

CONNECTIONS

News and information for a Jewish community that includes individuals with disabilities and special needs



Vol. 2, No. 2

Pittsburgh, PA

Winter 2012

Emma Kaufmann Camp's Geshher Program: An Interview with Adam Baron

by **Joshua Cohen**
Editor, *Connections Newsletter*

If you're interested in sending your child with special needs to camp this summer, you might want to consider Emma Kaufmann Camp's Geshher program. The two-week program, which runs from June 17 to June 29 this summer, provides children with special needs with an opportunity to attend the JCC's camp in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Although the Geshher program has been around since 2002, it came into existence many years since I was an EKC camper myself. So I spoke with Adam Baron, the Assistant Director of EKC, to learn more about the program.

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Geshher Program, Emma Kaufmann Camp 2010

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Pittsburghers Recognize Jewish Disability Awareness Month

by **Terry Feinberg Steinberg**
Agency for Jewish Learning

For the fourth consecutive year, February has been designated as Jewish Disability Awareness Month (JDAM) and has become a special time of recognition and commitment to the inclusion of individuals with disabilities. It's a time for Jewish communities to focus on programs and resources that raise awareness and help foster a better understanding of disabilities.

In 2008, the Jewish Special Education International Consortium created Jewish Disability Awareness Month at its annual colloquium in Minneapolis. Members of the Consortium (which included directors, coordinators, and administrators of Jewish special education services) chose the month of February because that month would give them enough time, after the high holidays in the fall, to plan and organize JDAM events. And since that 2008 colloquium, the Agency for Jewish Learning (AJL) has worked hard to promote and recognize JDAM in the Pittsburgh area.

The logo for this newsletter, the Jewish star with intertwining ribbons, was actually adapted from the JDAM logo created for the Consortium by Janice Goldstein, a graphic designer for the Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis. Shelly Christensen, Program Manager of the Minneapolis Jewish Community Inclusion Program for People with Disabilities at JFCS and an active national leader in the Jewish inclusion movement, asked Ms. Goldstein to create a logo that could be used nationally to visually "brand" and energize the mission of meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities and their families into every aspect of Jewish life.

When I spoke with Janice, who's now retired, she remembered the creation of the logo as a "subconscious" process. She naturally started with the Jewish star. She drew the ribbons flowing from the star to represent strands of different people who make up the Jewish community. The strands are all essential and intertwined and only together do they make up the star. The original colors were blue, the traditional color of the Jewish star on the flag of Israel, and gold, a color often associated with religious artifacts and the high priests during the time of the Temple in Jerusalem. The colors of the logo have been changed over the years by different users, such as *Connections*, but many use the traditional blue and gold for JDAM.

Some people assume that the ribbon element of the design was chosen to identify with important causes that use the symbol of the ribbon (such as the pink Breast Cancer ribbon, the yellow ribbon for U.S. troops, or the red AIDS ribbon), but this was not a conscious part of Janice's design. She admits, "I had seen something similar once, [but] I do not exactly remember." Still, Janice is thrilled that her work continues to inspire the community.

So what does this beautiful and meaningful symbol mean to our Jewish community today? It is a reminder of the value of difference and that we are all the strands of the ribbon and must work to create an inclusive community.

The staff of the AJL is available to help your organization or synagogue plan programs for JDAM and to help foster more inclusive programming. We will also be sponsoring screenings of the PBS documentary *A Place for People of All Faiths* at different community locations.

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About Connections

Connections newsletter is published by a consortium of six agencies with the mission of encouraging, supporting and recognizing the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of Jewish life in the Pittsburgh community. Connections also provides information about a wide range of resources for individuals with disabilities and their families.

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My Honor to Serve You

By **Rabbi Eli Seidman**
Director of Pastoral Care,
Jewish Association on Aging

Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference. They bless the one who receives them, and they bless you, the giver. —Barbara De Angelis

As the descendants of Abraham, we have inherited one of his many legacies: an attitude of kindness and sharing with others.



