

## An Evening of Mind Games with Schoke JFS Set for April 29th: Cocktails, Dinner, Honors, and a Mentalist

By Lynn Saltz, Schoke JFS Marketing and Communications Coordinator

The annual gala of the Elayne and James Schoke Jewish Family Service, *An Evening with Schoke JFS*, will be held on Sunday, April 29 at 5:30 PM at the Hilton Stamford Hotel. Schoke JFS will present the 39th Annual Mitzvah Awards to Jeri Appel and Gail G. and Stephen Trell and the 12th Annual Young Leadership Award to F. Robb Caster.

JERI APPEL, a Stamford resident since fifth grade, is an active volunteer for many organizations including Temple Sinai, Boy Scout Troop 15, sponsored by the Jewish War Veterans, and the Stamford Regional Agriscience and Technology Center. Jeri is also a graduate of UJF's Behrend Institute for

Leadership. At Schoke JFS, Jeri helps run Kosher Food Pantry Fresh Produce events, the Passover and Thanksgiving food and coat drives, and is a member of the An Evening with Schoke JFS Planning Committee.

GAIL G. AND STEPHEN TRELL are lifelong members of the Stamford Jewish community. Gail's philanthropic and volunteer causes include Starfish Connection, the Stamford JCC JumpStart program for children with special needs, and the Jewish Historical Society. In addition, since 2010, she has also raised the spirits of thousands as a Health and Humor Associates clown at Stamford Hospital. At Schoke JFS, Gail has served on the Saul Cohen – Schoke JFS Lecture committee and as a board member for the past four years.

Stephen and Vegas, the Trell's standard poodle, are frequent "friendly visitors" to the Stamford JCC JumpStart program. Stephen has served as the President of the Stamford Chamber of Commerce, President of the Stamford JCC, and on the Saul Cohen – Schoke JFS Lecture committee. Gail and Stephen are the recipients of the 2003 Jewish Historical Society Heritage Award and the 2013 Hyacinthe and Harold Hoffman Humanitarian Award.

F. ROBB CASTER has always been a "people person" with an entrepreneurial spirit. He is Vice President of Marketing for Building and Land Technology, a privately held real estate equity, development and property management firm that has completed Harbor Point, a transformative, mixed-use development in Stamford.

Robb has enjoyed helping many organizations, including Pacific House, the Stamford Museum and Nature Center,

The Preservation Society of Newport County, the American Theatre Wing, and UJA/JCC of Greenwich. Robb is a long-time supporter of Schoke JFS. He was instrumental in designing and building the agency's first website and online presence.

This year's celebration will also welcome Jon Stetson, the inspiration for the popular CBS series *The Mentalist*. The audience will be awed by Jon's performance because he knows what you're really thinking. Jon has performed for three US Presidents, the King of Sweden and the Royal Family of Monaco. The evening's events will be hosted by the Master of Ceremonies, Stamford's own, Alan Kalter, the voice of *The Late Show with David Letterman*. The evening is co-chaired by Liz Kitay and Ronnie Sichel and the auction is chaired by Sandy Speter.

Cocktails begin at 5:30 pm followed by dinner. A live and silent auction featuring items such as dinners at Columbus Park, Capital Grille, Barcelona, and BarTaco, tickets to several Broadway plays, a weekend getaway in New York City, and tickets to the symphony and sporting events. The "mind games" will follow the auction and the evening will conclude with a dessert reception.

General tickets include cocktails, dinner, the performance and dessert for \$180. Show tickets will include a dessert reception for \$65 per person. Please visit [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org) to reserve your tickets.

To discuss donations for the evening through corporate sponsorships, journal ads in recognition of the honorees, or for local businesses, please contact Lisa Rich, Schoke JFS Donor Relations Coordinator at 203-921-4161 or [lrich@ctjfs.org](mailto:lrich@ctjfs.org).



Mitzvah Award Recipient Jeri Appel

Photo: Aviva Mailer Photography



Mitzvah Award Recipients Gail G. and Stephen Trell

Photo: Alison Wachstein Photography



Young Leadership Award F. Robb Caster

Photo: Alison Wachstein Photography



Jon Stetson, America's Master Mentalist

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



### Who are you sustaining and nurturing?

Each year, Schoke Jewish Family Service asks our friends and donors to support us through our Annual Friends Campaign, and each year, we are overwhelmed by your generosity. But why do people give to Schoke JFS?

