

CONNECTIONS

Jewish Social Services of Madison

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Steven Tarkow left a legacy of activism and compassion.

Steven Tarkow His Love Enriched Us All

BY LOUISE GOLDSTEIN, Volunteer Coordinator/Senior Adult Program Coordinator



In 2003 Harold Tarkow created the Steven R. Tarkow Endowment Fund at JSS, in memory of his son. "I wanted to establish something in Steve's name, and I've always been pleased with the work that JSS does," Harold says. "I chose JSS because I felt that the agency and Steve shared a basic interest in helping people."

Harold has demonstrated his own commitment to assisting others. "I was very familiar with JSS through volunteering as an English Second Language tutor for a young Russian woman resettled by JSS. It was a very good experience and I'm friends with her to this day."

Harold tells us that Steve's social conscience developed in part through family discussions about the work of his progressive and politically active mother, Liesl. The lessons seemed to have resonated because Steve spent his entire adult life promoting and protecting the interests of people in need.

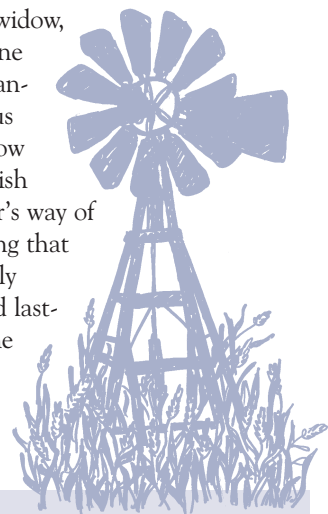
While in college, Steve helped establish a fraternity with the mission of civic involvement through walk-a-thons and tutoring projects. He also spent a summer internship with Senator Gaylord Nelson, a notable champion of the environment. Later, Steve studied at Saul Alinsky's famous "Industrial Age Foundation," where he organized

senior centers offering affordable meals and transportation. He also developed co-ops and markets for Mexican-American farmers. Steve's goal was always to organize self-sustaining groups that would empower their members to continue to function without him.

Armed with a graduate degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Oregon, Steve began organizing on the west coast. With evident pleasure, Harold recalls accompanying his son on a visit to some farmers who enthusiastically displayed their high regard for Steven.

Steve battled for the rights of the poor, despite his own personal struggle with Crohn's Disease. This debilitating illness took his life in 1985, when he was not quite 37 years old. Along with a wife and baby daughter, Steve left a legacy of activism and compassion

At the request of his widow, Janine, Steven's gravestone reads, "His love for humanity and justice enriched us all." The Steven R. Tarkow Endowment Fund at Jewish Social Services is a father's way of honoring and perpetuating that great love. We are all truly enriched by this kind and lasting gift that celebrates the life of an extraordinary man.



Crohn's Disease

Crohn's Disease is a chronic, inflammatory condition that can affect any part of the digestive tract. Although environmental factors clearly contribute, there is strong evidence from studies and from affected families that Crohn's has a genetic basis. It is not attributable to abnormalities in one gene, as is the case with diseases such as Tay Sachs, but rather to abnormalities in several genes together. While Crohn's Disease occurs in all ethnic groups and races, the incidence is highest in Caucasians and Jewish people. At present, only the symptoms can be treated. However, genetic research continues in hopes that the future will bring a cure, or even prevention. For more general information, see www.mazornet.com/genetics/chronsdisease.asp/. Thanks to Dr. Renata Laxova for confirming this information.

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A Moving Story: Part I

Deciding to Relocate Near Family, a Momentous Decision

JSS geriatric social worker Nancy Dodge says that a long-distance move presents challenges and opportunities for older adults and their families. Emotional as well as practical issues must be considered, and families must take into account the needs and preferences of both parents and children

Pseudonyms have been used to protect confidentiality

She'd already made the adjustments to one move and to widowhood. Cora and her best friend Betty lived in neighboring apartments on the east coast, where they were close enough to the big city to enjoy its delights and close enough to each other to provide friendship and support. Betty loved having her daughter living nearby; but Cora's son Jerry lived in Madison, Wisconsin. "I thought that Madison was near the edge of the world!" says Cora.

When Betty died suddenly, Cora felt alone and bereft. Jerry worried about her, so far away and with so little support, and strongly urged her to come and live near him and his family. He contacted Jewish Social Services to begin gathering information about affordable housing options for seniors, and met with the geriatric social worker who talked with him about housing and health care. She also described the social opportunities, outreach, and case management services available through the Elder and Family Support Program at JSS.

