

CONSORTIUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS IN CENTRAL AGENCIES FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

No. 13 Spring 2002

In This Issue...

A Tale of Two Issues: Current Litigation and Reflection on Functional Education —Marty Schloss

Highlights of the 15th Annual Colloquium

Consortium News From:

- Atlanta
- Baltimore
- Boca Raton
- Boston
- Cleveland
- Columbus
- Denver
- Detroit
- Houston
- MetroWest
- New Haven
- New York
- Philadelphia
- Phoenix
- St. Louis
- San Jose
- San Francisco
- Toronto
- Washington, DC
- West Palm Beach
- JESNA

Toronto Hosts Colloquium



Special Education Consortium members from across North America convene in Toronto

The Fifteenth Annual Colloquium of the Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education was convened in Toronto, May 6-8, 2001. The Colloquium was hosted by the Toronto UJA Federation, Board of Jewish Education, Toronto and coordinated by Dori Levine.

Participating in the Colloquium were: Diane Brezner, Houston; Linda Carson, San Diego; Wendy Chesnov-Dratler, Metro West, NJ; Deborah Director, Boca Raton; Shana Erenberg, Chicago; Eliot Fix, Rochester; Becca Hornstein, Phoenix; Flora Kupferman, San Francisco; Lenore Layman, Washington, DC; Caren Levine, JESNA; Dori Levine, Toronto; Shayna Levine-Hefetz, Baltimore; Rita Romanowsky, San Diego; Tina Roth, Montreal; Teri Sackin, Overland Park, Kansas; Ken Schaefer, Los Angeles;

Sharon Schanzer, Philadelphia; Marty Schloss, New York; Sara Seligson, New York; Sara Rubinow Simon, Washington, DC; Rita Singer, Denver; Marlene Tewner, Columbus; and, Linda Zimmerman, Atlanta.

Highlights of the 15th Annual Colloquium

The conference included sessions on Hebrew remediation techniques and Judaica program modifications; inclusion of children with special needs in Jewish schools; the Reena Foundation and birthright israel; teacher training and staff supervision; the work of Reuven Feuerstein; the role of the special educator in central agencies for Jewish education; site visits to the Zareinu Centre and She'arim Hebrew Day School; and, opportunities for brainstorming and networking.

About The Consortium

The Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education was co-founded by Rabbi Martin Schloss and Dr. Sara Rubinow Simon and is affiliated with JESNA. Marty is the director of the Special Education Center of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. Sara is the Special Needs Department field consultant for the Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington.

As expressed in its name, the Consortium was developed to strengthen special education through central agencies for Jewish education, and to provide a context in which communities' special educators can build a professional network. The Consortium's *Call for Action* appears on page 20.

The Consortium encourages the North American Jewish community to use the Consortium as a resource. Consortium activities include regular correspondence among members, the *Newsletter*, the development of a resource database, and an annual Colloquium. Additional copies of the *Newsletter* are available for task forces, lay leaders, professionals, and other community groups. Contact Caren Levine at JESNA: phone (212) 284-6898; fax (212) 284-6951; email: caren@jesna.org

16th Annual Colloquium of the Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education

Hosted by the Commission on Jewish Education, Columbus, Ohio, Sunday, May 5 – Tuesday, May 7, 2002. Contact: Marlene Tewner, Special Education Coordinator, at the Commission on Jewish Education, Columbus, Ohio, (614) 237-7686 ext. 240 or email: mtewner@tcjf.org

A Tale of Two Issues: Current Litigation and Reflection on Functional Education

Rabbi Marty Schloss

This year's article will be more ambitious than previous years' in that it will attempt to explore two very distinct and different topics rather than just one. The reason for this is that the litigious activities of the Supreme Court are once again timely and noteworthy, while at the same time, a reflection on the prioritization of special education strategies for Jewish education is warranted. Thus, this article will be divided into two segments entitled: Supreme Court Litigation and Reflection on Functional Education.

Supreme Court Litigation

Current US Supreme Court activities are of interest and possible concern for our Consortium. This segment will explore the implications of three US Supreme Court Cases. The first case, decided last year, does not directly impact our day-to-day special education activities. Yet, the case is one of philosophical interest and, in an indirect way, relates to our knowledge regarding religious obligation and mental retardation. The second and third cases, on the other hand, directly impact the field of special education and resources for our constituents. These two cases will be adjudicated during the 2001-2002 Supreme Court term.

Penry v. Johnson

The Supreme Court decided Penry v. Johnson on June 4, 2001. The case involved an individual with mental retardation who was convicted of a brutal rape and murder in 1980. The issue before the Court was whether the death penalty could be imposed on the felon. The Court ruled that Penry could not receive the death penalty. However, rather than deciding the case on the basis of the legitimacy of imposing the death sentence on someone with mental retardation, it chose to predicate its decision on a technicality. Specifically, the Jury had not been informed that it could consider the "mitigating effect" of his mental retardation in imposing his sentence. It was a flaw in the jury instructions that determined the decision rather than

addressing the overriding issue as to whether the death penalty ought to be an option for an individual with mental retardation.

Noteworthy, is the fact that this was the second time Penry appeared before the Supreme Court. In 1989, the same defendant appeared before the Supreme Court and the Court held that the instructions to the jury were flawed. In 1990, the State of Texas retried Penry. It was Penry II that appeared before the Court in 2001. Particularly regrettable is that Penry II could have served as an opportunity for the Court to develop a platform of jurisprudence regarding mental retardation. If the Court had been decided on the broader and more fundamental elements of this case, the Court's deliberation would have focused on individual competence and capacity and mental retardation.

At this point, the reader may ask why should we care about this issue at all? The response would be to suggest that the opinions regarding competence and levels of mental retardation are not totally unrelated to the question of Halachic competence on the part of Jewish individuals with mental retardation ...

When Penry I first appeared before the Supreme Court, the issue of mental retardation was dismissed with the notion that in and of itself no "national consensus" had developed against executing individuals with mental retardation. At the time of Penry I, only two states prohibited such executions. Since that time, however, The Death Penalty Information Center lists 16 additional states that forbid the death penalty for individuals with mental retardation with eight more pending. Clearly, in the intervening decade between Penry I and II, a significant change has taken place in the national

perspective on this topic. Unfortunately, the Court chose to ignore these national developments and, apparently, recognized no legal climate change on this issue.

At this point, the reader may ask why should we care about this issue at all? The response would be to suggest that the opinions regarding competence and levels of mental retardation are not totally unrelated to the question of Halachic competence on the part of Jewish individuals with mental retardation (the topic of my own dissertation). It would have been intellectually stimulating, if not Halachically relevant, to observe how science and American law negotiate legal obligation and intellectual capacity. I recall very vividly my meeting with the great religious and Halachic leader, Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky, when I began researching Halachic guidelines for individuals with mental retardation. He opened our conversation by asking me what science had to say on this topic. Penry II had the potential to contribute to that knowledge. Although legally prudent, it was intellectually sad when the Supreme Court avoided this element in their decision. No doubt this topic will reappear – hopefully sooner rather than later.

Toyota Motor Manufacturing v. Williams

A case that will be decided during this term involves Ella Williams, a Toyota Motor Corporation employee, who suffered from carpal tunnel syndrome, a repetitive strain injury that causes pain in the wrists and hands. This condition affected her ability to perform her job as an assembly line worker. The focus of the case concerns whether she ought to be considered disabled under the guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990. On the surface it is simply one worker's challenge to her employer regarding her status in the company. In reality, this case goes to the fundamental determination of what is a disability and who should be considered disabled. *The New York Times* explained the focus of the litigation as

the understanding of the intent of the ADA's definition of a disability, "an impairment that 'substantially limits' someone from engaging in one or more 'major life activities'." During the Supreme Court Justices' oral questioning period it was evident that determining the legal understanding of disability is far from obvious. Clearly, this case will pose a serious challenge for the Court.

This case has substantial significance to our Consortium. The Supreme Court decision will heavily impact our community. Determining disability speaks to the legal protection of our constituents as well as the provision of financial resources and critical services. As it is, a number of our communities have experienced difficulty in procuring needed services for our populations with special needs due to ambiguity in the determination of true disability. This case may either help or significantly hurt our efforts. To borrow a line from our astronauts: This is one small case for Toyota – one giant headache for those of us in human services.

Zelman, Supt. of Pub. Instr. v. Simmons-Harris, Doris et al

This is the case for which many have yearned while others have dreaded. The Cleveland, Ohio plan for school vouchers will actually be reviewed by the Supreme Court. In fact, the Court has consolidated a number of similar cases for its deliberation. The Court will use these voucher cases for its mechanism to further explore the parameters of the US Constitution's Establishment Clause – the separation of Church and State. Although these cases may be somewhat limited in scope, nonetheless, at the heart of the issue is the constitutionality of using government monies to provide tuition scholarships for eligible students attending parochial schools. Clearly, the decision in this case will be historic and carefully followed for its implications in the far broader arena of Church-State relationships. No doubt this case will serve as a catalyst for additional legal ventures into this terrain. Once decided, the proverbial "barn door" will have been opened and there will be no turning back on this controversial topic.

One can only applaud this Court for its courage in attempting to clarify the

Constitution's position on public, private and parochial school relationships in such an explosive atmosphere. This is not to imply that the Supreme Court has never entertained the Church-State issue. In fact, it has and this Consortium newsletter has covered some of those decisions (Aguilar, Augustini, Zobrest, Carter and Russman). However, the voucher issue is most daring to date. The potential constitutionality of vouchers for parochial school students is a "Pandora's box." In addition, the potential implications for students with special needs in Jewish day schools are obvious. Special students whose families are significantly financially challenged may be entitled to tuition relief outside of those entitlements from IDEA and state special education legislation. With the pressure of current special education expenses in the private sector so intense, vouchers will be a welcomed possibility. Unfortunately, patience will be necessary for those closely following this decision. Historically, these types of decisions are decided late in the session. As a lawyer for the Archdiocese of New York City explained, "The US Supreme Court usually decides these issues on the last day of their session and then gets out of town immediately." Nonetheless, the decision may well be worth the wait. At the very least, this session promises to be a most exciting, controversial and historic one.

Reflection on Functional Education

Special education strategies focus on assisting individuals for whom traditional education instruction is inadequate and, sometimes, inappropriate. Among those strategies are prevention, adaptation, modification and alternative programming. Prevention, when possible, is an obvious and preferable choice. In fact, prevention has become a significant interest of our BJE. As reported in last year's article, the BJE in New York is in the midst of a research project that addresses the prevention of reading difficulties in preschool youngsters. The experimental group is comprised of 176 students in four model schools: an all-boys Yeshiva, an all-girls Yeshiva, a coed day school and a coed Solomon Schechter school. After following the 176 students for five years, the project is expected to validate, and/or invalidate some cur-

rent educational thinking. The results will challenge educators with having to create new paradigms to reflect new knowledge and raise a whole new cadre of educational questions that will hopefully generate a new round of research. The first year's research statistics are beginning to emerge with some very interesting data. Clearly, the area of prevention is prominent in the repertoire of special education activities.

The areas of adaptation and modification (the nomenclature often differs among authors) represent the major focus of special education. The term "adaptation" is often used to refer to a strategy that takes mainstream texts and provides varying forms of access to that text. Examples of adaptation for individuals who are visually impaired include transferring written content into audiotapes, electric stimulations, Braille and large print text. The overriding concept of adaptation is to maintain the original curriculum, content and text and enable the student to master it through alternative means or modalities.