The answer is as varied as the individuals who donate. Some do it for altruistic reasons or a belief in *tikkun olam*. Some do it because their friends are donors and have inspired them to donate as well. Some do it because they have benefitted personally from our services, and some do it because they know someone whom Schoke JFS has helped and they want to help too!

In my dream world, every one of our hundreds of donors fully understands and supports the mission of Schoke JFS: helping those in need guided by Jewish tradition, and not turning anyone away.

Schoke Jewish Family Service provides that help even if our mission-driven services provide no revenue to the agency. Take Abe, for example, who lost his job, and after being evicted from his apartment, was living in his car. Abe needed Schoke JFS to help him find a place to live and a job to support himself, which we did. Or Sharon, who upon receiving Shabbat meals through our Kosher Food Pantry, said that the program had such a profound effect on her life and that of her son, Jon. She had wanted to develop a closer connection to her synagogue and having weekly Shabbat meals that she couldn't otherwise afford afforded her the connection she had been seeking. She and her son now sit down to a Shabbat meal every week and they have become active congregants at their synagogue.

As I write this, we are approaching the holidays of Purim and Passover, two holidays that stress compassion and caring for those in our community that have less than we do. On Purim, we are asked to give *matanot l'evyonim*, gifts to those who are lacking basic needs, and on Passover, we are asked to provide food to those without, and invite them into our homes. Schoke JFS is privileged to be able to fulfill these mitzvots with you, and because of you. Your generosity makes this, after all we do, possible.

Have a happy and healthy Passover!

Matt Greenberg, CEO



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Lynn Saltz, Editor

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Schoke JFS has expanded its reach across the Greater Bridgeport community, providing the same critical services it offers in Stamford from our Bridgeport Office:

- ✓ Home Companion Aides and CNAs for Stay-at-Home Care
- ✓ Counseling and Group Counseling
- ✓ Case Management and Emergency Assistance
- ✓ Jewish Family Life Education Programs

BRIDGEPORT OFFICE LOCATED AT:

**Jewish Senior Services**  
**Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Campus**  
4200 Park Avenue, Third Floor  
Bridgeport, CT

For more information about how to receive services through our Bridgeport office, please call **203.921.4161** or e-mail [info@ctjfs.org](mailto:info@ctjfs.org).

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



They say it takes a village to raise a child. What I know is that it takes a dedicated Jewish community with exceptional staff for Schoke JFS to accomplish the miracles it has over the past 40 years. Schoke JFS donors, volunteers and staff are living the Jewish value of *tikkun olam*, making the world a better place. Being a volunteer is a gift you give yourself and others. Volunteering is a great opportunity to get involved in the community, meet people, and do a *mitzvah*. By volunteering you are enriching the lives of those who are vulnerable in our community and in need of help.

The highlight of my week is delivering Shabbat meals. When a client opens the door, the look of appreciation and Shabbat wishes that greets me erase the everyday woes of life and fill me with a sense of wellbeing. One client always gives me a few dollars for *tzedakah*. It is her way of saying thank you and of giving back to the community.

Thank you to everyone who volunteers their time and donates to Schoke JFS. If you are not yet involved or want to become more involved there are many volunteer opportunities available. We need you and the community needs you.

Schoke JFS has many options for volunteers, including short- and long-term commitments. Ongoing volunteer opportunities include organizing, managing or working at the Kosher Food Pantry, delivering food pantry items, delivering Shabbat meals provided by 613 restaurant or a package of produce from our Fresh Produce Day, or making a friendly visit to a home-bound client. There are also one-time opportunities such as preparing and distributing baskets of food for Jewish holidays and Thanksgiving or assisting the staff with event mailings or other administrative tasks. Don't see something that interests you or fits your skill set? No problem! Let us help you find a volunteer activity that will match your interests and available time.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Jonathan Fass at 203-921-4161 or email him at [jfass@ctjfs.org](mailto:jfass@ctjfs.org) or go to our website ([www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org)), click on "Volunteer" and complete the online volunteer form.

You can make a difference in someone's life by just volunteering.

