



Links

FALL 2010

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues

I'm delighted to introduce this edition of LINKS, our Community Service newsletter. I know you'll share my pride as you read about the many service projects undertaken by our affiliates around the world. Our members are truly representative of ICJW's mission statement that our "volunteer participation (is) in the best and highest interests of Judaism and the rights of all humanity." Truly, we DO make a difference – in our communities and in our world.

With best wishes to all of you,

Sharon Gustafson,
President, ICJW



COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT

**Compiled by Community Service Coordinators
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Australia

The National Council of Jewish Women of Australia reports on the community service activities of its branches.

Gold Coast: In Queensland, NCJWA partners with Gold Coast Jewish Community Services to assist the elderly, single parents, homeless persons and distressed families in need within our community. They assist with care packages, referrals to the Aged Care Assessment Team and liaison with local government departments, counseling & legal services, meals cooked by our volunteers, food vouchers and home and hospital visits. NCJWA members prepare and deliver food hampers for Pesach and Rosh Hashana and when families are in need.

Brisbane: A small group of community service volunteers calling themselves 'Rose's Army' carry out home and hospital visits to those in need. Volunteers also sew shrouds for the Chevra Kadisha when required, which is usually only once a year.

Sydney: NCJWA is involved in hospital visiting and meals-on-wheels. Their 'Mum For Mum' outreach initiative is a home-based family support program that matches trained and supervised volunteers with mothers of new babies who are in need of a supportive connection. The project is aimed for normative as for non-normative families, and its objective is to help mothers successfully cope with the post-natal months, thus promoting healthy and nurturing family attachments.

Perth: NCJWA has a very close affiliation with the Maurice Zeffert Home for Jewish Aged, which boasts independent living, hostel, nursing home and special care unit for patients suffering from dementia. Volunteers run the kiosk, help with the delivery of meals on wheels, and raised money to supply computer desks for their new computer room, where the residents now learn how to use email with help from Carmel School students, as well as fundraising to purchase general equipment.

NCJWA also offers hospital and home visits on request, and runs a weekly indoor carpet bowls game and outings for the Perth Seniors Club.

Pesach and Chanukah food parcels are delivered to several needy families. They participate in a regular weekly market stall and a food bank at the Jewish community centre and the local Jewish day school. Many members are involved, and this has encouraged others from different areas of the community to get involved and work together, including husbands. All the funds raised go to help single parent families, the elderly and many more.

Victoria: The Victorian section in Melbourne today has 850 members and 150 active volunteers. They run a program for Empowering Single Women, which involves eight monthly sessions run by a psychologist, and a monthly support group. On average 10-14 women regularly attend each session of both groups, and many of the referrals to the new Support Group come from previous participants.

A dedicated team of volunteers operate three Senior Citizens clubs on a weekly basis, where the participants enjoy lunch, games and social interaction. NCJWA Victoria also runs a community bus which is a reliable service for their seniors. Their Golden Age Club supports isolated, ageing members of the community who have emigrated from the former Soviet Union, offering music, appropriate food for the festivals, and a sense of community. They also offer English lessons and refer participants to social workers as necessary.

NCJWA volunteers run regular musical film mornings and hold lively discussions on current affairs and weekly duplicate bridge sessions, all catered by a great team of volunteers. The NCJWA Oppe Shop is an important source of income for the organisation, through the sale of second-hand goods and clothes donated from various local fashion outlets.

In March 2010, NCJWA's founder Dr. Fanny Reading MBE was inducted into the Victorian Honor Roll of Women, in recognition of her significant contribution to the community of the State of Victoria. Another long-standing member (and ICJW executive member) Susie Ivany, was a recent finalist in the Premier's 2010 Community Volunteering Leadership Award, in recognition of her 30 years of dedicated service to NCJWA Victoria.

Canada

The successful on-going community service projects run by the National Council of Jewish Women in Canada include:

Toronto Section:

- Passover Food Drive - supplying Pesach food to 10,000 community members.
- "Just for Me" Backback Project – school essentials for over 200 kids.
- Food for Learning serving healthy snacks to over 125 underprivileged students at recess.
- Reading Angels – volunteers help primary school kids with literacy skills.
- L'Chaim Cancer Support for Jewish Women – telephone hotline, buddy network and gifts.