Modification, on the other hand, represents an attempt to maintain a strong relationship with the original topic by manipulating the original texts in ways that permit the learner mastery of as much of the intended material as possible. Modification may include such strategies as reducing the quantity of the text or rewriting it in a simpler more user-friendly form. Youngsters with language difficulties who learn Bible and/or Jewish Law in a much simpler form of Hebrew and/or who are not required to learn the entire text are examples of modification. Through modification the student can master all or part of the intended overall curriculum by manipulating the content and text.

Alternative programming represents a more radical form of special education in which a reconstituted educational program is formed as a more realistic curriculum designed to better respond to the individual's condition and situation. Alternative programming is guided by intellectual ability, time and a hierarchy of critical elements necessary for maximum and meaningful participation in communal life. A student with substantial physical and intellectual disabilities who celebrates his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah by opening the Ark, holding the Torah, chanting only the blessings over the

Torah and/or saying a prayer rather than reciting the Haftorah are examples of “alternative programming.”

Yet, true special education ought to be predicated on the individual student – not umbrella-like policies and structures.

Special education terminology distinguishes between modification and alternative programming as “remedial” and “functional” education. Remedial education seeks to enable a child to master an existing structure while “functional” education proposes a restructure and creation of a new curriculum that prepares the individual for real life as perceived through his/her realities.

Professor Goldstein of Brooklyn College drove home the concept of functional education through the use of one of his favorite stories. In the early part of the 1950’s, a special education class of youngsters with mental retardation had learned about the forthcoming coronation of Queen Elizabeth through creative forms of accommodation and modification. The Superintendent of the New York City Board of Education was informed that the talented teacher had achieved a remarkably high level of student knowledge on this topic. In fact, it was suggested that the students in this special education class had as much knowledge about the coronation of Queen Elizabeth as did any non-special education class in the entire city. The Superintendent decided to visit the class that week to see for himself what the special education teacher had accomplished. He spent 45 minutes watching an impressive mastery of the coronation by a class of students with mental retardation. The students knew the various coats of armor, the coronation procedures, the royal families and their ancestry. At the conclusion of the session, the Superintendent asked to address the class. He began, “I want to thank you all for permitting me to attend this session. I have gained substantial knowledge regarding this topic. In fact, this class knows more about the coronation than I do. And, I suspect, this class has a greater command of this topic than most, if not all, the other

special and non-special classes in the entire New York City. I am truly impressed!” He then paused and continued, “I need to return to my office but I’m a little lost. Could someone suggest what I should do to find my way back to my office?” “There was silence. He continued, “OK! If you were lost what would you do to help find your way home?” Again silence. He continued, “The truth is that I also don’t feel so well. What would you do if you didn’t feel well?” Still silence. He then turned to the teacher and said, “You are fired!”

True, the story is a bit extreme. None-theless, the concern is valid. How relevant and important was the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in light of student realities, needs and economy of time with which the teacher had available for the education of his class? What would really be a good use of the precious time students have to prepare for a viable and productive life? These are complex and troubling questions.

Twenty-first century educational life is governed today by academic standards, reform and assessment. The overwhelmingly popular choices in special education today call for accommodation and modification. I have found this to be true in international, federal, state and local special educational agendas. Yet, true special education ought to be predicated on the individual student – not umbrella-like policies and structures. Whereas, it is legitimate for the majority of students with special needs to function in the structure of mainstream standards and curricula it is not necessarily appropriate for all students. These issues are no less germane for Judaic studies. I would posit the following singular goal of Jewish special education as: To maximize each student’s potential for a positive, active and participating life in the Jewish community based on individual capacity and opportunity. For day schools, congregational schools and informal educational settings, this goal is to be developed for each student individually and, at times, independent of mainstream Judaic curricula. We ought to reflect more on what works best for each child in order for him/her to achieve his/her educational goal rather than what the mainstream curriculum demands and what his non-special peers are doing.

To clarify my position, I am not suggesting a rejection of prevention, accommodation and modification as

special education strategies in favor of alternative or functional education. I am suggesting, however, a reinstatement of alternative education as a serious and viable option in the continuum of choices in Jewish special education. Investment of precious time for coronation procedures on par with peers may not be justifiable if it exists as a sacrifice in acquiring basic life skills critical for any individual’s ability to survive in both the general and Judaic communities. As central agency personnel, it is our responsibility to assist in setting the educational agenda. Sometimes this demands assuming positions contrary to popular philosophy and practice.

For a number of our students, especially those with more substantial forms of disabilities, we may want to reflect on what type of education is best for our students.

A Ramp is Not Enough: NOD

The National Organization on Disability has put out three guides to learn how you, your organization, and your community can fully welcome people with disabilities. *That All May Worship* assists congregations, denominational groups and seminaries in welcoming people with disabilities. This handbook is interfaith and concerns people with all types of disabilities. *Loving Justice* clarifies the relationship between the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), other relevant disability laws and the religious community. It describes both legal and oral mandates. *From Barriers to Bridges* fosters dialogue between people with disabilities, their family members, religious leaders and the larger community. It provides the guidance needed to hold a That All May Worship Conference and to promote other community-building activities. To order go to www.nod.org, Donations and Sales, then to Religion and Disability Publications Order Form.

CONSORTIUM NEWS

Atlanta

This year has been one of many changes in Jewish special education programs in Atlanta. The Special Needs Department of Jewish Educational Services has been incubating a program that will provide direct service to the Jewish day schools in the community for children with a variety of learning disabilities. This program now known as the Amit Community School Program began providing support services this past fall. JES together with Amit continues to provide consultation, workshops, seminars, information, and support services to the supplementary schools and preschools in order for all children, regardless of their learning style, to participate in these programs.

The Amit Community School Program is offering three programs: Support Services, Transitional Classrooms and Teacher Education and Ability Awareness Trainings.

Support Services began this past Fall for children with moderate learning disabilities whose needs were not being met in the existing programs in Atlanta day schools. These services will be offered on site at participating schools and will include one or more of the following: a learning disabilities specialist on site to provide pull-out services, a facilitator to attend class with a student, modified curriculum to meet the individual needs of a student, speech and occupational therapy services on site, resource materials, technological assistance, adaptive equipment and general information and referral.

The Transitional Class, which will begin in the Fall of 2002 and will be housed in a day school, will provide all academic and Judaic instruction in a self-contained classroom and the children will attend all non-academic subjects with their peers in the regular school program. The target population for this program would include children with Autism/PDD, Down Syndrome, Fragile X, Cerebral Palsy (with associated learning problems), non-specific developmental disabilities, and others.

An extensive teacher education program will be established to teach the faculty of the school hosting the transitional class how to include children with different learning styles into their classrooms. In addition, classes will be offered on a regular basis to teachers in all Jewish day

schools on how to teach material creatively in order for all children to benefit. Through ability awareness trainings teachers, parents and students will develop a better understanding of differences and explore ways of supporting people with special needs in order to create a climate that values each individual's worth and abilities.

Linda Zimmerman
Special Needs Director
Jewish Educational Services of Atlanta
4549 Chamblee Dunwoody Road
Atlanta, GA 30338
Tel: (770) 677-9483
Fax: (770) 677-9499
specneed@jesatlanta.org

Baltimore

The Center for Jewish Education Special Education Services provides services to individuals with special needs, their schools, families, and the community.

Educational Consultation: Our staff of consultants are available to our pre-, day, and congregational schools. They are able to consult and give appropriate follow-up, meeting with teachers, parents, and administration as necessary. Additionally, our educational consultants now take a proactive role in our congregational and day schools through regularly scheduled visits to schools and correspondences with teachers and members of the administration. This year, we are also offering a study skills, note-taking and organization class to a group of middle school students which includes regular follow-up and observations.

SNAP (Special Needs Advocates and Parents) is a group of parents of children with special needs who have had extensive training in special education law. SNAP offers voluntary support and advocacy to families of children with special needs. Services offered include Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) preplanning, accompaniment to IEP and IFSP meetings, resources, information, and referrals. Due to the high demand for our services, we are now in the process of applying for additional funding so that we may train a new cohort of SNAP volunteer advocates.

We are also planning monthly "Ask the Lawyer" workshops for parents and a "SNAP Snippets" column in the Kulanu K'echad newsletter. We make ongoing efforts to recognize these indispensable volunteers.

Yad b'Yad is made up of JSEN, Jewish Special Educators Network and JADE, Jewish Advocates for Deaf Education. Our very successful workshop series and the triennial publication of our newsletter, *The Pointer*, have truly put special education on the map in Baltimore. Both JSEN and JADE have advisory teams that help plan their programming.

Our JSEN workshop series last year, entitled "Critic's Choice: Book Reviews on Behavior Management, Practical Applications in the Classroom" was a great success. Participants gained expertise about behavior management from world renown speakers and educators, Dr. Thomas Armstrong and Dr. Lawrence Shapiro. The workshop series concluded with a session entitled "Where Do We Go From Here?" facilitated by Shayna Levine-Hefetz, Coordinator of Special Education Services at the Center for Jewish Education, in which participants were able to share their successes and frustrations with behavior management in their classrooms. This year, we will be moving the JSEN to the next level with monthly meetings for area Jewish special educators to come together and share techniques that are working in their classrooms. Our workshop series this year will focus on "Differentiating Instruction in the Classroom" and will be held in spring 2002.

Over fifteen students are benefitting from the heightened sense of Jewish identity and community in JADE's Jewish education after-school classes at Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick and Columbia. This year, we are planning to expand our programming to include teens as well. JADE ran two successful workshops this year entitled "Raising Jewish Deaf Children" in Baltimore and in Washington, DC, at the Conference of the Jewish Deaf Congress in collaboration with the BJE of Greater Washington.

Gesher LaTorah, our supplementary Jewish education program for adults and children with severe special needs, has had a very successful year with their new principal, Rachel Turniansky, and new

location at the JCC. This move has enabled us to partner more effectively with the JCC and provide a full day of respite to the parents of our students. Additionally, the TAG program for adults who are interested in vocational and community service opportunities doubled in size last year. The students in the TAG class participated in two community disability awareness programs at congregational schools last year and are looking forward to continuing to raise awareness in many more community venues this year.

Kulanu K'Echad is an interagency collaboration that includes Jewish Family Services, Jewish Vocational Services, Jewish Big Brother/Big Sister League, JCC, and the Center for Jewish Education. These agencies are working hard to communicate and plan services for children with special needs and their families. The goal is to provide more complete and comprehensive programming for our population. Disability awareness, staff training, direct consultations at recreational and educational programs and referrals to Jewish educational opportunities are all a part of the role of the Kulanu K'Echad Jewish Special Educator, on staff at the Center for Jewish Education.

Our Special Education Board Committee and professional staff have identified disability awareness as a critical need in the Baltimore area. We have created "Just Like Me!" a hands-on disability awareness program for elementary school students with a modified version for preschool students. We will be presenting two workshops at the Jewish Early Childhood Association of Baltimore's annual conference entitled "Just Like Me: Integrating Disability Awareness Throughout the Year." Participants of this workshop will receive complimentary copies of "Just Like Me!" with three Jewish books featuring children with disabilities and a book about including children with disabilities in the regular preschool classroom. Additionally, we are involved in planning the Disability Expo: Celebrating Disabilities in the Jewish Community, sponsored by the Professional Advisory Committee on Special Needs.