Beverly A. Stein, President

# Schoke JFS THANKS

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FEDERATION FOR JEWISH PHILANTHROPY  
of Upper Fairfield County

**FOR THEIR GENEROUS  
ONGOING SUPPORT**

## HAPPENING IN BRIDGEPORT AND BEYOND

### *Schoke JFS Services Continue to Expand*

By Jonathan Fass, *Chief Operating Officer*

In December 2016, Schoke JFS moved into its new offices in Bridgeport, located on the third floor of Jewish Senior Services, 4200 Park Avenue. This move came with the merger of the Jewish Federations that served the twelve communities from Norwalk to Stratford. With this merger, Schoke JFS more than doubled its catchment area and assumed responsibility for serving thousands of additional families across Fairfield County.

In the past year, Schoke JFS has continued to expand its services through its Bridgeport office. With expanded staffing, the core programs of our agency are now offered from this new address. Each week, older adults participate in one of three weekly psycho-social support groups for successful aging. We have partnered with local synagogues to provide bereavement counseling and offer parenting classes for families considering divorce. Individuals can now meet with our therapists or psychiatrists for individual counseling. Clients can now find the support services they need to find employment, housing, emergency assistance or collect food from our Kosher Food Pantry and Fresh Produce Day distribution sites. Our Home Companion program, a home healthcare referral service, now serves upper Fairfield County and can provide low-cost, quality, stay-at-home healthcare services for families in need.

Recently, Schoke JFS helped Marc Frankel to find new home at Jewish Senior Services. Restricted to a wheelchair, Marc needed to relocate to a facility that could provide ad-



Marc Frankel in his new home at Jewish Senior Services. His move was made possible through the Schoke JFS Case Management department.

ditional support for daily living. Our Case Management department coordinated his move and Marc is now successfully transitioning to his new home. This was possible through the broader network of services and community collaborations that our expansion to the Bridgeport area provides.

As the community continues to seek our services we are committed to providing comprehensive, compassionate care. If you or someone you love needs assistance, please call our Bridgeport office at 203-659-3601, reach out to us at [info@ctjfs.org](mailto:info@ctjfs.org), or go online to learn about all our services at [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org). If you would like to support our efforts in the Bridgeport area, with either a donation or as a volunteer, please contact Jonathan Fass at 203-921-4161 or [jfass@ctjfs.org](mailto:jfass@ctjfs.org).

## SCHOKE JFS WELCOMES NEW STAFF MEMBERS



### **Dr. Toby Lazarus, Schoke JFS Brain Fitness Coordinator**

Toby has resided in Stamford for the past 19 years. Active in the BCDS parent's association, the JCC Center Women board, and UJF's Women's Philanthropy Board, she and her husband have four children aged 13-19. Dr. Lazarus received her BA in psychology from The Johns Hopkins University and her PhD from the University of Chicago where she specialized in neuropsychology. She is excited to bring her neuroscience expertise to the Brain Fitness program and hopes to grow its individual and group programs.



### **Cindy Phelps, Home Companion Coordinator-Upper Fairfield County**

Cindy joins Schoke JFS as the Home Companion Coordinator for Upper Fairfield County. She has a BA degree in Gerontology and Family Studies from University of Connecticut and is a Certified Nursing Assistant. Cindy has worked for the Town of Westport as their Senior Center Director and Catholic Charities as the Director for the state and federally funded Senior Nutrition Program during the past twenty-seven years. With Cindy's help, Schoke JFS looks forward to expanding Home Companion services in the greater Bridgeport area.

