

CONNECTIONS

Spring 2006, Vol. 5 No. 4

Kira Adler

“JSS Brought Us Home”

Gratitude spans generations with Kira and her mom, Bela.



It's just before Passover this year, and Kira Adler is wondering if her mom will make some gefilte fish from Grandma's recipe. It's the first Passover since Grandma and Grandpa died, just five days apart, in a room they shared at HospiceCare in Madison.

It's all a far cry from 1989, in Baku, Azerbaijan, a former Soviet Union state. There, the Armenians had been waging a hate war against the Jews and Muslims, and there was a 5% quota on Jews for college admission.

In October of that year, Kira, 15 and her sister Mila, 13, and their parents Bela and Alexander “Sasha” Alexandrov were allowed to emigrate to the U.S. Because they had only very distant relatives in the States, they were “adopted” by the Madison Jewish community.

Kira vividly recounts their arrival, with a catch in her voice. Landing at midnight, in a January deep freeze unlike their customary warm winters, “my mom was crying and my dad, who’s a big joker, trying to cheer us up said, ‘Oh, look, that crowd with flowers, they’re waiting for us.’” In fact, they really were staff and a troop of volunteer host families from Jewish Social Services.

Kira continues, “They took us to an apartment that was all furnished, down to the toilet paper, and the refrigerator was full. Next day they showed up with hot dinners. They took us to get our vaccinations updated, and to register for school. We weren’t left alone for a good three to four weeks.”

But Kira, like the rest of her family, was bereft, missing her maternal grandparents with whom

she’d lived since birth. Happily, JSS’ Janice Beers helped Riva and Vladimir Gelfand reunite with their family in August, 1991.

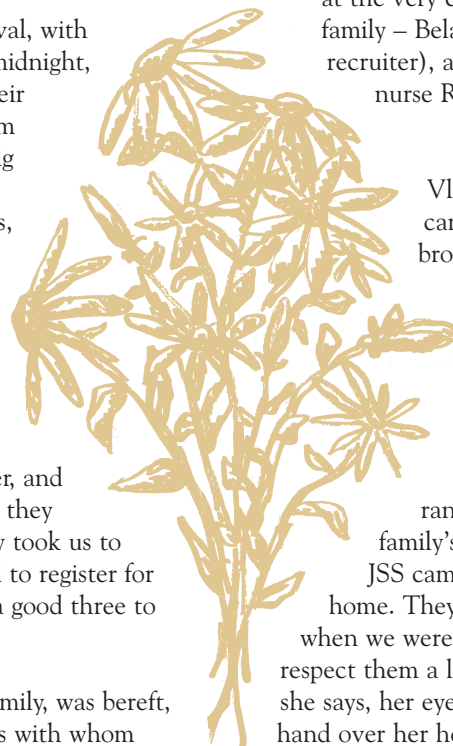
When Riva’s health started to fail, Janice interpreted at medical appointments, which helped her to come to know the family well. To show his gratitude, despite his limited resources, Vladimir sent a check to JSS whenever he could.

Meanwhile, Kira had been growing up, marrying Scott Adler, raising three children and working for seven years as a nurse in the heart-lung post-operative surgery unit at St Mary’s Hospital. As a professional, she could appreciate what JSS had done for her elderly grandparents.

One day, her sensitive heart broken by the suffering of her patients, Kira decided to resign from the hospital. Becoming an independent sales director with Mary Kay Cosmetics allowed her more time at home with her kids, and the precious flexibility needed to take care of her grandparents at the very end of their lives. The whole family – Bela, Sasha, Mila (a corporate recruiter), and Kira, all pulled together to nurse Riva and Vladimir.

In unspeakably quick succession, Vladimir had developed pancreatic cancer, gone to HospiceCare, Riva broke her hip, followed him there, and then, as two people who had always been together, died within days of one another. Of this trauma, Kira says, “Janice was our 911.”

