training for Bikur Chaverim volunteers.

Jewish Community Center Uptown New Orleans

for providing space for Teen Life Counts training for professionals and volunteers.

Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Home and Cemeteries

for providing meeting space for the Jewish Family Service monthly Board of Directors meeting.

Northshore Jewish Congregation

for providing office space for JFS on the Northshore.

Billy Henry and Tharp Sontheimer Funeral Homes

for assistance with indigent burials.

Major funding for programs has been provided by the following funds and foundations:

Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans

United Way of Greater New Orleans

The Goldring Family Foundation

The Woldenberg Foundation

The Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation

Cahn Family Foundation

Jewish Endowment Foundation – General Fund

Starbucks Coast Fund

Bruce Levy Family Foundation

Teen Life Counts teaches teens to ACT!

Although Teen Life Counts (TLC) facilitators routinely report that the student participants are engaged and attentive throughout the three-day workshop, it is sometimes difficult to assess whether the suicide prevention message is actually getting through.

Ellie Wainer, TLC coordinator, shared an outcome of a recent workshop held at an area school that demonstrates that:

- **Yes!** Teens are getting the message and...

- **Yes!** Teens really “get it!”

A TLC volunteer facilitator was working with ninth-grade students. On the first day of the workshop, she handed out the newly designed TLC information card (shown on this page). It has clear instructions on what to do and who to contact if someone seems to be having problems. Tim (not his real name) pocketed the card.

Tim’s mother had grown increasingly worried about the emotional health of her son. He seemed to be on a downward spiral; he was often moody and spent a lot of time in his room alone, with the door closed. She did not know whether Tim was suicidal, but she did know that he needed help – and quickly.

But where to get that help?

So, when Tim came home from school the afternoon of the first day of TLC and handed her the information card, his mother felt it was fate. She called JFS immediately, and in a very short period of time, Tim began counseling.

He continues to see a JFS counselor, and his downward spiral has stopped; his mood is much improved.

Tim’s mother is convinced that TLC and the follow-up counseling saved her son’s life.

She may well be right. Tragically, one week after her son completed the TLC training, an eighth-grader at his school, who did not have the benefit of participating in TLC, took his own life.

“We are always trying to refine how we deliver the messages of TLC so that the teens understand them more clearly and they are encouraged to open up more and share their feelings,” says Ellie Wainer. “This is an ongoing process.”



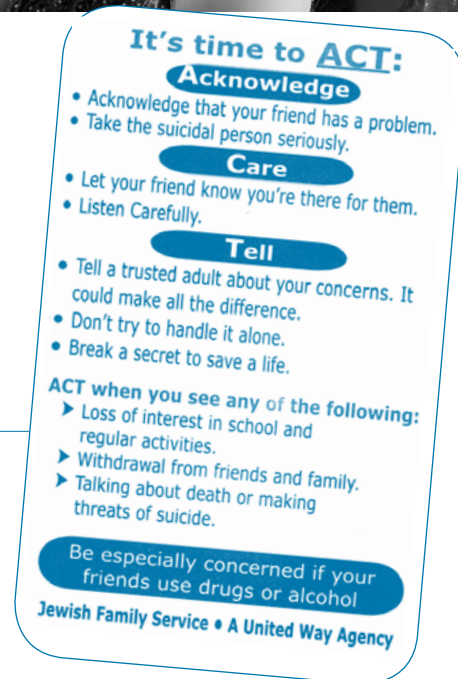
One example of a new way of presenting information is the ACT acronym, printed on the new TLC card: Acknowledge, Care, and Tell.

This year, with the financial support of the Starbucks Gulf Coast Fund, the JFS staff was able to do a thorough curriculum review, revision and enhancement this past summer.

In April, 2008, Ellie and Sarah Keith, LPC attended the American Association of Suicidology Conference in Boston where they learned about cutting-edge research in suicide prevention, how teens think and gain new knowledge, and how to present educational material in the most engaging ways.

One example of a new way of presenting information is the ACT acronym, printed on the new information card: Acknowledge, Care, and Tell. It gives clear guidelines for teens who suspect that a friend is in trouble.

“Thanks to Starbucks Gulf Coast Fund for funding this revision, we are giving teens the tools to cope with stress in their own and their friends’ lives,” concludes Ellie. Teen Life Counts is generously supported through the United Way of Greater New Orleans and the Louisiana Children’s Trust Fund.



New Face/ New Project: Suzy Lazarus/Literacy and Latkes

She “always hoped it would happen,” says Suzy Lazarus about joining the staff at JFS. Since her graduation from the University of Wisconsin, Suzy has worked in the Jewish community, and though her path to JFS was not direct, she says, “It quickly became a goal of mine to work at JFS.”

This year JFS has added a new special holiday project to serve the community and Suzy Glazer Lazarus, MSW, GSW, joined with JFS Board member and project chair, Fran Lake, to staff and coordinate it.