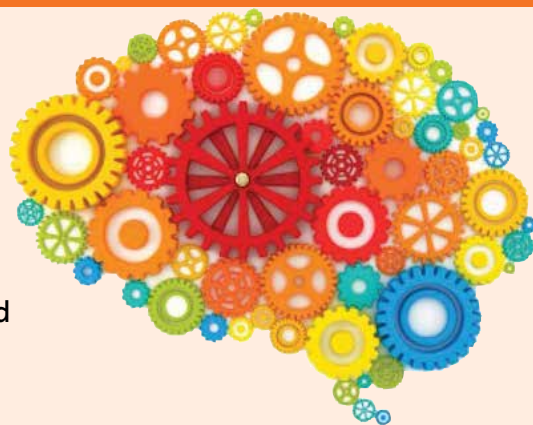


### **Taylor Ross, Jewish Twenties and Thirties Coordinator**

Taylor is the new Jewish Twenties and Thirties Coordinator. She is currently the Corporate Relations and Special Events Manager at the Westport Country Playhouse. Having started at the playhouse in August of 2016 as the Development fellow and promoted in January to the Artistic and Management Associate, Taylor has a strong background in planning special events. Previously, Taylor was performing across the country with some of her favorite roles being *Hairspray* (Tracy Turnblad), *Fatty Fatty No Friends!* (Bully) and *Urinetown* (Little Sally). She studied at Italy's Accademia dell' Arte and graduated from Muhlenberg College with a degree in theater and music.

## Brain Fitness Program

Want to stimulate your brain? The Schoke JFS Brain Fitness Program offers games and puzzles in a casual, supportive setting to inspire confidence and provide practical support to help you target your personal goals. Private and Individual sessions and dynamic group classes available.



### **UPCOMING BRAIN FITNESS GROUPS:**

**Monday, April 30**  
Memory and Recall

**Monday, June 11**  
Attention Skills

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM @ Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Ave  
Advance registration suggested. Light refreshments will be served.  
JCC Members \$8 per session • Community \$10 per session

To register, please contact Connie Cirillo Freeman at 203-487-0983 or email at [cfreeman@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:cfreeman@stamfordjcc.org), or for additional information contact Dr. Toby Lazarus, Schoke JFS Brain Fitness Program Coordinator at 203-921-4161 ext. 121 or [tlazarus@ctjfs.org](mailto:tlazarus@ctjfs.org).

## Send a Schoke JFS Tribute Card



Tribute cards are a meaningful way to celebrate with friends and family members on their Bar or Bat Mitzvah, graduation, wedding, birthday or any other *simcha* or special event. They can also be sent to family or friends in honor or commemoration of a loved one. There is no fixed amount for a donation and the card will be sent on your behalf. The inscription notes the purpose of your donation.

**To make a tribute card donation, go online to [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org) or call 203-921-4161.**

## ALEXA...Help Me?

By Eve Moskowitz, LCSW, Director of Clinical Services

A controversial topic for the times is the role of seniors in this technology obsessed society and how it affects their emotional connections and well-being. With the younger generations tethered to their devices, there is little opportunity for dinner conversation or even weekly phone calls to “check in.” But the plight of the senior population and technology is affected in many more ways than difficulty getting a live voice on the phone. With the shift from live and personal help to obtain an appointment, purchase a plane ticket or register for a gym class, the senior population may find themselves at a disadvantage. Many seniors become frustrated and anxious, having to wade through an audio voice response system or sign onto a web portal locked behind irretrievable usernames and ever changing passwords. The feeling of being disconnected and incapable of managing daily activities can create anxiety and fear amongst those who already feel vulnerable to the process of aging or being “aged out.”

Baby boomers who were raised watching the Jetsons and Star Trek can hardly believe that cars can drive themselves, phones access the face behind the voice and a thumb print replaces a name. The Silent Generation, the demographic born between the mid 1920's and 1940's, are even more awe struck. This generation remembers the home entertainment system being a radio and a telephone with an operator to place the call. Their learning curve often feels insurmountable, struggling to embrace the cloud, the App store, Alexa, and her nemesis Google Home.

There are of course many seniors who have been able to “catch on,” and use recent technological advances to enhance and strengthen their lives. The ability to FaceTime with relatives who live far away, the opportunity to access an online support group and countless other choices to connect to the outside world, and options for home delivery and online financial management are wonderful alternatives for those who can navigate the system. For others, however, the frustration of failure to master the choices that so many others use to their advantage creates sadness and fear, in a demographic that has so many other vulnerabilities to handle.

There are many classes offered to help guide and teach those who were not weaned on a computer keyboard, but the ever changing system, with continual upgrades, makes it difficult to maintain the learning curve. Just when one feels adept at negotiating the system, the system changes and the intuitiveness of having to change with it is again lost in anxiety and fear of the unknown.

