



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Main Office**

1301 Springdale Road, Suite 150  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08003

**Family Assistance Center**

1309 West Route 70  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08002

**Burlington County Office**

Tall Oaks Corporate Center • Building One, Suite 100  
1000 Lenola Road  
Maple Shade, New Jersey 08052



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April 2015

# JFCS NEWS

CHANGING THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS EACH YEAR IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

**Support groups offer special way to share, learn, and heal**

When it comes to tackling life's issues, sometimes an individual needs the belonging that can only come from being surrounded by others with similar situations or concerns. In a support group, people typically share their personal experiences and offer one another emotional comfort. JFCS will be adding new support groups this year, and will be expanding existing programs to address more issues with group therapy.

Participants in a group offer one another practical advice and tips, to help cope with their specific situation. Some of the other benefits are: feeling less lonely, isolated or judged, gaining a sense of empowerment and control, improving coping skills and gaining a sense of adjustment, reducing distress, depression or anxiety, and developing a clearer understanding of what to expect in a situation.

### BRINGING LIGHT IN DARK TIMES

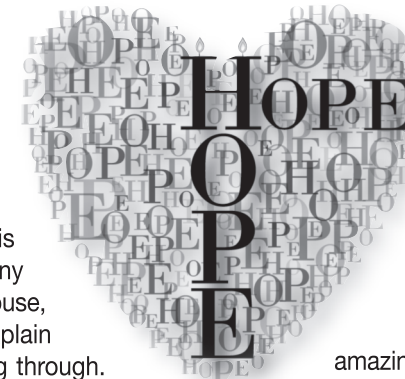
When Jack attended his first JFCS Widow / Widowers Support Group, he could finally express himself, in a way that he just couldn't seem to do before. He met men and women who had lost loves, and were struggling on the same path to healing and closure as he was.

“There are just some things in life, where a connection or a similarity of experiences is crucial to help cope. Sometimes, people don't know how to comfort you if they haven't experienced the same things that you have. As you grieve, you are not even really sure what you want other people to do or say,” says Jack.

“When you go to a group, people have a more direct connection and first-hand knowledge of what is happening. The conversations seem to flow, and you end up sharing, learning, and growing from things you didn't think you would. The support groups have truly been a great outlet for me, and I know that some of these people will be my friends for life. The JFCS social worker helps us address even more issues and obstacles so that we may work on them together. It's been amazingly helpful.”

Just as they had faced every obstacle together since they had met, they held each other up as life seemed to be crumbling. They went on trips, visited friends, had the all-important talks, and of course, loved each other with all their might. Approximately four months after Ellen was diagnosed, Jack was finally faced with living without her permanently. It was a trying time, full of confusion and sadness, the likes of which Jack had never known.

He found warmth from his family and friends, but many of them had not lost a spouse, so he found it hard to explain exactly what he was going through.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

\*All first names of clients in this newsletter have been changed to protect privacy.

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### A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR TOP LEVEL SPONSORS

**PRINCIPAL PARTNER**

Conference on Jewish Material Claims  
Against the German Government  
Jewish Federation of Southern NJ

The Raymond & Gertrude R. Saltzman Foundation

Iva and Joseph Samost  
State of New Jersey

**DREAMER**

Peter and Betsy Fischer  
Judy and Donald Love

United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern NJ

**VISIONARY**

Marvin Samson Foundation

**LEADER**

Jane C. Davis

Miller Family Foundation  
Wright-Cook Foundation

### Mark Your Calendar

JFCS ANNUAL MEETING  
& VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015 AT 7:30 PM

KATZ JCC, 1301 Springdale Road, Cherry Hill, NJ

Free to attend, registration  
required by calling 424-1333, xt 1420

FLAG PLACING ON VETERANS' GRAVES

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2015 AT 10:00 AM

Locustwood Cemetery, Rt. 70, Cherry Hill, NJ

HIGH HOLIDAY FOOD SORT  
FOR BETSY AND PETER FISCHER  
FOOD PANTRIES

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2015 AT 10:30 AM

JFED Annex, 1721 Springdale Road, Cherry Hill, NJ

To volunteer for flag placing or food sort,  
please call Andi Loew, Director of Volunteers,  
at 424-1333, xt. 1180,  
or email aloew@jfedsnj.org

For more information on sponsorships, planned giving, or other giving opportunities,  
please call Beth Wynne at 856-424-1333 or email bwynne@jfedsnj.org.

