



Samost JFCS NEWS

February 2018

Jewish Family & Children's Service of Southern New Jersey

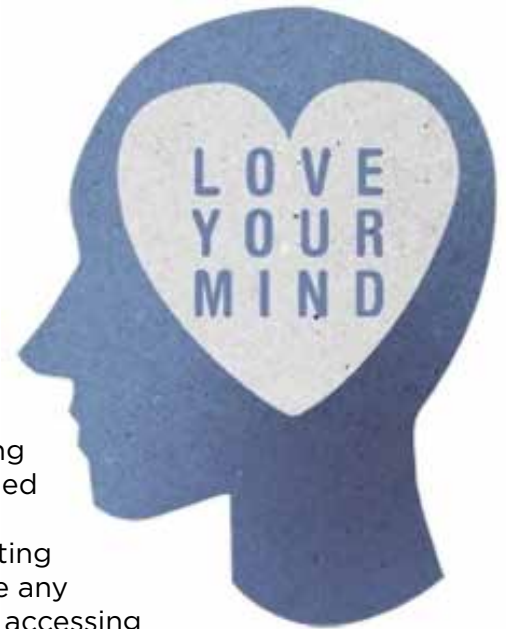
Love Your Mind. Let Us Help. Expansion of Counseling Department Includes More Staff and Greater Flexibility

Taking care of our minds should always be on our list of priorities, not only when we feel like we are in times of crisis, but as a way to maintain balance and help us be our best. JFCS is aiming to make counseling a comfortable and rewarding experience and is excited to announce the expansion of its counseling department.

The department offers individual, couples, and family therapy to children, adolescents, adults, and seniors. Our clinicians have the expertise to provide effective mental health services to those who are experiencing anxiety, depression, relationship issues, grief, loss, and a host of other life stressors that impact emotional well-being. Counselors are trained in hypnotherapy, mindfulness, and other trauma-informed and evidence-based practices. Carlos Bermeo, LCSW, NBCCH, Director of Clinical Services at JFCS, believes that providing a variety of therapies will help and encourage the community to achieve individual goals in a more effective and lasting manner.

JFCS' Counseling Department now features faster turnaround times for service inquiries, more therapists on-site, and greater flexibility in terms of scheduling office visits. Most insurances are accepted, including Medicaid and Medicare. A sliding fee scale is also available.

In 2018, Carlos and his team of therapists will focus on a campaign communicating a new way of thinking about therapy, called "Love Your Mind," and are concentrating efforts to eliminate any stigmas related to accessing mental health. Changing the public perception surrounding counseling helps reduce apprehension pertaining to therapy.



“Getting therapy is not just about waiting for a traumatic or life-changing event. It is a meaningful way to maintain your good mental health and well-being.”
- Carlos Bermeo

“I always ask first-time clients to rate their anxiety right before entering the office, on a scale from 1-10, 10 being the most anxious. Most individuals say it's a level of 8 or higher because of their thoughts, fears, and worries about seeing a therapist and how that might appear to others. Or, they worry about having a very scary experience,” Carlos says. “At the end of the session, after they have had the introductory experience to therapy and see the relaxed, welcoming space here at JFCS, I'll ask again. Many of them say, 'Wow, I am at a 2 - or even a 1 - I had no idea why I was nervous - I feel really good about it!'”

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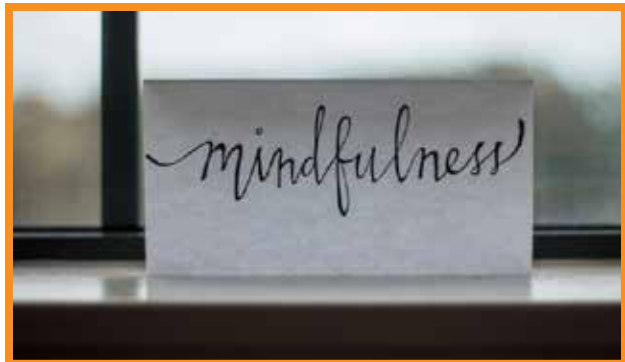
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Love Your Mind. Let Us Help. *continued from page 1*

A big part of the JFCS process is helping people understand that it is normal not to have all of the answers, and that it is okay to discuss life's moments with a counselor, who can point out a different perspective.

