

Telling Our Story

A Life of Hope,
Meaning and Happiness
at the JCC.

WHEN YOU HAVE A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, what opportunities exist for them post-secondary school? "Not many," shares Susan Cohen. "That's why the JCC has such a special place in our family's hearts!"

Susan's daughter Rachel, a 29-year old with some challenging developmental disabilities, has been attending the JCC's Adult Day Program for 8 years. "Rachel is stimulated and challenged each day with activities and social experiences that give her the tools she needs to progress in all areas of development. She takes Zumba classes, studies music and art, and cooks with her friends. She learns how to take care of herself, how to interact with others and other invaluable life skills each day. When she comes home at night, she shows us dance moves she's learned and shares stories about her day. She is more engaging, more vibrant, more smiley than on any day she has off. And that smile on her face says it all. It means everything. It means the world," says Susan.

THIS PAGE: Rachel visiting her teacher's dog, Valentino
OPPOSITE: Rachel assembling mishloach manot for Purim.

Like any parent, Susan's hope is to see her daughter find happiness and a sense of purpose in life and Rachel finds both here at the JCC. It's a place where she can be in the mainstream of life and surrounded by people who are eager to interact with her so she never has to feel alone.

This incredible experience spills over into our community. "Rachel and I might be in town and run into people she's met at the JCC and they enthusiastically approach her, greet her by name, and then introduce themselves to me. It's moments like this that make us so grateful—to be given an opportunity to connect with others in our extended community this way. It's good for Rachel, good for our family and good for the community we live in."

"Over the years, I have observed how the JCC takes enormous heartfelt responsibility to provide for special populations—for kids with special needs like Rachel, or

the frail elderly, or kids with cancer. What goes on inside these beautiful walls, with all its incredible programming and people, is a beautiful thing. And I believe that the JCC cares for everyone in this community because they view everyone in this community as important."

"When I think back to the days when I first began seeking out programs for her as a little girl, I remember how disheartening it was to see how limiting or boring or isolating most programs were. But when I found the JCC, I was immediately optimistic. I could tell right away that this was where I wanted Rachel to be. And now, all these years later, I am so proud of all her achievements—her trips into the community where she can practice her social skills and money management and other invaluable life skills that will translate into more independent living."





“I could tell right away that this was where I wanted Rachel to be.”

PHOTO: Rachel enjoying crafts with the Adult Day Program.

One of Rachel's biggest struggles is with expressive language, being able to communicate her feelings, and just last week she had a milestone, a real 'ah-ha' moment. "We were listening to music together and suddenly Rachel said she missed Valentino, her teacher Maria's dog. I told her to 'use her words' and tell Maria how she felt when she saw her the next day. And she did. And that Friday, Maria brought Rachel to her house to play with Valentino. She got to do something special because she used her words.

For us, this is enormous progress. And all these small moments add up. Rachel is developing an educated palate. She loves to eat out in restaurants and has evolved into a charming young lady. And she keeps learning. She gains valuable social experience just walking down the halls at the JCC. There's nothing like it. Without the JCC, life just wouldn't be the same."

The Adult Day Program at the JCC Guttenberg Center for Special Services, is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. "We pride ourselves on providing programming for all individuals who are differently-abled including our young adults," says Shelley Levy, Director of Special Services at the JCC. "As a true community center, we are fortunate to provide services that do not exist elsewhere to meet the unique needs of our program participants, but what makes The Guttenberg Center for Special Services and our Adult Day Program so successful and widely respected is the diversity of the JCC itself, with all its varied programs and friendly people who give our participants the opportunity to practice what they learn. We are an embracing, inclusive community that welcomes and supports this special population and celebrates the sense of belonging, increased self-esteem, independence and acceptance they gain from being a member of our JCC community."