# NEVER FORGET...

## New Funding Allows More Services for Holocaust Survivors

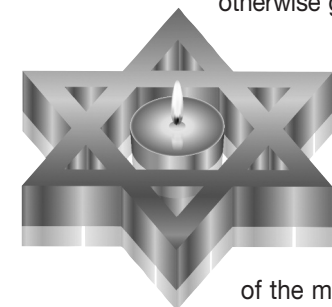
This year marks the 70-year anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The atrocities experienced by Holocaust Survivors continue to haunt them, despite the many years that have gone by. Experts who care for Holocaust Survivors share that the aging process for these individuals is often more challenging when compared to the typical aging population. This is due to the unimaginable situations they faced in concentration camps, forced labor, ghettos, and fleeing from persecution. Hunger, isolation and despair are situations they should never have to face again. Sadly, Holocaust Survivors are subject to suffer further trauma when placed into an institutional setting, as opposed to aging in place at home. While no one can erase the past, JFCS is ensuring that Holocaust Survivors receive the critical services and programs to create a better quality of life in their home environment.



Riva Lederman and Inge Bass, Holocaust Survivors, enjoy a JFCS Café Europa luncheon together.

This year, JFCS expects to receive over \$995,000 from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against the German Government (Claims Conference), an organization that provides services to Nazi victims residing in 47 countries. These dollars represent an increase of over \$200,000 from the previous year. This additional funding will help allow our Holocaust Survivors to independently age in place, with dignity and grace.

Gail Belfer, JFCS Director of the Senior Services Department, says, "Holocaust Survivors who meet the guidelines for the Claims Conference Grant receive in-home assistance, ranging from light housekeeping to help with the basic activities of daily living, such as bathing and dressing. Those who are most frail can receive up to 25 hours per week of homecare services. JFCS also offers a companion driver to assist with getting Survivors to outings that they could not otherwise get to. Other services include Kosher Meals-on-Wheels, social work, and nursing services."



Through the efforts of Joyce Ofori, the JFCS/JCRC Americorps VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America), JFCS was able to successfully compile a more comprehensive list of the many Holocaust Survivors in the area.

This research and investigation has doubled the list of those who receive our support and resources. Ofori, along with JFCS social workers, visited the homes of Holocaust Survivors to better understand their current needs, and this effort has helped to produce a training manual for homecare staff. Ofori was also instrumental in identifying each individual's potential eligibility for programs and benefits, so that they may apply for further assistance if qualified.

Our Café Europa Program, which holds monthly luncheons, has been reinvigorated by the additional individuals identified by Ofori. These luncheons act as a time for Holocaust Survivors to come together, in support of one another, to enjoy a day of friendship and socializing. All of the outreach efforts, coupled with the new funding, have helped to increase the overall impact JFCS will have on our Holocaust Survivor population.

Our goal is to enable the Holocaust Survivors to live independently in familiar surroundings, affording them a sense of safety, security, comfort, and community and to avoid further trauma of having to move into an institutional setting. JFCS will continue to make Holocaust Survivors aware of the services and support to which they are entitled.

**If you are a Holocaust Survivor, or have a loved one who is, please contact Gail Belfer at 856-424-1333 to take advantage of the resources available to you.**

JFCS THANKS ALL OF OUR PLANNED GIVERS

## PLANNED GIVERS SPOTLIGHT

Last year, JFCS was selected as one of eighteen organizations to participate in the LIFE & LEGACY™ program. The program comes to the community through a partnership of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and the Jewish Community Foundation. This program enables members of the community to include local organizations and synagogues in their estate plans. Since last year, 18 individuals / couples have signed a letter of intent (LOI) for JFCS through the LIFE & LEGACY™ program. The commitment of all of our planned givers will help the agency to build endowment funds that will provide essential annual funding for generations into the future.