Today, Kira ponders how, by a random act 16 years ago, her family’s three-generation connection to JSS came to be. “But they brought us home. They were so important in our lives, when we were so vulnerable and alone. We respect them a lot. They’re very close to here,” she says, her eyes welling up as she folds her hand over her heart.



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When Fortitude is Not Enough, JSS Is There

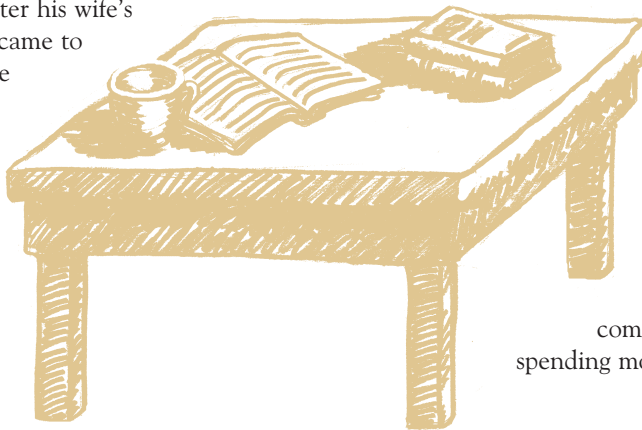
A pseudonym has been used to protect confidentiality

Charlie is a shy, middle aged man. He speaks softly and always carries a book. It is usually about war heroes who beat the odds, civil rights leaders, or great names in baseball like Lou Gehrig or Jackie Robinson who have faced adversity.

About seven years ago, Charlie's wife was diagnosed with ALS, Lou Gehrig's Disease, after they had been married just eleven years. At first, they tried to hire reliable help; but as her condition worsened, Charlie was forced to leave his job of over twenty years to nurse her full time.

Charlie cared for his wife with such love and competence that she lived eight years longer than expected. During these years, he was active in the ALS support group and helped other people with disabilities living in his apartment building.

Two years after his wife's death, Charlie came to JSS in desperate straights. Though employed by a home healthcare agency, he was not able to make ends meet.



Frequently, Charlie could not work because his health had spiraled downward. He was grieving deeply and had very little resilience.

Charlie was low on food. "So the first stop," says Pamela Phillips Olson, LCSW, JSS case worker, "was a food pantry. I remember his surprise and delight at finding a frozen chicken in the bag." Pam helped Charlie with a food stamp application, realizing that he had a learning disability

"Charlie gingerly removed a book...a story by an American POW. If he could survive what he went through, I Can Get Through This."

when it came to writing and spelling.

Money for rent was hard to save because medicine was very expensive. Fortunately, the doctor who cared for Charlie and his wife provided her services *pro bono* and offered samples of medicine when she could. But, as his health needs became more complex, Charlie was spending more. Pam helped

him apply for subsidized housing and negotiated with the current landlord for extra time to make rent payments. Porchlight, an eviction prevention and homeless program, also helped immensely.

It became apparent that the mourning was taking a toll on Charlie physically and emotionally and that counseling would probably be beneficial. Pam located a free clinic and before long, he was connected with a supportive psychotherapist.

When Charlie's van broke down, he was able to get a friend to repair it and located wholesale parts. Through its emergency grants fund, JSS helped out with the cost and provided money for medications, as well.

Charlie's ongoing struggle for financial survival was debilitating. He kept waiting to feel better so that he could work more hours. Charlie was too proud and embarrassed to apply for government disability. But, finally, Pam convinced him that there was no choice and he was entitled to these supports. He had earned them.

Charlie insisted on working when he could, despite intense neck pain from a slipped disc. When he had an appointment with a specialist, Pam was there with him. Afterwards, when she asked how he kept going through all the pain, Charlie gingerly removed a book from his backpack. It was a story by an American POW. "If he could survive what he went through, I can get through this," he replied.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Remembering Our Parents

Monday, June 12, 2006, 6 to 7:30 pm
Temple Beth El Lounge, 2702 Arbor Drive

"In the opening of buds and the rebirth of spring We remember them."

