

CONSORTIUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS IN CENTRAL AGENCIES FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

No. 10 Winter 1999

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Special needs educators gather from around the country

Atlanta Hosts Colloquium

The Twelfth Annual Colloquium of the Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education was sponsored by the Jewish Educational Services in Atlanta, GA, March 1-3, 1998.

Participating in this stimulating and productive conference were: Barbara Brodsky, United Jewish Federation of Northeastern NY; Wendy Chesnov, JEA Center for Special Education, MetroWest; Shana Erenberg, BJE/ATT, Chicago; Ellen Fishman, Special Education Center of Cleveland; Elliot Fix, Jewish Community Federation of Rochester; Linda Forrest, CAJE of Denver; Ann Goldman, Commission for Jewish Education, West Palm Beach; Shaula Gurari, Commission of Jewish Education, Columbus; Becca Hornstein, Council for Jews with Special Needs, Phoenix; Flora Kupferman, BJE of San Francisco; Caren Levine, JESNA; Helen Miller, Commission on Jewish Education, Columbus; Anita Naftaly, Agency for Jewish Education, Detroit; Aviva Pollock, JESNA; Kenneth Schaefer, BJE of Los Angeles; Sharon Schanzer, Auerbach CAJE, Philadelphia; Rabbi Martin Schloss, BJE of Greater New York; Sara Seligson, BJE of Greater New York; Sara Rubinow Simon, BJE of Greater Washington; Rabbi Shabse Werther, Keshet of Wisconsin; and Linda Zimmerman, JES, Atlanta.

Highlights of the Twelfth Annual Colloquium

The Twelfth Annual Colloquium of the Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education was coordinated by Linda Zimmerman and the Jewish Educational Services of Atlanta in March

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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 of 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 3.

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

Announcing...

Our bar-mitzvah year! Save the date: April 18-20, 1999 - Chicago! The Thirteenth Annual Colloquium of the Consortium of Special Educators in Central Agencies for Jewish Education will be hosted by The Board of Jewish Education/ Associated Talmud Torahs of Chicago, Illinois. For further information, contact: Shana Erenberg, Director, Keshet Sunday School, Consultant, BJE/ATT, 3210 W. Dundee, Northbrook, IL 60062, (847) 205-0274, email: shanaeren@aol.com.

THE OTHER SHOE FINALLY FELL

On Friday July, 1, 1997, The United States Supreme Court vacated three federal circuit court decisions and asked each court to retry its case in light of the re-authorization of IDEA, Public Law 105-17. The three cases involved the provision of special education services to private and parochial school students on the site of the private school. The underlining issues of the cases were the U.S. Constitution's Establishment Clause (separation of church and state); the entitlements and rights of students whose parents placed them voluntarily in private schools and the extent of the local education agency's responsibility in providing special education and related services to those students.

Specifically, the cases were: *K.R. vs. Anderson* in the 7th Federal Circuit District (Illinois, Indiana & Wisconsin); *Fowler vs. Unified School District No. 259* in the 10th Federal Circuit District (Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Kansas, Oklahoma & New Mexico), and *Russman vs. Sobol* in the 2nd Federal Circuit District (New York, Connecticut & Vermont).

K.R. vs. Anderson focused on a child with multiple disabilities who was voluntarily enrolled in a parochial school by his parents. The child required the services of an instructional aid which the local school district agreed to provide - but only at the district public school. The parents challenged the district's refusal to provide the aid on the site of the parochial school. With different rulings at the various judicial levels, the case was eventually heard by the 7th Federal Circuit Court of Appeals which ruled in favor of the local school district.

Fowler vs. Unified School District involved a twelve year old student with a hearing impairment. The parents placed him in a private non-sectarian school and requested that the district provide an interpreter at public expense

A YEAR OF LITIGIOUS ADJUSTMENT AND REVERSAL

Rabbi Martin Schloss

in the private school. As in *K.R. vs. Anderson*, the various judicial levels ruled differently. Thus, it was heard at the 10th Federal Circuit Court of Appeals who ruled in favor of the parents with the caveat that the interpreter services should not cost more than what the district expends for those in its own public schools.

Russman vs. Sobol concerned a student with Downs Syndrome whose parents planned to place her in a Catholic parochial school. The parents sought to have the services of a consultant teacher, teaching aide, and occupational and speech therapists provided at the private school at public expense. As in the other two cases, it landed at the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals who ruled strongly in favor of the parents.

Russman became the third public vs. private special education case considered by the Supreme Court. It was anticipated that the Supreme Court would take on all three cases and finally provide some meaningful guidance in this area.

Proximate to the Supreme Court's consideration of trying these cases, IDEA was re-authorized. The text of the re-authorization contained wording that

related to the very issues raised in the three cases. Section 612 (a) (10) IDEA read:

- (A) Children Enrolled in Private Schools By Their Parents.
- (i) In General. - To the extent consistent with the number and location of children with disabilities in the State who are enrolled by their parents in private elementary and secondary schools, provision is made for the participation of those children in the program assisted or carried out under this part by providing for such children special education and related services in accordance with the following requirements unless the Secretary has arranged for services to those children under subsection (f):
- (I) Amounts expended for the provision of those services by a local educational agency shall be equal to a proportionate amount of Federal funds made available under this part.
- (II) Such services may be provided to children with disabilities on the premises of private, including parochial, schools, to the extent consistent with law...

Ironically, as reported in last year's article, the legislation finally stated the permissibility of providing public school services on the premises of parochial schools but, then only required a minuscule amount of expenditure and gave the district the option of not providing it in the private school. Thus, instead of the Supreme Court trying these cases, it requested that the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals retry their cases in light of this new legislation. This past year saw each of these cases retried. About six weeks ago the final case was decided. The results were as bad for private schools students with special needs as was anticipated - and

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, the Jewish Education Service of North America 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 enhance and 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."

THE OTHER SHOE FINALLY FELL

Continued from page 2

worse. In a proverbial sense, the anticipated shoe had fallen.

K.R. vs. Anderson found for the District and denied the instructional aid in the parochial school. *Fowler vs. United School District* held that the parents were to be reimbursed for their expenditures of the interpreter for the past, but not for the future. The most painful was *Russman vs. Sobol*. The court not only reversed its decision but extended its impact. Russman went from demanding the local education agency to provide fully for students in parochial schools to limiting the responsibility to the Federal proportionality. It then determined that even the Federal proportionality need not be used on the site of parochial schools. Ouch! All that had been achieved litigiously had been lost legislatively.

Is all lost? Are there ways to preserve these services? The answer, I believe, is a suggestion made in an article of an earlier edition of the Consortium's *Newsletter* (#3) - Collaboration and Negotiation. Fortunately, the intent of the law is not to prohibit additional services to parochial students, it simply does not require it. That means that states or local education agencies may elect to provide services beyond the federal proportion and may even do it in parochial schools (in concert with last year's testimony before the U.S. Department of Education). The goal is to motivate them to do so.

In fact, such negotiating currently exists in New York City. If these negotiations are successful, it is a tribute to an ongoing relationship between the public sector and a coalition in the private sector. This is not to say that the long standing relationship has always been cordial and productive. Indeed we have had some serious differences which required state and federal intervention

***Is all lost?
Are there ways to
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services?***

as a part of resolutions. Yet, there exists an unmistakable respect for one another and opportunity for future collaborations for the benefit of both public and private sectors. Clearly, such collaborations will be required for participation in Title III, the Federal School Technology Program, and other possible grant programs. This type of collaboration strengthens educational initiatives and enhances large grant opportunities.

