



MOSAIC

Volume 4 | Spring 2019

JFFS Special Needs Quarterly Gazette

WELCOME to our spring edition of MOSAIC—a publication dedicated to making our Jewish community a more inclusive place for people with special needs. In 2018, we provided more than 370 enrichment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities and their families, and 2019 has been off to a great start with a wide array of enrichment and therapeutic programs. Let’s take a peek at some of the highlights so far from Mandel House and Horwitz Family House...



CHICKEN SOUP AND MATZAH BALLS

Why is this night different from all other nights? With the table beautifully set with fresh herbs and spring flowers, everyone enjoyed a meaningful family seder. Matzah ball soup was served to our families gathered around the Passover table, and individual residents were given the opportunity to participate and enjoy the Passover meal. A highlight was all the singing! Haggadahs for the visually impaired, gluten-free matzah balls, and homemade Passover treats added a personal touch. An interactive game of tic-tac-toe with wooden frogs was a great hit, and everyone had fun looking for the hidden matzah!



BRAIN FITNESS (MANDEL HOUSE)

A click on an iPad will open up a new world of discovery for adults with developmental disabilities. Matching games, crossword puzzles, playing cards, puzzles, doodle boxes, and play dough are all therapeutic media the residents use. Self-regulation, ability to focus on a task, and preferred and non-preferred activities are all beneficial by-products. The most widely-used behavioral intervention programs focus on developing communication and social and cognitive skills. New research suggests that some alternative therapeutic choices that include sports, exercise, and other physical activities can also be a useful adjunct to traditional behavioral interventions, leading to improvement in “Brain Fitness” and quality of life for individuals with autism and intellectual disabilities.



CREATIVE EXPRESSION (HORWITZ FAMILY HOUSE)

Part of creating Jewish homes for our residents is participation in fun Jewish activities like making Purim masks, painting flower pots for Tu BiShevat, and baking challah for Shabbat! The focus is on social and adaptive skills utilizing the creative process. And yes, creativity can be taught! At Color Me Mine, a favorite place to kick back and relax, springtime, butterflies, and bright color palettes help inspire creativity.

“Hang with Friends” is a program that is supported by college students. This includes relationship building, working on individual resident projects, technology support, and life skills training. Projects like designing your own t-shirt and coloring in and out of the lines are creative avenues frequently explored by Horwitz House residents.



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JEREMIAH SOCIETY NEWSFEED

by Sheldon Lacher

Jeremiah Society had its amazing 2nd Annual “Dancing with Our Stars” lollapalooza on January 27, with a red carpet entrance, dress up and make-up, tuxedoed judges, trophies, photo booth, and dance instructors. It was over the top!

Volunteers work with individual members to support self-determination, life skills training goals, relationship building, communication patterns, and individual projects. Music, dance, and expression are always a core part of Jeremiah, as is celebrating monthly birthdays and Jewish and secular holidays.

Contact **Sheldon Lacher** at **562.221.1785** or **Sheldonla@aol.com**, or **Reega Neutel**, at **714.614.3183** or **Reega@JFFS.org**, to let us know how you can help or if you'd like more information.

JFFS JEREMIAH SOCIETY EVENTS IN REVIEW

FEBRUARY

THE PAINTED SPRING GARDEN: Spring fever inspired us to learn about nature, the environment, and our personal responsibility to planet Earth. Butterflies, planting soil, clay, and seedlings were materials used in the flower ball everyone made to take home and nurture—goodness grows!! Painted rocks with motivational messages and artwork were exchanged as a token of friendship. The program included an interesting discussion and tasting plate on the six species from the land of Israel: wheat, barley, pomegranates, dates, olives, and figs. Thank you CJW volunteers from Chabad of North Irvine!

MARCH

PURIM FESTIVAL: Purim at Temple Bat Yahm is always a fun favorite with songs, games, and BBQ! Everyone participated in carnival games, and a highlight was meeting some friendly firemen from the OC Fire Department. Individual members took turns sitting on board the fire engine. Treats of homemade hamantachen and hand-crafted watermelon lemonade were sampled during the afternoon festivities. Thank you, Temple Bat Yahm!