Literacy and Latkes is a program designed to collect new and very gently used children’s books that will be provided to the children at the New Orleans Women’s Shelter, special needs students at New Orleans Free School, and 3rd and 4th graders at Lafayette Academy Charter School. If you prefer to donate money, funds will be used to purchase books and gift cards for the program. Checks should be made payable to Jewish Family Service.

While Suzy enjoys working with individual counseling clients she also has become an expert at coordinating special projects. From Passover Food Baskets, to Rosh Hashanah bags and now the Chanukah book drive, Literacy and Latkes, Suzy offers her organizational skills as well as her heart and compassion.

For Suzy, her day is filled with many projects and duties. From clinical counseling to heading up special projects, she is dedicated to serving her clients and

her community. Her work at JFS involves a variety of assignments, and her personal life brings with it the joys and time demands of family (she is mother to two-year-old David).

With her ready smile and warm manner, she seems to do it all effortlessly, never letting a single ball drop.

Her experience as a nursery school teacher at the Uptown JCC strengthened her resolve to become a social worker. “I had a few students who had anger issues,” recalls Suzy. “I felt helpless and frustrated because I didn’t know how to help them. I realized then I needed to learn more about childhood development. That is when I decided to get my Masters of Social Work at Tulane.”

Both Katrina and the birth of her son David lengthened her journey toward an MSW, but Suzy was able to do her field placement at JFS in her last semester of school and then was immediately hired on graduation.

She now works at the agency three very full days a week. With Ellie Wainer and Sarah Keith, she helped rewrite the Teen Life Counts curriculum, making it more user-friendly, streamlined, and focused (see the article on TLC on page 8 for more details on the revised curriculum). She is one of the TLC trainers throughout the school year.

Suzy is also the go-to person on the JFS staff for special projects; for example, she was the JFS representative on the planning committee for “Spinners and Winners,” the mega-agency fundraiser held in September that raised more than \$47,000 for JFS.

To talk with Suzy, call (504) 831-8475.

JFS counseling programs are underwritten in part by the United Way of Greater New Orleans, Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans and United Jewish Communities.



*Books to the ceiling
Books to the sky
My pile of books is
a mile high!*

*How I love them!
How I need them
I'll have a long beard
by the time
I read them!*



Mediation Service available at JFS Northshore

Candace (Candy) Rosenblum, who staffs the JFS Northshore office, is now a certified divorce mediator, having recently completed an intensive training program at Loyola Law School.

In a mediation, Candy meets individually with the husband and wife and then with them together for at least four sessions. She explains, “During these sessions we explore what compromise really means and I help them feel comfortable with giving and taking. To get them to that point is a challenge, and I have to first build a relationship of trust.

“But when a couple does begin to be able to compromise, then the real winners are the children,” says Candy.

“When a divorcing couple goes to court, it immediately becomes a fight, and there is the perception that there has to be a winner and a loser. What is so important about mediation is that it offers couples a way to put their anger aside for the sake of the children, so that, as much as possible, it can become a win-win situation,” notes Candy.

Like the counseling services provided by JFS, divorce mediation is offered on a sliding-scale fee basis, which makes it affordable to a wide range of couples.

Fascinated by the intersection between social work and the law, Candy

earlier in her career was under contract with the state to handle sexual abuse cases. She recalls, “I counseled not only the victims but also the perpetrators and, in the case of child victims, their parents as well.”

“That was my first exposure to the court system, and I soon became aware that many judges did not feel comfortable making recommendations for the care and custody of children. There were no professionals to assess the child’s feelings and the family situation and then help the judge come up with recommendations that would be in the child’s best interest,” adds Candy.

Part of Candy’s caseload, as the JFS social worker on the Northshore, is working with divorcing families. After careful evaluation of the child and family situation, she provides recommendations for the care and custody of the children.