Thus, during this school year, collaboration and negotiation ought to drive our government relations activities. Also, it behooves Jewish education leaders to seek support from the candidates for their issues and concerns. It is time Jewish education played a more visible role in the election process. There is no crime in questioning the candidates and suggesting that Jewish votes may be somewhat related to political positions regarding Jewish education. And, with the challenge of legislation and litigation upon us – none to soon.

Highlights of the Twelfth Annual Colloquium *(Continued from page 1)*

1998. In addition to valuable networking amongst members, sessions included:

- Site visit to the Amit Class, a Sunday school class for children with developmental disabilities
- Site visit to Yad B'Yad, a community program for children who learn differently
- Text study of Jewish Law and Disability

- Panel Discussion: The Role of the Professional vs. The Role of the Lay Person Working Together to Create Community
- Legislative Update
- Understanding Children with Autism/PDD
- The Role of the Marcus Institute and The Psychological Aspects of Learning Disabilities
- Fundraising, Grant Writing, and Marketing

- Tour of the Jewish Heritage Museum and the Temple
- Demonstration by students from the Sha'ar Class of the Epstein School, the Solomon Schechter Day School.
- Multiple Intelligences
- Presentation by the Coordinated Network for Persons with Disabilities
- Teaching a Second Language to Children with Learning Disabilities

Consortium News

Atlanta

Chaverim, the Task Force for Children Who Learn Differently, was formed to be a voice in the Atlanta Jewish community to advocate for children who learn differently. Jewish Educational Services acts as a referral source for the community and as a provider for teacher and community education.

Programs and services currently available through the Special Needs Department include:

- The Geshher Symposium
- Referral Information
- Teacher and Community Education Series
- Grandparents Club
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Resource Center
- *Yad B'Yad*, a community class for children who learn differently
- LD Teacher Networks

As always, the Special Needs Department is working towards increasing the availability of services for children who learn differently. The goals for the coming year are to redesign the *Yad B'Yad* program, develop a Pilot Partnership Program, and research the need for a modified, self contained day school class for children with moderate to severe disabilities and/or multiple disabilities.

The *Yad B'Yad* program is a community class for children who learn differently. Last year some children attended the program one day a week and attended their synagogue supplemental school on the weekend. Other students attended *Yad B'Yad* during the week and on the weekend. Although the children who participated twice a week in this innovative class enjoyed the opportunity of learning Hebrew and Judaics in their "own way" they were unable to benefit fully from the other services provided through their synagogue's supplemental school program. In order for these children to feel included in their synagogues' activities, it is important for them to attend the school at least one time a week. That is

why this year we hired a teacher/consultant who teaches the class during the week and spends Sunday traveling to the participating schools to observe students in the classroom and help the teacher modify the curriculum when needed.

The second area we will be focussing on this coming year will be a Special Education Partnership Program which will allow the JES Special Education Department to continue to improve programming in the metropolitan Atlanta Jewish community for children who learn differently. The Partnership Pilot Program will provide support to up to three Jewish schools by providing matching grants for programs for children who learn differently. The school will contribute a portion of a teacher's salary or other expenses involved in setting up new or additional services to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities. The purpose is to encourage schools to create or expand upon current programming for children who learn differently.

The third focus area will be to conduct a needs assessment for a community based, modified, self contained day school class for children with moderate to severe learning issues and/or multiple disabilities in Atlanta. This class may be housed in a day school allowing the children to participate in the typical school environment whenever appropriate.

Chaverim continues to work towards its mission: To create opportunities to enable every Jewish individual to receive a quality Jewish education.

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Baltimore

The Center for Jewish Education continued to offer a wide range of services to support students with special needs.

GESHER LATORAH TAG Program

The TAG program is accomplishing a lot of Torah, Avodah (in the dual sense of prayer and vocational training) and Gemilut Chasadim (acts of kindness). TAG's program was designed for the adult student with special needs who may not otherwise be able to participate educationally in the Jewish community. TAG includes: Torah study, prayer and vocational activity at sites with Jewish ideals and values.

TAMMAR

TAMMAR is a new model for Gesher LaTorah this year. Through Technology, Art, Music, Movement and Rhythm students are experiencing Jewish life and living.

Author-in-Residence

Gesher LaTorah students are working with the author Jennifer Littman throughout the year and creating an all-school book on Jewish themes.

Monthly Parent Session

The parents sessions provide information and support in an informal setting for parents of children with special needs. Among the topics discussed were Special Education Laws, Financial Planning, Psychiatric Issues, Adolescence and the Child with Special Needs.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Yad b'Yad continued to strengthen professional skills and knowledge and provide a network of special educators as well as advocates for Jewish education in the deaf community. Programming included: Sign Language Interpreter Workshops; Jewish Deaf Folklore: Better Understanding of Jewish Deaf Heritage; Training in Crisis Prevention Institute's Behavior Management Techniques; Teaching Hebrew to Children with Learning Disabilities; and, Classroom Management Socialization Skill Training for Students of Learning Disabilities in Congregational School Settings.

CONSULTATION

Consultation to pre-school congregational/community schools and day schools was a demanded service. Our pre-school consultant, together with the Pediatrics at Chartley, conducted a series of workshops, which were well attended, on behavioral techniques and other parenting issues.

COLLABORATION

The Center for Jewish Education together with the Jewish Family Services and the Jewish Community Center initiated a new program for siblings of children with disabilities. The siblings group will start next Fall. We would like to thank Ms. Anita Naftaly who has helped us by sharing her extensive knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm.

SPECIAL EVENT

On June 14, 1998 the 30th anniversary of the Special Education Services at the Center for Jewish Education was celebrated with the "Festival of Learning." The program featured a wide range of topics addressing various aspects of special education with special emphasis on the Jewish perspective. Rabbi Martin Schloss honored us by presenting the keynote lecture. Representatives of Jewish agencies serving people with special needs held a panel discussion. The event concluded with a performance by the Unlimited Potential Theater in which the actors shared their experiences in overcoming their disabilities.

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Starting mid-November, Tami Doron assumed the position of Coordinator of Special Education Services replacing Amian Frost Kelemer who is now the Coordinator of Educational Resources.

Boston

The area of Jewish Special Needs has grown and has taken on a new dimension at the Boston BJE during the past several years. The Boston BJE does not provide direct services to children of

families with special needs, or supervise staff in the field, but rather serves as a facilitator for staff training, networking, and resource allocation.

A Special Needs Network provides a forum for day school and congregational school educators to focus on special education issues. It also serves as a clearinghouse for local special education resources. The network meets several times a year and guest speakers have addressed the group on ADD, behavior management, and the inclusion of children with special needs. Most importantly, there were opportunities for sharing successful strategies or common areas of concern such as the personal stories surrounding a teenager with Down Syndrome as he became a Bar Mitzvah in the congregation. The rabbi, teacher, parent, and child himself shared their journeys with the Network. All the "players" joined an emotional panel to share their strong convictions regarding the integration of families with special needs into the Jewish community.