Montreal Section:

- Centre Yeladim – after-school program for children with food and tutoring.
- Chesed Direct Service Network crisis intervention services for HIV/AIDS clients and their families.
- The Elsa & Joseph Hopmeyer Boys and Girls Library & community center.

Winnipeg Section:

- The Gwen Sexter Community Living Centre multi-purpose senior centre.
- Citizenship Court - volunteers support new citizens at swearing-in ceremonies.
- Adopt a Classroom – new project being planned to adopt a classroom in inner city elementary schools and provide the children with clothing, books and help with reading.

Vancouver Section:

- Books for Kids – distributing books to disadvantaged children and their families
- Operation Dress-Up – providing gently used clothing collected from the community to disadvantaged families, and gift certificates to teenagers wanting to buy their own clothes.
- Battery Disposal Initiative – environmental project to encourage responsible recycling and disposal of used batteries, with receiving bins in schools and community stores.



Colombia

The Fundación Amigos De La Comunidad Golda Meir, previously the Federación de las Damas Hebreas de Barranquilla, supports the Golda Meir School, established 32 years ago in one of the largest and poorest slum areas of Barranquilla. This year they built a new dining room for its 800 students, where breakfasts and lunches are served to the undernourished children. The children can also meet with psychologists for special sessions funded by the Fundación. The project was funded through the sale of original sculptures painted by 100 artists, and by a raffle.

The Fundación also arranges Home Visits to the home of each student, which enables school staff, to understand their family situation and living conditions and to detect home violence, mistreatment and abuse. They support many enrichment activities in the school that promote sports, culture, recreation and the learning of values, and students have won local literature and math competitions.

Czech Republic

The European meeting of ICJW was held in Prague in November 2009, and this gave a boost to the Czech affiliate's membership drive. In February 2010, the CCJW (Společnost židovských žen České Republiky) was registered with the Czech Ministry of Interior as an official organization. CCJW leaders have been actively involved in discussions about the location and themes of the next European ICJW conference.

The project 'Families After Holocaust' provides psychotherapy for survivors and members of their families. ICJW helped its fledgling Czech affiliate to set this up, with training workshops for therapists whose families themselves experienced the Holocaust, led by British psychoanalyst and group-therapy analyst Irene Bloomfield. After she passed away in 2001, they organized an annual workshop in her name, and each year they award the Prix Irene to someone who has succeeded in creating peace among different groups of people.

France

The Coopération Féminine has announced the implementation of its "Jardin des Roos" project. This is an open space, located in a popular neighborhood of Paris, where families and young children will have the opportunity to meet and spend some time together, with the help of psychologists and volunteers from the Coopération Féminine.

Georgia

ICJW's Georgian affiliate Lea organized a summer program for youth and women of Jewish and different ethnic minorities on "Tolerance building through education". Its aim was to improve and encourage the studying of history in Georgia's multi-cultural and multi-religious environment.

In June, Lea and ICJW, working with Georgia's Council of Ethnic and Religious Minorities and the Center for Women and Children's Rights at the Public Defender's Office, held a round-table meeting on the topic of gender equality in ethnic minority communities. A representative of the UN Development Program presented a research study on Gender and Society in Georgia. Marine Solomonishvili, President of Lea and head of the Gender Commission of the Council of Ethnic Minorities, presented a study on "Involvement of the Issue of Gender in the Action Plan of the National Concept for Tolerance and Civil Integration."

Representatives of Georgia's ethnic/religious minorities met with the Public Defender of Georgia and the Chairman of the Consultative Council of the Parliament, Ms. Rusudan Kervalishvili. The participants discussed the issue of activating the involvement of the Councils of Ethnic Minorities and of Religions in the implementation of Georgia's law on Gender Equality and in the development of the 2010-2013 Action Plan for the implementation of a gender equality policy.

This event was followed in July with a meeting between members of Lea & ICJW, the Council of Ethnic and Religious Minorities and the Center for Women and Children's Rights at the Public Defender's Office, on the topic of domestic violence in Georgia's various ethnic and religious groups; the influence of cultures on the strategy of protection and support of victims of family violence; the peculiarities of perception and identification of and response to the facts of violence toward women in different social strata; and the development of effective strategies to help communities to overcome family violence. The representatives of state agencies present at the meeting discussed concrete mechanisms of the protection of victims, and the effectiveness of these mechanisms in the reality of different micro social strata. Local and international human rights

organizations presented international practices related to the aforementioned issues.