Arlene and Ed Plasky, long-time supporters of the JFCS mission, recently signed an LOI. Arlene says, "More than 70 years ago, the founders of JFCS invested their time, their efforts, and their money to build JFCS into the vibrant agency that we are so proud of today. We feel it is our responsibility to do the same for the next generation, and pay it forward. This sense of giving back when we have been so blessed is not a requirement - it feels more like a gift."

For more information on becoming a LIFE & LEGACY donor, call Beth Wynne at 856-424-1333 or email [bwynne@jfcsnj.org](mailto:bwynne@jfcsnj.org).



Arlene and Ed Plasky

### JFCS Thanks All of Our Planned Givers

- |   |                               |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Shelly and Jerry Abramson   | Peter and Betsy Fisher        | Arlene and Ed Plasky**        |
| Anonymous   | David and Valerie Gladfelter  | Mitchell and Martha Rosenberg |
| Anonymous **  | Michele and Curt Golkow**     | Jerold and Erica Rothkoff     |
| Marcia Baruch**   | Dr. Samuel M. Gordon*         | Gail and Bill Shane           |
| Patsy Brandt*   | Sarah Kaplan**                | Alison and Mark Shapiro**     |
| Roberta and Richard Budman,<br>Susan Love,<br>Sylvia and Michael Miller<br><i>In honor of their parents,<br/>Judy and Donald Love</i> | Deborah M. Klein*             | Dr. Seymour Siegel            |
| Nina L. Cohen, Esq.<br>and Karl W. Lane   | Susan and Howard Levine**     | Paul Stolpen**                |
| Andrew and Joy Cohen**  | Sis Levy                      | Glenn and Juli Sloves**       |
| Stefanie Cohen**  | Judy Love** and Donald Love** | David Snyder**                |
| Ellen Dubrow*   | Carol Lupo                    | Sheila Wasserbach*            |
| Marlene and Bernard Epworth   | Ruth and Marc Manin           | Alan and Dr. Laura Wechsler   |
| David and Daryl Farber  | Ian and Susan Meklinsky**     | James and Jennifer Weiss      |
| Miriam and Alan Feldman**   | Marla and Dan Meyers**        | Jennifer Dollinger Woods      |
| Mark Fendrick   | Joseph* and Esther Milgrim    | Beth and Craig Wynne          |
|   | Ann and Bernie Miller         | Cindy Laiken Yellin**         |
|   | Marjorie* and Robert* Paul    |                               |

\*Of Blessed Memory  
\*\* LIFE & LEGACY Donor

## INVALUABLE GUIDANCE TO GROW ON

Growing up in this day and age is not easy. There are growing pressures at school to be the best student, to fit in amongst peer groups, to please parents, to be involved in the community, to find your unique direction in life, and to put your best foot forward at all times. JFCS is providing two new support groups that may help ease the stress and help local youth and young adults to find a clear path through it all, with the launch of "This is Me" for pre-teen girls, and "This is My Life," a group for young adults in transition, for ages 20-30.

"Our 'This is Me' group will empower girls to work together so they can learn more about who they truly are, and focus on positive self-esteem, dealing with social stressors, and improving relationships. Attendees will be able to express themselves in an engaging and safe environment," says Nancy Lubars, JFCS Child and Adolescent Licensed Clinical Social Worker. "We are excited to have the opportunity to improve the lives of girls in our community, and help them learn that they are not alone."

"This is My Life" speaks to the particular challenges and issues of young adults in their 20s. "The years after graduating from high school can be stressful and intimidating for young adults. This new offering will provide some support and guidance," says Sandy Kabel, JFCS Assistant Director of Clinical Services. "Young adults will find support amongst their peers in a fun, social setting. Facilitators will offer various topics and tools to enhance skills that improve members' self-concept, confidence, coping capacity, goal setting and decision-making ability, as well as offer practical advice about career development."

"The 'This is My Life' group seeks to address the economic and social challenges that impact 20 and 30 year olds. Group members will address identity issues, such as who they are, and what they want out of work, family, and relationships," says Rena Essrog, JFCS Director of Clinical Services and Talent. "They can discuss feeling 'in between' late adolescence and adulthood, and can work on managing the feelings that come up when they are not where they thought they would be in life. Many individuals in their 20s and early 30s are not in the place they imagined they would be after completing their education; the economic downturn impacted their ability to fulfill their dreams in their timetable. This group will provide the skills to manage the challenges participants are facing," says Essrog.

