



Links

WINTER 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

I'm delighted to introduce this edition of LINKS, the ICJW Community Service newsletter. This is our annual round-up of all the wonderful service projects undertaken by our affiliates around the globe in the spirit of Tikkun Olam – Repairing the World. Alongside our advocacy work, our community service and social welfare projects reflect our commitment to taking action to make the world a better place for everyone. If you are reading LINKS in electronic format, you will find live links to our new and updated website, where you can read about all our affiliates and their activities and follow the progress of our campaigns on different issues. LINKS is all about staying connected to the many projects of ICJW, and we hope that both this summary and the regularly updated website will increase the connectedness that makes life richer and more rewarding.



With best wishes to you all of you,
Sharon Gustafson, President, ICJW

COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

*Compiled by Community Service Coordinators
Shirley Payes QSO, and Vivien Brass*



Introduction:

2011 has flown by with many significant events occurring in all our lives. Many countries around the globe have experienced severe floods, droughts, fires and other major natural disasters such as the earthquakes in New Zealand and additional tsunami in Japan. The global financial crisis has affected every country and is not over yet. Autocratic regimes are being questioned and toppled and women and children often suffer the consequences. Women's strength in difficult circumstances often hold the families and communities together; ICJW connects women around the world enabling us to communicate, and strengthen our global bonds.

We have had a wonderful response to our request for articles for LINKS this year and we are sure that you will enjoy reading them. Thank you all.

For those of us who remember the Convention in South Africa, were able to meet in London or Panama, and those of us who look forward to Berlin 2012 and beyond, these Community Links will form a further connection to our world.

With best wishes for a wonderful year ahead.

VIVIEN BRASS, President of NCJWA Victoria
SHIRLEY PAYES QSO, National President of CJW New Zealand

ARGENTINA

In 2011 the Consejo Argentino De Mujeres Israelitas (CAMI) presented awards for "Women of Yesterday and Today", to recognize members who have volunteered at CAMI – some of them for 30 years.

In a joint project with the Social Action Department in collaboration with the Foundation Cherry Breitman and with the support of the City of Buenos Aires, CAMI organized the first integrated exhibition of paintings by artists with learning disabilities and works by very important painters, at the Luis Perlotti Museum of Sculpture.

To mark Children's Day in Argentina, the CAMI Board Committee coordinated by Elisa Leibachoff organized their annual collection of toys, clothes, school equipment and non-perishable food products for delivery to children on the cancer wards of 5 public hospitals. They also participate in the collection of unwanted medicines to give to low-income individuals and support centers.

At a recent event organized by MAAIAN, the women's wing of Keren Kayemet Le Israel in Argentina, ICJW representative Cherry Breitman was invited to join a panel of women to discuss female solidarity and to launch the Forest of the Jewish Women of Argentina, in Israel.

Following the agenda proposed by ICJW, CAMI arranged a conference on "Gender Violence", together with the Department of Social Action, and organized participatory meetings with themes of open societies and multi-cultural links, the challenge of restructuring the future to achieve our goals, and the key to being happy.

AUSTRALIA

NCJWA (Victoria) has its own sponsored community bus to ensure that seniors in the community are picked up regularly from their homes to enable them to play cards, bingo, socialize and enjoy a hearty lunch at their Seniors Clubs. They organize a lively weekly current affairs discussion group and computer classes for seniors in our community, enabling them to communicate with their family and friends and use the internet, opening up a whole new world. The Golden Age Clubs support isolated elderly Russian immigrants, bringing them music, food, Yiddishkeit, and celebrate all the major festivals. The "Books Out Loud" program is enjoyed not only by the residents of Aged Care facilities, but also the volunteers who read to them. The Oppe Shop is thriving, selling anything from new shoes to well-loved clothes, books and household items.

NCJWA (Victoria) has launched a pilot program called "Mum for Mum", supporting young mums who may be socially isolated. The very successful program "Empowering Single Women" offers women support following relationship breakdowns, helping them to manage the emotional upheaval post separation.