In other exciting special education news, we will be piloting our Individuals with Disabilities Preschool Assistant Program this year in which we have placed a young adult with disabilities at the JCC Owings Mills Preschool as an assistant. She will receive continued

training on site with the ultimate goal that this program will lead to employment as an assistant next year. If this program is successful, we hope to expand it to include more training sites and students next year!

Shayna Levine-Hefetz
Coordinator, Special Education Services
Center for Jewish Education
5800 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21215-3996
Tel: (410) 578-6946
Fax: (410) 466-1727
shayna@cjebaltimore.org

Boca Raton

The Otzar Program has grown in many ways since its inception. Now, as we embark upon our third year, we have many accomplishments to reflect upon. Our student enrollment has tripled, and we have added many staff positions, including a Hebrew resource teacher. This teacher will work with each student, on a one to one basis, with a primary focus of prayer acquisition, as our students prepare for their Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

We have joined in a professional and community partnership with the Jewish Association for Residential Care (JARC). Our program meets weekly in this beautiful new facility. This partnership has facilitated a coordinated effort and network for students, and adults with special needs. The students of the Otzar Program may likely be the residents of tomorrow at JARC. We are thankful for this partnership, and look forward to many joint successes that will result from our combined effort.

The Otzar Program has also become a resource for the community. The program staff has shared the principles and teaching methodologies with various local and statewide synagogues. Many presentations and program consultations have been conducted, in an effort to assist and help establish appropriate and effective learning environments for Jewish children with special needs. Our commitment to community based outreach is a tenet that the Otzar Program staff holds in high regard. By serving as a resource to other schools and communities, we strengthen our commitment to our students, and to each other.

Deborah Director
The Otzar Program
Jewish Education Commission
9901 Donna Klein Boulevard
Boca Raton, FL 33428-1788
Tel: (561) 558-2117
Fax: (561) 852-6043
DLDFlorida@aol.com

Boston

The Bureau of Jewish Education in Boston welcomed Dr. Sandy Miller-Jacobs as the first full time Director of Special Education Services. Previously a professor in special education at Fitchburg State College, her experience includes teaching undergraduate and graduate students, supervising student teachers, and performing a variety of administrative positions, including department chairperson, interim vice president of academic affairs, and interim dean of academic personnel.

Work at the BJE is focused on four areas: (1) development of regional centers through planning and pilot implementation grants, (2) recruitment and preparation of special educators, (3) professional development workshops related to special education, and, (4) consultation to schools.

The concept for regional programs for students with special needs has been supported with grants for the past several years. These regional centers cut across denominations and enable congregations without sufficient resources to join together, sharing their finances and expertise. The regional centers are not self-contained schools, but are programs that provide inclusive services, resource room support as needed, and extensive remedial teaching as necessary. A regional director heads the program and provides ongoing support and mentoring to the classroom teachers of the congregational schools around special education issues and students with special learning needs. Such programs exist as models in two suburban communities (Newton and Lexington). Five congregations in a western suburban area (Sudbury Valley) are jointly planning a new regional center, with a needs assessment and data analysis completed. A kickoff event for all the congregations' members is to be held in the winter. Plans are also being made for a cross-denominational regional center for day schools south of Boston (Sharon). In addition, one pilot regional

class for four congregational schools south of Boston (Stoughton) was initiated for 10-13 year olds; plans to extend this to a more complete regional center are underway. Generous federation funding from the Combined Jewish Philanthropies earmarked money for three additional pilot programs targeted for students with special needs in pre-schools, day schools, and congregational schools.

The newly implemented certificate program for Jewish Special Educators, begun in October 2001 at the Boston Hebrew College, has seen an increase in course enrollment. Over the summer a course in curriculum modifications was offered and those in the course found it informative and practical. Additional work is being done to expand enrollment and to investigate granting state certification as a special educator for completion of the program with additional courses from area colleges.

Professional development workshops included topics such as multiple intelligences, autism spectrum disorders, and problem solving strategies. These workshops were given at the Special Educator's Network and at the Jewish Educators Assembly for Conservative congregational teachers. The theme of this year's conference was special education. RFP's were distributed to schools to foster their professional development needs in an ongoing and sustainable manner. There is an attempt to support projects that are collaborative and ongoing, in order to effect change in schools to enable all children with special needs to have a successful Jewish education.

Consultation to the schools involves providing mentoring for inclusion, sharing resources and ideas for students and programs, securing teachers, and helping professionals and lay leaders appreciate the moral imperative for providing services to students with special needs.

The Bureau also co-sponsored several events with other agencies in the Boston area. In September, the 6th annual Yom Sport was held. This sports day, organized by Jewish Big Brother/Big Sister, provided an opportunity for adults with disabilities to participate in several sporting events. In October, the Special Needs Services Department of the JCCs of Greater Boston sponsored "Changes in the 766 Regulations and How They will Affect Special Education Services." A public information specialist from the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, Jeannine Crisp, discussed pre-referral,

referral and evaluation, the new IEP, eligibility guidelines, and independent evaluations. In November, a groundbreaking conference, "Beyond the Ramp: Creating Mental Health Links," was held. This conference was an initiative of the Jewish Community Centers of Greater Boston and the Special Needs Professional Committee of the Greater Boston Jewish Community. The keynote speaker was Robert Brooks and Kitty Dukakis was the honorary chairperson.

Naomi Chernin
Special Needs Consultant
Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston
333 Nahanton Street
Newton, MA 02459
Tel: (617)965-7350 ext. 233
Fax: (617)965-9776
postmaster@bje.org

Cleveland

Cleveland's Jewish Special Education services have continued to grow significantly as the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland Special Education Department marks its thirteenth year. Serving its affiliated pre-schools, supplementary and day schools, the department has continued to broaden the network of services it provides to youngsters and their families from early childhood through age twenty-one. The Department serves as a clearinghouse for all of our institutions and professionals and parents in the Cleveland community.

ETGAR

The ETGAR program, completing its eleventh year, serves children with a range of developmental disabilities. This successful community consortium embraces these children and their families. It employs highly trained, dedicated personnel who help each youngster participate as fully as possible in the Jewish education experience. The program operates in three sites. Each is accessible and has similar age peers with whom ETGAR students interact.

Shadows

The Shadow Project allows students, who otherwise would not be able, to be full participants in the typical Jewish classroom. Its success has allowed it to become an integral part of the education system with each school taking on the full responsibility of training and providing support to its teen "shadows." Upon

request, the special education staff is available for consultation and provides assistance to individual schools. "Shadows" are typically identified by their synagogue schools and are assigned to work with one or two students throughout the school year.

Segula

Segula, a grass roots organization, continues to serve a group of students with significant special needs who seek day school education. Students are assigned instructional aides, provided by Segula, who follow them throughout the day. The Jewish Education Center's project coordinator oversees the program while the Jewish Education Center's coordinators with specialties in Judaics and general studies work closely with the instructional aides to develop individual education plans and provide support to them as they deliver instruction to their students. Students are included in the regular education class with their typically developing peers to the greatest extent possible. The special education staff works closely with the day school administration and teachers to ensure a smooth working relationship and on-going support services.

Occupational Therapy

In a continuing effort to provide services to our day schools, the Jewish Education Center in concert with five Jewish day schools identified occupational therapy as a gap in services we provide. Together, these institutions submitted a proposal to the Mt. Sinai Foundation and received a three-year grant that will allow us to secure an occupational therapist. The occupational therapist services will be shared among the five schools. This most recent addition to the array of services we provide is another way in which the Cleveland community supports its children with special needs and is an example of how the community cooperates to serve this population.

Professional Development

The Special Education Department offers a series of Jewish Educator Services Program staff development opportunities related to special education. These classes include a host of topics that address the needs of exceptional learners and their families. They are a fundamental part of the work in which we are involved to effect change in teacher's understanding of and attitudes toward their students with special needs.

Direct Service

The special education staff works with both day and supplementary/community schools. The department develops curriculum, coaches teachers and supports school personnel. The department works to maintain good relationships with the public schools in an effort to advocate for students and their families and access related services when appropriate.

Curriculum Library

The special education materials contained in the JECC's curriculum library are available to the education community as well as parents. These texts, videos and other curricular tools promote a deeper understanding of special education issues and related topics. The special education department is always acquiring new resources.

Annual Special Education Memorial Lecture

The inauguration of the Annual Special Education Memorial Lecture is dedicated to providing cutting edge information in the field to Jewish education professionals. The very successful initial lecture was held in October, 2000. Keynote speaker Rick Lavoie attracted a large number of professionals from across the system who heard him speak on motivating youngsters.

Ellen Fishman
Director of Special Education at the Jewish
Education Center of Cleveland
2030 South Taylor Road
Cleveland, OH 44118
Tel: (216) 371-0446
Fax: (216) 371-2523
efishman@jecc.org

Columbus

The Special Education Department of the Commission on Jewish Education (CJE) is a program of the Columbus Jewish Federation. Founded in 1996, its programs currently serve more than 50 children and adults and their families. The department works with more than 50 teachers in ten schools and institutions in the Columbus Jewish community.

The department provides a broad-based network of programs serving students in preschool, congregational and day school settings, as well as adults with special needs and their families. Programs are funded through the Federation's

annual campaign, with additional support from the Columbus Jewish Foundation and other private sources.

Many programs have been implemented in cooperation with Jewish Family Services, Wexner Heritage House, Shalom House, Leo Yassenoff Jewish Community Center, Schottenstein Chabad House, and area congregations.

Yachad

This program, affiliated with the National Jewish Council for the Disabled, provides unique social, educational and recreational mainstreamed programs for the developmentally disabled.

Our Yachad chapter serves young adults with special challenges with programming that brings them into the mainstream of Jewish life. Activities include field trips to museums, community programs, and sports activities. Special events are planned around Jewish holiday themes. The Columbus chapter is sponsored by the national organization, the CJE and Jewish Family Services.

Holiday Programs

Holiday programs are conducted for families with children under age eight who have special needs. This Judaic educational program provides social and learning opportunities that include music education and art therapy. The multi-sensory, pre-holiday celebrations incorporate Torah stories, Jewish customs and traditions. Most importantly, children learn the joy of being Jewish.

Services for the Deaf

The Commission on Jewish Education helps to provide interpreting and educational support for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in the synagogue religious schools. Working with the Community Association for the Deaf, the CJE provides interpreting for High Holiday religious services and bi-monthly Friday evening services for community members in cooperation with area congregations.

Information and Referral Service

The Special Education Department provides information and referrals in response to inquiries about educational services for persons with disabilities. The department networks with several programs in the community.

Resource Collection

The Special Education Department provides teachers, volunteers and parents with up-to-date and pertinent professional articles, books, videos and computer software. Some materials are circulated through the Educational Directors at each institution and others can be borrowed through the Jewish Teacher Resource Center. A current bibliography is available.

Professional Development

Each year the Special Education Department offers a series of staff-development opportunities related to special education. The topics of these classes have included background on the educational and behavioral needs of students and strategies to meet those needs. Through these and other staff development offerings, the department endeavors to strengthen teachers' understanding of and ability to manage the range of students in the classroom.

Consultation to Schools

Working with individual religious schools, the Special Education Department provides support services for children from pre-school through Bar/Bat Mitzvah, with a broad range of special needs. These students are served in inclusive settings. Services include individual consultation with administrators, teachers and parents, including observations and assessment of individual student needs, home visits, and curriculum support.