Another support group offered by JFCS, called Sibshops, is designed for siblings, ages 7-12, who have a brother or sister with special needs. Gabe, a Sibshops participant, says, "Sibshops really helped me understand that a lot of kids have stuff about their families that they want to talk about. It helps me find ways to work out my feelings, have fun, and get to know other kids who also have siblings with special needs. I learn from the other kids, and it's also neat to be there."

More than being a nice gathering and making new friends, the group can help on some truly fundamental levels. "It is a vehicle for kids to learn coping mechanisms, strategies for family life that enable them to adjust to the stressors of life with a brother or sister who has special needs. It is communicated through activities – such as games, crafts, and discussions," says Jane Abesh, JFCS Sibshops Coordinator. "Children learn to view their siblings as unique, rather than having special needs. They also learn that all families have stressors, even the ones that look perfect. The best thing is they network with others, thus decreasing their feelings of isolation."



## SOLIDARITY AND STRENGTH

Jennifer and Ben formed a special bond, and would share their thoughts and fears regularly. They had come to rely on the support each person found in one another – each acting as a sounding board when it seemed no one else could understand. They weren't family members or neighbors, or lifelong friends from high school. On the contrary, they had just met mere months before, at the Family Caregivers Support Group facilitated by JFCS. They were unified and held together by a real and human thread, as they both cared for a loved one suffering from Alzheimer's.

Nearly all Alzheimer's or dementia caregivers will, at some time, experience sadness, anxiety, loneliness and the feeling of being completely overwhelmed. Seeking help and support in the form of a caregiver support group is truly a necessity.

Currently, the state of New Jersey reports that 170,000 individuals have Alzheimer's. By 2025, the number is expected to increase by almost 25% - equaling 210,000 individuals who will have Alzheimer's in our state. Statistics indicate there will be many more individuals who are caregivers, just like Ben and Jennifer, needing the support that only a group can bring.

"In order to address the needs of this ever-increasing caregiver support group, we have applied for and received a Jewish Community Foundation grant to provide dementia training for our professional staff to become certified dementia practitioners," says Gail Belfer, JFCS Director of Senior Services. "The intensive training will promote, encourage, and enhance the knowledge, skills, and practice of those who provide care to individuals with dementia. Our social workers and nurses will be even more capable to guide caregivers through the challenges of caring for individuals with dementia."

For Jennifer, the support group has been a safe haven, the one place she can go to share her concerns. Not only do they address everyday caregiving issues, such as transportation, homecare, and medical bills, they also speak about how the patient and caregiver are both feeling mentally and emotionally.

"There are times when you feel as if your world is coming down upon you, and you want to scream. You want to cry out loud, hoping someone will hear, and know a way to help cure them of Alzheimer's," says Jennifer. "It's very difficult to watch someone you love, and look up to, struggle with remembering basic information, or people they have known for years. As a caregiver and a family member, when they start forgetting who you are, it hurts to the core, because you've shared so many memories with them that their brain simply just can't recall."

"When I am with the others in the group, I find that we share so many resources – information that helps us get to new resources for assistance or support at home. Some of the connections shared also help with the legal and financial issues that a caregiver may need to reference," says Ben. "The most invaluable aspect of the group is that I get to form lasting relationships with people who are like me."

# PUTTING POTENTIAL TO WORK

## Supported Employment Program Gives Wings to Individuals with Special Needs to Soar in the Workplace

Things are looking up for the workforce in our state, as more talented and able individuals with special needs are bringing their skills to the table. In our community, you just may see their skills evident on your dining table, thanks to the culinary job training offered by the JFCS Soups and Sweets program. The program not only trains individuals with special needs so they are able to find employment in the public sector, but also offers a catering business component for participants to apply their skills.

Lois Forman, JFCS Supported Employment Program Coordinator, says it is no secret how this program model became such a success. In fact, there are many key ingredients that help it to flourish. "The food that is created by the students of the Soups and Sweets program is a really great product, so you have something that the community can get behind and embrace. The mission of the program to get those with special needs into the working world is something that truly inspires the community, and the community benefits because the program brings diversity to the workplace," Forman says.