This past year, through a gift from the Combined Jewish Philanthropies, the BJE established a Jewish Special Needs Grant Initiative. To date, over one hundred students in ten different institutions have benefited from the programs that received the small incentive grants. The grants were awarded by an advisory committee interested in regionalizing services, highlighting the local expertise of existing organizations, and providing direct services to as many students as possible. For example, the local P'TACH chapter provides materials for elementary age school children; a synagogue's classroom materials are adapted for special needs students; and high school aide programs are developed as part of the congregational high school program. In addition, the grants created the opportunities for regional professional development and exchange visits to schools. Four supplemental schools joined together for professional development seminars based on areas of common concern. Their seminars included topics such as *Parenting Children with Learning Disabilities*, *Learning Disabilities: What Are They?*, *Special Education Regulations*

and the Administrator, and *Classroom Management*. Next year, several institutions will receive renewal grants and will continue to develop their special education programs. For example, one day school will collect special education materials and review them for the other day schools; another group will adapt materials for special needs students. There is also interest in creating resource room capabilities.

The Special Education Grant Initiative has focused the attention of the committee on the very important need for trained Jewish special education personnel. The Boston BJE is now at the early stages of exploring the possibility of establishing a joint program with Hebrew College and/or Brandeis University.

The BJE hosts several conferences and each conference offers workshops for special needs educators. For example, at the last Early Childhood Conference there were workshops dealing with deaf children and at the Day School Conference there have been sessions devoted to ADHD issues. The BJE is co-sponsoring day-long conferences with the JCC and independent organizations highlighting the inclusion of children and families with special needs in the Jewish Community.

The Boston BJE continues to advocate for more attention to and support of special education issues in the Jewish community. However, there still remains much to do.

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Cleveland

The Special Education Department of the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland is marking its tenth year serving the Jewish community's twenty-six affiliated pre-schools, supplementary and day schools. Central to its mission is the integration of students with special needs into the Jewish education system. To accomplish this goal, the department develops curricula, designs staff development programs and

observes and coaches teachers. Additionally, the department acts as liaison between Jewish and public schools, serving as advocate for parents by helping to establish and maintain relationships among teachers and school administration.

Working with individual religious schools, the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland has created a strong network of programs serving youngsters from pre-school through age twenty-one, with a broad range of needs. These students are served in a variety of settings including the ETGAR and Shadow projects.

The ETGAR program, which is entering its ninth year, continues to serve children with significant disabilities. Youngsters served in this supplementary program gain familiarity with prayers, Jewish music, and art. Hebrew vocabulary is included in the instruction. Dedicated personnel with highly specialized training are available to help each youngster participate as fully as possible in a wide range of Jewish learning. The department has recently completed a multi modality, multi level curriculum designed specifically for the needs of these individuals.

The "Shadow" project, now in its fourth year, continues to grow as increasing numbers of families request inclusion as the educational option for their children. "Shadows," teens providing one-to-one support to students with special needs, are trained by the Special Education staff to learn about disabilities, social or academic tutoring and to understand behavior. These "Shadows" are typically identified by their synagogue schools and are assigned to work with one or two students throughout the school year. The "Shadow" project enables students with special needs to be full participants in Jewish educational life.

Over the past year the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland has been involved in a planning process to develop a set of recommendations which would allow our community to better serve students with a variety of special needs enrolled in the day schools. The recommendations include a panoply of services which will enable students

with special needs to participate in the day school community.

The Special Education Department continues to offer a series of Jewish Educator Services Program staff development opportunities related to special education. These classes have included topics on inclusion, cooperative learning as a vehicle for meeting the needs of the exceptional learner, and working with parents of children with special needs. These and other staff development offerings endeavor to strengthen teachers' understanding of and ability to manage the range of students in the classroom.

The Special Education Department works cooperatively with other local agencies to support special education initiatives throughout the community. "Coffee Talk," a networking group for parents of children with special needs have regular get togethers to share their challenges and triumphs. Membership has grown to include some fifty parents. Over the year, experts in the field have met with the group to discuss issues of interest.

The special education materials contained in the JECC 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 continues to acquire new resources from the field.

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Detroit

Our 1997-98 academic year has been filled with excitement and growth!! We're quite pleased to report that our Opening The Doors Special Education Partnership Program has successfully completed its second full year of operation in our Metropolitan Detroit community. Beginning as a pilot program in January 1996, it is now an established program. It has opened the doors of opportunity for

children with learning disabilities and other special learning needs to receive a quality and appropriate Jewish education.

Recognizing the need and continuing to support our efforts has been the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. Their commitment has enabled us to expand our program this year from nine schools to seventeen schools. We successfully maintained our services to our original nine schools while integrating eight new school sites.

We have established partnerships with seventeen Jewish schools - four early childhood, four day schools, and nine congregational schools-across the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox spectrum. Last year 359 children were served and this year the total has grown to 581 children. Each partnership school received funding from the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit 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 consultation services to our school directors, special education teachers, classroom teachers and parents. Our services include: recruitment and placement of Special Education teachers in partnership schools; development of new school program models (such as resource room, inclusionary, pull out, zero and tenth hour) and teacher training workshops. We provided a variety of on-site seminars to enhance the skills of the classroom teacher to better meet the needs of all students in their classrooms. A sampling of learning opportunities offered were: *Communication Birth to Five; When Should I Be Concerned? The Afternoon Dilemma: The Child with Learning Disabilities and ADHD, Child Development: Communication to Parents, Opening Eyes and Hearts, and Judaism and Disabilities.* A Special Educators Network meets periodically to share common issues

and guest speakers are invited to discuss current methodology.

We continued our newly established Interfaith Special Education Collaborative (ISPEC) in collaboration with the Catholic Archdiocese of Detroit and the Lutheran Special Education Ministries. Our goal is to address joint issues relating to children receiving special education services in private religious schools. We have been exploring opportunities to work with surrounding universities to develop programs for continuing teacher training in special education. ISPEC has written a grant proposal and is seeking funding for this from a private foundation.

Our first annual Day School Conference was held for our four partnership day schools (Orthodox and Conservative). The theme was *The Changing Classroom* and featured two keynote speakers from the education and psychology fields addressing *The Hard to Teach Child and The Hard To Reach Child*. A successful collaboration of efforts resulted in a day of learning for 200 classroom teachers!

This year we hired two clinical psychologists to provide psychological/educational evaluations on a limited basis for our day schools to supplement the public school services that are provided to the schools.

A Disabilities Awareness curriculum entitled, "You and I were Made B'Zelem Elokim," was made available for 4th grade students community-wide and culminated in a *Kids on the Block* puppet performance for over 150 students.

Our Opening The Doors Special Education Partnership Program continues to evolve as we continue to meet the special needs of our children.

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Houston

The Bureau of Jewish Education of Houston and Kesher, the parent advocacy group for families with special needs children, are working together to

insure a successful year for our special children. The B.J.E. and Kesher provide a forum for parents to come together and discuss ways to optimize their child's Jewish education.

Jewish education may be provided to children and families in any of several ways along a continuum of services offered in the Jewish community. Children may be placed in the regular religious school classroom and have instructional modification provided by either the classroom teacher or special education consultant. Children may participate in a self-contained class that meets weekly at a host congregation in Houston. Instruction also may be provided in the child's home by a tutor.