"Getting therapy is not just about waiting for a traumatic or life-changing event. It is a meaningful way to maintain your good mental



health and well-being," says Carlos. For those actively battling anxiety, depression and other mental illness, Carlos wants them to know that the cause is likely out of their control. Contributing factors could be chemical imbalances, hereditary

markers, and environmental factors - and he feels that mental illness of this nature is comparable to chronic diseases such as asthma.

You deserve to love your mind, and JFCS is here to help every step of the way.

For more information, call (856) 424-1333. To fill out a request for services, visit www.jfcssnj.org/counseling.

Hunger doesn't take a vacation.

Food insecurity doesn't stop for holidays, spring and summer breaks, or for snow days. Empty shelves and plates happen 365 days a year, for many of our neighbors in need.

Last year, our Betsy & Peter Fischer Food Pantries distributed food to 4,541 individuals.

You can help end that cycle.

Please donate these "most-needed" items to our pantries:

- Cereal
- Pasta
- Prepared Tomato Sauce
- Boxed Milk
- Juice Boxes
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Snacks
- Canned Fish
- Canned Fruit

For more information, please call Donna Broecker at (856) 424-1333 or email dbroecker@jfedsnj.org. Food may be dropped off at 1301 Springdale Road, Cherry Hill, Monday through Thursday, 9 AM - 5 PM and Friday 9 AM - 3 PM.

Too busy to go shopping? We'll do the shopping for you. Visit www.jfcssnj.org/fooddonation to make a donation.



WHY NOT?

Why not employ individuals with special needs?

WHY NOT, INDEED!

All individuals have the right to seek real jobs, for real pay, and live meaningful, productive lives by working within their community.

With 120 employers in South Jersey giving opportunities to those with special needs through our Supported Employment Program, you are in good company.

Call JFCS Employment Specialist Betsy Wahlquist to find out how you can be part of something that brings promise and possibilities to so many in our area by calling (856) 424-1333 or by emailing bwahlquist@jfedsnj.org.



Our Soups and Sweets special needs culinary training program prepares young adults for employment in the food service industry.

You can try some of the delicious Soups and Sweets offerings at your next professional event or family gathering - and all sales support the program!

To place your order, call (856) 533-8090 or email soupsandsweets@jfedsnj.org.



On the Right Track

Special Needs Program Project SEARCH Helps a Childhood Dream Come True

Ever since PJ was a child, he had an admiration for trains.

“Since birth, PJ absolutely loved trains. It probably started with Thomas the Tank Engine,” says Noemi, PJ’s mom. “He really wanted to work as an engineer; it was his ‘train dream.’”

It is not uncommon for people on the autism spectrum to have intense and highly-focused interests, often from a fairly young age. Fortunately, PJ found that his dream of working in the train industry came true after his year-long participation in Project SEARCH. Project SEARCH is a nationally-recognized, one-year high school transition program, which provides training and education with the goal of competitive, integrated employment for students with disabilities.

This collaborative program, of which JFCS is the Community Rehabilitation Provider, started in South Jersey in September 2016 through Kennedy Health (now Jefferson Health).

“I loved our experience with Project SEARCH,” said Noemi. “It is a wonderful program. Considering the help PJ needed, everyone was all-hands-on-deck. The entire Project SEARCH team was very supportive and patient.”

Before he landed his job in the train industry, PJ participated in three 12-week internship rotations in different departments within Jefferson Health. He learned to write letters of application and compile a resume, honed interviewing techniques, and gained transferrable skills. PJ monitored machines in the boiler room, retrieved orders from a handheld device, and completed hardware diagnostics during his internship.

“PJ was always consistent in receiving high scores from his department mentors on work-related behaviors,” noted Janeene Martin, JFCS Employment Specialist for the Project SEARCH Program. “PJ was eager to apply all his experiences and training in the workforce.” PJ would soon realize that his skills and work ethic, along with guidance from the Project SEARCH team, would put him on the right track to his dream job.