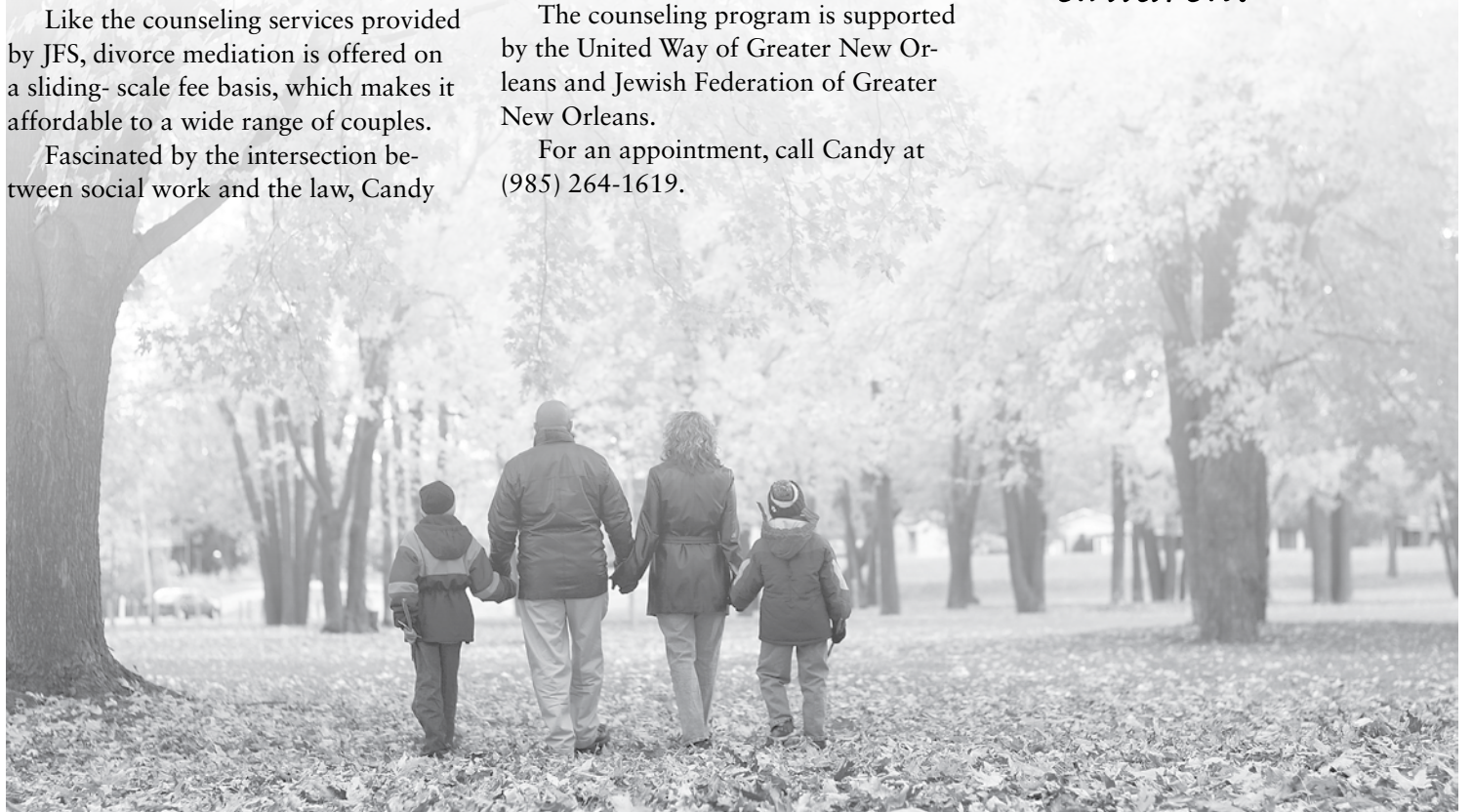
In addition to providing mediation services and working with the court system, Candy provides counseling services to children, families, couples, and adults.

The counseling program is supported by the United Way of Greater New Orleans and Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans.

For an appointment, call Candy at (985) 264-1619.



“... When a couple does begin to be able to compromise, then the real winners are the children.”



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Touro Synagogue Religious School

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Taxis: not just for travelers anymore

When many people think of taking a cab, they immediately think of being in a strange city...or going to the airport...or coming home from vacation.

Cabs, after all, are just for travelers...aren't they?

Not in the Greater New Orleans area—

Thanks to the generosity and foresight of Ms. Adele Cahn, the Cahn Family Foundation, and Jewish Endowment Foundation, our older Jewish community members are taking cabs all over town.

Here taxi cabs are used for:

- attending synagogue services
- visiting friends and family
- seeing the doctor
- going to the grocery, bank and shopping malls
- and lots more

Catch-A-Cab coupons are available for any Jewish person, 65 years of age or older to help get needed transportation and to stay connected within their community.

Participants in the program may purchase \$100 worth of cab coupons for only \$25. Coupons can be reordered

every three months. The cab companies that honor the coupons are Metry Cab Service, White Fleet Cab, and Checker Yellow Cabs.

The Catch-a-Cab program is an incredible example of the heart and the spirit of tikkun olam. Ms. Cahn saw a need for transportation assistance for those who no longer drive and she did something about it. She recognized that people wanted to remain connected to the community and to maintain their independence...and so Catch-A-Cab was created.

For more information or to register for the program, call Marlis at (504) 831-8475.



Calling all cars...toll free at 1-877-JFS-4CARS (877-537-4227)



**Calling
All Cars!**

Now's your chance to get rid of that old clunker in the driveway.....AND get a tax benefit as well.

If you have a car or truck (running or not) that you want to get rid of, consider the tax advantages of donating it to JFS. All you need to do is call the toll-free number for CARS (Charitable Auto Resources). Make sure you have a clear title to the car and CARS will arrange to have the vehicle picked up and a tax receipt issued to you at the time of pick-up.

JFS will receive a portion of the net proceeds from the sale of the vehicle. You will get a charitable donation deduction on your income taxes.

For more information call JFS at (504) 831-8475 or CARS at 1-877-JFS-4CARS (877-537-4227). Be sure to let them know that your donation is for JFS of Greater New Orleans.



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