This year, the self-contained class will meet at Congregation Beth Israel. The class is taught by an experienced teacher who has instructional strategies and resources sufficient to meet a range of challenging needs. The class follows its own curriculum path, but also is included in Congregation Beth Israel's school programs and chapel services. The children feel that they are part of a larger religious school community, but they still have their own classroom within which to express their talents and to experience Judaism.

The number of classes offered and the number of students being served in the self-contained classes has diminished over the past few years. We attribute this to more students being included and provided for in the regular religious school classroom. It is our hope that the move towards more inclusive classrooms with a willingness to tolerate more diverse learning styles will serve each of these children while allowing more socialization and better integration into their own congregations. The self-contained class teacher, classroom aides, and the special educational consultant are very willing to make curriculum modifications and discuss behavior management strategies that can make the inclusion of special needs students proceed smoothly.

We continue to explore ways technology can help both the exceptional students and their families. With the

prevalence of home computers and computer use in the classroom, we have unique options for providing feedback and information to students, families and teachers. The resources available on the Internet for specific disability groups and those people who instruct and support them offer us some exciting tools to make their education as solid, rich and meaningful as it can possibly be.

The Bureau of Jewish Education and Kesher provide monthly programs and workshops on various topics in the field of Special Education. Parents and teachers are encouraged to participate in the various forums in which these programs are presented. We try to present topics of immediate concern to our families and schools and provide follow-up information to insure complete understanding and implementation of new ideas and programs.

The Bureau of Jewish Education of Houston and Kesher work together to provide the best possible services to insure a strong Jewish education for every special needs child in the Houston Jewish community.

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Kansas City

Funded by a generous grant from the Jewish Heritage Foundation of Greater Kansas City, Special Needs has had an exciting and productive first year. Over 100 children in the community have received services as a result of this program. All community schools and congregations have been offered support in creating programming to provide access to individuals not currently involved or actively participating due to unmet needs. Inservice programs have been offered to all schools, as have ongoing consultation services. Child advocacy, round table discussions, parent support groups, transition assistance, crisis intervention and parent training have also been available. Included among our current programs

is tuition assistance for teachers, Jump Start Hebrew, consultation services to schools and the development of collaborative goals with community schools.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

Because of the inclusive nature of the philosophy of our program, it is appropriate to offer some special education training to interested regular classroom teachers. In this vein, CAJE Special Needs has offered every community teacher in a Jewish setting tuition reimbursement for an approved graduate special education methods course. This one-time per career offer has been made to those teachers deemed eligible by virtue of their having been actively involved in classroom education in a Jewish community for a minimum of three calendar years. It is hoped that many teachers will take advantage of this offer, thereby increasing the personnel available to work with students with disabilities.

JUMP START HEBREW

This community-wide course, taught by qualified special education teachers, is offered to any child in the community with a disability that would make learning Hebrew in a supplementary school challenging. Students have been invited to participate in this daily Hebrew class for three weeks prior to the beginning of the fall term. This should provide them with foundation knowledge, which will enable them to begin their Hebrew education with success.

CONSULTATION SERVICES

We have been successful in securing the services of three highly qualified and experienced preschool Special Education coordinators. All community preschools will receive consultation services on a regular basis in the 1998-1999 school year. Special Needs consultants have been hired to provide services for several of our congregational religious schools while several other schools have employed paraprofessionals to facilitate better learning outcomes for our children with special needs.

COLLABORATIVE GOALS

Our collaborative goals with community schools for the 1998-1999

school year include teacher education, both through tuition assistance and inservice programs throughout the year, teacher effectiveness training through teacher mentoring and observation opportunities, strategies instruction, and the creation of a parent-teacher forum vehicle by which parents and teachers can learn to expand their skills and learn new strategies.

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Los Angeles

The following is an update of programs in Los Angeles supervised by Kenneth Schaefer, PH.D., Director of Psychological services and Special Education of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Los Angeles (BJE). These programs are partially or totally underwritten by the BJE.

The BJE, with the Harold and Libby Ziff Foundation, subvents the cost of resource rooms staffed by credentialed, special education teachers that are on-going at 14 day schools. There are special Resource Programs (taught by non-special education teachers) at additional day schools. Students are seen by the resource specialist (General studies and/or Judaica) anywhere from a half-hour up to several hours per week.

In addition to these programs, speech and language therapy is offered at some of our day schools to students on a twice-a-week basis at their school. The cost is subvented by the Harold and Libby Ziff Foundation and is based on a sliding fee scale. The programs are staffed by California State Licensed Speech and Language Therapists.

In our religious and Hebrew school system, special programs are available at different geographical sites. These schools are termed Magnet Schools because they allow all children in need of special education services to enter their programs regardless of synagogue membership or their ability to pay. The special education programs offered are

taught by credentialed special education/Judaic teachers.

We have a disability awareness program staffed by volunteers. In nursery and kindergarten, the locally created puppet show, Glenn's Friends, is utilized, followed by a discussion session led by a person with a disability. Thousands of children were served by these programs. The BJE developed a formal Judaic curriculum, entitled "Justice, Justice for All," which teaches Judaic values in relation to disability awareness issues. It is quite extensive and used in many of our schools. This 100-page curriculum is available at \$35.00 per copy (including shipping and handling). Depending on staff and volunteer availability, our programs are also presented at public and other private schools.

We offer a user-friendly 100-page edition of our Los Angeles "Guide to Jewish Education Resources and Community Services for Children and Adults with Special Needs." It is available to families and educators at \$7.00 per copy.

We also publish a Jewish Special Education Holiday Curriculum, entitled "A Time to Rejoice," a substantial and comprehensive curriculum that is useful for religious and Hebrew Schools as well as camp programs for 7-9 year old children. To our knowledge, it is the most comprehensive 260-page Special Education Jewish Holiday curriculum in the English-speaking world. It is available at \$35.00 per copy (including shipping and handling).

Under department auspices, we run a successful information and referral hotline for people with disabilities, which serves hundreds of phone-callers annually.

A series of 8 seminars for parents, educators and professionals for "Helping Children with Special Needs" was presented from September through May. Close to a thousand people attended these seminars. Topics included *Educating my Gifted Child; They Tell Me My Child Has Special Needs-Now What Do I Do?; How is My Special Needs Child Affecting My Family?* Parents and siblings are welcome to come and par-

ticipate in this seminar; *ADD/ADHD- Making sure It's the Right Diagnosis and the Right Treatment; Current Trends in Psychopharmacology for ADD/ADHD, Tourette's Syndrome, Obsessive/Compulsive Disorder, Anxiety and Depression in Children; Legal and Financial Issues: Planning the Future of Your Special Needs Child; IQ vs. Emotional Intelligence-Social Skills and Fitting In; Mental Retardation: What Can Professionals Offer to Parents and Teachers?*

Next year, in an effort to reach our diverse population, we are increasing the number of locations for the seminars by adding Thousand Oaks and West Hills to our Los Angeles and Sherman Oaks sites. We are also offering topics that focus on two main themes-special needs and life issues-and are repeating some of the topics at the additional locations. Topics include: *Motivating Your Child for Success at School; Adoptive Families: Hidden Issues and the School Years; Current Technology for Children with Learning Disabilities; Prevention and Remediation of Reading Difficulties; Those Turbulent Teenage Years; ADD/ADHD Preschool Through Adulthood; High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome.*

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MetroWest

A Team of Early Childhood Consultants

After two very successful years of identifying children who require special education and providing teacher training in this area, new funding has been acquired to expand the service. The NBI Foundation has provided a grant of \$19,000 to provide a part time consultant service made up of psychologists and a social worker to serve the teachers and families of the estimated 300 learning challenged nursery school children (out of over 2,000) currently enrolled in the 34 schools under Jewish auspices in Essex, Morris and Sussex Counties. This service will provide: 200

hours of observation time of students, 6 training workshops for teachers, and 4 parenting workshops. The team will also put out a quarterly newsletter to parents offering helpful information on issues of concern to them. This project was previously funded by the Kulick Foundation.