“JFCS was able to connect PJ with a job opportunity as a courier with Edens Corporation, a partner organization with SEPTA. Now PJ gets to work in a job where he is

riding the rails all day long, three days a week, from 9 AM - 4 PM. He even rides a train into work,” Noemi says with pride. “His job is to ride the train to various locations, and to deliver important documents to the staff there.” Headquartered in Philadelphia, PA, Edens Corporation provides a variety of services to include paratransit transportation and ticketing throughout the Philadelphia region.

“One of the biggest rewards,” says Noemi, “is that PJ is coming out of his shell. PJ used to keep to himself a lot, but now he comes home to relay that he spoke up and asked for help on something. He is always pleased to share what he has learned, and how willing the staff is to assist him. Every day, his confidence in himself, and in his abilities, shows. If any parent is on the fence about a program like this, they shouldn’t be. They should just do it. Project SEARCH offers so much support to all the participants ... there are just so many benefits.”

PJ, when asked to choose two things he liked most about his job, said, “I like interacting with people and being independent.” Riding the trains, it goes without saying, is of course at the top of his list.

The Project SEARCH Program occurs on-site at Jefferson Cherry Hill Hospital, and is a collaboration of community partners including JFCS, Jefferson Health, Y.A.L.E. School in Cherry Hill, New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS), and New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD).

For more information on Project SEARCH, call Janeene Martin at (856) 424-1333, Ext. 3275. To learn more about all of the special needs programming JFCS offers, visit www.jfcssnj.org/special-needs.



Darkness to Light

60+ Services Director Retraces the Steps of Her Father, From the Holocaust to Hope

The trip was a long time in planning. On the 15th anniversary of her father Israel Dubner's death, Gail Belfer, JFCS 60+ Services Director, went on a mission to try to get a sense of what Israel's life was like - before, during, and after the Holocaust. She would travel with her husband Bob, daughter Arielle, sister Jodi and her husband Jared Gordon.

"It was important for us to walk in my father's shoes, and to pay our respects at cemeteries where our family members are buried, and at Auschwitz where they had been," says Gail. "It was also important for us to have closure, to find out information that we had not known before."

As they followed in his footsteps, they traveled to Lodz, Poland, where Israel grew up, and where the Nazis arrived when Israel was just 15 years old. They were able to visit where he played and lived with his parents, brother, and grandfather. They saw the kind of apartment they had lived in, the path he walked to school, and the textile store owned by his parents.

"It was wonderful to see, because we were able to envision that he had a wonderful life and upbringing, before the Holocaust. They had a close-knit family," she says. "He and his brother were in youth groups, and they sang in the choir together at the synagogue. But when the Nazis came into Poland, life suddenly changed. Within a short time, they were taken to the ghetto in Lodz."

Gail and her family members were able to visit the address where that ghetto had been located. The sheer impact of being in the place of such suffering was palpable by

all. "They were ripped from their schools and work; they had to leave society as they knew it. My father's grandfather died shortly after the ghetto was formed. Soon after that, my father's brother and father were killed. He once had dozens of cousins and aunts and uncles - his mother was one of 9 in her family - and most of them were killed," says Gail.



Israel Dubner, age 23, at Kibbutz Sa'ad, Israel following the War of Independence in 1948.

Some closure came for Gail and her loved ones as they visited the Jewish cemetery in Lodz, where they found her great-grandfather's grave site, a small marker with his name was found, amongst thousands. The family gathered to say a prayer and light a memorial candle. This act was significant to both Gail and to those who visited the site with her, but would have been equally important to Israel, as he never knew exactly where his grandfather was buried. The family had only recently been given a map of the cemetery.

Somehow Israel and his mother survived the ghetto until the last deportation on the cattle cars to

Auschwitz in August 1944, where his mother was separated from him and sent to the gas chamber. As they were forced to part ways, she gave him a spoon to help him to eat if he ever received rations. Israel gave her the only piece of bread he had from his pocket. Through a series of miracles, Israel survived Auschwitz, and later, Dachau.