Abraham lived in the Negev desert, in the southern part of what we call Israel. Like any desert, it was a harsh environment. Tradition

has it that Abraham's tent had openings on all four sides, so that he could see travelers coming and invite them in.

In Genesis 18, we read: "Please sir," Abraham said to the leader of the three travelers (who it turned out were really angels). "Do not pass by without stopping at my place. Let some water be brought... you can rest... I will get you bread... then you can continue. After all, you are passing by my house."

Abraham and Sarah were generous, hospitable people. They considered it an honor and a privilege to share what they had with others. Even with complete strangers, ordinary people. They appreciated them all as children of G-d.

It goes without saying that we should give consideration to people with special needs. If we can open our homes and our hearts to them, we are truly emulating the examples of Abraham and Sarah. Even doing a simple task is appreciated as a gesture of kindness and love.

Not just once, not just at holiday time. All day and every day, Abraham and Sarah saw it as their mission to help others and to spread the word of G-d. It is a mitzvah (commandment) to open our homes to guests if we are able to do so.

Mitzvot rarely come to us on a silver platter. If we really want something, we often have to make an effort or even a sacrifice to get it. We may even have to overcome an obstacle or two in our way.

Abraham and Sarah understood this. They lived their lives asking, "What can I do for others?" We ought to take inspiration from them and follow their example. Like Abraham, we too see extending our hospitality as a privilege to serve all of G-d's children.



"Jewish Disability Awareness Month" continued from page 1

Several synagogues have already designated special JDAM Shabbat services (see our Calendar on page 7), and AJL consultants are visiting religious school classrooms with interactive puppet shows and children's literature focusing on disability awareness.

Ultimately, every month should be a time to foster inclusion. The Meshaneh HaBriyot prayer is traditionally said when you encounter a person with a disfigurement or disability, and it translates to "Blessed are You... who varies the form of his creatures" (Talmud Brachot 586). The Talmud explains the uniqueness and the sanctity of human difference by saying that, "Humans stamp out many coins with one die, and they are all alike, but the King, the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed Be, stamped each person with the seal of Adam, and not one of them is like their fellow. Therefore each and every one is obligated to say, 'For my sake the world was created'" (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5).

The tagline of our newsletter, "Welcome everyone... with joy," is from Pirke Avot 1:15. We chose this to remind us all that inclusion is not just an obligation or value; it is indeed a joyful blessing. Therefore, let us all be mindful of our reactions to difference and let us intentionally strive to do more to include all of the strands of our people together in this community, with joy.

For more information about JDAM, contact Terry Feinberg Steinberg at tsteinberg@ajlpittsburgh.org or at 412-521-1101, ext. 3206.

Prospective Medicaid Co-pays and Other Reductions Worrying Families of Individuals with Disabilities

By Joshua Cohen
Editor, Connections Newsletter

Following the passage of the difficult 2012 Pennsylvania budget last June, the state legislature authorized the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) to establish co-pays for certain children with disabilities who receive Medicaid through what is known as “the loophole.”

Thousands of children with disabilities in Pennsylvania use Medicaid to pay for medical care, behavioral health services, and prescriptions. Children enrolled under the “loophole” – so-called because it enables children under age 18 with disabilities to receive Medicaid regardless of family income – have never paid co-payments for services.

As of the publication date of this newsletter, the DPW had yet to announce its plan to apply co-payments. However, an action alert from the Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP), a non-profit advocacy organization based in Philadelphia (www.phlp.org), states that, when enacted, co-pays are likely to apply to children from families with a gross income that’s more than 200% of the federal poverty guidelines (i.e. over \$44,700 in gross income per year for a family of four).

Although the dates for the implementation of the new co-pays have yet to be finalized, David Gates, the Director of Policy and a Senior Attorney for the PHLP office in Harrisburg, recently informed me, “Co-pays will NOT be implemented this fiscal year (ending June 2012). However, the DPW intends to move ahead with the implementation of co-pays in the next fiscal year—sometime between July 2012 and June 2013 but more likely before the end of 2012.” Mr. Gates also says that the PHLP expects to receive more information on the DPW’s timeline by the beginning of February.