A community meeting was held with approximately 80 Indian Jewish family members who wish to immerse themselves in the Jewish community in Melbourne. There was interest in our programs and how best to further the contact, given that they do not live close to the Jewish area.

NCJWA New South Wales runs "Mum for Mum", an ongoing program that matches trained and supervised volunteers with mothers of newborns who have little or no family support during their first year of motherhood. The service is free and non denominational and has grown through ongoing referrals from The Royal Hospital for Women and early development centres. Over 100 mothers from 15 diverse cultures and faiths have enjoyed the benefit of this program, and it has also generated a great intake of volunteer members.

As a result of this program, NCJWA(NSW) is also involved in partnering with "Wee Share", an initiative which organises the distribution of excellent quality second-hand toys and clothing to both Jewish and non-Jewish families in need.

Through their collaboration with the Shalom Institute and the co-hosting of the Gamarada Art Exhibition at Fanny Reading Council House for ten days in September, NCJWA (NSW) will be able to provide a scholarship for an indigenous female medical student in 2012.

NCJWA Western Australia provides assistance to families in need, delivering food parcels to several families at different times of the year. One of their members came up with the idea of participating in a regular weekly stall at a market which has been running for about two years, and a Food Bank has also been set up at the Jewish community centre and the local Jewish day school thanks to her initiative. Many members are involved and it has encouraged others from different areas of the community to work together. All the funds go to help families, single parent families, the elderly and many more.

BRAZIL

For the past 52 years in Brazil, the League of Jewish Women of Brazil has been making Brazilian Jewish women aware of the need for social participation. This year's theme was "The Future Depends On Us" - an invitation to all activists in the Jewish community for effective social action and partnership. Claudia Costin, Secretary of Education for the City of Rio de Janeiro began a partnership with LFIB by proposing that we participate in an educational project to support Bill 1117 – a proposal for legislation to mandate the study of the Holocaust in public schools in Rio de Janeiro.

Professional development and social inclusion go hand-in-hand. Reflecting this need, LFIB in partnership with the RAI Jewish Assisted Living Home held training courses in March and September for caregivers of seniors and people with physical or mental dependence on hospital and home environments.

BULGARIA

Maya Konfino reports that she was re-elected as the President of the Bulgarian Council of Jewish Women together with 4 new members of the executive. The organization has had to re-register with the Bulgarian National Register of Organizations, because of changes to the regulations, and new plans were drawn up for the year ahead.

Members of the Council are very active volunteers in the many activities organized by Shalom – the central organization of Bulgarian Jews. They help to prepare holiday celebrations, meetings, anniversaries, cultural and charitable events, and to help with building the Jewish community. At the same time, they visit nursing homes and elderly and housebound members of the community, especially during the holidays, to involve them in Jewish activities.

The annual seminar on "Bulgarian Jewish Woman in Contemporary Society" took place over 3 days in June 2011 in Borovetz, a popular mountain resort near Sofia. The participants from BCJW and the women's dancing group "Kedar Manceva" enjoyed lectures and discussions concerning different aspects of traditional and contemporary Jewish life and the opportunities for Jewish women. The Seminar was arranged with help from Shalom and the American Joint Distribution Committee. BCJW also organized a celebratory event to mark the end of the school year together with the women's dancing club "Kedar Manceva".

Members of the BCJW were invited for medical examinations by doctors from the National Health Academy to measure the bone density of their lumbar vertebrae through osteometric analysis. The results showed that 45% of the members have osteoporosis.

CANADA

The National Council of Jewish Women of Canada (NCJWC) is dedicated to social justice in the Jewish and secular community. NCJWC continues to lobby the Canadian government against trafficking of children; advocating for women and children suffering in poverty with early childhood programs and support for youth at risk; continued support of the ALUMA Israel Family Counseling Agency in Tel Aviv; and sustained awareness programs for Jewish Genetic Diseases.