Innovative Technology for the Developmentally Challenged

The Kulick Foundation continues to support the Yaldeinu Program/The Children's Institute's Collaborative efforts to provide the developmentally challenged with the innovative use of the latest advances in educational theory and technology. We have achieved this by integrating Judaic computer education and art therapy as curricula in our self-contained setting. The NBI Foundation is providing a matching fund so that the 6 month pilot can be expanded to a year. This will double the number of sessions the children will participate in during the academic year. Teachers will continue their own education through workshop training and individual sessions with our specialists to create Judaic software that is multi-sensory and interactive.

Yaldeinu Tots

Thanks to new funding provided by the NBI Foundation, Torah for Tots will resume in September of 1998. This program will be open to 3's and 4's, and will engage children using the mommy-daddy-and-me model. The program will provide 2 sessions of 12 bi-weekly Sunday morning sessions of an hour in duration. Scholarship funding is provided. A support group is also available to families that provides the educational and related support to parents whose children have been recently diagnosed as learning or developmentally challenged.

Solving Social Problems in the Synagogue Classroom

Solving Social Problems in the Jewish Classroom is a problem solving/conflict resolution workshop program that was successfully piloted through the JEA Center for Special Education. This program was devised to assist teachers with the professional growth needed to deal with these issues

in schools and to reach out to the children who desperately need to deal with behavioral issues that interfere with their ability to learn.

This project was undertaken in response to the growing number of behavior management problems in synagogue schools. It was recognized that too much valuable time, already limited in afternoon schools, is being spent by teachers and principals enforcing disciplinary action instead of teaching. This includes a broad category of students including youngsters from divorced or dysfunctional families or who are ADD/HD, learning disabled, withdrawn, depressed, impulsive, angry, or aggressive towards others. Faced with these issues, children need to be taught strategies to help them to avoid thrashing out or acting out inappropriately.

The Solving Social Problems in the Synagogue Classroom project will include 25 subsidized workshop sessions in schools, and 3 community-wide training programs conducted by consultants and specialists. This is made possible by the NBI foundation.

Wendy Chesnov, Director, Center for Special Education, Jewish Education Association of MetroWest, Alex Aidekman Family Jewish Community Campus, 901 Route 10, East, Whippany, NJ 07981-1158, (973) 428-7400, ext. 308.

Milwaukee

KESHET of WISCONSIN has gone through a "growth spurt" over the last twelve months. Its programs are increasing and its name is becoming ever more familiar in the Milwaukee Jewish community.

During the last twelve months, KESHET of WISCONSIN has been able to:

- Maintain over thirty children in Milwaukee's Jewish educational and camping programs.
- Provide support for families of children with special needs.
- Provide for the delivery of speech and language therapy for a group of children at one of Milwaukee's Jewish Day Schools.

- Offer educational programming for teachers in Milwaukee's Jewish Day School and Sunday School programs.
- Offer sensitivity programs within the Jewish community in cooperation with Jewish Family Services and independently.
- Foster the message of *inclusion* for Jewish children with special needs.

KESHET of WISCONSIN has begun a process unique to such a young organization (KESHET is moving into its third year of services). Between January and May of 1998, KESHET of WISCONSIN undertook a Strategic Planning process, involving hundreds of hours of volunteer time in discussion and thought. The result of this process is a plan for KESHET of WISCONSIN's growth in the years to come. The plan includes examining how best to maximize and streamline our delivery of services; interagency relations; expansion of our program to service children who cannot be successfully included or integrated into existing Jewish programs, and more.

KESHET of WISCONSIN is a unique agency and parents and teachers alike are excited about having such a service in Milwaukee. We celebrated our position in our area at our August 20th gala reception, *Unity in the KESHET Community*. We look forward to broadening our base of support in our community

Rabbi Shabse Werther, KESHET of WISCONSIN, 6401 North Santa Monica #250, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, (414) 964-5437, Fax: (414) 964-9498, KESHETofWI@aol.com

New York

NEW PROGRAMS School Inclusion Program

The BJE will be initiating a pilot project of inclusion for students with special needs in the regular classroom. The program will include 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. Currently, the program is work-

ing with a community network of schools and two other independent schools. The project is open to both day schools and congregations.

The Kollel Outreach Project

The BJE in conjunction with a Hassidic community, will be training selective individuals in the Kollel seminary system for futures as Jewish educators. The program will combine lectures and hands-on teaching experiences and will focus on educating children in multi-level classes with a heavy emphasis on classroom management.

ONGOING PROGRAMS

Child and Family Advocacy Program

The BJE Special Education Center in conjunction with the New York UJA/Federation Taskforce on Disabilities runs an advocacy program whose sole mission is to serve 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.

BJE/Chai Lifeline Telecommunications Network

BJE and The 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 technological mechanisms to provide children with cancer and/or other critical illness

the opportunity to maintain ongoing educational, 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 initiatives. To date, 26 youngsters have benefited from the program.

In addition to the above, the program seeks to link a big brother/big sister program as well as family communication through email and chat programs on the Internet. To accomplish this goal, the program has developed a relationship with the National Christina Foundation which provides a number of computers to children and their families for the particular use of this project.

JETNET Website

For the past year, the BJE Jewish Education Telecommunications Network (JETNET) has run its own website. The website provides viewers with extensive information regarding Jewish special education organizations, services, contracts, and links to other valuable websites. In addition, the JETNET website is planning a chat area for a variety of online real time discussions. It will also attempt to develop an area for a bulletin board function that will allow educators to post information, suggestions, and questions for other educators' responses. Future initiatives include staff development through stream video and interactive learning.

Administrator's Certificate Program

The BJE's Institute for Special Education Enrichment (I-SEE) contin-

ues to negotiate a certificate program that will provide students with a New York State Education Department approved degree in administration and supervision (SAS). The program is a 30 credit post-masters project in conjunction with The College of Staten Island/City University of New York (CUNY). Information regarding the program will be disseminated as soon as the negotiations have concluded.

Council of Jewish Special Education Programs

BJE's Special Education Center has formed a council of special education schools and self-contained special education programs in non-special schools serving students with learning disabilities. The Council plans joint educational programs and special projects and initiatives. This past year the Council chose student self-advocacy as its target activity. Dr. Anthony Bashier, noted professor and author, served as the project advisor. The coming year's projects include networking with teacher preparatory schools and writing skills.