New for this year, a special education consultant was assigned to each of Columbus's religious schools. Funding for this program was received from the annual campaign of the Columbus Jewish Federation and an award from the Columbus Jewish Foundation. The consultant, working with the education director, observes classes, identifies children having learning and behavioral difficulties, provides educational strategies to teachers and consults with parents.

The department also provides curricular materials on disability awareness and sensitivity training to congregational schools.

Parents

The Special Education Coordinator meets with parents and administrators in private conferences to determine the best ways of meeting the special needs of their child. The coordinator works with parents

to identify educational objectives, and helps all members of the educational team to address each family's concerns. Additionally, the Department acts as liaison between Jewish and public schools, serving as an advocate for parents by helping to establish and maintain relationships among teachers and school administrators.

The Parent Network on Including All Our Jewish Children is an organization for parents of children with special needs. Parents of children of all ages are welcome to participate in this program. At each meeting, speakers who are experts in the field, present and lead discussions. They provide information on medical, legal, psychological, educational, and other issues. Parents are encouraged to recommend future speakers and topics. The group is co-sponsored by Jewish Family Services.

Keshet and Bar/Bat Mitzvah Class

Two religious school classes, conducted by the Commission on Jewish Education, prepare children with special needs to participate actively in the Jewish community. The Keshet class helps participants gain familiarity with Jewish holidays, prayers, music and art. Keshet, for elementary age students, meets at Agudas Achim Synagogue.

The students in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class actively prepare for participation in a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony that is meaningful and specifically designed for each child. The class, for middle school-age students, meets at Congregation Tifereth Israel.

Both classes include Hebrew vocabulary in the instruction. Throughout the religious school year, students have opportunities to integrate with the mainstream religious school. Dedicated personnel with highly specialized training are available to help each student participate as fully as possible in a wide range of Jewish learning.

Friendship Circle

The CJE partners with the Schottenstein Chabad House and Jewish Family Services to provide training for volunteers to become "buddies" with children with disabilities. The Friendship Circle program engages students from 12 to 20 years old and coordinates weekly visits to homes of children with special needs. Volunteers receive training in disability awareness, medical and safety concerns, behavior management and meaningful lay.

Licensed professionals lead all training workshops. The CJE also assists in the placement of these volunteers.

Major funding for all programs are provided through the annual campaign of the Columbus Jewish Federation with additional funding provided by the Community Endowment Fund for Jewish Education and Literacy of the Columbus Jewish Foundation.

Marlene Tewner
Special Education Coordinator
Commission on Jewish Education
1175 College Avenue
Columbus, OH 43209
Tel: (614) 237-7686 ext. 240
Fax: (614) 237-2221
mtewner@tcjf.org

Denver

The Colorado Agency for Jewish Education (CAJE) continues to offer programs and services that focus on educational inclusion and community awareness of special needs in Colorado's growing Jewish community.

Kochavim (Stars) Supplemental Religious School Inclusion

Magnet programs at Congregation Emanuel and at CAJE's popular evening Hebrew High School offer opportunities for children with special needs to participate in supplemental religious school programs. Peer aides often accompany students with special needs to classes and programs, allowing them to socialize and learn in a Jewish environment while other children in the religious school have the opportunity to learn with peers who have special needs. CAJE also provides ongoing consultation and inservice programs regarding inclusion strategies and resources at area supplemental schools as requested.

Chaverim (Friends) Programs for Adults with Disabilities

Chaverim sponsors classes taught by special educators for lifetime Jewish learning for adults with special needs. Adults from local supervised living environments participate in educational activities on a biweekly basis. In collaboration with the Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center, the Sunday Fun Club gets together regularly for social activities and holiday celebrations in a Jewish setting.

Preschool Inclusion

CAJE encourages early intervention and preschool inclusion in Denver's Jewish preschools. Early childhood specialists provide on-site screening, identification and family consultation for children at risk for disabilities. A major component of this program is direct consultation with teachers and administrators to provide techniques and modifications that encourage successful inclusion. The specialists act as liaison between the preschool staff, parents, and school district/community resources. In-service presentations on classroom management, socialization strategies, Child Find evaluations, and crisis intervention are ongoing. Speech/language pathologists provide on-site screenings, evaluations, and speech/language therapy. Parents pay a minimal fee for these services with the rest of the cost underwritten by CAJE.

Day School Inclusion/Teacher Training

CAJE provides support services to facilitate successful inclusion at Denver and Boulder Jewish day schools. Students with disabilities or uncategorized learning/behavioral problems are referred to the CAJE special education staff by the principal, teachers, or parents. Support services for these students include parent conferencing, IEP recommendations, public school district liaison, consultation with outside physicians and agencies, and medication supervision. In-service training and consultation with teachers and parents is a major component of the program. Speech-language screenings, evaluations, and therapy are provided at two day schools at reduced cost to parents.

Recreation

CAJE staff consults with counselors and administrators at the Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center Camp Shai and Camp Shalom to facilitate inclusion of a large number of children with disabilities. In the Summer Magic program, children with special needs spend time at Shwayder Camp in Idaho Springs. CAJE provides programming, staff training, CIT orientation, special transportation and supervision. Sunday Fun Club provides afternoon activities with a Jewish focus for older teens and adults with disabilities in cooperation with the Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center. Theater outings and celebration of Jewish holidays are ongoing activities of this group. As an approved Artreach

agency, CAJE maintains a telephone contact system that allows people with disabilities and their families to obtain free tickets to many of Colorado's theater, museum, concert, and sports events.

Networking

Kibbitz, Kvell & Coffee provides a forum in which parents and families of children with special needs can share information, expertise, and accomplishments. JUST US is a social/support group for brothers and sisters of people with disabilities. Activities include outreach to other siblings, information sharing, maintenance of a web page, and field trips.

Consultation/Resource Center

CAJE offers community-based educational and consultation services. The Special Education Department functions as a clearinghouse for special education information for the Denver and Front Range Jewish community. Inclusion strategies are presented at Denver's Mini-CAJE Conference, the Early Childhood Educators Conference, and the Day School Teachers Conference. In August 2001, the Preschool Special Education Consultants presented a popular seminar on inclusion issues at the National CAJE Conference in Fort Collins, CO. Teacher training and consultation, youth group presentations, agency liaison, and referrals are ongoing. New programs include a hands-on sensitivity program for preschool and elementary school students ("Abilities Awareness: What Does It Feel Like?") and consultation on b'nai mitzvot instruction and adaptations. A broad range of books, videos, current articles, and local and national agency information are available through the CAJE Library and Resource Center.

Rita Schwartz Singer
Special Education Coordinator
Colorado Agency for Jewish Education
300 S Dahlia Street, Suite 101
Denver, CO 80246
Tel: (303) 321-3191 ext. 18
Fax: (303) 321-5436
rschwartz@caje-co.org

Detroit

*"For every closed door...
there is one that is opened."*

– Helen Keller

Opening the Doors Special Education Partnership Program continues to open the door of opportunity – enabling children with learning disabilities and other special needs receive a quality and appropriate Jewish education. Our gratitude goes to our Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit (JFMD) for continuing their support and funding to enable our partnership schools – Early Childhood, Day Schools and Congregational Schools – across Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Humanistic spectrum – to continue our important mission. Last year 700 children in 23 partnership schools were helped by our team of 20 special education teachers who were placed on-site in those schools. Each partnership school received funding from the JFMD to provide for the hiring of qualified special educators to implement services within their schools. Schools in turn demonstrated their commitment by providing internal challenge funds in their school budgets. The Agency for Jewish Education (AJE) Special Education Director coordinates the Opening the Doors program and provides support and consultative services to school directors, special educators, classroom teachers and parents. Our full range of services include: recruitment, placement and indirect supervision of special educators; development of school program models (inclusionary, resource room, zero and tenth hour); on-site teacher seminars and conferences. A team approach is encouraged where information is shared regarding a child's strengths, interests, types of assistance child needs, present level of functioning and goals and expectations of the parents. Each school model of service delivery is tailor-made to fit the needs and philosophy of each participating school.

Specialized Seminars

A variety of seminars were provided to enhance the skills of the classroom teacher to meet the needs of students with special challenges within their classrooms. A sampling of learning opportunities that were offered included: Quick and Practical Modifications that Work for Students with Learning Difficulties;

Choice Theory Can Help – Classroom Management Strategies; Reaching and Teaching Through Sensory Integration; Preschoolers Communicative Development; Indications for Intervention; Identification and Classroom Management for Speech and Language Challenges.

Jewish Day School Conference

Our fourth annual conference brought together teachers from five partnership day schools to hear well-known speaker, Sharon K. Weiss, M.Ed., behavioral consultant, Northern Virginia. She spoke on "Survival Skills for Teachers: Behavior Management Techniques for Use in Schools" in the afternoon session and her evening talk to parents was entitled "Survival Skills for Parents." The conference was generously sponsored by the Jay M. and Dorothy S. Rosenthal Teacher Institute Fund at Hillel Day School. It was a success – with 200 teachers in attendance and approximately 75 parents at our evening program.

Family Circle Community Program

Our 6th annual luncheon seminar for parents, professionals, clergy and lay leaders was held to encourage communication, sensitivity and discussion. We were quite pleased to feature as our keynote speaker, Becca Hornstein, Executive Director, Council for Jews with Special Needs, and fellow consortium colleague. The program topic was "Why Don't Kids Come With an Instruction Manual?" It addressed the challenges and concerns of raising a child with a disability, ways to nurture awareness, sensitivity and goal setting in the classroom and the community. She offered many success stories and presented an outstanding and inspiring program. Following the presentation, a private session was held with Becca facilitating discussion amongst parents.

Special Educators Network

Our network met quarterly throughout the year to discuss relevant issues and to share current thought and methodology. We have had visiting professionals share their expertise and we have provided financial support to encourage our special educators to attend local seminars and conferences to keep current in the ever-changing field of special education.

Day School Support

AJE has worked with day schools to support their state-mandated services for children with special needs. To supplement the public school services, a clinical psychologist was hired by AJE to provide psycho-educational evaluations for those in need.

Disabilities Awareness

We continue to provide our You and I were Made B-Zelem Elokim curriculum, written by Bayla Landsman and Sheva Locke to be used by 4th grade students throughout the school system. In coordination, we offered Kids on The Block puppet performances four times a year at school sites serving 7 schools. The performances were presented by volunteers from the Michigan Metro Girl Scouts.

Efshar Sunday School

Our Efshar program, under the capable direction of Robyn Glickman, continued to meet the needs of 9 children with more involved needs. Individualized instruction reflects the needs of learning, development and behavioral challenges and are multi-sensory to provide a meaningful curriculum. Music, crafts, drama, Judaic software, holiday celebrations, Bar and Bat Mitzvah preparation, field trips and family programs are integral components of the Efshar program.

As our program is completing its 5th year of operation – we're proud of what we've accomplished thus far and are striving to meet ever-changing needs to continue to provide quality service. We continue to act as a community resource by providing current materials – resource files, student assessments, books and videos for use by both teachers and families. May we continue our efforts in providing a much needed service for our children.

Anita Naftaly
Director of Special Education
Agency for Jewish Education
6735 Telegraph Road, Suite 370
P.O. Box 2031
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-2031
Tel: (248) 645-7860
Fax: (248) 645-7867
naftaly@ajedetroit.org

Houston

My work to date has been quite busy just maintaining all the programs from the past two years: The Keshet Sunday School, the Keshet Parent Support Groups, the Jewish Network of Special Educators, and improving communications with all the Religious School principals via direct meetings with them.