In October, Marni Besser of Calgary, Alberta, was installed as NCJWC's new President at the Annual Board of Directors' Meeting in Winnipeg. One of her first actions was to send a proposal to the Canadian Minister of Finance with regard to solutions to child poverty, urging him to increase funding for programs which support children, to introduce employment equity initiatives, to increase child benefit for low-income families, and to provide education, scholarship and training opportunities for lone mothers and Aboriginal women of low income.

Roz Fine, ICJW V.P. for Canada reports that NCJW Canada is continuing to flourish with many unique and innovative programs and projects in its various sections. Members of the Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver Sections will be participating in the CIBC 'Run for the Cure' in support of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

Vancouver Section has been supporting elderly Jewish residents in a nursing home in Harare, Zimbabwe. They have also expanded their "Books for Kids" program which supplies used books to elementary students in inner city schools. "Operation Dressup" has been developed in order to teach adolescents to shop responsibly, as well as providing used clothing to children in lower income families. They continue to support the Women of the Wall in Israel and the Agunah movement worldwide for equitable divorce proceedings. This Section has advocated lengthening the sentences of convicted child traffickers.

Edmonton Section is planning a program on the awareness of hereditary cancers like Breast Cancer and Ovarian Cancer. They have partnered with other women's groups.

Toronto Section installed Linda Steinberg as their new Section President at their annual Volunteer Recognition evening that took place in June. Their programs include:

- "Just for Me" Backpacks Scheme, which provides backpacks filled with books, toys, school supplies, and snacks to needy boys and girls aged 4-12 prior to the start of the new school year.
- "Beyond 3:30 Boys' Book Club" addresses the education, nutrition, and recreation needs of at-risk middle school students from economically disadvantaged families and provides these boys with new books for them to keep.
- "Drive for Dreidels" makes sure that thousands of Jewish children have a new toy at Chanukah.
- The "Gift of Life Program" promotes the registration for organ and tissue donation through education and awareness within the halachic framework, with the ultimate goal of saving lives.
- "Passover Food Drive" continues to supply and deliver approximately 3,000 boxes of Kosher for Passover Food so that economically disadvantaged families can celebrate Passover with dignity.
- "The 2nd Annual Jewish Genetic Diseases Awareness Week" will take place November 14-20, advocating that young couples planning a family be screened for the Ashkenazi Jewish panel of Genetic Diseases. For further information visit www.whatsinyourgenes.com

Winnipeg Section's largest project is the "Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre" which offers educational and fitness programs to seniors. It also provides Kosher Meals on Wheels to those in need in the community.

- “Citizenship Court” is an annual event where volunteers act as hosts and provide refreshments to people in the community who are becoming Canadian citizens.
- “Holiday Gift Wrapping” is also an annual event where Council Volunteers wrap gifts for Chanukah and Christmas at a local Shopping Centre
- “Purim Shalach Manot Baking” took place in time for Purim where members baked over 400 hamentaschen for shalach manot baskets which were distributed to clients of Jewish Child & Family Service.
- The “Books for Kids” program distributed new and gently used books (donated by members) to students in an inner city school.

It is with much regret and sadness that NCJWC's **Montreal Section**, is closing due to lack of membership and funds after almost a century of community service.

ISRAEL

The Council of Women's Organizations in Israel celebrated International Women’s Day 2011 at Daliat el Carmel, a Druze Village in the North of Israel, commending young Druze women for their civil service, which are pioneers in their community. 30 representatives from the various Israeli women’s organizations attended and met young Druze women in an interactive encounter. The young women talked about their activities, their motivations and plans for future careers, and all the women shared the feeling that they gained more from volunteering than they gave.

Guest of honor of the event was the former Druze Member of Knesset Amal Nasaraladin, who explained about the history of the Druze people in Israel and their eternal bond. Describing himself as a feminist he quoted an old Druze saying: “He who wants to succeed – should be on the women’s side”!



Pictured (l to r): Aviva Kohlmann, VP of CWOI; Iman Madi, Chair of the Druze Volunteers; Rina Wasserman, President of CWOI; and Rina Bar Tal, Chair of Shedulat HaNashim in Israel.