Child Abuse Prevention Program

The BJE Special Education Center and the Jewish Board of Family and Children Services (JBFCFS) are now in their fourth 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 seminaries.

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. To achieve this goal, the program is assembling an educational advisory committee who will guide the development of the resource center.

The Child Abuse Prevention Program has recently expanded its services 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 two year's All-Star courses, the Special Education Center and Long Island University (LIU) ran a fourth 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 the leading professionals in their field. This year's topics included: *Issues in Current Legislation, Developing Jewish Special Education Programs, Language/ESL, Hebrew Assessment, Issues in Inclusion, Hebrew Reading Disorders, Navigating The (NY) CSE Process, Social & Academic Issues of Developmental Language Disabilities, Math Strategies, and Vocational Preparation*. The course instructors included: Attorney Michael Rebell, Rabbi Martin Schloss, Dr. Allison Egert, Rabbi Dr. Avraham Granick, Dr. Jed P. Luchow, Dr. Aryeh Wohl, Joan Harrington/Advocate, Dr. Anthony Bashir, Dr. Edward Pieper, and Dr. Jeffrey Lichtman.

Models of Excellence

The BJE Special Education Center's program for gifted and talented students directed by Dr. Abraham J.

Tannenbaum is beginning its fifth year. In its first year, the program helped two Jewish high schools start programs for gifted and talented students.

During the past three years, four Jewish elementary day schools explored a variety of programs for gifted and talented students under the guidance of Dr. Tannenbaum with the goal of designing a program that met the unique needs of each school. This year, participants will implement those four new programs. Last spring, the program sponsored a *yom ivyun* on education for gifted and talented students with each of the four schools presenting its own unique design and rationale for its selection. This year, a new special school program is planned.

JETNET

The BJE's telecommunications network, JETNET, is beginning its fifth year. In addition to providing Internet access to schools and homes at discount prices, JETNET creates international interschool projects and provides ongoing Internet workshops, seminars, and conferences for Jewish educators. During the past year, JETNET provided sessions at the New York State Education Nonpublic School Annual Conference. It is helping to design this Year's conference as well.

Presently, JETNET is working on a telecommunications project between Jerusalem and New York. High school students from fourteen schools (seven from Jerusalem and seven from New York) will work together on Jewish communal projects. The goal of the program is to develop a sense of understanding and cooperation among ideologically and geographically different students. It is hoped that this project will help cultivate future Jewish leaders with an appreciation for global Jewish concerns and the ability to work with other Jewish leaders in a harmonious and beneficial manner. Also, JETNET continues to maintain its telecommunications lab. This allows JETNET members to explore a variety of Internet functions. The lab now offers its members realtime video and auditory communication worldwide. The technology serves as the basis of JETNET's newest

project of developing socialization programs for homebound children.

Association of Jewish Special Educators

The Association of Jewish Special Educators (AJSE) is beginning its eighteenth year. During the past seventeen years, the AJSE has sponsored numerous conferences, seminars, workshops, and symposia for over 15,000 participants. It has published a newsletter called *Special Edition*, and a professional journal called, *The Jewish Special Educator* addressing important topics and issues in Jewish and general special education. This past year, the AJSE published its fourth edition of *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.

Guidance and Consultation 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 responds to thousands of such requests yearly. Recently, the Center assisted two doctoral students in their quest for a doctorate in special education, numerous students seeking master's degrees in either special education and/or Jewish education, and 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 tract and a religious teacher seminary tract. In the graduate tract, 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 200 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 three seminars and sponsors special education courses in additional religious teacher's seminars. The goal of this program is to develop more sensitive day and supplementary school teachers 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 fifteenth 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 1,600 individuals.

In addition to the above, 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 school work. To date, VSE has placed approximately 1,000 volunteers in over fifty educational settings serving over 3,000 students. VSE is planning the develop-

ment of a manual of its volunteer program so that other communities can replicate its success.

The Parent Education Program

The Parent Education Program (PEP) funded through a grant from the J.E. & Z.B. Butler Foundation, is beginning its sixth year. PEP is designed to heighten parent 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 will be sponsoring a special services conference this fall to help parents access important and necessary services for their children.

The Jewish Heritage Program

The Jewish Heritage Program (JHP) is beginning its twentieth 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.

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Philadelphia

Supplementary, day, community, and pre-schools in Philadelphia's five county Jewish community continue to expand programming and services for people with special needs through the age span. The consultants from the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education (ACAJE) continue to train teachers and directors, consult on methods and materials, and advise on initiating and expanding programs. There has been an increase in the number of formal and informal education programs — over 30 now exist — as well as the number of programs that accommodate more severely disabled people.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia continues to support special needs programming with grants for

starting or enhancing programs. This year, seven programs received such grants. Among the programs that received grants, the recently started informal education family programs - SIMCHA and SIMCHA WEST - attracted many new families.

The consultants continue to coordinate programs for professional educators throughout the community. This year, in addition to many workshops targeted to specific audiences, they hosted a community-wide symposium on Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder with Dr. Anthony Rostain from the University of Pennsylvania. Close to 100 teachers, therapists, and principals attended a program which included a talk on how ADD affects children in the religious school environment and subsequent problem-solving break-out groups.

The consultants have initiated a number of special projects this year. They have written and distributed a survey of schools to determine which schools are offering what type of programming. ACAJE is producing a "Starting the Year Off Right" manual, and they have written an article for inclusion in this publication. And, they have created and supervised the piloting of a diagnostic phonics inventory which is appropriate for both special needs and mainstream students. Teachers who have used it are uniformly enthusiastic about its potential.

The Association for Jewish Special Education, which the consultants advise, continues to offer valuable programming for parents and professionals. Rabbi Eliezer Goldstock, Ph.D., National Director of Heart to Heart: American Jewish Society for Distinguished Children, spoke to the group about Jewish children with Down's Syndrome and other severe disabilities and the work his organization is doing. Dr. Herbert Mandell, Medical Director of KidsPiece: National Hospital for Kids in Crisis, spoke to the group about childhood and adolescent depression. And, in a joint program with P'TACH, the organization screened and discussed the video "How Difficult Can This Be?" which examines the many facets of learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder.

While the consultants work with many schools and programs, one in particular deserves special mention. Gratz College High School now offers six pro-

grams for teens, young adults, and adults with a variety of special needs. There are three Sunday programs, for teens, young adults, and traditional young adults. There is an eight-part socialization workshop, in which teens from NCSY, the Orthodox youth movement, work with disabled teens from the class and a local residential facility. There is also a class at the residential facility, which employs local teens who participate in a service learning course at Gratz. This year, for the first time, the consultants worked with the director of the service learning course to promote it and train the high school students about special needs. Last, but not least, there is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah class preparing for a ceremony on Memorial Day 1999.

The First special Bar/Bat Mitzvah class, which held their service on Memorial Day 1997, continued with their work together and went on a successful ten day trip to Israel in the summer of 1998. Dr. Sharon Schanzer consulted with Andi Oxman, Director of Special Programs at Gratz, in the planning of the trip and went along as an advisor. They also helped create a 10 minute video about the special programs, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and the Israel trip. They presented these programs and the video at the Beit Issie Shapiro 2nd International Conference on Developmental Disabilities in Israel.