The two main activities that I have added to these are preparing the Special Educators Handbook, an edited form of Flora Kupferman's booklet from San Francisco; and implementing a Disabilities Awareness Workshop Month in October. We presented a series of three workshops held on succeeding Thursdays in October with presenters from the Houston area. We are using teacher incentive hours, with monetary bonuses given at the end of the year to encourage as much participation as possible from the teachers and professionals in the Jewish community.

In February, we will again have presenters in the area of special education at the day-long Yom Limmud program. This program has attracted hundreds of people each year who are motivated and interested in learning more about Judaism and ways of improving services to all of its children.

With the help of Lisa Klein, our Resource Center Coordinator, I have been expanding our Special Education Library with a variety of new books, pamphlets, and publications.

Diane Brezner
Special Education Consultant
Bureau of Jewish Education
5603 South Braeswood Boulevard
Houston, TX 77096
Tel: (713) 729-7000
Fax: (713) 721-6232
dbrezner@houstonjewish.org

MetroWest

The mission of the JEA Center for Special Education is to assure that every learning disabled and/or developmentally challenged Jewish student has access to educational experiences and community activities that allow for a meaningful Jewish life. The Jewish Education Association is seeking qualitative improvement of Jewish special education within schools and acknowledges the challenges our schools face when educating children with learning disabilities.

This year the Center conducted a needs assessment survey of synagogues and day schools. Schools recognize their difficulties in educating the growing numbers of learning disabled students. The study showed that less than one quarter of our schools provides these students with special education settings, and that there are two to three learning disabled children in every Jewish classroom. Most of schools describe their programs as ineffective because of untrained personnel in the area of special education. This study has led to a proposal funded jointly by the United Jewish Federation of MetroWest and The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey that will provide continued early intervention, a university level teacher training and mentoring program, and synagogue based classes of Jewish special education for children ages 6-13.

Primary Prevention Program Expanded

For several years now, the JEA Center for Special Education has provided on-site pre-school observations made by psychologists, teacher training programs, a four week university level course for educators, parent education workshops, and a Focus Support Group for parents of newly identified children. Expanded services now allow for two types of support group meetings. One is for parents of children with developmentally challenged children with serious medical conditions and the other is for parents of children with learning issues.

Project Beresheit Teacher Training/ Mentoring Program

This summer thirty MetroWest synagogue and day school educators/principals attended "Project Beresheit" - a two-week university level course entitled "An Overview of Learning Disabilities." Lectures addressed the following topics: identification, the impact of learning disabilities on the family, accommodations for learning, ADHD, behavior management, effective learning strategies in Judaic studies, and adaptations for the Hebrew curriculum. Participants received certificates toward both the National Board of License and the New Jersey State Department of Education Professional Development credits as well as a stipend.

Twenty of the participants in the conference will continue their education through monthly mentoring sessions with

a special educator at the JEA Special Education Resource Library and will receive on-site mentoring visits at their individual schools two times per year. Teachers will also have the benefit of a lab school experience where they can experience a demonstration program of authentic Jewish special education.

MetroWest synagogues will also have the benefit of receiving a small stipend to offset mainstreaming costs in their schools, (e.g. a shadow, materials or equipment).

Principals will also participate in a seminar on the development and supervision of special needs programs in the schools. Synagogue schools will continue to benefit from existing consultation services offered by the director of the Center.

The Tzelem Program

Thanks to the support of the Healthcare Foundation of NJ, the Center is expanding its offerings to special needs children. The Tzelem Program consists of two self-contained classes for classified children with learning disabilities. They will be located at B'nai Or, Morristown, NJ (ages 9-12) and Agudath Israel, Caldwell, NJ (ages 6-8). Small classes of individualized multi-sensory instruction and computer education in Judaica and Hebrew are being offered. Consultative services for parents will also be available.

JEA staff will recruit, train, mentor and supervise prospective teachers. The twenty-eight-session program will occur one day per week for 1.5 hours. Scholarships are available. These sites will serve as a lab school for teachers as part of the mentoring program previously discussed.

Special Education Resource Library

Funding from The Healthcare Foundation of NJ will also assist the Center in expanding the Special Education Resource Library to include new staffing (e.g., Special Education Resource Coordinator and Program Coordinator) and materials such as books, videos, periodicals, and additional teacher training materials. Our statistics indicate that eighteen resources circulate monthly with the resource library housed by the JEA Waldor Memorial Library. The library provides valuable resources to parents and now services as a teacher-training site. This Special Education Resource Library and its programs are a

reflection of the community's commitment to special education families because in Jewish tradition: "...every person is precious because everyone is created in the image of G-d, independent of their learning abilities of disabilities."

Wendy Chesnov Dratler
Special Education Director
Center for Special Education
Jewish Education Association of MetroWest
901 Route 10
Whippany, NJ 07981
Tel: (973) 428-7400, ext. 308
Fax: (973) 428-4720
wdratler@ujfmetrowest.org

New Haven

Promising collaborations are underway for children with special needs in Greater New Haven. From day schools to afternoon programs, in every movement, Greater New Haven's Department of Jewish Education is working to develop appropriate Jewish educational venues for all students with special needs. While our programs are still evolving and there is still much work to be done, the DJE of Greater New Haven is proud of the strides that have been made over the past eight years.

Talmud Torah Meyuchad: For Any Student, From Any Synagogue

Now in its eighth year, Talmud Torah Meyuchad started in response to parents and community members who were concerned about the need for support and/or appropriate Jewish educational settings for students with special needs. These same parents and community members, including religious leaders and professionals from the Yale Child Study, now compose the Board of Talmud Torah Meyuchad (TTM).

TTM's goal is to provide Jewish children with special needs with a fun, safe, appropriate environment in which to learn about Yahadut. Although run by the Department of Jewish Education, TTM is housed in local synagogue schools. Whenever possible, students participate in their own synagogue's Hebrew school. TTM provides advice and/or staff to assist the synagogue school in meeting the needs of each student. For students who cannot be served at their day school or synagogue school, there is a site at one of the local synagogues,

TTM at Congregation Beth El Keser Israel (BEKI), in which any child with special needs – regardless of synagogue affiliation – may enroll. TTM at BEKI serves students with disabilities ranging from mild learning disabilities to autism. Some TTM students obtain their secular education in schools for children with special needs, while others attend local public schools. TTM's BEKI site includes students from Conservative, Orthodox, Reform, and unaffiliated families.

A particularly exciting component of TTM's program is the collaboration that takes place between TTM staff, synagogue school staff, "home synagogue" staff, and parents. TTM staff works with parents and "home synagogue" staff to teach in a way that is appropriate for each child's religious community. For example, if a child is from an Orthodox community that teaches Hebrew with the Ashkenazi pronunciation, TTM staff will teach that child Hebrew with the Ashkenazi pronunciation. Synagogue staff frequently consult TTM staff with concerns about current or potential TTM students, and together they work out a plan for helping the children succeed. Relevant adults collaborate in determining details such as what a child will study for his or her Bat Mitzvah, what type of mitzvah project s/he will do, or the details of a behavior plan.

TTM facilitates interaction between Jewish children of all abilities. TTM provides children whose parents never thought their child could become a Bar Mitzvah with the tools they need to become an adult in their community. TTM brings together members of different synagogues and movements to allow children with special needs to obtain a quality Jewish education. It is truly an exciting collaboration.

Day School Initiative

Over the past two years, the DJE has provided rudimentary financial support for two local day schools to hire staff for students with special needs over the past two years. In the day schools, the DJE works with the educators on staff, offering workshops on site, and purchasing resources. There is a need to expand the services to allow every child who wishes to pursue an intensive Jewish education the ability to attend a day school. The DJE is working to develop foundation support for this endeavor.

Professional Development, Teacher Training, Family Support

At the annual DJE-sponsored educators' conference both for day and supplementary schools, a variety of seminars are always offered on issues and methods related to teaching children with special needs. The DJE also disseminates curricular materials and consultation on behalf of students with special needs in after-noon schools. Additionally, last year Judith Stern from the Charles E. Smith School gave two presentations here for teachers and parents. Last year also saw the continuation of a support group for families of children with special needs.

All programs delineated above were done under the inimitable leadership of Sydney Perry, Executive Director of the Department of Jewish Education and Associate Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven.

Anna Begleiter Weisberg
Teacher, Talmud Torah Meyuchad
Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven
360 Amity Road
Woodbridge, CT 06525
Phone (203) 387-2424
weisberg@teacher.com
www.jewishnewhaven.org

New York

NEW INITIATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT

Eating Disorders and Nutrition

The Board of Jewish Education and The Maimonides Medical Center are developing a joint health initiative for Jewish schools involving nutrition education and eating disorders prevention. The program is based on research by the Maimonides Health Center indicating a higher than average occurrence of certain diseases in the Jewish community relating to inappropriate nutrition and current knowledge regarding eating disorders. The program will include on-site school consultations, workshops, seminars, and publications with the goal of informing educators and parents on behavioral indicators of potential eating disorders and sound nutritional practice. The publications will include information regarding communal resources addressing nutrition and eating disorders.

Masters Degree in Reading

BJE has begun planning the creation of a Master's Degree Program in Reading for teachers in Jewish schools in collaboration with Fordham University. The Reading Program will follow the same format as has been used by BJE in its Masters Degree Program in Special Education with the College of Staten Island and its Masters Degree Program in Instructional Technology with the New York Institute of Technology. It is anticipated that the program will be under the educational auspice of Dr. Joanne Ury, formally with Teacher's College, Columbia University. Dr. Ury is well known and highly respected in the field of reading.

Mini-Courses

The BJE and the New York Institute of technology are planning one-credit mini-courses. These courses will target specific areas for intense study. Under consideration are topics as: pre-reading skills for pre-schoolers, curricula for content areas to meet the new New York State Education Department new academic standards, behavior management, strategies for teaching multi-level classrooms and survival skills for new teachers.

NEW INITIATIVES IN ACTION

Special Educators Administration Certificate Program

After years of exploration and negotiation, BJE's Institute for Special Education Enrichment (I-SEE) has finalized a joint certificate program in Educational Administration and Supervision with Long Island University. The post-graduate SDA (School and District Administrator) program will provide participants a New York State Certificate in Educational Administration allowing them to serve as a state approved District Supervisor as well as School Administrator in any NY State School District and approved special education program. Due to a variety of logistical issues, it is anticipated that first joint program cohort will begin during the summer semester, 2002. This initiative builds on the already successful Center's Master's Degree in Special Education.

Masters Degree In Instructional Technology

BJE in collaboration with the New York Institute of Technology and supported in part through a grant from the Covenant

Foundation began its Master's Degree Program in Instructional Technology during the 2001 fall semester. The 36-credit program is designed to run for two years. This includes Sunday classes in the fall and spring semesters and summer courses. In addition to providing the traditional course of study, the program will have the additional focus of Judaic studies. Given the technology developments in general and Jewish education, this program seeks to enhance teacher skills and opportunities for effective anytime-anywhere learning in day, congregational and informal Jewish educational settings. The program has significant additional implications for improved teaching for children with learning disabilities and other special needs.