"Additionally, the food industry is a true passion for the participants, so they blossom because it is something they love to do. Many participants grow more than they would in a traditional (non-culinary) or academic program. It brings them pride, fulfillment, and confidence in themselves because they are living their dream."

To complement their new culinary skills, the students also receive training in the "soft skills" of employment, such as stress management, teamwork, and conflict resolution. They leave the training program with an increased sense of self confidence to enter the workforce.

"The model is one that works, for the community and the participants. Consumers feel really good about purchasing from the catering business," says Barbara Abrams, Director of the JFCS Special Needs Department. "Our sales have increased year by year, raising \$12,000 the first year to \$30,000 the second year. In this, our third year, we are expected to reach \$45,000 in sales. Many of our trainees have previously enrolled in other culinary training programs that had a more academic focus, and have found those programs difficult. Soups and Sweets offers a more hands-on approach to learn how to work in a commercial kitchen, thereby hoping to ensure success in each of our trainees."

Soups and Sweets is part of a sweeping movement within the government and the community-at-large for creating more employment opportunities for those with special needs. This is, in part, in answer to a concerning trend, which evidenced that the workforce participation of people with special needs was at 26% in 2013 – a downward spiral of participation that started in 2010. Thankfully, the latter part of 2014 showed a positive change both nationally and locally, and we are optimistic that with programs such as ours this trend will continue.

Beyond the Soups and Sweets program, the JFCS Supported Employment Program assists individuals with resume writing, honing interviewing skills, and completing job applications. JFCS established relationships with many businesses and organizations throughout Southern New Jersey who are very supportive of the JFCS vision to make the opportunity to work more accessible and attainable for individuals with special needs. The program began in 2004, and since then has assisted hundreds of individuals in finding and maintaining integrated, community-based employment.

"We assist them every step of the way, in every different stage of preparing to enter the working world. This includes accompanying the individuals on job interviews, providing job coaching, follow-along support, and assisting with establishing natural supports at the worksite," says Forman. "Our goal is to find the right job match for each individual, based on their strengths, abilities, and interests. We make sure the candidate fits with the duties of the job – but also the environment, or the 'work culture.' We want them to be a part of a team."

JFCS believes that all individuals have the right to explore community-based employment as their first option. We believe individuals have the right to seek real jobs, for real pay, and lead meaningful and productive lives by working within their community. Our team of Employment Specialists and Job Coaches help individuals obtain and maintain competitive employment. JFCS is an approved Supported Employment vendor with the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) and the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).

The best gifts we can give those with special needs are opportunity, understanding, and our support. Believing in the full potential of others and highlighting the strengths of others is what the JFCS Special Needs Supported Employment Program is founded in. With the dedication and support of the JFCS staff, and the unwavering commitment of community members, the sky is the limit for each client in the program.



*Soups and Sweets graduate Joey Sass, showing off his culinary skills in the kitchen.*

# HUNGER ON THE RISE

## IN SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

Chelsea, a single mother of two, is the face of hunger. Joshua, a once-successful attorney, now unable to work because of a disability, is the face of hunger. Thomas, a 65 year-old war veteran is the face of hunger. Lucy, the third grader without dinner, is the face of hunger. And, Lillian, a grandmother of five, is also the face of hunger.

In other words, the face of hunger looks like every person each one of us knows. It knows no age limit, and doesn't show leniency to anyone caught in its grasp, no matter your background or social status. The official numbers on food-insecurity in our area are in, and as almost everyone in the social services nonprofit sector feared, the numbers are higher than ever.

Feeding America, the national organization for hunger awareness, released its summary called Hunger in America 2014. In contrast to the previous study, Hunger in America 2010, the rate of food insecurity in our area

has more than doubled. For example, in 2010, 91,000 individuals reported using a feeding program in South Jersey. In 2014, that number stood at 196,300.

Just last year, the three JFCS Betsy and Peter Fischer Food Pantries distributed \$172,120 worth of food to over 5,600 food insecure individuals. The agency will be doing even more this year, in order to keep up with the swiftly increasing current of hunger in Southern New Jersey. Sadly, food-insecurity is spreading across the Southern New Jersey landscape like wildfire.