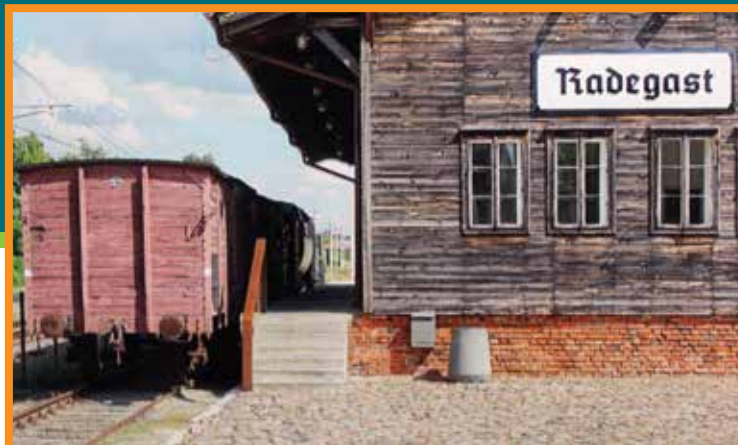
Gail and her family walked through Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau where so many of Gail's family members and JFCS clients' family members perished. They fulfilled her father's wish to recite Kaddish - the memorial prayer - for his mother and numerous other relatives who were killed at that site. Gail also paid her respects and recited memorial prayers on behalf of her clients' lost relatives. They went on to Krakow and Warsaw, where they saw and learned about the ghettos of those cities.

Gail thought often of JFCS Holocaust Survivor clients she works with everyday, who also endured such places. Many JFCS clients are from Poland, as well as from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and other Eastern European countries. Hearing and seeing first-hand how they were barely living in sub-human conditions, constantly fighting starvation and illness, beaten and tortured on a daily basis, Gail still finds it difficult to understand how any person could have survived such trauma.

At Auschwitz and Dachau, Israel and the other able-bodied prisoners were forced to work hard labor for more than eleven hours a day moving heavy stones across the camp with no warm clothes or shoes. Throughout the darkness, one light that followed her father was his beautiful voice, and his



Radegast station, located in Lodz, Poland, transported 150,000 Jews to Auschwitz, including Gail's father and grandmother and countless family members, most of them to their deaths.



dream to be a cantor - and his voice was one of the small miracles that helped to save his life.

"One evening, the Nazis were drinking and having fun. Seemingly for no reason, they told all of the prisoners to come out, and just started shooting people, one by one. My father, at that point, just started singing his prayers. One Nazi soldier took notice, saying that Israel had the voice of an angel - and they spared his life, because as barbaric as the Nazis were, many of them were well educated and had an appreciation for music and fine arts," says Gail.

In the library on Kibbutz Sa'ad, where Israel lived, there are small boxes archived from each year.

Inside one, there would be another heart-warming gift for Gail and her family. Contained in a box labeled "1947," they discovered pictures of her father at age 22, just before he made his way to the United States, where he completed his education and realized his passion to become a cantor. Israel went on to attend San Diego State University, graduated from Yeshiva University and spoke six languages. He served as a cantor in a synagogue in Scranton, Pennsylvania for more than 30 years.

Gail has an even deeper appreciation and admiration for the Holocaust Survivors she serves at JFCS. "The resilience of the Survivors to re-start so many times - makes us appreciate why especially during this stage of their lives, we need to be there and support them, and let them know we will help them. They need to know they are not alone anymore. I feel so strongly that helping and serving the Jewish population in our community has to be a priority. Our visit only helped to strengthen my conviction that it is of highest importance that the Survivors get what they need. They were silenced for so many years and no one spoke up for them. As they are now seniors, JFCS is here to care for them, to advocate for them. We must support them, enhance their lives, and try to make their lives easier."

There was one final piece of closure for Gail and her family from their life-altering trip: obtaining the death certificates of her uncle and grandfather, and the true birth certificate of her father Israel.



Arielle Belfer (Gail's daughter), Gail and Jodi Gordon (Gail's sister) holding an Israeli flag at Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland.