Dr. Sharon Schanzer, Coordinator of Special Needs Programming & Dr. Shelley Rosenberg, Special Needs Consultant, Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education, 7607 Old York Road, Melrose Park, PA 19027, (215) 635-8940, Fax: (215) 635-8946, Email: acaje@netaxs.com.

Phoenix

In 1998, *The Council For Jews With Special Needs* will celebrate its 13th year of providing assistance within the Jewish community to children and adults who have disabilities. A "B'nai Mitzvah Party" honoring the supporters of the agency and the individuals and families we serve is planned for fall. In those thirteen years, the Council has grown from a small, grass-roots organization with limited resources to a community-wide non-profit agency serving the entire 70,00 Jews of metropolitan Phoenix.

Special Education Services are available to over 20 synagogue schools, day schools

and preschools. Special education teachers on the Council's staff provide staff training for these schools as well as student observations, curriculum modifications, behavior management plans and other resources. The Council provides the funds for schools to employ special education teachers and tutors.

Summer Camp Inclusion Services are provided at each of the Jewish day camps, and for the first time this year, to Camp Pearlstein (a residential Jewish camp outside of Phoenix). The Council meets with parents of campers to assess their child's special needs within a regular camp and then hires the necessary staff, provides the training and supervision of staff and monitors the camp throughout the summer.

Sign Language and Oral Interpreters are available upon request within the Jewish community and are always offered at no charge at the High Holidays and other special occasions in at least one large synagogue. Interpreters for students with hearing impairment are provided in Jewish schools and camps.

Support Groups for family members have been among the Council's most active programs. Parents of school age children meet once every 4-6 weeks; grandparents of children/teens with special needs meet monthly on Sundays for brunch and a speaker. Sibling support groups have been offered intermittently as the demand arises. In the past year, a special support group for parents of children with autism spectrum disorders began and it has flourished.

Adult Social Club (Yad B'Yad) provides religious, cultural and recreational gatherings for young adults with developmental and learning disabilities, emotional disorders and physical impairments. The group meets about once a month and participates in a wide variety of activities which include Shabbat and holiday celebrations/dinners, tzedakah projects, bowling, swimming and miniature golf outings, and more. In 1998, a grant from the Jewish Community Foundation provided funds to develop a "Shabbat in a Box" project to train volunteers to bring Shabbat items and an "instruction manual" to those adults with special needs who are unable to leave their homes and participate in Yad B'Yad programs.

Family Social Gatherings such as bowling tournaments, children's concerts, carnivals in the park and more are

offered throughout the year as a way of facilitating new friendships among the families served by the Council.

Community Education is available to both the Jewish and secular communities, as is the *Information and Referral Service*. The Council offers speakers on disability related topics as well as a "Disability Awareness Workshop," tailored to the age of its audience. The Council receives many inquiries about disability related issues from Phoenix and beyond; it is listed as a resource in a variety of interfaith publications on disabilities. The Council staff sits on many disability committees in the Phoenix area and is part of the network of service providers in this field.

The Council For Jews With Special Needs has much to celebrate in its "b'nai mitzvah" year!

Becca Hornstein, Executive Director, The Council for Jews with Special Needs, 32 W. Coolidge, Suite 102, Phoenix, AZ 85013, (602) 277-4243 (voice/TDD), Fax: (602) 266-7875.

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 ten years, an increasing number of children attending synagogue schools have been receiving special education services. The Special Education Consultant at the Bureau of Jewish Education works in partnership with the synagogue schools, assisting in the hiring, training, and support of 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 their needs, providing standardized forms for student referrals, evaluations, and IEP's, and being available to principals and parents when questions arise. This year, eight synagogue schools directly met the needs of 168 children who have learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, or other disabilities. The students received special education help in

either a pull-out program, self-contained class, or by having the special educator come into the mainstream class. Indirectly, all the other children and teachers benefited from the presence of a special educator on staff.

The Bureau of Jewish Education has published and distributed the "Handbook for Special Education Programs in the Synagogue Schools." 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. It is available on the Internet at the BJE's website, or can be ordered from the BJE.

The special education consultant also worked with many day schools. The Harold and Libby Ziff Foundation has provided grants to five day schools to hire Resource Specialists, and the special education consultant acts as a liaison between the schools and the Foundation. In addition, the BJE purchased special education materials for some of the day schools and offered workshops for general studies and Hebrew teachers. Workshop topics included: differentiating education, identifying students with learning disabilities, and making accommodations in both general studies and Hebrew.

As part of the BJE's professional development opportunities for Congregational school teachers, the following special education topics were offered: Special Education refresher, meeting needs in the classroom, and discipline techniques for children with learning disabilities. Additionally, a Day School Principals' Council meeting was devoted to special education issues.

In the coming year, in addition to maintaining the ever increasing phone and email consultations, and the services described above, we hope to locate children who have developmental disabilities and design a program for them, begin a twinning program with Israeli Bar and Bat Mitzvah students who have developmental disabilities, expand the special education resources on our website, and begin support and/or educational groups for parents of day school students receiving special education services.

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St. Louis

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

Thirty students were enrolled in the Three R's Program during 1997-98 which seeks to recognize, refer and remediate 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 in the afternoon Hebrew school curriculum. We continue to emphasize that this program is NOT a Bar and Bat Mitzvah tutorial.

The tutors receive specialized materials to help with the individual needs of the students at our orientation workshop in September and throughout the year. In addition, we encourage our tutors to attend Special Education workshops sponsored by CAJE at the Educator's Fair in November and special workshops throughout the year.

Since 1990, over 35 students have finished the program and become B'nai Mitzvah. The 3R's Program continues to grow and have an impact on many students and families. During the 1998-99 school year, 14 tutors will be servicing nearly 40 children.

We continue to encourage and train our teachers to be effective with mainstreaming and inclusion. Students with special needs have been mainstreamed into synagogue and temple religious school classrooms on Sunday and Shabbat.

Another program in our community that is facilitated by CAJE staff, but which is independent from CAJE, is "Ohr Atid - Light of the Future." After

two years of intense organization by concerned parents of special needs children who wanted to see their children receive a formal Jewish education, this program began 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. Enid Weisberg-Frank is the Ohr Atid Director/Teacher. Students from various Jewish High School programs are trained to be *Madrachim* in the school to help facilitate the learning environment. The class is self-contained but is integrated with Congregation Nusach Hari B'nai Zion's regular religious school students for specific activities such as *t'fillah* and music. The children in these special classrooms represent all denominations of Judaism - Conservative, Reform, Traditional, and Orthodox. *Madrachim* are also assisting one child with special needs in a Religious School preschool program.

Computers, donated by Monsanto Corporation, are used in Ohr Atid's therapeutic computer lab, which meets for five week sessions, one hour weekly.

In addition, Ohr Atid has developed project PRISM (Parents, Resources, Information, Sharing Mission), a professionally-run monthly support group for parents caring for Jewish children with special needs. 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 special children. PRISM also has a family referral project to match one family with another family who is caring for a child with a similar disability.

And finally, Ohr Atid has 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 are all available through PRISM.

We are looking forward to the exciting success and continuous growth of "Ohr Atid" — a very important addition and educational asset to the St. Louis Jewish Community.