This leaves us all with a sobering reality that there are more people hungry, and more families having to make critical life choices based on their ability to purchase food. There are increased numbers of individuals who have to resort to desperate measures in order to make food a possibility in their home (e.g., eating expired foods or pawning personal property to get cash for food).

JFCS pantries are feeling the urgency for food, each and every day.

"We rely on donations, and the JFCS food pantries are in dire need of food. We have seen a tremendous increase for the demand for food. In one week alone, one of our pantries serviced 22 families in just a single day. It's very difficult to keep up with the need," says Andi Loew, JFCS Director of Volunteers.

"Unlike other pantries, Betsy and Peter Fischer Food Pantries are kosher, and have hours of operation every day of the week. JFCS has food pantries in three locations in Camden and Burlington Counties. Each of our locations is seeing the same increasing stream of clients."

Casey holds two jobs and struggles every month to make ends meet. "The children see me stressed everyday – about bills, about the cost of transportation, about the hours I have to work. Often, I will have to put off my medical / health care so that I can make sure that the children have food. With the help of the JFCS pantries, we can actually set aside time where we can sit and eat as a family, and feel whole again, with enough to eat. I can feel good that we are having a nutritious meal," she says. "I know in my heart that JFCS does all it can to help me, and when I am back on my feet, I intend to help them to help others that are in the same situation I am in now."

JFCS has increased our food collections during the holidays and high-demand seasons, and recently introduced an innovative virtual food drive. This online giving component allows the public to donate funds to support our 3 pantries, through the JFCS Causevox site.

With an Internet-based "food drive," making contributions becomes an easy, streamlined, user-friendly experience for the giver. Participants can simply visit [www.jfcsfighthunger.causevox.com](http://www.jfcsfighthunger.causevox.com) to make a contribution, just by clicking the "Make a Donation" button. With an online resource

**JFCS pantries continue to meet needs of food-insecure families, though hunger is a formidable opponent**



of pantry support, the agency can procure food items and grocery store gift cards. Interested parties can even host their own Causevox page to facilitate a fundraising initiative for JFCS and its Betsy and Peter Fischer Food Pantries. If a person has a Bar or Bat Mitzvah coming up, and wants to do something for the community, this is a great option. This is also a terrific opportunity for those who have an upcoming birthday, and would rather give back than receive presents. Others may enjoy the online fundraising as a special project to do with their children to support social services and teach the value of charitable giving. Whatever the reason, the virtual food drive is truly a wonderful, interactive, and engaging platform to get friends and loved ones involved in community service for those who struggle to put food on their tables.

Of course, traditional in-person food donations can always be brought to the JFCS main office at 1301 Springdale Road, Ste. 150, Cherry Hill. Additionally, individuals can also arrange their very own food drive to help JFCS pantries (live or online) or volunteer in our food pantries.

JFCS, with the community as our partner, is committed to ending food-insecurity for our neighbors, the many faces all around us. With the support of community members, donors, and local organizations in partnership with the agency, hunger does not have to be on the rise. On the contrary, we can all rise so that we may see hunger fall.

**For questions, or for more information on these opportunities, or our about our pantries, please call Andi Loew at 856-424-1333, xt. 1180.**

### JFCS Betsy and Peter Fischer Food Pantries: MOST NEEDED ITEMS

- Cereal
- Prepared tomato sauce (or other canned tomato products)
- Canned fish
- Canned vegetables
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Rice
- Pasta
- Boxed milk
- Baby food and formula
- Snacks
- Canned fruit



### HUNGER IN AMERICA 2014 STATISTICS FOR SOUTH JERSEY

- 44% of households report choosing between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage at least once in the past 12 months; 24% face this choice every month.
- 68% of households report choosing between paying for food and paying for utilities at least once in the past 12 months; 44% face this choice every month.
- 53% of households report choosing between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care at least once in the past 12 months; 29% face this choice every month.
- 60% of households report choosing between paying for food and paying for transportation or gas for a car at least once in the past 12 months; 29% face this choice every month.
- 26% of households report choosing between paying for food and paying for school loans, tuition, or other educational expenses at least once in the past 12 months; 13% face this choice every month.