Linda Marino, special and critical needs supervisor for Jewish Family and Children’s Service, said the addition of co-pays could be devastating for many families

with children with special needs. “I’m particularly concerned that families in the middle income bracket might no longer be able to afford to pay for all of their child’s healthcare costs due to the added financial burden of the co-pays,” she said.

In another attempt to curtail Medicaid spending, on January 3, the Department of Public Welfare implemented a six-prescription drug limit for certain adults over age 21 on Medicaid. To find out if this change applies to you and to learn about exceptions, visit www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/insurance.aspx for a link to the notice of the change or call Medicaid directly at 1-800-657-7925.

Waiting List for Medicaid Waivers Continues to Concern Families

According to the Pennsylvania Waiting List Campaign, since November 2011, 15,794 Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities have been on waiting lists for Medicaid Home and Community Based waivers that would provide funding for things like housing needs and community employment. And while these individuals wait for funds, many are living with older parents who can no longer afford to pay their expenses or carry out day-to-day care.

“The people on these waiting lists continue to wait, sometimes for years on end, to receive funding through waivers,” said Ms. Marino.

“My fear is that, between the growing waiting list for Medicaid waivers and the impending changes to the Medicaid loophole, the state may revert back to using some version of institutionalization,” she added.

Ms. Marino speaks from personal experience. She is the parent of a 34-year-old son who has autism. Her son lived in an institution for eight years beginning in 1989 when he was 12 years old because support did not exist for continued safe living at home. The family was offered only two choices: an approved private school in Philadelphia or Polk State Center, a state

institution in Western Pennsylvania.

When her son left Polk in 1997, he qualified for the Consolidated Waiver, which was designed to help individuals with intellectual disabilities live more independently in their homes and communities through special services. Because of the waiver, Jeremy has a life he enjoys, resides in a group home, and participates in supported employment, said Ms. Marino.

“But many Pennsylvania families do not have access to this waiver option,” said Ms. Marino. “This means that many adult children with disabilities in Pennsylvania won’t have the opportunity to be more independent, productive, and involved with their communities.”

“Also, if younger children with disabilities do not get waivers so they can access the services they need now, they will also end up struggling to be independent as adults.”

The previously-mentioned Pennsylvania Waiting List Campaign monitors the state waiting list for Home and Community Based waivers for people with intellectual disabilities and advocates for adequate funding. Visit www.pawaitinglistcampaign.org for more information.

Make Your Voice Heard

People with disabilities and their families need to let their legislators in Pennsylvania and Washington know that cutting Medicaid funds for vulnerable populations in order to balance the budget is unacceptable.

To find contact information for your Pennsylvania legislators, visit www.legis.state.pa.us/

To contact your federal representatives, visit www.house.gov/representatives or www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm.



FOCUS ON COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Jewish Summer Camp Opportunities

by **Shani Lasin**
Jewish Residential Services

In the mid-1980's, I was a teenager attending a Camp Ramah in Wisconsin (a camp in the Conservative movement's network of overnight camps). I lived in a cabin that adjoined another bunk with a group of similarly-aged girls with intellectual disabilities.

The experience had a profound impact on me and my fellow campers as we became friends with our cabin-mates and came to appreciate the unique contribution of every person at camp. At the time, the inclusion of people with disabilities in Jewish camping was not very common, but fortunately the number of Jewish camps offering programs for children and young adults with disabilities has grown and diversified since Ramah first developed its special needs camping program in 1970.

Today there are a wide variety of Jewish camps that serve children, teens, and young adults with special needs. Some of these programs mainstream campers; others offer separate programming that targets individuals with autism, intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, and other developmental, learning, and social issues.

Several camps offer vocational training and are designed to provide work experience while preparing participants for independent living. There are also family camp programs where parents, siblings, and individuals with special needs gain support from others while

participating in a meaningful Jewish educational experience.