From Poland, Gail and her family journeyed to Israel, where her father went after the war in 1947 to visit his uncles, who escaped before the Holocaust to try to start a new life. Following months of intensive medical care and almost two years in displaced persons camps, Israel was smuggled on a boat to Israel, known then as Palestine.

JFCS Provided Over \$1 million of Support Services to Holocaust Survivors in 2017

Together with grants from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), The New Jersey State Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program, the Eva and Marvin Schlanger Family Foundation, and private donors, the 60+ Services Department provides assistance with restitution applications, ongoing social work and nursing case management, homemaker and personal care services, Kosher Catered Home Delivered Meals, transportation, and supportive counseling. The socialization of JFCS Survivors is enhanced through our monthly Café Europa luncheon, which offers a kosher lunch and often hosts musical entertainment or holiday programming. For an updated list of eligibility programs for Holocaust Survivors, visit www.claimscon.org.

These are not just pieces of paper, but sources of healing. Gail and her family will have the dates of birth, to recognize and to honor loved ones on those anniversaries, and the dates of deaths to commemorate on their Yahrzeits. The Nazis stole too much, from far too many to fathom, but those lost will have their voices live on, through the prayers and love of their family members who continue to share their stories, honor their legacies, and journey to understand their lives.

To learn about JFCS 60+ Services, visit www.jfcssnj.org/holocaust-survivor-support.



No Room for Harassment

Project SARAH Offers Education and Outreach to Thousands



Recently, the world witnessed a tidal wave of awareness regarding sexual harassment and assault. This is due in part to the hashtag #MeToo, shared by celebrities and others on social media, to denote their experience with these difficult issues. Elected officials, CEOs, coaches, musicians, actors, mentors, and employers from all over the nation were all called to the floor for their behaviors. Many were fired from their jobs, and others resigned. Some face criminal action. It is an awakening for many, but a hard truth is that the prevalence of abuse and harassment is - and has been - rampant.

For many years, the JFCS Project SARAH Program, part of the JFCS Rhona Fischer Family Assistance Program - has made it its mission to educate and empower individuals of all ages. A focus is particularly on young people - so that the community can put an end to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse early on in life, and share what they learn with the generations to come.

1300 teens in local high schools have experienced the tremendous impact of the Project SARAH Building Healthy Relationships (BHR) presentations this past year. These cover crucially-important information for all genders, such as giving and getting consent, recognizing red flags of relationship abuse, what to do if a friend is in an unsafe situation, college sexual assault, and having a safety plan in place in the event of a potentially dangerous or uncomfortable scenario.

Hilary Platt, JFCS Project SARAH Program Coordinator says, "I realize how much these classes are needed when I ask, 'Who has talked about consent at home?' I then see that maybe five percent of the attendees will raise their hand. I don't blame the families; it's an awkward conversation that most people don't know how to start. However, that's why we talk about it in our BHR class and provide the students with a video to show their parents or guardians to help make it an ongoing conversation."

Case in point, at the end of a 9th grade presentation at Cherry Hill High School West, a female student came up to Hilary, and explained that in 8th grade a boy very aggressively tried to get physical with her. The student was able to push him off of her, but she still thinks about it every time a boy consensually wants to be affectionate.

"She felt that the BHR program was empowering, and was grateful about how much we stressed bystander intervention, so that everyone knows they need to step up in some way, if they know someone has the potential to be harmed. We can't allow anyone to accept these types of behaviors, to look the other way, or to shame someone who was threatened," says Hilary.

This past year, the JFCS Project SARAH Program also created a compelling public service announcement (PSA) to raise further awareness of the epidemic. Entitled "SARAH GIVES HOPE," the PSA featured voices of

all ages and backgrounds, from all over the South Jersey community, including a township committee member, a rabbi, a policeman, and high school and college students. It was filmed by local teen Andrew Rowan (Andrew Rowan Productions). The community responded with

enormous support by sharing the PSA on social media, and viewing it more than 7,000 times.

"Abuse and harassment can happen to a person any age, any gender, LGBTQ or straight, and regardless of race, religion, or background. It doesn't discriminate, and we can't put a filter on anyone who experiences it. We need to listen if they want to share their stories - and we hope that awareness can prevent such stories from ever being written in the first place," says Hilary.

