

Social Concerns Committee 2006-2007

- * The year started with a collection of baskets for Rosh Hashanah filled with challah, honey, apples, wine and flowers, to be distributed to the elderly participants of the JFCS's Kosher Cafe. Many thanks to Marsha Abramson for coordinating this effort.
- * The Yom Kippur Food Drive for the Crisis Ministry of Trenton was, as always, a huge success. The Religious School volunteers did a terrific job.
- * Donations were gathered to purchase \$500 worth of gift cards from both McCaffrey's Supermarket and Shoprite in \$10 and \$25 denominations, to be distributed to some of the residents of Princeton Community Village.
- * A Passover Food Drive for Jewish Family & Children's Services was run through the month of March at The Jewish Center. As always, the congregation was exceptionally generous.
- * On Sunday, April 29, our congregation had the opportunity to do a double mitzvah:

The Health Ministry of Princeton had requested that we help them with a drive for durable medical goods, such as manual wheelchairs, walkers, bath chairs, commodes, crutches, etc. This was actually advertised all over town with flyers telling the greater community to come and donate their leftover medical goods. Apparently, within the first hour, the efforts were well worth the energy, and the Health Ministry was overwhelmed with the amount of donations they received.

At the same time, we had a Blood Drive at The Jewish Center. This was coordinated through Lynne Ross, who works for The New Jersey Blood Services, a division of The New York Blood Center, which services 60 hospitals in New Jersey and 250 hospitals in the New York metropolitan area. The response was exceptional, and I would like to recognize all of the participants by name for giving of themselves to help save a life. My hope is to extend this drive to be able to include a bone marrow donor registry, and then eventually, have genetic testing done on premises. I have also requested that each member that knows his or her blood type to please let The Jewish Center office know, so it can be added to their computer profile.

Our thanks for this special gift goes to: Fran Amir, Fred Appel, Diane Arons, Patricia Atwater, Robert Atwater, Amy Becker-Mattes, Michael Blumenfeld, Ruth Blumenfeld, Sara Bucholtz, David Cheskis, Jessica Deutsch, Felice Farber, Rabbi Adam Feldman, Matthew Feuer, Edward Flax, Bobby Freedman, Martha Friedman, Gina Gerstein, Gil Gordon, Michael Grenis, Randy Hubert, Stephen Hudis, Heidi Joseph, Mark Killingsworth, Cynthia Kleinbart, Michael Landau, Howard Levy, Neil Lewis, Marian Mendelsohn, Carole Miller, Dana Murre, Eve Niedergang, Henry Opatut, Maia Reim, Gail Rose, William Rosen, Jonathan Sabin, David Saltzman, Sally Steinberg Brent, Deborah Tipermas, Irv Urken, Tirza Wahrman, Aaron Weinstein, Lesley Wishnick, Nir Yakoby,

and Fran Zeitler, all of whom volunteered to donate blood. In addition, I would like to thank Caroline Sigal of the Religious School's Zayin class for giving her time to help coordinate this effort.

* The Pwee Family: This past November, Louise Sandburg, through Lutheran Social Ministries, brought the possibility of sponsoring a young refugee family from Burma, who had been living in a Thai refugee camp for the last ten years, to our attention. In the months that followed, this young family went from arriving here in December with little more than a bit of summer clothes to a temporary guest home, clothing befitting our climate, proper medical attention, fully furnished and outfitted housing in Princeton Community Village, Social Security numbers for all of them, a job at McCaffrey's for the dad, a nursery school scholarship for the two and a half-year old at our own Joan Levin Nursery School, and ESL and computer lessons for both parents. Under Louise's direction, this was all donated by members of our congregation. In short, the efforts of The Jewish Center members have given the Pwee family a piece of the "American Dream." Louise is nothing short of magical!

* I was contacted by a woman who lives in New York City, and is interested in donating her car to a Jewish cause. Upon initial contact, she really had wanted to donate it to the Pwee family. Unfortunately, it's a little premature for either of them to be able to think in terms of getting a license, but upon consulting with Rabbi Feldman, there is possibly someone who is in such need. I am in the midst of making sure that the transfer of ownership can be done with the proper tax deductions for the donor, and registration for the receiver.

Respectfully submitted,
Arlene M. Jacobs Opatut,
Social Concerns Co-Chair