For more information on special needs services at the JCC or to find out how you can support these vital programs, call Shelley Levy at 201.408.1489 or email slevy@jccotp.org.

tributes

Looking for a way to mark a special occasion such as a wedding, anniversary, bar/bat mitzvah, or a birth of a child, or to honor someone's memory? Make a donation to an individual endowment fund in their honor! All gifts over \$18 are recognized with a card to the recipient and listed in this publication. For more info or to make a tribute please contact Fran Koszer at 201.408.1404 or visit jccotp.org and click "Donate."

21ST CENTURY FUND

From Randi and Michael Kollender to Laura Freeman in memory of Grace Miller

From Lynn and Jonathan Norton to The Gelsey Family in memory of Myrna Gelsey

AL & SUSAN WHITE HOLOCAUST EDUCATION FUND FOR YOUTH

From Susan White in memory of Al White's August birthday

ARLEEN & CHUCK WAYTE SCHOLARSHIP FUND FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

From Amy Zagin to Sharon and Peter Kestenbaum in honor of their daughter Lori's marriage

From Amy and David Zagin to Jennifer Schiffman in honor of being named the JCC's Volunteer of the Year

From Amy and David Zagin to David Rosenblatt in honor of him receiving the JCC's Chairperson of the Year Award

From Amy and David Zagin to JoJo Rubach in honor of him being named the next President of the JCC

From Sharon Potolsky to Amy and David Zagin, congratulations on Andrew's graduation and Ally's upcoming graduation

From Larry Auerbach, JTC Trucking, to Myrna and Yale Block in memory of their son Brian

From The Zagin Family to Eric Kleiner and Family with sincere condolences on the loss of his beloved grandmother

From Amy and David Zagin to Alissa and Zach Epstein, congratulations on the birth of their baby

From Amy and David Zagin to Annette Scala in honor of receiving the Staff Recognition Award

From Amy and David Zagin to Tina Guberman in honor of her dedicated service to the JCC

From Chuck Wayte, Brock Trucking, to Myrna and Yale Block in memory of their son Brian

From The Zagin Family to Jennifer Schiffman and Family with sincere condolences on the loss of her beloved father

BERIT & MARTIN BERNSTEIN CONCERT FUND FOR SENIORS

From Berit and Martin Bernstein to Robert Silber and Family in memory of his mother Edith Silber

BERIT & MARTIN BERNSTEIN OPEN FORUM FUND

From Berit and Martin Bernstein to Steven Blicht wishing him a very speedy recovery

From Berit and Martin Bernstein to Phyllis and Paul Tauber in memory of Phyllis' mother Pearl Franck

BERNIE AND RUTH WEINFLASH SHIRAH FUND IN TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW LAZAR

From Temple Emanu-El of Closter to Carol Kopelman in memory of Bernie and Ruth Weinflash

From The Dornfeld Family to Jody Konstadt in memory of Bernie and Ruth Weinflash

From your friends in Shirah to Judy Frank Kershner in memory of Rabbi Jack Frank

From SHIRAH members Richard and Phyllis Rosen

From Marilyn Linder to The Weinflash Family in memory of Ruth and Bernie Weinflash

From Arnold R. Sollar and Elaine Sollar Eisen to Jody Konstadt in memory of Bernie and Ruth Weinflash

BERNSTEIN-SLOTE MEMORIAL FUND FOR SENIOR COMPUTER LITERACY

From Bob and Carol Slot-Bernstein to Roslyn Lampert in memory of her brother

CAMP DREAM STREET-PEARL SEIDEN SUMMER PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WITH CANCER AND OTHER BLOOD DISORDERS

From Kids4Caring to Lisa Robins, thanks so much for coming to Kids4Caring

From Debby, Dov, Elizabeth and Abigail Bacharach to Sylvain Siboni and Family in memory of Jacques Siboni

From Debby, Dov, Elizabeth, and Abigail Bacharach to Judy and Sylvain Siboni in honor of Arielle Siboni's marriage to Joshua Grossman

From Pearl Seiden to Nancy and Peter Brown in memory of her mother Bernice Weinstein