We are planning a program rooted in Jewish tradition to honor the memory of our loved ones. It will be facilitated by Cantor Martin, Pamela Phillips Olson, LCSW and Jean Lind, bereavement counselor. Please join us.

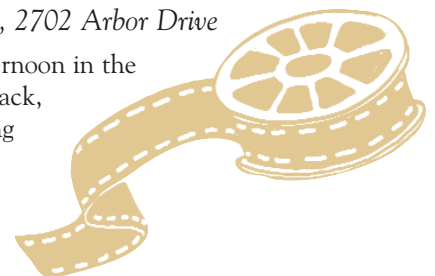
Registration required. Call Pam at JSS 278-1808 or email pamela-jss@mjcc.net.

Movies for a Wednesday Afternoon

Dirty Dancing

Wednesday, June 21st, 1:30 to 4 pm
Temple Beth El Lounge, 2702 Arbor Drive

Spend a summer afternoon in the Catskills. Great soundtrack, wonderful Oscar winning film. Snacks will fit the occasion!



Thank You

for Your Tribute Gifts

The following contributions were recorded between January 1, 2006 and March 31, 2006

IN HONOR OF:

Lillian Abrams

Maxa dai and Al Frank

Michael Abrams, speedy recovery

Pamela Phillips Olson and Steven Olson

Linda & Ron Arm-Jameson, for their help

Trude Arm

Billy Asnien, Bar Mitzvah

Pamela Phillips Olson

Chuck Barrett, speedy recovery

Bettine and Dan Lipman

Eve Becker

Diane Becker Krasnick and Marc

Krasnick

Janice Beers

Svetlana and Gennadiy Karlyuk

Vera and Sergey Slesarev

Janice Beers, birthday

Barbara Spierer

Joanna Berke-Lynch, speedy recovery

Pamela Phillips Olson and Steven Olson

Sandy & John Bierman, speedy recovery

Betsy Haimson

Natalie Borenstein

Sue Sweet

Jerry Borsuk, 85th birthday

Bobbie and Kal Kunin

*Lorraine & Gerald Bosruk's
twin great-grandchildren*

Ruth Levey

Helen Sweet

Vera Croner

Gamber Tegtmeier

Nancy Dodge, birthday

Barbara Spierer

Nancy Dodge, in appreciation

Beatrice Levine

Karen McCarthy

*Beverly & Bernie Donenberg, 50th wedding
anniversary*

Corlie and Sol Blumenfeld

Tillie Fischer

Carla Blum and Ismor Fischer

Michael Frank, Bar Mitzvah

Sally Garten Balkin

Sylvia Frank, speedy recovery

Judy and Dan Pierotti

*Mr. & Mrs. Richard Goldman,
help and devotion*

Renee and David Richmond

Louise Goldstein, speedy recovery

Sherry and Paul Minkus

Pamela and Steve Olson

Darlene and Stuart Schwartz

Barbara Spierer

Rose Steinig

Helen Sweet

Jenny Grossman & Aaron Frenz, engagement

Darlene and Stuart Schwartz

Claudia and William Haus, new grandson,

Jacob Elijah Bernstein

Sally Garten Balkin

Anita Hecht

Sue Burrows and Tom Hecht

Robert Jacobs, 75th birthday

Bunny and Bill Spitz

Richard Katz, speedy recovery

Charlotte and Ralph Musin

Rose Steinig

Amy Kubala & Joshua Spierer, engagement

Sherry and Paul Minkus

Pamela and Steve Olson

Judith Ross and Richard Bowman

Rose Steinig

Liz and Russell Whitesel

Julie Lakritz, speedy recovery

Evelyn and Arnold Miller

Julie & Lowell Lakritz, anniversary

Linda and Chuck Barrett

Heidi Lauhon, Mazel Tov

Pamela Phillips Olson

Lechayim Mealtime Plus

Ardyce Cappelli

Helen Vukelich

Marcia Lewis, speedy recovery

Evelyn and Arnold Miller

Ruth Linowitz, birthday

Estelle and David Goldenberg

Ana Marquez

Aliana Perez

Evelyn Miller, speedy recovery

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

Steven Morrison

Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

Steven Morrison, 60th birthday

Mary Fulton and Steven Koslov

*Ben Olson's film in Wisconsin Film Festival
"the Monster Team"*

Pamela and Steven Olson

*Pamela Phillips Olson & Steven Olson,
appreciation*

Barbara Spierer

How Tributes Help