By keeping education at the forefront of the conversation, we can keep our loved ones from harm. No one deserves to be abused - and no one should ever remain silent. To learn more about Project SARAH, call (856) 424-1333 or email Hilary Platt at hplatt@jfedsnj.org.

According to a 2017 Psychology Today Study:

81% of women have been harassed in some form
17-20% of males report being harassed
71% of those harassed do not report it



Legacy Donor Spotlight

JFCS participates in the LIFE & LEGACY program, which enables members of the community to remember JFCS in their estate plans. The program is brought to JFCS through the Jewish Community Foundation, Inc. and its partnership with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. LIFE & LEGACY donor Gregg Wolfe recently shared his passion for JFCS and what a legacy means to him:

“Having lost my first-born son, Justin Matthew Wolfe, to a heroin overdose, I reached out to JFCS for support and to assist with the opiate epidemic which was surrounding our community. I was received with love, caring, emotional guidance, and a familial sense of security. I was immediately enamored by the wealth of services which JFCS so willingly provides to those less fortunate or in dire need of sustenance. I have been a volunteer, board member, and advocate ever since, as everyone within JFCS provides the necessary strength and everlasting reinforcement so individuals may move forward with a better existence. For that, I have committed to leave a legacy to JFCS in return for what they have done for me during the lowest point in my life, and that is losing my son.” - Gregg Wolfe



For more information on how you can become a LIFE & LEGACY donor, call Beth Wynne at 856-424-1333, Ext. 1179 or email bwynne@jfedsnj.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR LEGACY DONORS

Shelly and Jerry Abramson

Anonymous*

Anonymous (2)^{LL}

Marcia Baruch^{LL}

Steven Beilowitz^{LL}

Patsy Brandt*

Roberta and Richard Budman,
Susan Love, Sylvia and Michael Miller,
in honor of their parents,
Judy and Donald Love

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^{LL} Life and Legacy * Of Blessed Memory



NEW LGBTQ PROGRAMMING

Project Rainbow

A supportive and inviting environment for teens in grades 7 to 12 who identify as LGBTG & their allies. No Charge to Attend

7 - 9 PM

February 22, March 22, April 26, May 17
Katz JCC

For information or to RSVP, contact Beth Wynne at bwynne@jfedsnj.org.

A collaboration with the Katz JCC. Funding provided by Jewish Community Foundation, Jewish Women's Foundation, Geshar Philanthropy Initiative/JCC Camps at Medford, and private donors.

Aging With Pride

A welcoming space to share resources, build relationships, learn about JFCS services, and discuss unique LGBT issues affecting older adults.

For information, contact Reva Farenback-Brateman, MSW, CDP at rbrateman@jfedsnj.org.

Sponsored by Timothy Rice Estate and Elder Law (TREE).



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For more information on sponsorships, legacy giving, or other giving opportunities, please call Beth Wynne at (856) 424-1333, Ext. 1179 or email bwynne@jfedsnj.org.



Main Office

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Family Assistance Center

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Phone: (856) 433-8225 • Fax: (856) 685-7570

Burlington County Office

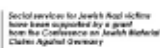
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Special Needs Department

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www.jfcssnj.org

JFCS is part of the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA).
Accredited by the Council on Accreditation for Family & Children's Agencies (COA).



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

STEPPING OUT WITH JFCS

April 21 at 8:45 PM
Congregation Beth El

Tickets are \$72 each or
agency sponsorships start at \$500, and
include at least 2 tickets to the event.

For information, please visit www.jfcssnj.org/steppingout.

FLAGGING OF VETERANS' GRAVES

May 6 at 9:30 AM
Locustwood Cemetery, Route 70, Cherry Hill

JFCS ANNUAL MEETING AND RECOGNITION OF BOARD, STAFF, & VOLUNTEERS

Sponsored by the Law Offices of Eric A. Shore
September 13 at 7:30 PM
Katz JCC Social Hall

For information on these opportunities,
and many more throughout 2018,
visit www.jfcssnj.org/calendar.