So, what is the senior population who struggle with technology and all its complexities to do? As in all arenas of life that present challenge, pull on the coping skills of the past, when different life situations necessitated strong and adaptive coping skills. This is a generation that has survived life experience, who are in many ways more accomplished in their survival than the millennials, who rely on auto-correct and Siri for guidance. Take advantage of classes designed to help master a new skill, but be patient with the learning curve and always use breathing techniques to keep stress at a minimum.

Computer classes are available at Schoke Jewish Family Service for one-session coaching on how to use email or an eight-session course on Microsoft Word or Excel. For further information, please contact Elaine Mitchell at 203-921-4161, ext. 110.

## KICKIN' IT WITH



JTT (Jewish Twenties & Thirties) has started the year off dancing away! Every month the group gets together for happy hour at a different bar in the area. Last month, we were at Rascal Flatts, where we participated in line dancing, laughter and more! Upcoming events will include the first meeting of our JTT Giving Circle, JTT's new tzedakah program, events centered around the holidays, and of course our regular monthly happy hours that always draw a crowd! JTT continues to grow as a dynamic program connecting local Jews in their 20s and 30s through social, educational, cultural, and volunteer events. For upcoming events and to learn more about JTT or the Giving Circle, search for the “Jewish Twenties & Thirties” group on Facebook. For more information and to be added to our mailing lists, please contact Taylor Ross at [tross@ctjfs.org](mailto:tross@ctjfs.org).



Tova Feldstein and Ashley Mail



Ariella Goldstein, Brett Hillsberg and Jessica Klein

HOARDING  
To Keep or Not to Keep?

By Sarah Elliott-Stowe, Home Companion Case Manager

Some days I look at my home and wonder why I keep stuff that my husband and son don't need. In an attempt to keep my home nice and neat, I discard “stuff.” I then hear from them, “Hey, I needed that,” or “I was saving that, just in case I lost the original.” Striving to maintain less clutter is a problem that everyone can relate to. Thankfully, this is not a hoarding situation.

According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, hoarding is the persistent difficulty of discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value. The difference between hoarding and clutter is in a cluttered home you would still be able use the rooms in a purposeful manner. In a hoarding situation, items fill and block active living spaces so they cannot be used, or use is hampered by the large amount of items.

The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services says, for those who hoard, the quantity of their collected items sets them apart from other people. Commonly hoarded items may be newspapers, magazines, paper and plastic bags, cardboard boxes, photographs, household supplies, food, pets and clothing.

This behavior usually has toxic effects – emotional, physical, social, financial and legal. According to the website [www.childrenofhoarders.com](http://www.childrenofhoarders.com), the emotional effects of hoarding include embarrassment about their parent's home and frustration and resentment towards the hoarder. Hoarders are at a greater risk of falling, asthma, allergies, and social isolation. When pets are in the home, objects often get covered with animal waste and the air quality becomes noxious. Financial trouble may arise when hoarders buy things they don't need, overlook bill payments, or accumulate debt due to overspending. You can be evicted from a rental home and, if you own your own home, you may have issues with the fire department or zoning board. Additional legal action may be taken if you have young children or pets in the residence. Children may be removed from a home because of unsanitary conditions such as bio-hazardous waste, rotting food, insects, or items that are piled too high and may cause injuries.

When downsizing after retirement, some may be unable to part with belongings or to envision the more limited space they are moving into, overfilling their new environment. Some older persons develop hoarding behavior as a secondary symptom to dementia and can no longer keep up with the organization necessary to maintain order.

The Alzheimer's Association estimates that 13% of people over the age of 65 develop dementia; of these, approximately 20% exhibit hoarding behavior. There is a higher prevalence of hoarding behavior among those who are single and socially isolated.

According to *U.S. News and World Report*, those seeking to help loved ones with hoarding should recognize the difference between hoarding and sentimentality, consider other reasons for hoarding behaviors, seek professional support, and not discard items without the cooperation of the hoarder. A number of treatment and intervention strategies have demonstrated some success. Be aware that everyone looks at their circumstances differently. If you feel that your situation may be overwhelming, please seek assistance.