Jerry brought Cora to Madison for a visit and to look at various apartments, and they attended a Lechayim luncheon. There Cora met many warm, outgoing people, including Shirley, who lived in an apartment complex she liked. The two women met in Shirley's apartment and talked about loneliness and loss, family and community. Feeling reassured that she would have both social opportunities and a potential friend close by, Cora decided to make the move to be nearer her family.

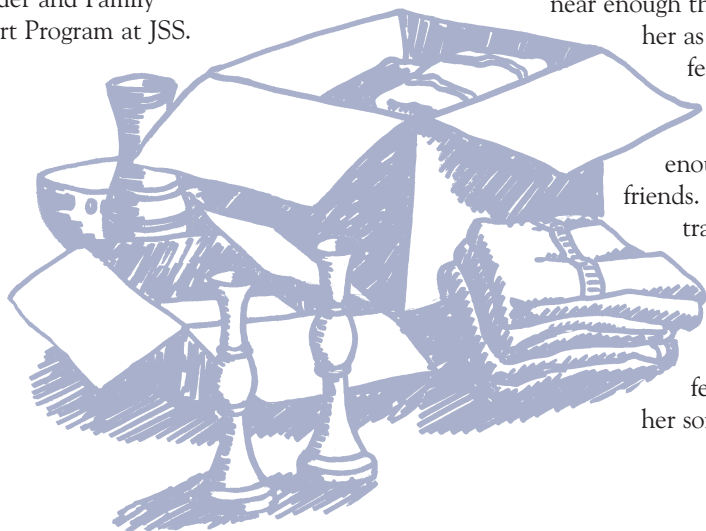
The JSS social worker met with Cora in her new apartment to welcome her to the community. Cora enjoyed making new friends at Lechayim, where fellow canasta players were thrilled to have her join their weekly games. Of all the JSS services, Cora was most appreciative of the friendly visitor she met through the Volunteer Program.

"I just loved seeing her every week—I wanted to be with someone young. We are still friends even though she moved away." When Cora feels ready to meet a new volunteer visitor, another match will be made by the JSS volunteer coordinator.

On occasion, Cora still feels a bit of "culture shock" in this Midwestern city, but being able to see her son and his family often is a great comfort. They enjoy weekly meals and family holidays. When Cora has a medical problem, she knows Jerry or his wife will be able to take her to the doctor. It's a big relief to Jerry to know that his mother is near enough that he can be there for

her as she gets older. Both feel that Cora moved at a good time, because she was independent enough to make new friends. Cora now finds that travel is getting difficult for her, and says that the lack of direct flights to and from Madison makes her feel good that she and her son are in the same city.

"I thought that Madison was near the edge of the world!"



Is relocating a good idea? Issues to Consider

Below, Nancy suggests some issues to consider. Adult children can help their parents deal with decision-making and moving by acknowledging their pain and loss. In addition, Nancy emphasizes that the parent should be given as much control over the process as possible and feasible without increasing stress.

- Does the parent feel connected and supported in his/her current community?
- Have previous sources of support dwindled or disappeared, putting the older person at risk?
- Does the older person feel lonely or unsafe?
- What is the relationship between family members like? Do the children have the time and commitment to provide support?
- Does the new community have services to meet the parent's needs, such as affordable housing, social opportunities, medical care, transportation?
- When is the best time to make a move?
- Who will manage the practicalities of sorting, packing and moving? Would the services of a "transition agency" alleviate some stress?

Should you want to discuss your own family's situation, be in touch with Nancy Dodge at 278-1808 ext 18 or ndodgejss@mjcc.net

All in all, Cora feels settled and connected in her new home. A comfortable apartment, assistance from JSS, caring physician, new social groups, and the presence of family and community helped her feel that Madison is "my new home." The best thing about moving to Madison? "Being near my children and grandchildren, of course!"

JSS Offers A Sincere

Thank You

for Your Tribute Gifts

The following contributions were recorded between November 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004

IN HONOR OF:

All People Who Help Seniors

Henry Gurevich

Sarah Aked

Milton and Joanne Yatvin

Lee and Alma Baron, 60th wedding anniversary

Alan and Harriet Hyman

Mildred Bauman

Steven and Karen Bauman

Corlie Blumenfeld, speedy recovery

Warren and Gerry Randy

Ken and Joan Riggs

Sara Brandt, SAD group leadership

Nancy Dodge

Louise Goldstein

Ilana R. Caplan

Brenda P. Caplan

Janice Gratch and Steve Wilensky, engagement

Stuart and Darlene Schwartz

Julius Grunes, 80th birthday

Jonathan and Susan Lipp

Vivian Edelman

Eileen Bruskevitz

Harriet and Alan Hyman, special birthdays

Roy and Muriel Rotter

Joseph Kauffman, college honor

Ken and Joan Riggs

Sharon's Volunteers

Raymond and Leah Kessel

Bradley Misch Koritzinsky

Allan and Kathy Koritzinsky

Estelle Krasno

Lowell and Julie Lakritz

Ken and Joan Riggs

Bobbie Lazarz

Bill and Bunny Spitz

Lechayim

Anne Layton

Sy Levey, 85th birthday

Gerald and Lorraine Borsuk

Kal and Bobbie Kunin

Leonard and Rose Steinig

Helen Sweet

Dr. and Mrs. Donald Logan, marriage

Marcy and Jeffrey Kushner

Les and Denise Mirkin,

24th wedding anniversary

Barry and Irene Mirkin

Norman Morganstein, 90th birthday

Jeff and Judy Kravat

Jack and Debra Spear

Steven H. Morrison

Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman

Regina Pearlmutter

Steve Scheibel and Jane Pearlmutter

Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon Rabinowitz

Sandy Porter and Dan Yopack

Joseph V. Raineri, 90th birthday

Jerome and Lois Keisler

Ken Riggs, get well

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

Benjamin Robbins

Kenneth Robbins and

Louise Root Robbins

Rose Rodenstein

Judy Ettinger

Lauri Roman

Shirley Roman

Bob Schwartz, quick recovery

Ken and Joan Riggs

Francie Smith Saposnik

Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman

Bill and Bobbie Malone

Bill and Bunny Spitz

Sylvia Sugerman

Francie Smith Saposnik,

new granddaughter, Hallel

Dan, Bettine and David Lipman

Anna Schuster

Constance Markey

Sylvia Schwartz, get well

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

Judy Sidran

Dan and Judy Pierotti

John and Sharon Sklar, anniversary

Kent and Valerie Mannis

Barbara Spierer

Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman

Steven Koslov and Mary Fulton

Jeffrey Spitzer-Resnick

Mr. And Mrs. Sanford Spitzer

Sari Michal Steinberger, birth

Bruce Thomadsen and Louise Goldstein

Leonard Steinig, birthday

June Klein

Nort Stoler, get well

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

Sylvia Sugerman, birthday

Bill and Bunny Spitz

Sylvia Sugerman, new home

Steven Olson and Pamela Phillips Olson

Shirley Volpiansky, granddaughter becoming a bat mitzvot

Paula Volpiansky

Janice Wexler and Ron Walker

Sherman and Rochelle Frank

IN MEMORY OF:

Henry Wohl

The Lunch Bunch

Arnold Bergson

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

Livia Bergen

Dorit Bergen

Lynn Berman

Sandra Reppen

Continued on page 4

Thank You for Your Tribute Gifts *(continued)*

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Elliot Brizic

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

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Harriet Brown and Jamie Young

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Janice Beers

Michael and Kathy Blumenfeld

Sol and Corlie Blumenfeld

Max and Betty Bodenheimer

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Neil and Marjorie Buckholtz

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Pressman

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Darryl Crystal

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Bonnie Edelstein

Dave and Estelle Goldenberg

Julius and Sylvia Grunes

Bezalel and Betsy Haimson

Jon and Becky Kaiser

June Klein

Larry Kohn and Laurie Buchalter

Lowell and Julie Lakritz

Abraham Landsman

Larry and Jean Landweber

Mark and Ilene Laufman

Joan Lerman

Seymour and Ruth Levey

Dan and Kathy Levin

Dan and Bettine Lipman

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Sue Milch

Michelle Minkus and Michael Heifetz

Paul and Sherry Minkus

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Dr. Ralph Stein

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Burnie Sweet

Sue Sweet

Harry Sweet

Sue Sweet

Ann Thomas

Meyer and Lucy Williams

Margaret Weatherhogg

Curt Weatherhogg

Lillian Yatvin

Susan Laughrin

Dan, Bettine and David Lipman

Alice Zelden

Natalie Borenstein

Did you know..?

- Two years ago, Lillian Yatvin and her daughter, Sarah Aked generously agreed to appear on the cover of **Connections**. In that feature, Lillian said, "I'm traveling up a very steep hill. But through JSS, there are people holding my hand." Sadly, cancer took Lillian's life last July. We at JSS miss our social work colleague and friend. We are grateful that Lillian's generosity lives on through a bequest to our agency.
- JSS has a terrific new agency brochure. If you'd like a copy, give us a call.
- JSS will sponsor psychiatrist Dr. David Mays speaking on "Mindfulness" on Tuesday, March 8th, 7:30 p.m., at Temple Beth El.