Preschool Reading Disability Prevention Program

Based on twenty years of special education research, BJE's Special Education Center in conjunction with BJE's Early Childhood Center and the Jewish Board of Family and Children Services (JBFCS) has initiated a reading disability prevention program aimed at kindergarten and pre-1A youngsters in Jewish day schools. The program will attempt to replicate the federally funded work of Drs. Frank Vellutino and Donna Scanlon. Vellutino and Scanlon developed both an assessment tool and intervention program geared to detect and correct potential reading problems in youngsters. In a recent article reviewing their research, Vellutino and Scanlon demonstrated that as many as 50% of students classified in fourth grade as having learning disabilities in the area of reading actually had no real disabilities other than, perhaps, poor instruction. Currently, Vellutino and Scanlon serve as general program consultants with Dr. Margaret Jo Shepherd of Columbia University as the on-site consultant together with Dr. Lisa Robbins. To date, the program has completed its first year's activities. Previously, the Special Education Center ran a Yom Iyun by Dr. Vellutino and Dr. Scanlon explaining their work and a joint summer graduate school course with Long Island University (LIU) on reading in preparation for this year's program. A conference reporting the interim results is being considered for the fall of 2002.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

School Inclusion Program

Based on last year's initiative, the Center will be continuing its pilot project of inclusion for students with special needs in regular classrooms. The program incorporates intensive staff development, on-site assistance, seminars, workshops and conferences. The program's goal is to enhance teacher abilities in educating a class of students with varied abilities and needs. This year, the program will work with a community school network and a number of independent schools. The project is open to both day schools and congregational schools.

Government Relations

BJE's Special Education Center serves on federal, state and city government councils and task forces representing Jewish special education programs, issues and concerns. The Center advocates for Jewish special education interests on the federal level in the US Department of Education's Office on Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) and National Leadership in Private Education. The Center contributed to the development of regulations associated with Public Law 105-17 (IDEA). On the state level, the Center representative is a member of the NY State Education Department's Advisory Panel on Special Education Services and serves as a chairperson for the NY State Education Department's Commissioners Advisory Council on Non-public Education. The Center is also a member of the NY City Committee of Non-Public School Officials. The most recent issues include: the impact of PL105-17 on non-public and parochial school programming; inclusion vs. self-contained placement; the participation of students with special needs in the developing NY State Regent's standards and testing initiatives; distribution and implementation of Title III technology programs and the re-authorization of IDEA.

Child and Family Advocacy Program

The BJE Special Education Center in conjunction with the New York UJA/Federation Task Force on Disabilities runs an advocacy program serving persons with special needs and their families. The program seeks to

develop a comprehensive communal network of information and resources for persons with disabilities. The goal of the program is to have a one-call system that will provide callers with up to date quality information regarding services and resources for persons with special needs. In addition, the family advocate is positioned to provide critical information regarding existing gaps in service for the purpose of identifying future initiatives. BJE joins the Westchester Jewish Community Services Agency and the Federation Employment and guidance Services (FEGS) in serving as lead agencies for this project.

The Advocacy program utilizes the latest technology to enhance timely responses for those in need. Valuable information is available on the BJE website (www.bjeny.org). This provides a 24-hour information service. To date, the program has responded to approximately 2,800 requests for assistance.

BJE/Chai Lifeline Telecommunications Network

BJE and Chai Lifeline organization administrate a technology-based communications program linking hospitalized and homebound children with their schools, tutors, families, and/or friends. The program uses video telephones, the Internet and other technology to provide children with cancer and/or other critical illness the opportunity to maintain ongoing education, remedial, and social activities. The technology prevents the loss of an academic school year while the child is recuperating from a bone marrow transplant or other forms of treatment. From the hospital room or bed at home, the child is in sight and sound of the classroom where he/she can fully participate in school activities. The program also maximizes the use of tutors for homebound children. Instead of working with three to four students a day and having to spend substantial time in traveling, the homebound teacher can double his/her tutoring load without moving from his chair. The motto of the program is, "Your classroom is only as far away as your telephone." The video-phones can be attached to large TV monitors as well as camcorders for varied educational use. To date, close to fifty youngsters have benefited from the program. Three years ago, the program was the subject of a Ch. 12 Long Island Cable News report.

JETNET Website

For the past few years, the BJE Jewish Education Telecommunications Network (JETNET) has maintained its own website. The website provides viewers with extensive information a wide variety of topics including Jewish special education organizations, services, job and placement opportunities and links to other valuable websites. The BJE website continues to explore the feasibility of a chat area for a variety of online real time discussions and bulletin board that allows educators to post information, suggestions, and questions. Ongoing planning includes the potential for staff development through stream video and distance learning.

Council of Jewish Special Education Programs

BJE's Special Education Center staffs a council of special education schools and self-contained programs serving students with learning disabilities. The Council plans joint educational programs and special projects and initiatives. In past years, the Council has conducted professional growth seminars where professionals in Jewish special education collaborated on strategies, methods and materials for Judaic content. In addition, the Council has worked with Dr. Margaret Courtney, affiliated with Long Island Jewish Hospital and the New York University Hospital Child Study Center on behavior management, with Dr. Anthony Bashier on self-advocacy and Dr. Elaine Fine on writing skills.

Child Abuse Prevention Program

The BJE Special Education Center and the Jewish Board of Family and Children Services (JBFCS) are now in their sixth year of their joint Child Abuse Prevention Program (CAPP) for the Jewish community. The ongoing program provides educators and administrators critical information regarding child abuse and what to do when it is suspected in a student. To accomplish this goal, the program presents conferences, seminars and workshops on topics including indicators of abuse, legal mandates, Jewish and general community resources and Halachic considerations. To date, the program has reached thousands of educators in over 85 settings spanning the Jewish ideological continuum. In addition, the program provides in-service

and pre-service courses in child abuse prevention, which meet New York State certificate requirements for all human service providers. The program also seeks to prevent child abuse through the development of healthy family living. Towards this end, the program sponsored community seminars dealing with communication skills, conflict resolution and danger signs within the family. These seminars have now been expanded to include students in college and Jewish teachers seminars. Another aspect of the program is the creation of an educational curriculum and resource center to assist teachers in helping their students recognize and respond to inappropriate relationships.

The Child Abuse Prevention Program has recently expanded its service to include a classroom management project for Jewish educators. The project began with a conference dedicated to the area of classroom management followed by on-site school workshops. The conference featured Lee Cantor who demonstrated his program of behavior management.

Special Education All-Star Courses

Following the success of the last five year's All-Star courses, the Special Education Center and Long Island University (LIU) ran a 6th course. The three graduate credit courses provided sessions on a variety of special education topics. Each session was conducted by an expert in his/her particular topic. Thus, students had the unique opportunity to encounter leading professionals in their field. This year's topics included: Current Research on Reading Readiness for Literacy; Techniques for Literacy Training in Pre-1A and Kindergarten; Inclusion Strategies for Judaic studies; Learning Strategies for Judaic Studies; Curriculum Enhancement Routines in the Content Area I: Social studies & Language Arts; Curriculum Enhancement Routines in the Content Area II: Science & Mathematics; Social Skills Development Training; Effective Classroom Management; Preparing for the English Language Arts: Listening and Note Taking strategies and Preparing for the English Language Arts: Composition & Writing/ the TOWER Strategy. This past year's instructors included: Dr. Margaret Jo Shepherd, Dr. Lisa Robbins, Dr. Edward Pieper, Dr. Mary Courtney, Dr. Jed P. Luchow and Dr. Joel Mittler.

JETNET

This past year, JETNET constructed a model wireless internet lab environment in addition to its recent and expanded telecommunications lab. The new wireless lab serves as the site for the new joint BJE/New York Institute for Technology Master's Program in Instructional Technology leading to New York State Certification in Instructional Technology. These two labs enable JETNET members to explore a variety of hardware, software and Internet innovations and functions. Plans for this year include expanding school and community training sessions and exposing new technology options for Jewish day and congregational schools. JETNET's technology initiatives serve as the basis of the BJE/Chai Lifeline's project of developing socialization programs for homebound children. In addition, the lab hosted Title III training programs for nonpublic schoolteachers. Also, JETNET has installed a satellite dish for distance learning programs. For the past few years, JETNET lab served as a staff development distance-learning site for the new New York State Education Department's 4th and 8th grade math assessments. Currently, JETNET is planning a joint conference to be held in the fall of 2002. In addition, JETNET is working with the New York Institute of Technology to offer on-line courses for a number of disciplines.

Association of Jewish Special Educators

The Association of Jewish Special Educators (AJSE) is beginning its 21st year. During that time, the AJSE has sponsored numerous conferences, seminars, workshops, and symposia for over 16,000 participants. It has published a newsletter entitled *Special Edition* and a professional journal entitled *The Jewish Special Educator*. The Jewish Special Educator is now indexed in ERIC and has received recognition from professional organizations as a new exciting special education publication. This year's planning includes a number of Yimei Iyun, workshops and seminars relating reading, reading comprehension and latest research regarding Dyslexia as well as the next edition of *The Jewish Special Educator*.

Guidance and Consultations Services

The Special Education Center provides ongoing help to organizations, schools, administrators, teachers, parents and persons with special needs. The Center

provides assistance to day and supplementary schools in starting various special education programs, to parents seeking appropriate schooling for their children with special needs, to educators looking for positions, and to government agencies and organizations in their special education initiatives. The Center regularly assists graduate school students in their quest for a doctorate or master's degree in special education. It has also assisted in the creation of a private college's department of special education.

The Institute for Special Education Enrichment

The Institute for Special Education Enrichment (I-SEE) sponsors two basic activities: a graduate school track and a religious teacher seminary track. In the graduate school track, the Center sponsors a master's program in special education jointly with the College of Staten Island of the City of New York (CUNY). This project, originally funded by the J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation, has graduated close to 350 students with graduate degrees in special education. Well over 90% of the graduates are currently teaching in Jewish or public school special education programs. Many have gone on for additional certificates and degrees in bilingual extension, school administration, and doctoral programs. I-SEE is currently seeking to develop alumni programs that follow the graduates through their professional careers.

The Teacher Seminary project provides special education courses in two seminars and sponsors special education courses in additional Jewish teacher's seminars. The goal of this program is to develop more day and supplementary school teachers who are sensitive to the needs of children with special challenges in their classrooms. The program also helps develop a more supportive Jewish community for Jewish persons with special needs.

The Vocational Preparation Program

The Vocational Preparation Program (VPP) now in its 18th year, continues to assist disabled and non-disabled individuals in planning a viable and meaningful career. Although the program has a particular focus of providing a smooth transition from high school to the world of work, VPP is open to people of all ages. VPP networks with government, federation

and private agencies to provide a most comprehensive array of potential vocational opportunities. To date, VPP has served over 2,200 individuals.

Additionally, VPP offers monthly career aptitude tests throughout the school year. The aptitude tests seek to provide individuals with important information regarding their skills and abilities for realistic and successful employment

Volunteers in Special Education

The Volunteers in Special Education (VSE) continues to recruit, train and place qualified persons in Jewish schools to help students with special needs keep up with their schoolwork. To date, VSE has placed approximately 1,500 volunteers in over fifty educational settings serving close to 4,000 students. VSE is planning the development of a manual of its volunteer program so that other communities can replicate its success. One of the VSE volunteers was honored for her work in assisting teachers and students alike at the Ezra Academy of Queens, New York. This year's planning includes the exploration of new models for volunteering in special education.

