



Press Release

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VIRTUAL 2021 ANNUAL MEETING FOR ALPERT JFS/LEVINE JRFS HELD ON MONDAY, MAY 24

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – May 28, 2021 – This year’s annual meeting for Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS) and Melvin J. & Claire Levine Jewish Residential & Family Service (Levine JRFS) was a virtual gathering on Monday, May 24, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. A full program, with the theme of “Resilient, Together” recapped the accomplishments of the past year. JFSComForCare was the presenting sponsor.

At the event, the 2020-2021 Board of Directors were recognized and the 2021-2022 Board installed, Rabbi Anthony Fratello of Temple Shaarei Shalom in Boynton Beach, delivered *the D’var Torah* (a talk relating to the weekly Torah portion); Ayla Weisberg, a graduating teen participant of the Alpert JFS “Relationships & Decisions for Teens” program was recognized; and Sheila Engelstein, Bob Herzog, and Jane Terker Perelman and Bruce Terker shared their respective commitments to our Holocaust Assistance Program, Jewish Addiction Outreach & Support, and the Melvin J. & Claire Levine Jewish Residential & Family Service Residential Program, with a service recipient from each program expressing their gratitude to the supporters, and four Volunteer Awards were presented.

The Linda White Volunteer Award, established in memory of a former volunteer coordinator at the agency, is presented to a person who exemplifies the notion of *Tikkun Olam* (Hebrew for “acts of kindness to perfect or repair the world”). This year’s recipient is Linda Weiss, who has the qualities we hope for when selecting a volunteer! This year’s recipient was Linda Weiss, a mentor in the Judith & Jack Rosenberg Mentoring 4 Kids program for six years. A retired working parent, she knew that her experiences and love of children could make a difference! She matched with seven-year-old Joelle six years ago. Neither one of them would let anything – including COVID-19! – keep them apart! She has encouraged friends’ involvement with Alpert JFS and some have become mentors themselves or spearheaded new programs.

The Bob Schweitzer Volunteer Award recognizes an individual who shared their professional services with the agency, showing an affinity for guidance, impartiality, fairness, and a commitment to effective results. This year’s recipient is Al Komins, who began volunteering with the agency in 2001 and is a past president of the agency. He has served on a host of committees, some in the capacity of chair. The piece de resistance of his long and esteemed affiliation with our organization is his leadership of the PQI (Performance Quality Improvement) committee for the past 14 years, helping it reach its current focus.

The Bernie Silbert Volunteer Award, named in memory of a successful businessperson, is given in recognition of professional services contributed to assist Alpert JFS. This year’s honoree is Arlene Hershkowitz, an AmeriCorps member since 2019. She has demonstrated a strong work ethic, caring demeanor, and compassion towards the clients and community she serves. Arlene has dedicated substantial time to providing companionship and transportation to Alpert JFS clients, and willingly fills in for other companions, as needed. She is a regular volunteer for Kind Kitchen meal deliveries.

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The Sol Freedman Volunteer Award, created in memory of Sol Freedman²¹ is presented to a volunteer who, like “Reb Sol,” as he was affectionately known, enhances the lives of those he or she touches at the Levine JRFS Activity Center with warmth, kindness and humility. Rabbi Bernie Eisenman was presented with this year’s award. For many years, Rabbi Bernie (as he is affectionately known) would visit the Activity Center twice a month to teach and engage the residents in Torah study, Jewish history, and holidays. Over the past year, he has taken his talents to Zoom. The faces of the residents lit up the first time – and every visit since – they saw their beloved rabbi on Zoom! With his PowerPoint presentations and jovial attitude, he brings Jewish texts to life; this was especially true when he dressed up for Purim to read the *Megillah* to us. He has led a Passover Seder for Apartment Program residents and their families annually, with each resident playing a role, thanks to Rabbi Bernie’s encouragement. This year, he led the Seder on Zoom for residents of both the apartment program and Group Homes.

“As we met for the second consecutive year virtually, we celebrated – as a community – the way we connected, communicated and coped in a most challenging year,” said CEO Marc Hopin. “We were adaptable, flexible, open, and optimistic, finding creative ways to continue providing the critical services and programs for those who needed us. We remained the place for people to turn for help, assisting more people with greater needs than ever before.”

You can see videos from the Annual Meeting online: “The Top 10 Ways We Showed Resilience” can be viewed at <https://vimeo.com/555451389>, and a video thanking our supporters, “Because of You...” is available at <https://vimeo.com/552183080>. The meeting, in its entirety, can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/556295783>.

Established in 1974, Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service is a nationally accredited service provider for children, adults, seniors, and Holocaust survivors. The non-profit, non-sectarian organization is a trusted leader, with a team of nearly 200 highly skilled professionals delivering high-quality care to community members. Alpert JFS works to ensure the well-being of children and families, independence of older adults and quality-of-life for individuals with disabilities. For more information, visit www.AlpertJFS.org or phone 561-684-1991.

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