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RUSSIAN CORNER

It Feeds Their Souls

BY JANICE BEERS
JSS Resettlement Coordinator



Over 70 people from Madison's Russian-speaking community gathered on December 14th to listen to a concert by Valentin Vkhorev. Mr. Vkhorev is a 74-year-old composer and performer from St. Petersburg. His compositions are well known throughout Russia.

The audience enjoyed the songs about nature and skiing. They laughed when Mr. Vkhorev joked about how Russian men in their sixties receive a pension and are settled in their lives, while American men are looking to change jobs and remarry. And they were moved when he sang his well-known ballad about the Solventsky Monastery. Once a major cultural and Russian Orthodox center, under communism it became a labor settlement. Later, the Nazis converted it to a concentration camp. Many famous Russian intellectuals were imprisoned there.

Alexander Krichevsky, who was resettled by JSS in 1992, was responsible for bringing Mr. Vkhorev to the Oakwood Village Auditorium. "There are many cultural events sponsored by the Russian community in Milwaukee and I thought our community would enjoy this local outreach," he stated. Ticket prices are kept low and admission is free for anyone who cannot afford the purchase price. "I would like everyone in the community to have the opportunity to enjoy these performances," he explained.



Alexander was also instrumental in bringing the Moscow trio "Brut" to the Meriter Retirement Center stage in January. "This concert was also well attended," comments Alexander. "Despite a snow storm, 50 people came to enjoy the performance." "This is our connection with our native country and the activities we used to have there," states Elena Frishman, who immigrated to the United States eight years ago.

Alexander, with assistance from Jewish Social Services, will continue to bring Russian performers to the community. Elena is looking forward to future events. She explains, "It feeds our souls and gives us the feeling we're still united."

Composer and performer Valentin Vkhorev entertains Madison's Russian speaking community.

Upcoming Russian Concerts

- **Master Grisha** *Singing Gypsy music, Jewish songs, jazz and ballads*
March 4th, Meriter Retirement Center Stage
- **Galina Homchik** *Performing folk, tango, Russian and English songs*
March 22nd, Oakwood Auditorium
- **Erik Sootes** *Composer, guitarist, one-man-orchestra performing classical, fusion, rock, hip-hop and more.*
March 26th, Masonic Center

For more information contact Alexander at 334-5494
or alkrich@yahoo.com

He's Here to Help

BY LOUISE GOLDSTEIN
*Volunteer Coordinator/Senior Adult
 Program Coordinator*

If you call JSS on a Friday morning, you may be greeted by Michael Pressman, who comes in to answer the phone every Friday from 9:00-11:00. It's one of the many ways this self-described "people person" volunteers.

When did you come to Madison?

We came in 1996 from New Jersey. Madison is a good place to live, to bring up kids, my wife is happy, and it's an easier lifestyle because of the people who live here.

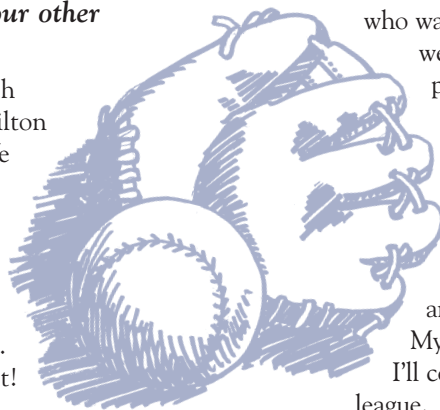
How did you get involved with JSS?

Janice (Janice Beers, JSS Resettlement Coordinator and Michael's neighbor) asked me to come to Lechayim. I came, I liked it, so I kept coming back. I could be myself there, try to help people and be

friendly. Ed Pickett recommended me to be on the JSS Board. There I got to make decisions and find out more about the inner workings of JSS. (Michael served from 2001-2004).

Tell me about your other volunteer work.

I tutor an eighth grade boy at Hamilton Middle School. We do every subject and the student has someone to talk to. He made the Honor Roll, not because of me. I was proud of that! I restarted the Men's Club at Beth Israel Center and we arranged two successful trips to Brewer's games. We had 40 people the first time, and everyone had a good time. That was the main thing.



I know you're a baseball fan. Aren't you also a coach?

I coach four to nine year old kids. It's the Midvale Heights Community Association league, but we take anyone who wants to play. We offer scholarships, we won't turn anyone away from playing baseball. I don't ask why someone needs a scholarship. We want it to be a fun thing and give everyone the opportunity to play baseball. I'm also the commissioner. The league started in the 1990s with 60 kids and now there are over 300.

My son Sammy is aging out but I'll continue to be involved with the league. I've always been a sports fanatic.

Anything you'd like to add about your experience volunteering for JSS?

I'm here to help.

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