We appreciate when you honor and remember others with a gift to JSS. Gifts that are unrestricted in nature allow JSS to use them where the greatest needs exist.

Every donation means a great deal to us. We have made every effort to make sure our thank you lists are accurate and complete, but if we have inadvertently neglected to list your name, please let us know.

Call Svetlana, 278-1808. Thank you.

Continued on page 4

Thank You for Your Tribute Gifts *(continued)*

- Dan Pierotti, speedy recovery*
Linda and Chuck Barrett
Bettine and Dan Lipman
Bunny and Bill Spitz
- Judy and Daniel Pierotti, speedy recovery*
Betsy and Bezalel Haimson
- Jane Pizer, speedy recovery*
Evelyn and Arnold Miller
- Sandy Porter, speedy recovery*
Pamela Phillips Olson
- "Powerful Tools" Group*
Mary Holm
Joan and Allen Liegel
- Dr. & Mrs. G. Pransky, help and devotion*
Renee and David Richmond
- Gerry & Warren Randy, new great grandson,
Jacob Elijah Bernstein*
Sally Garten Balkin
- Dr. & Mrs. M. Richmond, help and devotion*
Renee and David Richmond
- Mr. & Mrs. Sol Richmond, anniversary*
Renee and David Richmond
- Rose Rodenstein*
Laurence Rodenstein
- Sara Rosenzweig*
Bilha Mirkin
- Arlene Rotter, birthday*
Betsy and Bezalel Haimson
- Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Rubin, help and devotion*
Renee and David Richmond
- Sandra Rubin, help and devotion*
Renee and David Richmond
- Francie Smith Saposnik, appreciation*
Helen and Ervin Bruner
Saretta Burke
Steven Crade and Family
Sylvia Grunes
Arlene and Hershel Rotter
- Francie Smith Saposnik, talented service*
Mary Horlick
- Francie Smith Saposnik, NASW-Clinical
Network Presentation*
Pamela Phillips Olson
- Mamey Scheele, birthday*
Judy and Dan Pierotti
- Robert Scheele, birthday*
Judy and Dan Pierotti
- Anna Schuster*
Constance and William Markey
- Stuart Schwartz, speedy recovery*
Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen
Evelyn and Arnold Miller
Sherry and Paul Minkus
- Ruth and Daniel Siegel, mazal tov
on daughter's wedding*
Linda and Chuck Barrett
- Barbara Spierer*
Judith Ross and Richard Bowman
Svetlana and Gennadiy Karlyuk
- Barbara Spierer, birthday*
Pamela and Steve Olson
- Lisa Spierer and Christopher Richardson,
engagement*
Judith Ross and Richard Bowman
Rose Steinig
Liz and Russell Whitesel
- Bunny & Bill Spitz, anniversary*
Linda and Chuck Barrett
- Sophie Steinberger, Bat Mitzvah*
Gail Jacob and Henry Steinberger
- Norton Stoler, birthday*
Sandy and Bob Schwartz
- Ida Swarsensky, speedy recovery*
Arlene Rotter
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- Helen Sweet, 80th birthday*
Lorraine and Gerry Borsuk
Corine Cohn
Betsy and Bezalel Haimson
Joan and Ken Riggs
Arlene and Hershel Rotter
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- Kenneth Sweet and Family*
Clara Sweet
- Roger Sweet and Family*
Clara Sweet
- Ethel & Harold Tarkow, 25th wedding
anniversary*
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- Jordana Thomadsen & Nathan Eisenberg,
engagement*
Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen
- IN MEMORY OF:**
- Annabelle Argand*
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- Kate Barbash*
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- Michael Klein*
Sally Garten Balkin
Corine Cohn
Rochelle and Sherman Frank
June Klein