Jewish camps have been successful in providing transformative Jewish experiences because they create communities in which Jewish values infuse the daily rhythm of life. For individuals with special needs, a Jewish camp experience can play a pivotal role in their lives. Not only do they gain independence, increase their social interactions, and participate in new experiences as all campers do, but they are also accepted as part of a community where each person is valued.

In addition to these benefits, the inclusion of individuals with special needs into camp life helps those campers who do not have disabilities to develop a greater appreciation for children who may be different from themselves.



Camp Ramah, Wisconsin 2010

An inclusive Jewish summer camp also encourages every individual to engage with Jewish tradition and is a place where each person is a valued member of the community. The Foundation for Jewish Camp can help parents find a camp for their child with special needs. Their website, www.jewishcamp.org, provides a wealth of information on Jewish summer camps. Click on "Find a Camp;" then select "Filter Your Search;" finally, select Yes for "Special Needs" to search the database for an appropriate camp.

The following is a partial list of overnight camps for individuals with disabilities and special health care needs:

Emma Kaufmann Camp, Pittsburgh's Jewish Community Center camp in West Virginia offers the Geshet program for campers with special needs. For more information on this program, see our interview with the assistant camp director, Adam Baron, on pages 1 & 6.

Camp Ramah's network of camps (which are affiliated with the Conservative movement) are located throughout the U.S. and Canada. Special needs programs at different Ramah camps serve different populations and different age groups. Several Ramah camps also offer post-high school vocational programs that are designed to maximize independent functioning within a supervised setting or on a college campus. Several also offer family camps. www.campraham.org/content/specialneeds.php

Union of Reform Judaism's camps offer inclusion specialists at their 13 camps as well as several immersion camps. www.urjcamps.org/programs/specialneeds/

Camp JRF's Shemesh program is the Reconstructionist Movement's special needs camp in the Poconos. www.campjrf.org/parents/shemesh

Camp Morasha's Yachad program provides a camping and vocational experience for kids, teens and adults in an Orthodox program in Lakewood, PA. www.campmorasha.com/

Camp Simcha is a free, kosher, medically supervised overnight camp for seriously ill children and teens and is located in Glen Spey, NY. www.campsimcha.org/

If you would like to be put in touch with a local parent who has already sent his/her child with special needs to a Jewish summer camp, contact Shani Lasin at 412-325-0039 or at slasin@jrspgh.org.

CAMPS IN PITTSBURGH

For individuals with special needs there are a number of camping opportunities in the Greater Pittsburgh area. Many of these camps offer both day and residential programs. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it provides several options and some search tools.

James and Rachel Levinson Day Camp

The Jewish Community Center's J&R Day Camp is committed to serving children of all abilities from ages 5 to 12. Campers attend eight weeks of camp, located at the JCC's Family Park in Monroeville. Contact Liza Baron at 412-521-8011 ext. 241 or at lbaron@jccpgh.org for more information.

www.jccpgh.org/camp/jr_day_camp

Woodlands Foundation

Woodlands Foundation offers week-long and weekend camp experiences for children, young adults, and adults. www.woodlandsfoundation.org/

Mainstay Life Services

This summer program for adults is an urban camping experience with an extended, overnight stay on a college campus.

www.mainstaylifeservices.org/services/summerprogram.php

ACHIEVA

ACHIEVA in Beaver County offers a variety of activities for children, teens, and adults with developmental disabilities as well as weekend camps throughout the year.

www.achieva.info

Camp Success

The Children's Institute of Pittsburgh's Camp Success serves low-income families who have a child or children with special needs. The camp is free of charge to families in need.

www.amazingkids.org/content.aspx?sectionid=4&subsectionid=52&pageid=76

Watson Institute

The Watson Institute offers four different camps for individuals of various ages and with different abilities on the autism spectrum.

www.thewatsoninstitute.org/

Other local organizations that offer camps include the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh and other museums, universities such as Chatham and Carlow, cultural organizations like the CLO, and community organizations like the YMCA.