Barbara Poger, Central Agency for Jewish Education, 12 Millstone Campus Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146, Phone: (314) 432-0020, Fax: (314) 432-6150. Please note: Barbara Poger's new position is Israel Experience Center Promoter. The new Special Education Coordinator is Enid Frank.

Washington, DC

The Special Needs Department of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington offers a continuum of special needs services encompassing early childhood through continuing education for adults with special needs. Service settings range from Jewish nursery schools and day care programs to congregational supplementary schools, day schools and Jewish community institutions and groups.

The BJE Early Childhood Special Needs Consultant, Mara Bier's, involvement includes staff in-service workshops, parent and teacher effectiveness training courses, and identification and referral of children who may have developmental lags or other academic, behavioral or physical issues that would benefit from early intervention. Support is given to early childhood educators to enable them to include children with a variety of special needs in their program. "At risk" children, who have already been identified in their early childhood programs, are then monitored as they progress through their religious school and day school experiences. A two-day teacher training institute called "Handle with Care" dealt with working with families on sensitive issues like adoption, death/dying, serious illness, and siblings with disabilities. Participants also attended a parents' workshop to better understand the parents' perspectives. Other workshop topics included *Working with Aggressive Children in the Classroom; Conferencing with Parents; Red Flags: Early Identification of Disabilities in the Pre-School Classroom; Ready or Not: A Kindergarten Readiness Workshop for Parents and Teachers; Communication Skills; and Cooperative Parenting.* The "Inclusion Is Real" network for teachers working with special needs students in their classrooms meets regularly. Parent to Parent, the support group for parents of young children with special needs, is an inter-agency project spearheaded by the BJE.

The self-contained Shema V'Ezer Special Education Program meets at the Jewish Community Center in Rockville. Recreational activities are available for youngsters with special needs and their families as part of the regular JCC program. The JCC also offers continuing education classes and special events for adults with developmental disabilities such as holiday celebrations and an annual sleep-over Shabbaton. Many of the participants are residents of the Jewish Foundation for Group Homes, whose Jewish Living Coordinator conducts staff training sessions and works with residents of the group homes and the semi-independent Oshinsky Apartment Program. The BJE Special Needs Department provides resource materials and consultative services for these programs.

A major innovation this year was the Sh'lom Kitah Pilot Program, which provides on-the-job teacher training to build the techniques needed to successfully integrate students with learning differences in their own congregational schools. Teachers from eight schools were matched with job coaches/mentors with whom they worked throughout the year. The process included individual clinical supervision and group in-depth seminars. Participating schools received incentive grants to acquire remedial materials.

Support for this initiative was provided by the new Mashkon Fund as part of its comprehensive strategy to transform local Jewish education. Twelve additional teachers will be selected for the next cycle.

Programming continues for Jews who are deaf. Interpreters in Jewish religious and cultural settings meet together to develop appropriate signs and guidelines. The UJA Federation's Jewish Information and Referral Service maintains a list of interpreters with Judaic signing skills.

The spring session of the Introduction to Judaism course, offered by the College of Jewish Studies and taught by a consortium of Montgomery County rabbis, was again made accessible to deaf and hard of hearing individuals through the use of the audio loop, the provision of a sign interpreter for the Judaic studies component, and a special instructor who utilized sign as she taught Hebrew reading.

Throughout the year, holiday sign language materials are distributed to

all Jewish schools and interpreters on the Jewish community interpreter list. Siman Tov, the self-contained supplementary school classes taught by deaf teachers for deaf students meets at Congregation Tifereth Israel and a number of deaf youngsters are included in congregational schools with ASL (American Sign Language) and cued speech interpreter support. To cover interpreter costs at BJE lectures and in-service programs, there is a \$1.00 surcharge on all registration fees.

After very protracted negotiations between the Montgomery County Public Schools and the Private/Parochial School Committee, chaired by Sara Rubinow Simon of the BJE, a comprehensive agreement was reached whereby eligible students could receive special education or speech/language services either at the closest public schools, a neutral site, or at their own neighborhood public school. Parents may also opt for the federal per capita pass-through funds to procure these services privately. The agreement, a model for other communities, is being successfully implemented. In-service programs for non-public teachers are an added feature of the agreement.

Increasing numbers of congregations are adopting guidelines that assist them to include youngsters with special needs in their religious school programs if possible and to provide a mechanism to determine special provisions or alternatives. Many congregations have formed Special Education Committees and are implementing these procedures. The BJE Special Needs Department is available as ombudsman relating to parent/religious school issues.

A special education concentration is available as part of the George Washington University/College of Jewish Studies cooperative graduate program. The core courses for students in the entire graduate program include Affective Development and Behavior Management and Adapting Attitudes, Programs, and Curriculum for Students with Special Needs in the Mainstream Environment. In this way, all administrators and teachers are equipped to accommodate youngsters with a broad range of learning styles and special learning needs in their programs.

Congregational supplementary school in-service and BJE workshop topics include *Identifying and*

Accommodating Special Learning Needs, What Do I Do When . . .?, and Learning Styles/Teaching Styles. The Learning Specialist Network meets regularly in locations around the Greater Washington area.

The BJE Special Needs Resource Center houses journals, testing instruments, and remedial materials as well as sensitization programs and books. The Levine Family Memorial Special Needs Collection contains audio-visual, manipulative and print materials for use in all settings. A growing large print Judaica collection assists individuals with low vision. Regular "clinic hours" are scheduled for individual and small group consultations.

Teaching Hebrew Reading to Students with Learning Disabilities, by Paula Goodman, a Washington reading specialist, is available for purchase. *The Resource Program Guide for a Congregational School* is still a best seller. It includes procedures and forms for identification, referral, management, and record keeping as well as teacher and parent workshop formats and remedial student materials. *The Dignity and Disability Jewish Discovery Kit*, by Kopin, Kupchan, Simon, Fruchter and Gold contains centers for "hands on" special needs sensitization and *Tikkun Olam*. It has been successfully utilized by groups of all ages. Our Haggadah, originally published for adults with low reading skills, is being used in nursing homes, JCCs, and group homes. Young families and Americans are also choosing it because of the large print, consistent transliteration, and concise Seder highlights in easy English. "The Four Questions," adapted by Jennifer Feldman of the Shema V'Ezer Special Education Program, incorporates communication board icons and is available with Hebrew, transliteration and English texts. The new *My Book of Jewish Holidays*, utilizing this format, is ready for distribution.

Dr. Sara Rubinow Simon, Board of Jewish Education of Greater Washington, 4928 Wyaconda Road, Rockville, MD 20852, (301) 984-4455 X312, TTY: (301) 984-1670, Fax: (301) 230-0267. This past summer Lenore Layman assumed the position of Director of the Special Needs Department. Sara Rubinow Simon's new position is Special Needs Field Consultant.

JESNA

Congratulations to the Consortium on its Bar Mitzvah year! JESNA is pleased to be a part of this great event and we look forward to seeing you in Chicago April 18-20, 1999.

JESNA's website (www.jesna.org) is ever-growing. Resources for special needs education can be found under the Consortium area under "Networks." We invite new members of the Consortium to join our email discussion list. It is a rich source of collegial sharing and exchanging information. Contact Caren for more information.

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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:

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CONSORTIUM OF SPECIAL EDUCATORS IN CENTRAL AGENCIES FOR JEWISH EDUCATION

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