Continued on page 5

Thank You for Your Tribute Gifts *(continued)*

Roslyn Kopelberg
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Joan and Ken Riggs
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Barbara Spierer
Rose Steinig
Helen Sweet
Nerissa Victor
Helen Vukelich
Liz and Russell Whitesel
Sheldon Klein
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Terry Koslov
Pamela Phillips Olson and Steven Olson
Diane Gutmann and Thomas Palay
Judy and Dan Pierotti
Gladys Ruth Leff
Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen
Pamela and Steven Olson
Seymour (Sy) Levey
Betsy Abramson and David Seligman
Rita and Leon Applebaum
Sally Balkin
Rhoda and David Berman
Patricia Bernhardt
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Corlie and Sol Blumenfeld
Lorraine and Jerry Borsuk
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Mary and Dan Caulfield
Corine Cohn
Mildred and Marv Conney
Rochelle and Sherman Frank
Kathleen and Larry Goodman
Mary Graye and Isadore Fine

Rita Harrington
Anna Heifetz
Dale Hunsaker and Don Crary
Al Kadushin
Goldie Kadushin and Steven Morrison
Roslyn Kopelberg
Bobbie and Kal Kunin
Charlotte and Carlos Lima
Maxine, Ben, Scott and Doug Lowell
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Christopher Meyers
Sandy Porter
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Mitch and Sharon Rapkin
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Cathy and Robert Rolland
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Lois & Norton Stoler
Ray Teitlebaum
Rochelle and Sherman Frank
Max Wald
Hildegard and Julius Adler
Betsy Haimson
Gerda Wald

Thank You

Foundation For the Future Donors

Additional Donors since February, 2006

Amy and Marty Fields

Les Goldsmith and Dale Kunin

Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman, *in memory of Harry J. and Belle Goodman*

Rudolf Mathias, *in memory of Camille Mathias, an additional gift*

Diane Seder and Bruce Rosen

Burton and Georgia Wagner

Bernard Weisblum

In Appreciation

Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman, *in memory of Harry J. and Belle Goodman*

In 2005, *Madison Magazine* named Bob and Irwin Goodman their Men of the Year. In our book, they are the men of every year. The Goodman brothers' generosity to Jewish Social Services is yet another example of their extraordinary philanthropy throughout the Madison Community.

For years, Irwin and Bob have supported the JSS annual Friends campaign with significant gifts. In 1997, they established a JSS endowment fund of \$100,000. And now, the Goodmans have helped to build our Foundation For the Future with the lead gift of \$350,000, earning them the title of *Shomrim*, Guardians of Jewish Social Services.

With their latest gift, the Goodmans have chosen to honor their beloved parents, in perpetuity. As announced last month, henceforth, Lechayim, JSS' flagship program, will be known as the **Harry J. and Belle Goodman, parents of Irwin A. and Robert D. Goodman Lechayim Lunchtime Plus Program.**

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you, Bob and Irwin. From swimming pools to a Jewish campus to senior programs, the Goodmans nurture the citizens of Madison at every stage. *Lechayim!* To Life!

Chotzim, Visionaries

Cheryl Rosen Weston and Dr. Rudolf Mathias

Cheryl Rosen Weston is a past president of the JSS Board of Directors. When the current Board decided to launch the Foundation For the Future, Cheryl was out in front with an immediate, pacesetter gift. Her goal is to insure that the agency continues to provide its quality services to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

Dr. Rudolf Mathias, a retired clinical psychologist and survivor of the Holocaust, has learned much about the importance of caring for and about individuals who face adversity. Like Cheryl, Rudy is a *Chotzim*, a Visionary. His wish is to see JSS continue, and perhaps expand, its outstanding services to senior adults in the Madison community.