The following LINKS provide search tools to help you find special needs camps in Pennsylvania:

www.post-gazette.com/lifestyle/summercamps/default.asp

pittsburgh.about.com/cs/specialcamps/

www.verypecialcamps.com/Pennsylvania/Special-Needs-Summer-Camps.shtml

www.kidscamps.com/camps/pennsylvania-specialneeds-camps.camp



Questions to Ask About Camps for Children with Special Needs

1. Will the camp be able to meet my child's specific needs?
2. What's the ratio of campers to counselors?
3. What are the eating, recreational, and living facilities like?
4. Does the staff have appropriate training?
5. In what type of area/region is the camp located?
6. What kind of health care is offered on site for campers?
7. Is there a visiting day for parents?



8th Annual All Abilities Camp Fair

- Camps and programs for typical children and those with disabilities
- Inclusion-friendly camps and programs
- Full and half day programs
- School and preschool age camps
- Information regarding extended school year (ESY)

**Saturday, February 4
10:00am - 3:00pm**

The Mall at Robinson
100 Robinson Centre Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15205

For more information contact:
ABOARD's Autism Connection of PA
Phone: 412-781-4116 or
1-800-827-9385
E-mail: jenniferfulton@aboard.org

What is Extended School Year (ESY)?

ESY refers to services provided over the summer to students who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). A student qualifies for ESY if he/she is unable to retain academic skills or other skills learned over the course of the regular school year. The specific criteria for ESY eligibility are listed in detail on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's website at www.education.state.pa.us/ and can be found most easily through a Google search of "PA Department of Education" and "Extended School Year Eligibility."

An IEP meeting to discuss ESY eligibility must be held by February 28 for children with severe disabilities that fall within the department's "target group" to qualify for ESY services (the definition of "target group" can be found on the PDE website). Note that ESY services are not limited to this group. Also, there is an additional deadline of March 31 for ESY program specifics to be included in the student's IEP if the student is in the department's "target group."

For legal information on this topic, visit www.wrightslaw.com and/or www.elc-pa.org/.



*"Adam Baron Interview" continued
from page 1*

JC: Hello, Adam, thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Could you give me an overview of what the Gesher program is?

AB: The group of children with special needs has girls and boys mixed together. And they're just like any other group of campers. They're doing the same activities as any other group would do: sports, horseback riding, swimming in our lake and pool, arts activities, kickball, tennis, basketball, and our ropes challenge course. They also spend time doing activities together with other groups of campers who are not in Gesher. And the Gesher campers are also part of our big brother/big sister program where they partner with a big brother or big sister through our teen program.

JC: So the campers in the Gesher program are fully integrated with the rest of the camp; it's not separate at all.

AB: Correct.

JC: Okay, and the Gesher campers are integrated into the cabins with the other campers?

AB: No, they have their own cabins. Typically there's a cabin of boys and a cabin of girls.

JC: Now, do staff members in the Gesher program have backgrounds or experience working with children with special needs?

AB: The supervisor of the program has experience and majors in the field of working with children with special needs. The person who was our supervisor last year also worked at our Teen Center which serves children with special needs at the JCC. And that's the afterschool

program where most, if not all, of our campers with special needs come from. They participate in both programs: Gesher and the Teen Center. The other assisting counselors have to have an interest in working with this population, but they may be a little bit younger than the head counselor. They may be in high school but have experience working in places like The Friendship Circle in Pittsburgh. It's about finding the right people to work in our program.

JC: Are there certain disabilities that the camp doesn't feel equipped to handle?

AB: The most difficult disabilities to accommodate at EKC are children who have physical disabilities related to walking because of the terrain at camp; it's very hilly. And a lot of our paths are not paved; they're gravel. And there's a lot of movement throughout the course of the day over this terrain. Some of our buildings are wheelchair-accessible, but if someone had to use a wheelchair or used a cane that would certainly be a major obstacle.

JC: Have you had any children who used a wheelchair at the camp?

AB: No.