The professionals at Schoke Jewish Family Service can offer guidance to persons who may be exhibiting hoarding behaviors. Please contact Isrella Knopf, Director of Senior Services at [isrelak@ctjfs.org](mailto:isrelak@ctjfs.org). Schoke Jewish Family Service also offers a home cleaning program through its residential cleaning service which is sensitive to hoarding situations. For more information about cleaning, please contact Jodi Maxner 203-921-4161 ext. 125 or email [residential\\_cleaning@ctjfs.org](mailto:residential_cleaning@ctjfs.org).

# 6TH ANNUAL SAUL COHEN – SCHOKE JFS LECTURE

## Bruce Feiler, Presenter - *Sharing Secrets for a Happy Family*

On November 9th, with over 225 guests in the auditorium of the Ferguson Library, Schoke Jewish Family Service presented the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Saul Cohen – Schoke JFS Lecture. Bruce Feiler, the featured speaker, a *New York Times* columnist and bestselling author of twelve books, shared stories of his life and travels and the passion that motivates him to help families lead joyous lives. Titled *The Family Today: Secrets to Stronger Relationships and Greater Happiness at Any Age*, Bruce's talk spoke about the themes of his most recent book, *The First Love Story: Adam, Eve and Us* and one of his most widely read self-help books, *The Secrets of Happy Families*.

The lecture was offered through the generosity of Mimi and Saul Cohen. It is a gift they give annually to a grateful community at no cost.

Prior to the community lecture, a Patrons' Reception was held in the library to thank a group of generous donors for their support. A book signing and dessert buffet followed the community lecture.

Thanks for a successful evening go to the steering committee: Betsy and Mike Stone, Sheila Romanowitz, Gail G. and Stephen Trell, and Joanna and Mark Frank.

The greater Stamford community thanks Saul and Mimi Cohen for their generosity and vision in supporting this annual and much anticipated lecture.



Photos by Aviva Maller Photography

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In honor of Nate Himmelstein's  
Bar Mitzvah

### NAOMI AND BERNARD WARMFLASH

In memory of Marvin Weinberg

### LYNNE WEINBERG

In honor of Jim Schoke's 93rd  
birthday

### ROBERTA AND EUGENE ZINBARG

In memory of Joan Zinbarg

## LEGACY DONATIONS

*Schoke JFS extends our deepest appreciation to the following people  
and their families for their support of JFS through a legacy gift:*

ADRIENNE AND MICHAEL  
ALEXANDER

THE ESTATE OF SHEILA CARMINE☆

MIMI COHEN

SAUL COHEN

THE ESTATE OF

THOMAS GILMARTIN☆

MERYL AND RON JAPHA

NAN AND PAUL GORDON

GRECIA AND RON☆ GROSS

JUDY AND ADAM RIN

HILDE SCHERAGA☆

ELAYNE☆ AND JAMES SCHOKE

JESSICA AND LAURENCE SHEINMAN

BEVERLY AND DAVID STEIN

LINDA B. GORNITSKY AND

HARVEY WEBER

RENEE ZINN

☆ *Of blessed memory*

# A BIG THANK YOU to all our donors!



A special thank you to all who contrib-  
uted and increased their gift towards the  
Matching Challenge Incentive.

This year's annual campaign has been a  
great success and we owe it all to YOU!

Your gift allows Schoke JFS to continue  
to provide support and services to indi-  
viduals and families in our communi-  
ty who are faced with difficult life  
challenges and often have no-  
where else to turn.

If you have not yet made a  
donation and would like to,  
please call Lisa Rich at 203-  
921-4161 or go online to  
[www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org).

## *It Takes a Village!*



The work of Schoke JFS couldn't happen without our dedicated volunteers and staff! During our annual Thanksgiving Food and Coat Drive, our volunteers provided Thanksgiving meals to families across the community, while clients had the opportunity to "shop" for coats and outerwear. A few weeks before, students from Temple Beth El participated in our annual High Holiday food drive at Stop and Shop. In December, Schoke JFS staff contributed to our annual adopt-a-family program, providing over thirty families with holiday gifts. The following day, we celebrated the graduation of a new group of Home Companion aides, who will help the elderly and ill to remain at home with quality care.

### SAVE THE DATE!



## Disrupt Aging in your Community

**June 6, 2018 • 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM**

**Stamford Jewish Community Center**

1035 Newfield Avenue, Stamford, CT

In an effort to engage the public in transforming attitudes about aging, Schoke Jewish Family Service, the Stamford JCC and AARP are partnering to present a 90-minute program entitled *Disrupt Aging in your Community*, which is designed to bridge the gap between generations. This interactive session focuses on aging from an intergenerational perspective, offering thought-provoking discussion and activities. Details to follow at [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org).