The Parent Education Program

The Parent Education Program (PEP) funded through a grant from the Butler Family Foundation, is beginning its ninth year. PEP is designed to heighten parent knowledge, understanding and involvement in special education. PEP continues to sponsor and cosponsor ongoing parent workshops, seminars, and conferences. PEP, in conjunction with the Jewish Parent Advocate Coalition, sponsored a special services conference and fair last fall to help parents access important and necessary services for their children. This year, PEP is sponsoring a conference/fair that will provide parents maximum opportunities to learn firsthand about important resources as well as initiate face-to-face contact with communal service providers. This year's presentations included panels discussing behavior management programs from different disciplines in home and school. Past year's conferences have included such notable presenters as keynote speaker Dr. Turecki who reviewed his research and programming for over 400 participants.

The Jewish Heritage Program

The Jewish Heritage Program (JHP) is beginning its 23rd year. Currently, JHP

is in four Jewish community centers throughout the greater New York area, serving approximately 100 developmentally disabled individuals. In addition to the ongoing Sunday school program, JHP conducts an annual Pesach Model Seder and other special events. JHP publishes special materials including a Siddur and Haggadah for its students so they will be successful in joining in Jewish communal ceremonies and celebrations. JHP is currently developing a Jewish Holiday Cycle Curriculum Guide for use in Congregational schools and informal special education programs for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Rabbi Marty Schloss
Sara Seligson
BJE of Greater New York
426 West 58th Street
New York, NY 10019-1102
Tel: (212) 245-8200 ext. 384, ext. 399
Fax: (212) 397-1066
mschloss@bjeny.org, seligson@bjeny.org

Philadelphia

The Philadelphia Jewish community continues to expand its services in special education with 65 programs in the pre-schools, day schools, supplementary and community schools. A new survey of services, completed by Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education (ACAJE), indicates that these programs span pre-school through adulthood and range from mild to severe disabilities. The Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education, through its consultant for special needs, continues to provide in-service training and consultation to teachers and principals on establishing and maintaining programs for children, teens, and adults with special needs.

The Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia provides start-up grants for innovative programs in the Jewish schools. The lay committee for special education of the Auerbach Central Agency meets on a regular basis and selects recipients of the grants based on their proposals. Five pre-school and supplementary schools received grants this past year. Most of the grants went to resource rooms programs or to inclusion specialists for children in mainstream classes.

ACAJE also has a consultant to the Orot program in the day schools. The mission of the Orot program is to provide special needs education for those students

who need more than what the resource room can provide. These classes combine self contained and inclusive settings. In three years, Orot has grown from a single class of two children in one day school to more than thirty-five students in seven classes in five day schools. The programs span kindergarten through seventh grade.

The Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education is also one of the co-sponsors of informal socialization programs for students with special needs. Gam Yachad, began in 1988, meets the socialization group for elementary and middle school students with significant special needs.

The Association for Jewish Special Education has just celebrated its tenth birthday. The AJSE is an organization for teachers and parents who advocate for Jewish Special Education. Two editions of the Tekia newsletter were published this year. The newsletters contain resources for parents and teachers of students with special needs. Featured speakers at AJSE events included Shelley Hahn, who spoke on "Helping Children with Language Processing Problems" and Jodi Button who spoke on "Recording for the Blind and Dyslexia."

The first edition of Sharon Schanzer's "Natural Hebrew: A Commonsense Approach to Teaching Hebrew" was published by ACAJE in the fall of 2000, and includes theoretical and practical approaches to teaching Hebrew. Accommodations for children with special needs are also included in this book, which is a sequel to Dr. Schanzer's "Hebrew Decoding Inventory."

Sharon Schanzer, Ph.D.
Coordinator of Special Needs Programs
Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education
7607 Old York Road
Melrose Park, PA 19027
Tel: (215) 635-8940 ext. 1231
Fax: (215) 635-8946
dschanzer@aol.com

Phoenix

The Council For Jews With Special Needs continues to provide a variety of programs and services to children and adults who have developmental, physical, behavioral and emotional disabilities. In recent years, the Council created a web site (www.cjsn.org) that has educated its visitors, informed them of Council events, advertised employment opportunities,

linked them to other Jewish/disability related sites and offered e-mail addresses for personal contact. In addition, the web site offers on-line shopping as an option for charitable giving to support the agency.

In the summer of 2001, the Council proudly opened the doors of its first Jewish group residence for adults who have developmental disabilities. "Shalom House" presently has three men residing there with a fourth bedroom available for an additional resident. The home is staffed at all times when the residents are present. Besides being a home, Shalom House is also the meeting place for the Council's young adult social group (Yad B'Yad) and their Hebrew classes. In mid-January, 2002, ten of the adults will have a group b'nai mitzvah to celebrate their years of study.

As it has for 16 years, the Council's continuing programs and services include special education classes and support for inclusion in regular congregational and day schools; special education teachers and tutors in congregational schools; special education consultants for all of the preschools, day schools, high school and congregational schools; trained counselors for both day camps and residential camps; staff training and supervision in schools and camps; sign language and oral interpreters in any Jewish settings; social clubs for teens with severe disabilities and for young adults with special needs; support groups for parents, grandparents and siblings; educational forums on disability related topics; disability awareness workshops; family social and recreational outings; and information and referral services.

In winter 1999, the Council produced the 180-page *Disability Resource Directory* of Jewish agencies, schools, camps, residential and vocational programs in Canada and the United States. The directory includes names, addresses, phone/fax numbers and e-mail information as well as brief descriptions of what programs or services each group offers. The directory is available for \$25 (including shipping and handling). The directory was updated in early 2001, to add twenty more resources and correct changes contact information. Agencies not presently listed in the directory are encouraged to contact the Council to get into the next printing of the directory.

Becca Hornstein
Executive Director
Council For Jews With Special Needs, Inc.
32 West Coolidge, Suite 102
Phoenix, AZ 85013-2773
Tel: (602) 277-4243
Fax: (602) 277-7064
info@cjsn.org

St. Louis

The Central Agency for Jewish Education in St. Louis has had another year successfully serving our children with special needs.

Forty-seven students were enrolled in the "Three R's Program" ("Recognize, Refer, Remediate") during the 2000-2001 school year. This program provides Hebrew education for children, who, for a variety of reasons, have difficulty in a classroom situation. Admission into the program is based on parental input, teacher recommendations, CAJE recommendations, and the approval of the rabbi or educational director at the student's congregation. The program serves students from third grade through seventh grade. Each student receives either 24 one-hour private tutorial sessions or 32 forty-five minute sessions. Individualized Flexible Goals are developed for each student, which are based on the curriculum the student would have received in the afternoon Hebrew school, where appropriate. We continue to emphasize that this program is NOT a Bar and Bat Mitzvah tutorial. Since 1990, over 60 students have finished the program and have become B'nai Mitzvah within their own congregations.

Tutors in the "Three R's Program" receive specialized materials to help with the individual needs of the students at our Tutor Orientation workshop in September and also throughout the year. A Tutors Forum is held in January to share ideas and provide further support. In addition, we encourage our tutors to attend educational workshops sponsored by CAJE, the community, and the congregations to further their pedagogic and Judaic skills. Tutors also attend the CAJE "Educator's Fair" in October and participate in other special workshops throughout the year.

"Three R's" tutors are encouraged and trained to be effective with mainstreaming and inclusion. Where appropriate, "Three R's" students are included in Hebrew school shabbatonim and other programming. Students with special

needs attend their home-based synagogue and temple religious school classrooms on Sunday and/or Shabbat.

The "Three R's Program" continues to grow and have an impact on many students and families. During the 2001-2002 school year, 17 tutors will be servicing over 45 children. Strides continue to be made in outreach to the community as well.

Another program in the St. Louis community that was facilitated by CAJE staff, but which is independent from CAJE, is "Ohr Atid - Light of the Future." Two years of intense organization by concerned parents of children with special needs resulted in a formal Jewish Sunday school begun in September, 1997. According to Albert Glassman, President, "Ohr Atid's mission is to promote, facilitate, develop and maintain the maximum potential of school-age children with disabilities both at school and at home through a community partnership, within a Jewish environment." The two hour a week Sunday School program began with six students, increasing to eight in the 1998-1999 school year. Students from various Jewish high school programs are trained to be Madrichim in the school to facilitate the learning environment. The children in the Ohr Atid Sunday School represent all denominations of Judaism - Reform, Conservative, Traditional, and Orthodox. Madrichim are also assisting children with special needs in other religious school programs. Three students have successfully been mainstreamed into their home-based congregational religious school programs.

Computers, donated by Monsanto Corporation, are used in Ohr Atid's therapeutic computer lab, which meets weekly for sessions of five weeks, two hours per session.

In addition, Ohr Atid has developed Project PRISM (Parents Resources Information Sharing Mission), a resource-sharing network. Project PRISM also includes a family referral project to match one family with another family caring for a child with a similar disability. Other support services are also provided.

Ohr Atid has also developed a list of resources for parents - tips on social services and financial resources, Jewish educational data, entitlements from Federal, State and City governments, and Jewish experiential opportunities as part of this project.

A professionally-run support group for parents caring for Jewish children with special needs, hosted by Ohr Atid, meets

periodically. This is a wonderful environment for parents to share their feelings and help one another face the stress and anxiety of meeting the needs of their children.

We are looking forward to the exciting success and continued growth of Ohr Atid – a very important addition and educational asset to the St. Louis Jewish community.

Enid Frank
Special Education Coordinator
Central Agency for Jewish Ed.
12 Millstone Campus Drive
St. Louis, MO 63146
Tel: (314) 432-0020
Fax: (314) 432-6150
efrank@cjestl.org

San Francisco

The Special Education program at the Bureau of Jewish Education continues to address the needs of children with disabilities, their teachers, principals, parents, and other members of the community. It is funded by a grant from the Jewish Community Federation Endowment Kohn Fund and also receives support from the Pinkus Sugarman Fund for Exceptional Children with Special Needs in Jewish Education.

For the past thirteen years, children attending congregational schools have been receiving special education services. Twelve schools have a special education teacher on staff. This teacher provides individual or small group instruction, usually in a “pull-out” model. In some schools, the special education teacher assists students inside their classes. The Special Education Consultant at the Bureau of Jewish Education works in partnership with the congregational schools, assisting in the hiring, training, and support of the special education teachers, subsidizing a small portion of the special education teachers’ salaries, helping to choose the model of service delivery that most appropriately meets the school’s needs, providing standardized forms for student referrals, evaluations, and IEP’s, and being available to principals and parents when questions arise. Last year, the congregational schools directly met the needs of 185 children who had learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and other disabilities. All the other children and teachers in these schools benefited indirectly from the presence of the special educator on staff.

The Bureau of Jewish Education’s *Handbook for Special Education Programs*

in the Synagogue Schools is available at no charge on the Internet at the BJE’s website, or can be ordered from the BJE for \$10. It contains policy statements, procedures for setting up or maintaining a special education program, and forms that can be copied and/or adapted for use by individual schools. The online version features over forty links to related websites.

As part of the BJE’s professional development opportunities for teachers, the following topics were offered: Special Education, Classroom Management, Learning Styles, and Meeting Special Needs for Teens in Informal Programs. Each workshop series is tailored to a school staff, so we can address more individual issues.

We also partner with two synagogues that host social programs for children with developmental disabilities and their families. Groups meet monthly for informal play and learning. Through music, arts and crafts, and stories, the children and their parents explore the Jewish holidays and Torah stories. The groups meet during existing Sunday school times. In this way, there are opportunities for inclusion, and teen aides and other resource personnel are available to the group.