JC: Have you had any children with autism at camp?

AB: Yes. I would say that most Gesher participants have a diagnosis that includes autism.

JC: How many children with special needs do you typically have at camp each summer?

AB: Typically we have anywhere from 3 to 7 campers with special needs.

JC: And what has your personal experience been like working with campers with special needs?

AB: I've definitely had a lot of experience with the group. And it's great to see them gain a lot of different skills—learning to live and work together. They're gaining independence. They're certainly overcoming fears. In this last group, someone was really afraid to go on the zip line, but they did it . . . They're also making friends. They're connecting.

JC: What are the registration deadlines for this summer?

AB: We don't have a set deadline for the program, but we do aim to have everyone registered by May 1st.

JC: Are there any special accommodations that have been made for campers with special needs in the past?

AB: We've made accommodations for medical and personal purposes, but our program is not designed for campers who need consistent one-to-one assistance.

JC: Is there anything else about EKC that you would like to communicate to the parents of children with special needs?

AB: The most important thing that I think I'd stress is that a camper with special needs can have the same experience as a typical camper . . . and be part of the EKC family.

JC: Well, thank you for talking with me. It was very informative.

AB: Absolutely. It was nice talking with you, too.

If you would like to get in touch with Adam Baron regarding the Gesher program, you can contact him at 412-278-4184 x209 or at abaroon@jccpgh.org.



Calendar

FEBRUARY



February 1 **Film Viewing and Discussion –** **“A Place For All: Faith and** **Community for Persons with** **Disabilities” (film)**

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Jewish Family & Children’s Service
Growing Together Support
Group Meeting
5743 Bartlett St. (Squirrel Hill)

Contact: Linda Marino
412-904-5945
lmario@jfcspgh.org

February 4 **“Special Disability Awareness** **Month Shabbat”**

9:30 am
Beth Shalom
5915 Beacon Street
(Squirrel Hill)

Library Minyan in Helfant Chapel
Guest speaker:
Terry Feinberg Steinberg

Contact: Terry Feinberg Steinberg
412-521-1101, ext. 3206
tsteinberg@ajlpittsburgh.org

February 4 **“8th Annual** **All Abilities Camp Fair”**

10:00 am – 3:00 pm
The Mall at Robinson
100 Robinson Center Drive

ABOARD’s Autism
Connection of PA

Up to 30 camps will be
participating.

Contact: ABOARD
412-781-4116
jenniferfulton@aboard.org

February 7, 14, 21 **“Cooking Club in Squirrel Hill”** **The Friendship Circle**

6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
JCC Levinson Hall
RSVP required.

Contact: Rivkee Rudolph
412-224-4440
info@fcpggh.org

February 8, 15 **“Cooking Club in the South** **Hills” The Friendship Circle**

4:30 pm – 6:00 pm
The Friendship Circle
Chabad of South Hills
RSVP required.

Contact: Rivkee Rudolph
412-224-4440
info@fcpggh.org

February 23 **“Teen Volunteer Training”** **The Friendship Circle**

Location & time TBA
at www.fcpggh.org.
RSVP required.

Contact: Rivkee Rudolph
412-224-4440
info@fcpggh.org

February 24 **“Special Disability Awareness** **Month Shabbat”**

8:00 pm
Temple David
4415 Northern Pike (Monroeville)

Contact: Terry Feinberg Steinberg
412-521-1101, ext. 3206
tsteinberg@ajlpittsburgh.org

February 24 **“Special Disability Awareness** **Month Shabbat”**

Temple Ohav Shalom
8400 Thompson Run Road
(Allison Park)

Contact: Terry Feinberg Steinberg
412-521-1101, ext. 3206
tsteinberg@ajlpittsburgh.org

February 25 **“Special Disability Awareness** **Month Shabbat”**

9:30 am
Beth El Congregation
1900 Cochran Road (South Hills)

Guest speakers:
Judy Greenwald Cohen and
Faith Siskind

Contact: Terry Feinberg Steinberg
412-521-1101, ext. 3206
tsteinberg@ajlpittsburgh.org

MARCH

March 6, 13, 20, 27 **“Girls’ Dance Club”** **The Friendship Circle**

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm
Jewish Community Center
RSVP required.