APRIL

THE PASSOVER STORY: Passover is a retelling of events from thousands of years ago that never gets old. We had a Matzah Factory come down from LA to offer members the unique experience of making their very own matzah from scratch, as well as being entertained with jokes and puppets! CJW and Jeremiah Society volunteers served matzah ball soup and helped to decorate chocolate-covered matzah with rainbow sprinkles. Jeremiah members were invited to explain the story of freedom and the symbols of the seder plate. The craft activity included brightly-colored personalized seder plates to be shared at the Passover table!



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UPCOMING EVENTS

UPCOMING JEREMIAH SOCIETY PROGRAMS

Sign up and volunteer for these summer social events!



PIZZA AND BINGO

Sunday, June 23

Join us for a favorite interactive game. Everyone has a chance to win! Prizes, pizza, and fun!



ROCK 'N' ROLL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Sunday, July 21

Make challah with Solomon Society volunteers and rock 'n' roll to a local DJ. Line up for a gourmet ice cream bar with a variety of flavors and toppings!



SUMMER BEACH PARTY

Sunday, August 18

Enjoy a day of sun, surf, beach games, and sandcastles at a local beach. Adults with special needs, their families, and caregivers are all invited!

Be part of Jeremiah Society and expand your circle of friends, strengthen life skills, take part in creative expression, and stay connected to the Jewish Community. Contact **Sheldon Lacher** at **562.221.1785** or **Sheldonla@aol.com** for more information.

MORE UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

“GIRLS JUST WANNA HAVE FUN” GIRLS' CLUB:

June – Color Me Mine, **July** – Beach Hats and Picnic,

September – Paris in a Tea Cup. Not a member? Ask about joining our Girls' Club for ongoing fun events like Ice Cream Parlor, Glam Day & Sky High Trampoline Park!

For more information, email **Reega Neutel MSW, ACSW**, at **Reega@JFFS.org**.

DANCING WITH OUR STARS

Put on your dancing shoes! For a stupendous afternoon of fun and laughter, Jeremiah members were all primed and dressed up. Hair, make-up, and broad smiles were the order of the day. Lots of pictures were snapped for the staged photo opps with hats, oversized sunglasses, bow ties, and glitter crowns.



Seasoned dance instructors from OC Dance Studios demonstrated a variety of dances including the Cha Cha, Waltz, Freestyle, and more. This was followed by lessons and then the competition! Everyone won a trophy and received feedback and a score from our illustrious tuxedoed judges from Temple Beth El's Men's Club. The judges personalized the feedback with support, encouragement, and humor, just like the popular TV show! Our stars truly shone in the spotlight!



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WE LOVE OUR VOLUNTEERS



JEWISH CONNECTION VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Our enrichment programs offer a selection of activities and services designed to meet the social and recreational needs of Jewish people with disabilities. Engagement activities include challah bakes, Shabbat programs, and holiday celebrations. Whenever possible, we work to integrate participants into Jewish life in Orange County.

THUMBS UP VOLUNTEERS!

At our Jeremiah Society Bowling Extravaganza, NextGen volunteers engaged with our members and families with special needs. The volunteers demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and commitment. As individuals arrived, everyone was introduced, given a name tag and bowling lane assignments, and were provided assistance in putting on bowling shoes. There was great excitement and cheering as the afternoon progressed and everyone joined in the bowling competition. Pizza, French fries, ice cream, and cake were on the menu. A souvenir bowling pin was signed by all participants as a keepsake. New friends were made, and as everyone said goodbye, the most frequent comment was, "Can we do this again soon?"

SIGN UP: VOLUNTEER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Enrichment Volunteers: A visit to strawberry farms, Animal Corner, beauty shops, gardening, chef's kitchen, game nights, or movie magic are popular choices.

Event Volunteers help out at special events such as the Summer Beach Party, challah bakes, community Shabbat dinners, field trips, Jeremiah Society events, and more. Give our families the experience of acceptance, inclusion, and friendship.

Contact us today to schedule an interview, and together we can determine how you will best be able to help. To apply, go to: www.jewishoc.org/specialneeds



DONATE

How You Can Help:

- Make a monetary donation to JFFS Special Needs Services
- Donate Items from the Wish List: TV, Refrigerator, Art Supplies
- Donate Gift Cards: Restaurants, Target, Home Depot, Movie Tickets, Theme Parks, Nail Salons, Sport Stores



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