ICJW President Sharon Gustafson, paid a visit to Israel in May 2011 where she met with the Cultural Attache of the USA in Israel and the Public Affairs Officer at the Embassy in Tel Aviv, to discuss cooperation with ICJW and CWOI on future projects. Sharon visited the Emunah Beit Elazraki’s Children’s Home in Netanya, and met with representatives of the various women's organizations in Israel: Naamat, WIZO, Emunah, Hadassah Israel, ORT Israel, University Women, and Soroptomist – who

each described their projects and activities.

NEW ZEALAND

The Council of Jewish Women in New Zealand has branches in Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch, and Dunedin, which do not meet regularly but stay in contact with the national office. The Wellington branch has had a busy year, with a fundraiser bazaar to assist the local Progressive and Orthodox congregations, and a very successful conference encompassing interfaith, religious studies, and a discussion panel on the future of CJW NZ. A meeting was also held with the younger members of the

community to encourage them to participate in the CJW programme, and many good ideas came from the discussion. There has been positive feedback regarding the ICJW emails that are forwarded around New Zealand. We continue to represent Jewish women at the National Council of Women, the Women's Interfaith network, and various public forums. The next AGM in Wellington will be the 70th one for this branch, while NZ CJW (originally the Union of Jewish Women) is 82 years old.

SLOVAKIA

Association ESTER is an organization of Jewish women in Slovakia based in the town of Košice, the second largest city in Slovakia. Marta Gyoriová reports:

In May 2011 we co-organized the "Reading Names" remembrance ceremony at the Jewish cemetery to mark the Anniversary of the first transports to the concentration camps from Košice and surrounding vicinities in 1941. In the synagogue in Košice we read out the names of those who never returned to their homes. Another very important Shoah project, for which we are already preparing, will be the Memorial Reunion in Poprad on March 25, 2012, to mark the 70th anniversary of the transports of 1,000 young Jewish women and girls from Slovakia to the concentration camps, from which only one in ten returned.

We also do not forget to keep our rich traditions, and we try to organize meetings on the occasion of Purim, Pesach, Chanukah, as well as Sabbath evenings. More than 700 people participated in July at "Vagrancy of Jewish Košice" event with a workshop with Rabbi Steiner and a presentation on the Jewish cultural heritage of Košice. Pictures can be seen here: <http://www.kosice.estranky.sk/clanky/potulky/zidovske-kosice>

In September 2011 we organized a Jewish kitchen workshop before the New Jewish Year within the context of a multi-cultural evening, and a concert with title "Yom Kippur", with the participation of leading Slovak and Israeli performers. At the end of the year we are preparing an evening of entertainment, questions and answers.

Association ESTER cooperates with various organizations and educational institutions and makes every effort to involve the majority society and 8 national minorities living in the district of Košice. This is a common effort to build up a civil society that will recognize, now and in the future, the irreplaceable importance of Jewish culture and history.

SOUTH AFRICA

Estelle Cline reports that 2011 marks the 80th anniversary of the Union of Jewish Women of South Africa – a special milestone of which they are enormously proud! Two very exciting functions to celebrate our 80th anniversary have been planned, including our "Divas in Concert" fundraiser - an evening of popular Broadway songs performed by well-known Jewish women singers.

Back in 1931 Toni Saphra gained the support of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies for the creation of a Jewish women's organisation, with the Johannesburg branch being the first to be established. Over the ensuing years, the organisation expanded throughout the country. The raison d'être was to initiate and develop projects in both the Jewish and general communities. The UJW of SA became an affiliate of the International Council of Jewish Women and greatly values this ongoing relationship.

The UJW's work continues to be characterised by courage, compassion and creativity. Throughout the apartheid years, the UJW pioneered projects using Israel's HIPPIY programme, where mothers from

disadvantaged backgrounds were trained to teach their pre-school children. We also started Soup Kitchens at hospitals and in poor Township areas.