We are very excited about a new innovative program in the Spring of 2002. We will hold a camp weekend for children with disabilities and their families. We are working closely with the camp staff to plan a weekend full of activities for the children, their parents, and their siblings, and we hope to make this an annual event.

The 2001-2002 year promises to be a breakthrough time for our community. In the fall we held several meetings for parents to voice their concerns about current gaps in services, and we did a needs assessment survey. Based on all the data we are gathering, we will be working on developing both program models and funding sources, and we are optimistic about expanding the available services in the area.

Flora Kupferman
Special Education Consultant
Bureau of Jewish Education of San Francisco,
Marin and Sonoma Counties
639 14th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94118
Tel: (415) 751-6983 ext. 122
Fax: (415) 668-1816
fkupferman@bjesf.org

San Jose

Last year, the Jewish Federation of Greater San Jose offered a pilot program for a special needs self-contained religious school class. Students involved in the program have developmental or social disabilities that included Down Syndrome, ADD, Dyslexia, Mild Seizure Disorder, Auditory and Visual Processing Difficulties.

The Federation is now adding five students to the program, which it has now named Meyuchad, (“special”). At this stage, students with diagnosed language disorders are also being added.

The Special Needs Coordinator for the Federation of Greater San Jose, Irene Swedroe, serves as the Director, Head Teacher and Consultant for this program. Responding to requests from teachers, parents and religious school principals, she observes students in order to determine whether they should stay in the regular religious school class (and suggests certain modifications to accommodate them if they do) or if the student is better served in the special needs Sunday school program.

There are also two other professionals on staff: a Judaica teacher who is also in charge of art, as well as a Hebrew teacher. All three staff members have an education in special education and Judaica. High school students (over the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah) have also volunteered to join the staff in order to keep the student ratio low; at the end of the year, some students will receive community service awards in acknowledgment of their important work.

Students in the program love coming to class! Teaching is done through art, visual kinesthetic modalities, and repetition. Students receive 20 minutes of Hebrew instruction in either a small group of two or individually. The class runs one hour and 45 minutes.

Last year’s curriculum focused on the holidays. This year, we are hoping to add biblical content, visit local synagogues and attend their junior congregation services. I am encouraging the parents to explore the local Jewish youth groups. I am hoping to provide further outreach to the area synagogue religious schools.

Irene Swedroe
Special Needs Coordinator
The Meyuchad Program
Jewish Federation of Greater San Jose
Council on Jewish Education
14855 Oka Road
Los Gatos, CA 95030
Tel: 408-358-3033 ext. 44 / Fax: 408-446-5890
IRSWED@aol.com

Toronto

It has been an exciting year in the area of special education in Toronto, and next year promises to be even more exciting. We finally put into effect some of the changes we have been planning for at least the last two years. As those of you who participated in this past May's Consortium are aware, our study of the special education needs in the Toronto area was finally completed, and recommendations were submitted and approved. The committee that worked on this project had come to understand the need for suggesting a model for restructuring the services that already existed, and creating opportunities for new services to be developed. Day schools and supplementary schools were taken into account in the study, as well as those who had not yet been able to access services from the Jewish school system. One of the most important recommendations was that we create a new position for a Central Department Director who would be able to coordinate the different areas of service, including psycho-educational assessments, early identification, remediation services, staff training, development of curriculum accommodations, and social work school services. Finding such a person was a monumental job, but we finally accomplished it. Our new director, Debbie Gladstone, took up her new duties on October 1, 2001. We are hoping for great things.

Of course, a major event in the life of Toronto's special education life this past year was our hosting of the Jewish Special Education Consortium in May. The 23 participants shared their expertise and experience in an intense three days, which also included visits to some of the most significant special ed institutions in the city: She'arim Hebrew Day School, the Zareinu Centre, and the Reena Foundation. Sessions were held on a variety of topics, including Hebrew Remediation Techniques, Judaica Program Modifications, Including Children with Special Needs in Jewish schools, Teacher Training and Staff Supervision, an Introduction to the Feuerstein Cognitive Approach, and a discussion on the Role of the Special Educator Within a Central Agency. A major aspect of the experience was the sharing of common issues and problem solving techniques. It was a wonderful group of people, many long-standing friends and colleagues, and many new participants.

Dori Levine
Special Education Consultant
Board of Jewish Education
4600 Bathurst Street, Suite 232
Willowdale, ON M2R 3V3
Tel: (416) 633-7770, ext. 249
Fax: (416) 635-1408
DLevine@ujafed.org

Washington, D.C.

The Special Needs Department of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington continues to offer supportive services to administrators, teachers and parents of students in the area nursery schools, congregational schools and day schools.

Early Childhood Services

We have expanded both the numbers of children with special needs that we serve in our schools as well as the courses and support groups for parents and teachers. Several of our schools have added special needs facilitators to their staffs. These well trained professionals will be available to work with children one to one to facilitate social interactions, language, motor skills and to support attentional skills. They are also available to model good inclusionary techniques and will serve as mentors and consultants to staff. Several schools have one-on-one paraprofessionals (shadows) working full time with individual children who require continuous support in order to be successfully included in the typical preschool classroom.

Many preschools now offer speech and language screenings as well as the option of a student receiving individual private therapy services on site. Additionally, a few schools are now offering the services of an occupational therapist to work directly with identified children as well as to consult with classroom teachers.

We are offering a class entitled "Inclusion is Real." This class will meet monthly at the BJE and is designed for teachers, assistants, and facilitators working with young children with special needs in their classroom. There will be many other teacher workshops offered throughout the year aimed at increasing the knowledge and skill level of early childhood educators.

The Early Childhood Conference in October 2001 included workshops on Challenging Behaviors, Sensory Play,

Using Visual Modalities, and Working with the Special Needs Child in Your Classroom, among the many offerings.

"Parent to Parent," a support group for parents of young children with special needs, organized and run by parents with consultation of the Early Childhood Special Needs Department, BJE and JSSA met once a month on Thursday mornings at Adas Israel. Parent to Parent will offer discussions, sharing sessions and present interesting speakers.

CONGREGATIONAL AND DAY SCHOOL SERVICES

Parent Education and Support

The BJE held a workshop series for parents about college planning for Jewish students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD. The workshops included: The College Search Process: Organization and Levels of Available Support; College Options for Students with Learning and Attention Problems; Colleges Sensitive to Fostering Jewish Identity; High School to College: The Difference Parents Can Make. A second series about social skills development will be held in the springtime.

Professional Education and Support

Professional development seminars for both administrators and teachers include a series of four Sunday seminars. Topics include: Kids and Drugs: Use and Abuse; Building the Connection for each Child: An Alternative Approach to Teaching Torah; Understanding and Working with the Challenging Parent; Make it Challenging: Make it Multisensory. Other seminars include a full day seminar planned for the spring and a weeklong summer institute. Last year's topics for these seminars included sensory integration, Wilson Reading and the Neuropsychology of Learning.

Twelve congregational schools are participating in Sh'lom Kitah, a mentoring program which provides on site training to staff. Special education mentors work with each school during the course of the year to provide on site inservices, observations and meetings with administrators and teachers to help them service students with special learning needs effectively.

Student Services

The area day and congregational schools continue to expand their services to stu-

dents with special needs. Shema V'Ezer, a community Sunday school program serves students with multiple challenges at the JCC. A cluster of congregational schools began two new community classes for students with moderate to severe learning disabilities which are held on Sundays and during the week. Sulam, the day school special needs program continues to expand its services and meets the needs of 18 students, kindergarten through eighth grade in two sites. On site speech and language therapy services continues to be provided by the country public schools at two area day schools.

Publications

The book, *Teaching Hebrew Reading to Students with Learning Disabilities* has been revised, reprinted and is available for sale. *Kesher Connection*, a new Jewish community newsletter for people with disabilities and their families is published twice a year by the special needs department in collaboration with the community special needs professional advisory committee.

Lenore Layman
 Director, Special Needs Department
 BJE of Greater Washington
 4928 Wyaconda Road
 Rockville, MD 20852
 Tel: (301) 255-1952
 Fax: (301) 230-0267
 lenore@bjedc.org

West Palm Beach

The Yad program for children with special needs offers a formal Jewish education on Sunday mornings. Yad is designed to serve children who do not learn effectively in the regular religious school classroom because of their special needs. All classes meet at the Commission for Jewish Education in West Palm Beach, Fl. The program is possible through an endowment of the J.N. Sommers of the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County.

Ilana DeLaney
 Assistant Executive Director
 Friedman Commission for Jewish Education
 3267 N. Military Trail
 West Palm Beach, FL 33409
 Tel: (561) 640-0700, ext. 1174
 chupaca@aol.com

JESNA

Now that our website has been newly revised, we invite you to take a look at all the resources it has to offer (www.jesna.org). JESNA's site contains six core areas: Congregational and Communal Education; Day Schools; Educator Recruitment and Development; Media and Technology; Research and Evaluation; and Youth. The site also features sections on Adult Jewish Learning, Early Childhood Education, Family Education and Special Needs Education. The Special Needs section includes links to Resources, Webquests, Relevant Articles, and Network publications.

Please continue to help us build this community resource by submitting materials and links for possible inclusion.

Rebecca Goldwater
 Technology Associate
 JESNA, Jewish Education of North America
 111 Eighth Avenue, 11th Floor
 New York, New York 10011-5201
 Tel: (212) 284-6892
 Fax: (212) 284-6951
 rebecca@jesna.org

Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education CALL FOR ACTION

In recognition of the obligation to provide a religious education for all Jewish persons with special needs, the Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education, in conjunction with JESNA, urges all Jewish communities throughout North America to develop and support systems to:

- identify Jewish persons with special needs including individuals with developmental, learning, behavioral, neurological, physical, medical, and sensory disabilities
- deliver Jewish educational services to special persons that will enrich their Jewish lives and those of their families. Such services include special educational programming in early childhood; day and supplementary schools; continuing adult education programs; and programs in residential, social/recreational and camping settings
- explore various funding sources for the provision of the aforementioned services through federal, state and local government entitlements and

foundations as well as local community and private sources.

The Consortium, in conjunction with JESNA, endorses this proactive approach to provide services to Jewish individuals with special needs.

"It is enough that an individual is disabled. Let us not disable him or her as a Jew as well."

THANK YOU, SHARON SCHANZER

Sharon Schanzer was recently offered a wonderful opportunity as director of special education for a suburban school district in the Philadelphia area. After much consideration, Sharon decided to accept the offer and this new challenge in her career. Thank you Sharon for your years of commitment, intellectual honesty, and wonderful ability to learn from and to teach us so well. We look forward to following your future successes and know that while you will no longer be at the Averbach CAJE, you will still be making significant contributions to the field.

Keep Your Community Informed

Additional copies of the *Newsletter* are available for task forces, lay people, and other community groups.

Contact Caren Levine at JESNA if you would like additional copies:

caren@jesna.org
 (212) 284-6898

CONSORTIUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS IN CENTRAL AGENCIES FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

Rabbi Martin Schloss – Co-founder, Consortium
Dr. Sara Rubinow Simon – Co-founder, Consortium
Rebecca Goldwater – Co-editor, Newsletter
Caren N. Levine – Co-editor, Newsletter

The Newsletter is a publication of the Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education which is affiliated with JESNA, the Jewish Education

Service of North America,
 111 Eighth Avenue, 11th Floor,
 New York, New York 10011-5201.



The Newsletter is published and distributed by JESNA.