



## THE SPECIAL NEEDS CONSORTIUM OF JEWISH AGENCIES OF PHILADELPHIA

The issue of inclusion is now at the forefront of Jewish life. More synagogues, Jewish schools, camps and JCC's have begun to welcome people with disabilities and provide programming to include all. **The Special Needs Consortium of Jewish Agencies of Philadelphia proposes that a unified commitment across the religious spectrum be made to designate the month of February, 2009 as a national month of recognition and commitment to inclusion.**

The goals we hope to accomplish by designating Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month are:

- The inclusion and acceptance of people with disabilities in every aspect of our Jewish organizations and communities
- The raising of awareness and sensitivity

We are asking for your commitment, along with other congregations throughout North America, to participate in **Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month in February, 2009**. Tremendous strides have been made in communities that have set aside specific time to focus on inclusion in a Jewish context. In several communities across the country, including Washington, DC, Minneapolis, Boston, Atlanta, and New York City, congregations have designated a special time each year in order to recognize the importance of inclusion. In some cases, this is marked by a designated weekend devoted to increasing awareness of this critical issue, and in others it takes the shape of a month-long initiative. In all cases, it has brought much-needed focus to issues of inclusion, and has connected people to the Jewish community who previously had been left to watch others experience Jewish living opportunities that were not accessible to them.

Attached are Special Needs Resources in the Philadelphia, as well as in other Jewish communities, that will give you more information about inclusion and ideas for how your congregation can participate in **National Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month**.

Thank you for your commitment to making the Jewish community more inclusive to all. Please contact me at [dgettes@acaje.org](mailto:dgettes@acaje.org), 215.635.8940, ext. 1231, if you have any questions or need additional information.

Deborah Gettes  
Consultant for Special Needs  
Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education of Greater Philadelphia



## **GREATER PHILADELPHIA JEWISH COMMUNITY SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES**

### **THE AUERBACH CENTRAL AGENCY FOR JEWISH EDUCATION – SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

<http://www.acaie.org/content/specialNeeds/specialNeeds.shtml>

ACAJE professionals consult with rabbis, educational directors, teachers and concerned lay people to initiate and/or enhance special education programs in preschools, synagogue, community, and day schools. They assist schools in determining appropriate programs, assessing and adapting available materials, and evaluating and updating teaching methods in light of the needs of the school's particular population.

Workshops and seminars introduce educators to new methodologies and provide opportunities to consult with colleagues in the field.

The ACAJE Consultant for Special Needs Education directs two fellowships:

#### **Reta Emerson Fellowship - Teen Assistant Program**

The T.A.P. program trains teens to work with and help students in the synagogue schools who are experiencing difficulties. The teens attend 45 hours of training and are offered continued support during the year. The teens also receive a national service certificate. This highly successful program has had a tremendous impact on the teens and the students they work with as well as other students in the classroom.

#### **Lasko Fellowship: For Synagogue School Directors and Special Education Teachers**

The Lasko Fellows are highly competent professionals who are chosen to become leaders and trainers in topic of special education in their synagogue supplementary school. The Fellows participate in 32 hours of training. After the training sessions, the Fellows conduct workshops in their schools on the same topics as their training. The Fellows receive stipends and the schools receive grants for their participation in the program.

Contact: Deborah Gettes, ACAJE Consultant for Special Needs Education, at 215.635.8940, ext. 1231, [dgettes@acaie.org](mailto:dgettes@acaie.org).

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL NEEDS**

Children with special needs are included in Early Childhood Education programs run by synagogues, JCC's and FELS. Accommodations and therapies are provided in an inclusion setting with appropriate professionals coming to the schools to provide services. Both Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El in Wynnewood <http://www.tbhbe.org> and Adath Jeshurun in Melrose Park <http://www.adathjeshurun.info/preschool/> have special needs classrooms for young children as part of their schools.

## FEDERATION EARLY LEARNING SERVICES

<http://www.felskids.org/>

Federation Early Learning Services (FELS) enrolls children with a wide range of special needs. A Child Development Specialist (a licensed and registered occupational therapist) works with children in their classrooms to identify their unique challenges and learning styles recommends and models effective inclusion strategies and provides early intervention referrals and advocacy services. Regarded as a leader in the field for nearly a century, FELS, a non-profit agency, enrolls infants, toddlers, preschool and school age children from diverse economic backgrounds on a year-round basis at seven centers, four public school sites and four home based programs, located throughout Philadelphia, Montgomery and Delaware Counties.

In safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate environments, FELS provides a diverse array of highly regarded innovative programs. The Creative Curriculum based on the philosophy and procedures promoted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is used in classrooms.

For the past three years, through a grant from the First Hospital Foundation, FELS has provided consultation services to the Jewish and secular early childhood communities in the Greater Philadelphia area. More than 400 children who have exhibited a range of developmental concerns (including sensory integration difficulties, autism, and developmental delays) have been served to date.

All of the children are observed in their classroom settings by a licensed and registered occupational therapist. This is followed by a team meeting with the center director, teachers and parents to discuss the observation and recommend referrals and strategies to better integrate the child into their classroom. While a few children are referred for private therapy, a high percentage of them are referred to the early intervention system.

Contact Jacki Robins at [jrobins@FelsKids.org](mailto:jrobins@FelsKids.org) or 215.676.7550, ext. 104 for information.

## THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

<http://www.phillyfriendship.com>

Kids helping kids is the power driving the success of The Friendship Circle. The Friendship Circle links teenage volunteers with kids with special needs, through one-on-one play dates, Sunday Circle Respite Sessions, holiday events, and many other dynamic programs. The Friendship Circle recognizes, especially for a kid with special needs, the value one friend can make and the benefits of creating a warm, inclusive community for the family.

If your family, or a family you know, might want to join The Friendship Circle, please write, call or email us at 754 South 9th St, Philadelphia, PA 19147, (215) 574-1765, [Info@phillyfriendship.com](mailto:Info@phillyfriendship.com).

## JCHAI

<http://www.jchai.org>

JCHAI provides residential care options for adults with intellectual disabilities in the Philadelphia area. The following specific types of services are provided:

### **1. Residential Homes:**

JCHAI operates three residential sites. Each is a beautiful, single home located in a pleasant and safe neighborhood. The homes are located in Elkins Park, Wynnewood, and Northeast Philadelphia. Each home accommodates six residents.

Each home has a live-in house supervisor as well as rotating relief and weekend staff. Caring and compassionate staff assists residents with daily living skills, as well as conflict resolution, ensuring transportation for residents to activities, and providing encouragement and positive reinforcement.

### **2. Apartment Program:**

In addition to houses, JCHAI also offers an apartment program based out of the Presidential City Apartments in Philadelphia. This program is designed for individuals who can primarily live independently, but may need some additional supports in terms of daily living skills. Staff in the apartment program is present from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. during weekdays and intermittent hours on weekends. Residents have the option of living with a roommate in a 2-bedroom apartment, or living alone in a 1-bedroom apartment.

### **3. Independent Supportive Living Program:**

JCHAI also provides home and community based services to adults with intellectual disabilities who are living with their families or on their own in the community. This service offers personalized supports to help individuals to live fulfilling, productive lives as independently as possible. Services are tailored to each individual's needs and interests, and are modified to support the person successfully in various facets of daily living.

## **JEWISH COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL OF GRATZ COLLEGE SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMS**

[www.gratz.edu/jchs](http://www.gratz.edu/jchs)

### **Inclusion**

Over the last decade, the JCHS Special Needs Program has been a national leader among supplementary Hebrew High Schools in providing formal Jewish education for teenagers and young adults with special needs. A program has been developed for the inclusion of students with mild social, learning and physical challenges in JCHS classes. Parents, students and teachers work together as a team to make sure that each student is provided with what he/she needs to make JCHS a meaningful educational experience.

### **The Atid Program**

This is an intergenerational mitzvah program for all teens. It includes a strong service component, working in a residential life care facility with the Jewish elderly. This program is also within the framework of an inclusion program with other teens with special needs.

## Programs for Adults

JCHS sponsors four Adult Jewish Education Programs. One program offers a comprehensive Jewish education for adults with mild to moderate developmental disabilities. The other is a more calendar based program and involves older individuals who are at a lower educational level with an accompanying class of teen service learning students.

For more information, contact: [Andrea Oxman](mailto:Andrea.Oxman@gratz.edu), Director of Special Needs Programs  
JCHS of Gratz College at [aoxman@gratz.edu](mailto:aoxman@gratz.edu), 215-635-7300, ext. 222

## JEVS

<http://www.jevshumanservices.org/>

Career Strategies, a department of JEVS Human Services, offers the following services for individuals with learning differences and an interest in attending college: SAT and ACT tutoring, college admissions counseling, and financial aid advising. For more information call 215-854-1864.

## JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF PHILADELPHIA GREATER SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

<http://www.jfcsphilly.org>

- Social and spiritual experiences for individuals and their families
- Consultation at critical moments in the life continuum
- Supportive counseling around relationships, vocation, self-sufficiency, and life skills
- Care management for budget planning, entitlements, financial assistance, living options, employment opportunities, and training advocacy
- Advocacy in the community

### ***Adult group experiences to enhance socialization and independence:***

- ***The Network***—High functioning individuals can make new friends while participating in monthly community-based, culturally enriching outings.
- ***Monday Night Social Group***—Individuals can improve social skills and life skills while making friends and having fun.
- ***Gam Yahad***—Individuals can feel a sense of community when celebrating holidays together in a synagogue setting while family members participate in lectures and informational settings.

For more information, contact Lisa Ney, Special Needs Coordinator at 267.256.2269 or [LNey@jfcsphilly.org](mailto:LNey@jfcsphilly.org).

## MADREGOT

<http://www.harziontemple.org/harzion/groups/group.asp?GroupID=92>

The special needs program of The Jane Fishman Grinberg Religious School of Har Zion Temple, is a warm, nurturing Jewish environment dedicated to children with learning differences. Each child is encouraged to maximize his or her learning potential and is instilled with a lifelong love of Judaism. The children learn about Jewish holidays, Israel, and the Hebrew language in a fun and creative atmosphere. Some children benefit from a self-contained classroom, while others are partially or completely mainstreamed with support. The children's needs are varied, but the commitment of the program is to engage every child and help them to live a meaningful Jewish life.

Madregot is a community-based program that welcomes all children regardless of synagogue membership. With parents' permission, programming is specially designed to benefit each child, using his or her IEP to facilitate and build on successful secular experiences.

For more information, please contact Rabbi Nogah Sherman, Educational Director, at 610-667-5000 X114 or [rnsherman@harziotnemple.org](mailto:rnsherman@harziotnemple.org).

## ***NATIONAL SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES***

**The Jewish Special Education National Consortium has created a comprehensive and extremely valuable “Jewish Disabilities Awareness Month Resource Guide.”**

Click here to download -

<http://jyped.org/JDAM%20Resource%20Guide%202008-2009%20cover.pdf>

**The Jewish Special Education National Consortium** is a professional network of Directors, Coordinators and Administrators of Jewish Special Education Services in Central Agencies for Jewish Education. Communities that do not have central agencies are represented by a designee of the local Jewish Federation.

The mission of the Consortium is to provide a structured forum that will enable professionals in special education to access and disseminate information and ideas on:

- Program models and development
- Specialized curriculum and technology
- Inclusion
- Professional development and support
- Advocacy and Legislation
- Community relations and awareness

Each year, a colloquium is held which provides opportunities for networking and professional growth. An annual newsletter highlights each community's achievements in Jewish special education and services. A listserv enables members of the Consortium to be in communication, share resources, and provide collegial support throughout the year.

## ***MOVEMENT RESOURCES***

### **Jewish Reconstructionist Federation**

Special Education: <http://www.jrf.org/resources-library&tid=1:13&show=#Special%20Education>

### **Union for Reform Judaism**

Jewish Family Concerns Disability Awareness: <http://urj.org/jfc/disability/>

### **United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism**

Accessibility: <http://www.uscj.org/Accessibility7508.html>

### **Yachad: National Jewish Council for Disabilities**

An agency of the Orthodox Union: <http://www.njcd.org/>

## **ONLINE JEWISH SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCES**

**Bureau of Jewish Education New York**

[www.bjeny.org/bjeny.asp](http://www.bjeny.org/bjeny.asp)

**Camp Ramah Tikvah Program**

[www.campramah.org](http://www.campramah.org)

**Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education**

[www.caje33.org](http://www.caje33.org)

**Down Syndrome Among Us**

[www.pirchei.co.il/spec\\_ed/down](http://www.pirchei.co.il/spec_ed/down)

**JBI International**

[www.jewishbraille.org](http://www.jewishbraille.org)

**JCC Association of North America**

[www.jcca.org](http://www.jcca.org)

**Jewish Guild for the Blind**

[www.jgb.org](http://www.jgb.org)

**Jewish Children's Adoption Network**

<http://jcan.qwestoffice.net>

**Jewish Deaf Resource Center**

[www.jdrc.org](http://www.jdrc.org)

**Jewish Education Service of North America**

[www.jesna.org](http://www.jesna.org)