There are more than 100 individuals and families who have made gifts to the Foundation For the Future, at whatever level they were able. Each donor has a personal reason for supporting the agency, and each gift carries with it great meaning. In these pages, we have thanked each contributor and will continue to do so, on an annual basis.

As of May 1st, gifts and pledges to the JSS Foundation For the Future Endowment Fund totaled \$975,000. We are so close to the goal of \$1 million. Won't you help us go over the top? Call Foundation Chair, Howard Sweet at 257-0945 for more information and to make a gift – or simply clip the coupon below and mail it with a check to Jewish Social Services, 6434 Enterprise Lane, Madison, 53719. Thank you, in advance, for your generosity.

Thank You

for Your Contribution to JSS Foundation For the Future Endowment Fund

I/we hereby contribute to Jewish Social Services of Madison:

\$5,000 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$_____

Please send an acknowledgment of this gift

This gift is to remain anonymous

Name (Please print) _____

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Please make your tax-deductible contribution to Jewish Social Service at 6434 Enterprise Lane, Madison, WI 53719.

Did you know..?

- Recently, JSS was recognized by the United Way of Dane County for “Best Practices: Providing Financial Management Assistance in the Context of Case Management.” Nancy Dodge and Barbara Spierer presented at a symposium, and JSS was one of only seven agencies to receive this monetary award.
- JSS received the prestigious Kovod Award at the 2006 Association of Jewish Family and Children’s Agencies national conference. Materials prepared for the very successful JSS Foundation For the Future Endowment campaign were recognized in the fundraising category. Previously, JSS won for *Connections*, this quarterly newsletter.

Jewish Social Services of Madison

Maria Cancian, *President*

Steven Morrison, *Executive Director*

Barbara Spierer, *Associate Executive Director*
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Christine Pavelko, *Designer*

Janice Beers, Louise Goldstein,
Pamela Phillips Olson, Rachelle Richardson,
Barbara Spierer
Contributing Writers

INTERNATIONAL CORNER



Breaking the Pattern of Abuse

A pseudonym has been used to protect client confidentiality.

“When I walked into Janice’s office (Janice Beers, JSS Director of Immigrant & Refugee Services), I immediately felt respected,” comments Anastasiya, an immigrant married to an American man. “She helped me clarify my situation. I talked to other professionals before I called Janice; but no one else was as willing to listen.”

The two women discussed Anastasiya’s plight in detail. The émigré had brought police records detailing the abuse she endured; but she was also in denial about what was really happening. Janice explained that she should qualify for immigrant relief under VAWA, the “Violence Against Women Act.” VAWA allows immigrant women or men in abusive marriages to self-petition and get permission to live and work in the United States. That way, they do not need the cooperation of an abusive spouse. Because Anastasiya had no income, was in crisis and had a need for immediate legal representation, Janice arranged for *pro bono* assistance from Attorney Rachel Caplan of Haus Roman & Banks LLP.

Janice also referred Anastasiya to the Domestic Abuse Intervention Service (DAIS), and they offered her temporary housing and counseling. Through DAIS, she was referred to the Immigrant Project of Wisconsin (IPW) whose mission is, “to end domestic violence and sexual assault through education, advocacy and *pro bono* legal representation in family and immigration law cases.” After a time, they were able to pick up the case from Attorney Caplan. Ramona Natera, the Director and Managing Attorney of IPW comments, “Thanks to JSS, I can concentrate on the legal aspects of this case. Jewish Social Services has provided Anastasiya with emotional support, a referral to a psychologist, and assistance with finding permanent housing and employment.”

Anastasiya is well on her way to making a new life for herself and her young child. She believes that she wouldn’t have been able to break the pattern of violence without the help of JSS. “Now, I’m volunteering for DAIS.

I’d like to help other women to break the chain of abuse. I can’t say ‘thank you’ enough to JSS, Rachel Caplan, DAIS and the Immigrant Project of Wisconsin.”