Marine Solomonishvili was invited as an expert by the UN Association to report on the cultural heritage of Jews and other national minorities in Georgia. The recommendations of her monitoring project were included into the report of the UN Association to the government of Georgia and to USAID.

Lea & ICJW have started campaigns against Nazism and Anti-Semitism and in support of Israel, which will focus on ways to fight the growing threats against Israel in Georgia, debating problems and to what Jews in Georgia can do to express their solidarity and help Israel at this time.

Israel

The first Teenage Girls' Crisis Center in Israel has opened at the Neve Michael Children's Center in Pardes Hanna, operated under the auspices of Emunah, the National Religious Women's Organization in Israel, affiliated with the Council of Women's Organizations in Israel. It serves girls at risk from ages 13-18 nationwide, from all backgrounds, who have experienced childhood traumas stemming from various adverse social conditions, including poverty, family dysfunction, violence in the home, and parents who suffer from drug abuse and alcohol addiction.

The Center provides teenagers with vital assistance, care and compassion. It has a 24-hour Emergency Crisis Center, a school on the premises, daycare facilities that also serve disadvantaged children in the area, a therapy enrichment center, and an external Crisis Center and Therapy Counseling Unit, which seeks to keep families in crisis intact. Israel's Welfare Ministry not only refers children at risk to the care of the Center, but has pledged funding for the first two years of operation. The refurbishment of the Center was funded by the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, Keren Hayesod of Sweden, and Emunah Canada.

The Council of Women's Organizations has also been involved with the drafting and launch of the Ayala Social Charter – Jerusalem's Charter for the Advancement of Women - is intended to make the public/municipal sphere compatible with the goal of advancing the quality of women's lives, in all areas of life. The Charter acknowledges the unique difficulties faced by women in an economically, socially and culturally complex and challenging reality, and gives local organizations a social and economic responsibility to improve the quality of life of Jerusalemites in general, and women in particular.

New Zealand

The Council of Jewish Women in NZ hosts an annual Chanukah party for the senior members of the Jewish community, including lunch and an outing. In Wellington they run a strong Care of the Aged project, with social workers, who receive support from CJW volunteers. The CJW-NZ belongs to the national Council of Social Services. Shirley Payes reports: "Our volunteers also visit people in hospitals, but today with such short stays in hospital, we find that we are ringing people at home more and more."

Slovakia

Association ESTER is an organization of Jewish women in Slovakia's second-largest city, Košice. Its president, Marta Gyoriová, reports that ESTER has been working with various Slovakian organizations and educational institutions. Their main aim is to keep the traditions and the rich cultural heritage inherited from our ancestors and to represent the Jewish Community in Slovakia. They make an effort to cooperate as much as possible with the majority society and eight national minorities living in the Košice area in common efforts to build up a civil society that will accept the irreplaceable importance of Jewish culture and history in Slovakia.

ESTER is the main organizer of the European Day of Jewish Culture in Slovakia, and Marta has been the coordinator of these events for the whole Slovakia for the past 6 years. They put on concerts of Yiddish, Hebrew songs, exhibitions of books and literature, forums, talks at round tables, talks with writers of Jewish descent, commemorative meetings on mournful Jewish days of remembrance, and celebrations on the Jewish holidays of Purim, Pesach, Chanukah, as well as Sabbath evening events.

They are planning a project for 2011 entitled "Know the Truth", which will be aimed at educating the younger generation, and they provide consultation for those interested in writing their academic theses on themes of Jewish culture and history.

South Africa

The Union of Jewish Women of South Africa has continued its regular community service projects and feeding schemes, but launched many new projects during 2010.

The Johannesburg branch teamed up with the women of the Lutheran Church in Alexandra Township to start a new Soup Kitchen for pensioners and unemployed persons, as well as for schoolchildren returning home from school. They UJW purchased the utensils necessary to start the project, and continue to supply all the food, while the ladies from the Church attend to the cooking and serving of 150 recipients each day.



During the Soccer World Cup, schools were closed for 5 weeks, leaving vulnerable children wandering the streets and at risk of child trafficking. Together with the Lutheran Church, UJW ran a Holiday School to provide a safe environment with hot meals and educational and fun activities. During the national teachers' strike in August/September, they stepped in again to teach classes in maths, science and English.