## CASE MANAGEMENT

# A CLIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Rebekah Kanefsky, LPC, Director of Case Management

In the past, I have shared research, statistics, updates and information about the unmet needs across our community and how the Schoke JFS Case Management department helps clients to rebuild their lives. For this issue, I felt that a letter from a current client would best show the work of the Case Management department. Meet Marty and Jordan, a father and son who came to SJFS at a critical moment and how our agency could help. The letter below was addressed to Matt Greenberg, our CEO:

Dear Mr. Greenberg,

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to your staff for assisting me and my family when we were in times of need.

Back in July, I started working with the Case Management department to get my father's and my life back on track. When I first reached out to Schoke Jewish Family Service, my father Marty was homeless, bouncing back and forth between my basement and that of my sister in New York for nearly one year. It had gotten to a point where the situation was creating breakdowns in my marriage, my relationship with my sister and other involved family members, and even issues with my children. But worst of all, it was creating what appeared to become an irreparable rift with my father.

We started off with some individual counselling for me to be able to come to terms with what my needs would be. We then moved to father and son sessions so that we could fully express our feelings toward one another. Our therapist was very aware from the start as to what type of person my father was and kept our sessions focused.

Then, there was a magical moment when I received a call from the Case Management department, informing me that there would be an opportunity to secure new housing without the long list, if my father submitted all of the required information immediately. For most of the previous year, my father had been unable to follow-through on nearly all the personal goals which would help him move out of my house. With this new-found motivation, he filed for Social Security, got a CT photo ID, and completed the application process on time. Within a short period, we were informed that he was accepted and could have a new home by the start of February.

As of this weekend, my father has moved out of my house to start the next chapter of his life. I know that we are not done with all that is needed for my father to fully come to terms with how lucky he is. With more therapy there is more hope. We know that we cannot fully change him, but just the fact that he is now back in communication with his siblings and has a closer connection to our family is a good beginning.

I would like to thank your team for doing such wonderful work in helping our family at its toughest times.

Sincerely,

Jordan

This is but one of many successful case management stories. Though Jordan and Marty were able to find the help they needed, how many more will find themselves overwhelmed and incapable of getting back on their feet? Thankfully, Schoke JFS is there when you need them. If you know of someone who could use our case management services, please have them contact us at (203) 921-4161. All services are kept confidential.

## EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

# HOW SCHOKE JFS HELPS: *Filing for CT Unemployment*

Schoke JFS has an experienced staff with an excellent working knowledge of the options available for older persons who are seeking career opportunities or enrolling for unemployment benefits. While working one-on-one with clients to assess their skills, establish goals, and monitor their progress, the professionals in the Employment and Training department can help individuals back on the road to full employment.

The following is a letter from a recent client of Schoke JFS Employment and Training services:

I am a septuagenarian, Connecticut resident who recently filed for unemployment benefits for the very first time in my life.

As a computer-savvy marketing analytics specialist for my entire career, I found applying for unemployment benefits an experience surprisingly and unnecessarily complicated. At virtually every step in the online process, from logging into the site, to navigating the forms and enrolling in the online website, my frustration increased with every attempt.

At the beginning of my process, I was incorrectly told by friends already receiving unemployment benefits to go to the local Department of Labor (DOL) office in Stamford. At the DOL Bedford Street location, the customer services staff were polite and helpful. They did tell me that I could enroll

online but they also told me that I would have to go to the Bridgeport office as well (not the case).

I attempted to enroll online. The website seemed clear, so I completed my enrollment without any difficulty. However, I found the second section for filing weekly unemployment claims unclear, with some of the key wording confusing and very similar to the enrollment section.

Feeling frustrated and a bit stymied, I eventually reached out to the Schoke JFS Employment and Training program. The staff worked with me, patiently taking me through the online enrollment and unemployment claims process step by step. With this guidance, I successfully navigated the CT Department of Labor unemployment system.

It was close to two weeks from the time my unemployment began until finally, with Schoke JFS's guidance, I was able to successfully register and file the first and second week's unemployment claims without a hitch.