Yer Vang, Ramona Natera and Grisel Eschavarria staff the Immigrant Project of Wisconsin.

Altrusa International Makes Grant to JSS

The Madison chapter of Altrusa International, “an association of professional women and men who volunteer their energy and expertise in projects dedicated to community betterment,” have designated JSS the recipient of a monetary award, in support of the Citizenship Tutor Project. According to the award letter, “The club promotes literacy by supporting efforts that help children and adults to meet their full educational potential.”

The responsibility of the JSS Citizenship Tutor is to prepare elderly refugees to successfully complete the written citizenship exam and to be able to converse with officials during the naturalization process. Elderly refugees arriving in the US have seven years to complete the naturalization process or risk losing eligibility for government sponsored subsistence programs.

“Accentuate the Positive” -Saul Levin

Saul Levin is a retired clinical psychologist, square dancer, self-described baseball fanatic and life-long learner. In addition to volunteering for Jewish Social Services, he volunteers for RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program) and Middleton Outreach Ministry.

How did you get started volunteering with JSS?

I had volunteered while I was still working, visiting a severely disabled, highly educated woman in a nursing home; I read Shakespeare to her. I also made recordings for the blind. After I retired, JSS connected me with an elderly man in a nursing home in Waunakee. I enjoyed visiting him; we took walks and discussed the news-he had a range of interests. I read to him from the New York Times. I liked the feeling of being useful, and I liked him. Then I visited several other elderly men and women. The last man I visited had a very positive outlook on life and stayed interested in the world around

him. Now I help a young disabled woman with her shopping.

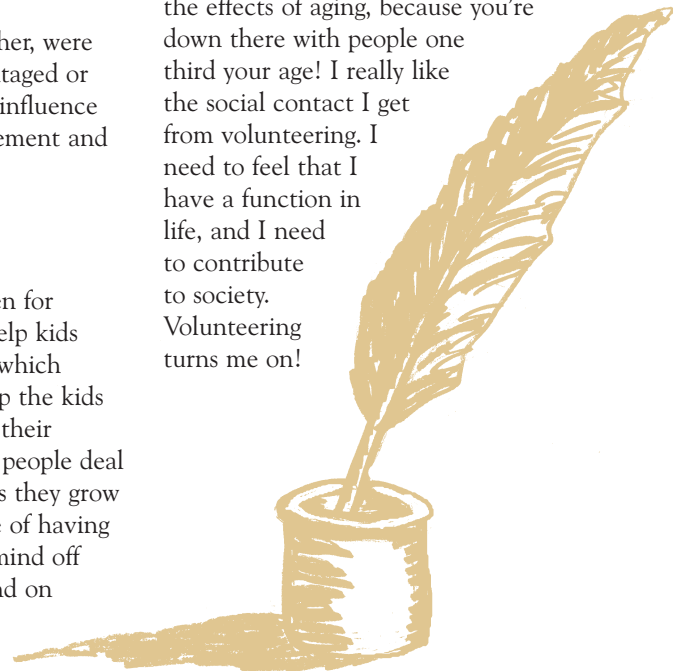
How did you learn the value of volunteering?

My parents, especially my mother, were very sensitive to helping disadvantaged or “put-upon” people. My wife is an influence with regard to community involvement and helping people in need.

What have you gained from volunteering?

I volunteer with school children for RSVP. I go to kindergarten and help kids one-on-one with counting skills, which I really enjoy. I like that I can help the kids I volunteer with, while they’re in their formative years. I’ve learned how people deal with various illnesses and losses as they grow older. I’ve learned the importance of having a positive outlook; it keeps your mind off problems associated with aging and on

interesting, positive things. I also learned how important it is to keep your mind alive, so I audit courses at the UW-Madison in history, English and art. It counter-acts the effects of aging, because you’re down there with people one third your age! I really like the social contact I get from volunteering. I need to feel that I have a function in life, and I need to contribute to society. Volunteering turns me on!



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Madison, WI 53719-1117

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