In Cape Town, the Keshet Group of Camp's Bay will soon officially open the newly built Reception Grade classroom at the Masikululeke Creche in Joe Slovo Park, Milnerton, following a three-year fundraising drive to raise 210 000 Rand (\$30,501). They have supported this pre-school for over 10 years, with food contributions, classroom furniture, toys and books, and training for the helpers, and now they have created a permanent structure, which will have a long-term educational benefit to disadvantaged children.



During August 2010, nine volunteers from Cape Town UJW participated in the Habitat for Humanity Women's Week, working together to build a house for a needy young family. Local UJW women also helped to organize a Fun Day for disabled and handicapped children at the Good Hope Centre.

In Durban, UJW volunteers help out with the South African Police Umbilo Victim Support Centre, providing counseling and support for rape/abuse survivors, and giving them care bags of toiletry items. As underwear is taken for evidence, replacement panties are provided, and because there are very young children being abused, they give out diapers, toys and coloring books. The Durban branch also provides maize meal and sugar to help feed 100 children at the Jabula Day Care Centre and Creche. During a recent visit, it was found that they have few books or educational toys, so UJW women have embarked on a project involving local young mothers to set up a "fantasy" corner for the children, provide colorful story books and educational toys. They are also raising funds to provide a late afternoon snack for the children before they return home.

UJW Durban administers the donated funds for a unique project, entitled Operation Abraham, which brings teams of Israeli doctors to visit clinics in KwazuluNatal, to educate doctors/nurses on performing efficient/safe circumcisions to assist in reducing the occurrence of AIDS.

Ukraine

Eleonora Groisman, President of the Ukrainian Independent Council of Jewish Women, reports that she was invited to the commemorative meeting of the Ukrainian Parliament dedicated to the 20th anniversary of Ukraine's sovereignty. She was also present as a representative of the Jewish community when U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton visited Kiev in August.

The Council of Jewish Women and other Jewish organizations in Ukraine sent a letter to the chairman of the Ukrainian Security Service, Valery Khoroshkovsky, demanding that a neo-Nazi festival planned to take place near Kiev be banned, and it was cancelled as a result of their protest. Eleonora was also vocal on the international social network Facebook against the establishment of a Facebook page entitled "Kill the Jews!", and her campaign was supported by the Ukrainian Council of Jewish Women, the Council of Jewish Women of Georgia and ICJW affiliate Lea, as well as many other Jewish organizations around the world.

On August 4, 2010, the Ukrainian Independent Council of Jewish Women participated in the first "March of Life" event in Kiev and other cities around the Ukraine. "The March of Life" was first held in southern Germany in 2007, on the initiative of Pastor Jobst Bittner and the TOS Ministries organization from the city of Tuebingen. This event was organized in protest against anti-Semitism and as an act of support for Israel. The second "March of Life" was held in East Germany in 2008 and attended by 900 people. In 2009, the March was held under the title "March of Remembrance", with its route running across eight cities in the United States, and this has become an annual event on Holocaust Memorial Day every April. TOS reports that further events are planned in Peru and other international locations. Information can be found at www.tos.info.

United Kingdom

UK Vice President Penelope Conway reports that the League of Jewish Women has extended their 'Headstart' program, established by groups in the north of England, to the Greater London area, renaming it 'Way Ahead'. LJW members show women how to tie scarves attractively when they have lost their hair because of chemotherapy. The members are trained to tie the scarves and to demonstrate the techniques to women and their families.

Not all women are comfortable wearing a wig when they lose their hair, and this service provides them with an alternative accessory which can be personalized to complement whatever she is wearing.

The service has been a great success, with members visiting women individually in their own homes and also demonstrating to groups in the cancer units at several London hospitals. We offer each woman a scarf of her choice as a gift, and they can buy further scarves, snoods or soft hats, or LJW's custom-made hats. More hospitals are becoming interested in using the LJW service, and their ability to respond is only limited by the number of members being trained.



Uruguay

The Council of Jewish Women in Uruguay helps two public schools in Montevideo and one in rural Uruguay with books, toys and clothes for the children. They also support the Children's Hospital, the Hospital de Clinicas, the biggest public hospital in Uruguay. Their new Doar Project at the home for the elderly involves volunteers visiting every week to help the residents send and receive emails from their children and other relatives abroad. This has brought a lot of happiness to those who had lost contact with their love ones.