Contact: Rivkee Rudolph
412-224-4440
info@fcpggh.org

March 8 **“Family Purim Celebration”** **The Friendship Circle**

Location & time TBA
at www.fcpggh.org.
RSVP required.

Contact: Rivkee Rudolph
412-224-4440
info@fcpggh.org

March 19 **“Sexual Abuse Awareness”**

6:00 pm
Jewish Residential Services and
Jewish Family and Children’s
Service of Pittsburgh.
Rodef Shalom Congregation
4905 Fifth Ave. (Oakland)

Individuals with disabilities and
their families are invited to this
workshop to learn about types of
abuse and how to stay safe.

Contact: Shani Lasin
412-325-0039
slasin@jrspgh.org

APRIL

April 1 **“Pre-Passover Program”** **The Friendship Circle**

Location & time TBA
at www.fcpggh.org.
RSVP required.

Contact: Rivkee Rudolph
412-224-4440
info@fcpggh.org

April 25 **“Challah for Hunger** **with J’Burgh”**

The Friendship Circle and
Jewish Residential Services
I-Volunteer Event for
18-35 year olds

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Jewish Community Center
RSVP required.

Contact: Odaiah Leeds
412-224-4440
odaiah@fcpggh.org

April 27 **“Parent Seminar and** **Resource Fair”**

8:30 am-2:00 pm
Location TBA

Event offers practical information
and resources for parents
of children (of all ages) with
disabilities.

Sponsored by Jewish Residential
Services, the Agency for Jewish
Learning, the Jewish Community
Center, the Jewish Federation
of Greater Pittsburgh, Jewish
Family and Children’s Service of
Pittsburgh, and The Friendship
Circle.

Contact: Shani Lasin
412-325-0039
slasin@jrspgh.org

April 29 **“Friendship Planting Day with** **Shalom Pittsburgh”** **The Friendship Circle**

Location & time TBA
at www.fcpggh.org.
RSVP required.

Contact: Rivkee Rudolph
412-224-4440
info@fcpggh.org



CONNECTIONS



News and information for a Jewish community that includes individuals with disabilities and special needs

“Welcome everyone... with joy.”

— Pirke Avot 1:15

Consider Joining the Caregiver Connection Program

Caring for an adult loved one who has special needs can be overwhelming, and the Caregiver Connection Program of Jewish Family and Children’s Service of Pittsburgh (JF&CS) can help those who need full-time care, part-time care or respite care. Experienced caregivers provide individuals with the care they need while giving peace of mind to the family.

The program is committed to ensuring that caregivers understand the needs of clients. For this reason, caregivers begin by conducting a client assessment together with the family and developing a plan of care.

All caregivers are fully screened and are required to participate in a specialized Disability Awareness Program training. Other caregiver requirements include an annual physical exam and TB test, criminal and child abuse background checks, competency tests, and ongoing training by Caregiver Connection.

Clients and families select the caregiver that best meets the family’s needs. And since the caregivers are independent contractors, they negotiate fees directly with clients and families. This process leads to rates that are generally more affordable than those of other agencies.

Clients pay a small administrative fee to JF&CS to cover referrals, 24/7 back-up coverage, ongoing support and advocacy, continuous caregiver training, and the careful screening of each caregiver.

JF&CS is licensed by the Pennsylvania Department of Health to operate the Caregiver Connection Home Care Registry. For more information, contact Holly Anderson at 412-904-5948 or at handerson@jfcspgh.org.



Through the Samuel M. Goldston Teen Philanthropy Project, Jewish Family and Children’s Service will pay for a caregiver at the rate of \$12.00 per hour for up to 5 hours for one time per family. The individual receiving the care must be an adult between the ages of 18-60. This program will be available on a first-come, first-served basis until the funds are spent.