The UJW engages Jewish women extensively in educational programmes aimed at strengthening and deepening Jewish identity. We campaign continually for the improvement of the rights of Jewish women in Jewish religious law (halacha). Today in South Africa, due to the UJW's participation and deep concern, a civil divorce has to be obtained before a 'get' can be issued.

Here are two of our current projects in Johannesburg.

Kosher Mobile Meals (KMM)



This project is the flagship of the UJW in Johannesburg, and has been in existence for over 30 years. When the need arises, we supply kosher meals to members of the Jewish community who are unable to provide meals for themselves. The project, which includes home visits and emergency needs, entails the packing and delivery of well-balanced cooked nutritious meals. Approximately 45 000 meals were delivered over the past year. We have just initiated another important project for these recipients. In partnership with the Jewish Security Organisation in Johannesburg, we are supplying some of

our KMM recipients with panic buttons to use in the event of emergencies. We intend extending this project to the larger Johannesburg Jewish community.

A Library for the ReShomile Primary School



In the broader community, a partnership between the Union of Jewish Women Johannesburg, the National Director of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and mothers from an elite private primary school, resulted in the successful completion of a library at the ReShomile Primary School in Diepsloot,

an extremely impoverished area on the outskirts of Johannesburg. This under-resourced school had a room full of shelves but not a single book on them! UJW committee members assisted with sorting and cataloguing over 2,000 books which were donated through various sources. At the official opening of the new library, the UJW and the SA Jewish Board of Deputies were warmly welcomed and thanked for their contribution.



CALENDAR EVENTS

Feb 27 - March 9, 2012	UN Conference on the Status of Women, New York
March 8, 2012	International Women's Day
April 29 - May 2, 2012	ICJW European Regional Conference, Berlin
May 2-3, 2012	ICJW Executive Meeting, Berlin
November 13-14, 2012	ICJW Executive Meeting in Toronto
May 2013	Herczeg Education Seminar in Jerusalem
November 2013	ICJW Executive Meeting in Chicago
March 2014	ICJW Quadrennial Convention

ICJW ACTIVITIES

ICJW Joins CSW Leadership



ICJW is proud to announce the election of Madeleine Brecher to the position of Communications Secretary of the Commission on the Status of Women at the UN in New York City. [The NGO Committee on the Status of Women, NY](#), is one of three women's committees of CoNGO that advocates for women's rights and gender equality. At the helm of the NGO/CSW/NY is new Chair, Soon-Young Yoon, who is the UN representative for the International Alliance of Women and works as a consultant for the World Health

Organization. "All issues are women's issues," said Ms. Yoon. "We are the committee that makes it possible for the international women's movement to meet at the UN every year, renewing its inspiration and energy."

ICJW launches 2nd Women's Academic Research Prize

First awarded in 2009, the Women's Academic Research Prize encourages original research on subjects relating to the role of Jewish women and their contribution as leaders in their communities and in Jewish society, which evaluates the place of women within the predominantly male leadership structures in Jewish life and/or addresses a way to improve the situation of Jewish women and analyzes their effectiveness in the world. The award consists of a certificate of recognition and a \$1,000 honorarium, and will be awarded at the ICJW's quadrennial [Herzceg Jerusalem Education Seminar](#) in Spring 2013. Submissions must be received by September 2, 2012 and [further information can be found at on the website](#).

WEBSITE NEWS

This year the [ICJW website](#) has been completely redesigned and restructured, to show the breadth of the activities of the worldwide organization and its affiliates and to update its members on relevant topical issues. For the first time, each [affiliate](#) has its own page on the website, where they can post news updates about their activities. Information about [membership](#) and the [history of ICJW](#) have been added to the site, and copies of previous [ICJW publications](#) can be downloaded. The Education & Training section of the website includes [Online Courses](#) in English, Spanish and Russian, on topics such as the [Jewish Festivals](#), [Women's Lifecycle Events](#), [Biblical Women](#) and [Bible Study Sessions](#) from a feminist perspective. Visit www.icjw.org to see what we have to offer.