Monica Rozenbaum reports that three years ago, a group of young women started the CJW Dor Hemshej (Next Generation) section. Their first project was "Shalom Bait", working against domestic violence, which necessitated a year of training followed by a campaign to raise awareness of the problem in the Jewish community. They organized a series of events with outstanding lecturers, and a contest among ORT students to design a poster about domestic violence, which thanks to Discount Bank was displayed all over the city and shown in cinemas, and then distributed as a brochure in hair salons and medical centers. Even though the group is small, they are doing a fantastic work and liaising with local NGOs involved in tackling domestic violence.

CALENDAR EVENTS

February 21-March 4, 2011

UN Conference on the Status of Women, New York City

March 3 – 5, 2011

NCJW-USA National Convention, Dallas, Texas

May 16-17, 2011

ICJW Executive Board Meeting, London UK

May 29-June 1, 2011

NCJW-Australia National Convention, Melbourne, Australia

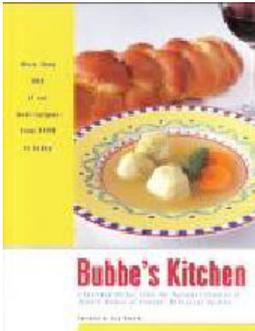
September 3-5, 2011

UN DPI/NGO Conference, Bonn, Germany

November 14-15, 2011

ICJW Executive Board Meeting, Panama City, Panama

ICJW ACTIVITIES



COOKBOOKS FUNDRAISING OFFER

NCJW of Canada, Vancouver Section, has a supply of cookbooks entitled 'Bubbe's Kitchen' to offer to other ICJW affiliates as a fundraiser. It makes a great gift for newly weds, hostesses and housewarming gifts, for students going out on their own, or just good cooks who want another cookbook for their collection. Sold in Canada for \$30, affiliates can buy them for \$5 each or \$54 per box of 18 books (\$3 each). Purchasers would pay shipping and handling. Please contact Bonnie Gertsman [bgertsman@shaw.ca] if you are interested.

WEBSITE NEWS

ONLINE BIBLE COURSE

The ICJW Bea Zucker Online Bible Study Course is now in its second year, with materials for 19 study sessions already online in English and Spanish. We know of many groups of women around the world who use these materials as the basis for study groups. One recent session covers the Torah reading Mishpatim in the book of Exodus, and Dr. Bonna Devora Haberman sets out a historical view of slavery, from Ancient Egypt to the present day. Since the white slave trade continues to be a major campaign issue for ICJW, we urge you to [click here](#) to visit the website's [Jewish Education](#) section and check out this and other Online Bible Course sessions.

ISSUE BRIEFS

HIGHER GROUND CAMPAIGN

NCJW's Domestic Violence Campaign "Higher Ground" is an effort to end domestic violence in the United States by improving the economic status of women. Based on the understanding that economic security is critical to women's safety, Higher Ground educates and mobilizes advocates, community-members, and decision-makers to promote progressive policy solutions that champion women's economic autonomy.

Domestic violence is often addressed with community service work that primarily focus on the provision of services to victims and survivors, and NCJW's local sections have a long history of providing direct service to women and families in need. The NCJW Seattle Section is just one example of an NCJW section that saw a need in their community and filled it. The section has been helping women and their families create homes with the program Shalom Bayit: Furnishing Peaceful Homes since 2001. The program is the only furniture bank exclusively for survivors of domestic violence in Washington state.

While these short-term interventions are critical for women in crisis, more must be done to alleviate the conditions that put women at risk for this type of violence. NCJW believes that by working to improve women's economic status, we can add to the important prevention and intervention work that is already being done and can help eradicate one of the largest systemic reasons that violence against women persists: lack of financial security. It is our hope that our sections will use the expertise they have developed through community service projects like Seattle's Shalom Bayit to advocate for related laws, policies, and programs like, for example, federal, state, or local affordable housing programs.

NCJW knows that a woman's ability to leave or avoid domestic violence is directly related to her level of economic security. Through Higher Ground, we hope to ensure that no woman ever has to choose between personal safety and economic stability for herself and her children.