

WORLD COUNCIL OF JEWISH COMMUNAL SERVICE

HOWARD CHARISH
President, WCJCS

and

THEODORE COMET
Executive Vice President, WCJCS

The WCJCS seeks to enhance Jewish life and strengthen Jewish communities by stimulating professional growth, leadership development, and connection among Jewish communal workers throughout the world. Responding to requests from participants at the Ninth Quadrennial, held in Jerusalem in 1998, the WCJCS has embarked on a year-round program of expanded activities.

The World Council of Jewish Communal Service is pleased to greet and honor its older sibling—the Jewish Communal Service Association—on the occasion of the Association’s 100th Anniversary.

JCSA has led the way in the development of Jewish communal service based on the highest professional standards, including extraordinary technical skills, Jewish commitment, involvement in the larger Jewish community, and a global view of the community we serve. WCJCS is extending that professionalism and global view on a worldwide basis.

The most profound contribution JCSA has made from the overseas perspective is the redefining of the volunteer-professional relationship. The *Association* pioneered the concept of a professional-lay leadership partnership, a team working together in a more effective manner for the benefit of the community.

By contrast, the overseas model of the Jewish professional was too often a polarized version: either the professional was a rabbi to be looked up to or a Shamesh to be looked down upon. Building on the JCSA model, WCJCS is fostering the team approach throughout the world, providing a more productive and wholesome working relationship.

BACKGROUND

Recognizing that the same conditions, circumstances, and events often affect Jewish communal service organizations throughout the world, a group of professional leaders collaborated to create the first International Conference of Jewish Communal Service in an newly united Jerusalem in 1967. It was an attempt to exchange ideas and further a sense of commonality among communal service workers throughout the world. The conference soon became a quadrennial event.

At the Eighth Quadrennial in 1994, the organization was transformed into an ongoing, year-round operation, and its name was changed to the World Council of Jewish Communal Service.

WCJCS

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Jewish professionals are expected to sharpen their skills and renew their purpose, wherever they are employed. Many lack the resources needed for professional develop-

ment. Thus, WCJCS seeks to provide them with continuing professional support, counsel, and the exchange of knowledge, experience and resources. WCJCS is an important adjunct in the development of worldwide Jewish communal professional leadership that can establish cooperative, working relationships in addressing communal issues locally, nationally and internationally.

TURNING INWARD

Concern has been expressed about the growing territoriality and turning inward of Jewish communities and the professionals who serve it. Such parochialism further validates WCJCS' mission to enhance and promote interpersonal networking so as to foster a greater commitment to a global communal profession.

Political transformations in Eastern Europe and elsewhere have given rise to many newly created communal organizations, and an underdeveloped cadre of professionals desperately needed to provide required services. In the more highly developed communities, many professionals are not adequately prepared to cope with rapidly changing Jewish agendas, social service needs, and the building of Jewish identity and community. They too can benefit from increased professional resources and assistance.

THE PARADOX OF DISTANCE

There is a paradox in our rapidly changing Jewish communal world. The availability of high-speed transportation and the emergence of new forms of instant communications bring

our world closer together. Yet given the dispersion of Jewish communities, and the unequal distribution of resources, there is also a growing sense of separation and isolation. In these circumstances, many professionals would greatly benefit from opportunities to increase their networking and professional development.

A NEW GENERATION

There is a new generation of Jewish communal workers who would benefit from connections with colleagues throughout the world, to attain an international perspective that would broaden the local view. The WCJCS Quadrennial and its other ongoing programs can play a major role in this important regard.

WCJCS TODAY

The highly successful Ninth Quadrennial in Jerusalem in 1998 attracted 750 communal professionals from all over the world. A clear message was sounded at the conference—a demand for even greater year-round programming. Thus WCJCS has embarked upon an ambitious program of expanded activities. With the approval of the leadership, a Seven Point Plan has been put in motion: Quadrennial, Annual Conference in Israel, Regional Conferences, promotion of affinity groups on specific concerns (e.g., service to the aging, women's issues, professional training), special professional consultation missions, leadership development professional exchanges, and improved communications.

In concert with JCSA and other partners, WCJCS is committed to helping strengthen Jewish life and advance our profession throughout the Jewish world.