All is well now. I just wish I had gone to Schoke JFS sooner!

If you need assistance in your search for employment or navigating unemployment benefits, please contact Jodi Maxner, Job Developer at Schoke JFS at 203-921-4161 or email at [jmaxner@ctjfs.org](mailto:jmaxner@ctjfs.org).

## Schoke Jewish Family Service Ongoing Programs

### Brain Fitness Group

Monday, April 30th, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM  
at the Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue

Want to stimulate your brain power? The session will focus on memory and recall with practical support to help reach personal brain fitness goals. Advance registration suggested.

Light refreshments will be served.

JCC Members: \$8 per session.

Open to the community at \$10 per session.

Optional lunch following the session  
\$9 (under 60), \$4 suggested (over 60).

To register, contact Connie Cirillo Freeman  
at 203-487-0983 or email  
[cfreeman@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:cfreeman@stamfordjcc.org)

For additional information, contact Dr. Toby Lazarus, Schoke JFS Brain Fitness Program Coordinator at 203-921-4161 or [tlazarus@ctjfs.org](mailto:tlazarus@ctjfs.org).

### Let's Talk...

Seniors talk about common interests and concerns, facilitated by a Schoke Jewish Family Service counselor.

...in Stamford • Tuesdays, 11:00 AM, Free  
at the Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue  
Contact Sheila Duggan at 203-921-4161  
or [sduggan@ctjfs.org](mailto:sduggan@ctjfs.org).

...in Westport • Thursdays, 1:00 PM, Free  
at the Westport Senior Center,  
21 Imperial Avenue, Westport.  
Contact Sheila Duggan at 203-921-4161 or  
[sduggan@ctjfs.org](mailto:sduggan@ctjfs.org).

...in Fairfield • Mondays at 12:45 PM  
at the Bigelow Center for Senior Activities,  
100 Mona Terrace, Fairfield.  
Contact Amanda Geffner at 203-921-4161 or  
[ageffner@ctjfs.org](mailto:ageffner@ctjfs.org)

### Spousal Bereavement Group

Gather to share feelings and exchange ideas in a non-judgmental environment that provides emotional, practical, and spiritual support for grieving the loss of a spouse or significant other. Contact Amanda Geffner, Schoke JFS Therapist at 203-921-4161 or [ageffner@ctjfs.org](mailto:ageffner@ctjfs.org).

**Mondays at 10:30 AM**

at Congregation B'nai Israel,  
2710 Park Avenue, Bridgeport

**Fridays at 10:30 AM**

at Stamford JCC,  
1035 Newfield Road, Stamford

### Not Enough Money for Food?

Schoke JFS provides information and eligibility assistance for financial help to purchase food. For a consultation, please contact Rebekah Kanefsky, Schoke JFS Case Manager at 203-921-4161 or email [rkanefsky@ctjfs.org](mailto:rkanefsky@ctjfs.org).

חג פסח כשר ושמח

# Happy Passover

from the Board and Staff of  
Schoke Jewish Family Service



## Mitzvah Baskets Add Tzedakah to Every Occasion!

When you order a beautifully designed Mitzvah Basket for your celebration, the proceeds go directly to the Schoke JFS Kosher Food Pantry which provides food to thousands of individuals and families in our community.

Mitzvah Baskets and centerpieces are uniquely designed and custom ribbon colors can be used to fit the décor of your event. The decorative baskets are filled with “faux food,” symbolic of the food that is donated to the kosher food pantry.



**To order a Mitzvah Basket for your next event, go to [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org) or call 203-921-4161.**



## Let us help you make your home sparkle!

Schoke JFS' Residential Cleaning Service can help you get the job done. Trained and supervised cleaners provide regularly scheduled and seasonal cleaning.

Prices are competitive or slightly lower than the competition.

Revenues generated help us provide quality social services to those in need, in addition to offering employment to unemployed individuals in our community.

**For additional information, please call Jodi at 203-921-4161 or email [residential\\_cleaning@ctjfs.org](mailto:residential_cleaning@ctjfs.org)**

**HALSTEAD  
PROPERTY**

**Rhoda Freedberg**

Lic. R.E. Broker  
Director's Council



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