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# HEADLIGHTS

*Shining lights: Jewish education for people with special challenges*

Winter 2012/2013

Vol. 4 • No. 3

## Local Lamplighters

***Meet 8 individuals in our own community  
who are each spreading their own light.***

A publication of **JEP!** Jewish Education for Every Person

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## About JEEP

### Jewish Education for Every Person

Our Vision: A Jewish community in which **every person** has access to our spiritual inheritance and can use it to reach his or her full potential.

Our Mission: To help local people with special needs access Jewish education and connections to empower them to better overcome their life challenges.

JEEP serves:

- **Children** and youth with learning and other challenges
- **Seniors** in nursing homes and those who are homebound
- **Adults** with disabilities
- **Patients** in hospitals
- **Alcoholics and addicts** wishing to obtain or maintain recovery using Jewish spiritual tools and support

Please visit us at [Jewisheducate.org](http://Jewisheducate.org)

Feel free to contact us about Headlights or Jewish education: [rabbi@jewisheducate.org](mailto:rabbi@jewisheducate.org)  
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## Recovery:

### On Overcoming Inner Struggles

## LET'S CELEBRATE OUR VICTORIES

By Benjamin Bresinger

Sunday, December 21, 2008

My cell phone rings and I see that it is the number of someone that I often don't have patience for. I have a dilemma; on one hand I want to press the red button, and not have to deal with that nag. On the other hand I think I should press the green button; after all, a person needs my help and it's my spiritual duty to be there for them. So, I answer.

Let's dissect that battle and the triumph. When I see who is calling, my self-centered internal voice says "don't pick up - it's him again." Immediately the G-

d centered voice comes along and says, "Pick up - it's the right thing to do." The battle ensues and ultimately I listen to the G-dly soul and pick up ... a resounding victory. On a cosmic level, a revolution just happened. The heavenly hosts go wild. All the worlds, from the highest on down, rejoice. The cosmos revel, but to me this stupendous battle between right and wrong is instantly forgotten. Why?

This event is something that I want to forget as soon as possible. All I remember from it is the struggle and my initial selfish reaction. However, to G-d the most important part of this event is my victory. When my G-dly self overcame the struggle and did the right thing. My lack of self-esteem warps my perception causing me to overlook the good that I do. This false perception is one that the addict must break away from.

This prayer, which is commonly used by people in recovery, helps me to see things rightly.

**Please G-d help me see myself through Your eyes.**

When I have the capacity to see myself the same way that G-d sees me, I have the capacity to celebrate my victories. Victory is defined in the dictionary as, "success in any contest or struggle involving the defeat of an opponent or the overcoming of obstacles." Any contest or struggle, no matter how big or small.

So this Chanukah, as we celebrate the traditional victories we must also

focus on our personal ones. We celebrate the military victory of few Jews over many Greeks and the wondrous outcome of how the last cruse of oil lit the menorah for eight days. At the same time we personally acknowledge all the times that our G-dly self overcame our self centered ego. We recognize that the struggle has value only because it brought us to victory. Once we won the battle, the only memory we keep is one of triumph. The only memory that we celebrate is the power of light over darkness, wisdom over folly.

We all have triumphs, many a day. Sometimes the struggles outnumber them. At the end of the day, every time we win it is because we have G-d in our lives. The more we learn and pray the more we are able to see the power that G-d has given us. And that's something to celebrate.

## Rabbi Eliezer Silver Memorial Award



## Gene and Elise Mesh

*for their leadership in JEEP's mission to provide every person with access to Jewish education to better enable them to meet their special challenges*

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## A Letter of Support to My Special-Needs Child

By Hinda Schryber

Dear Son,

You got sent home from school today.  
For being fifteen minutes late.  
You got sent home because that was the only way the school knew how to deal with you.  
Believe me, I wish it did not have to happen.  
I know you packed your bag and brought all your belongings home.  
I know.  
I know that is a sign of how “wronged” you felt.

Son, I know what this school means to you. I know that even getting there for six whole weeks has in itself been an enormous achievement.  
I know how afraid you were to go.  
I know that you have not been in school for six years, not been able to keep a job, not really done anything.  
I know how you felt about yourself.  
I know you felt you could not do anything; I know you feel you are mentally disabled.

I also know that you struggled as a young child to keep up.  
I know you were diagnosed with severe learning difficulties.  
I know that the tests showed you have a seizure every three minutes for three seconds.  
I know and you know.

I know how you felt when your father was diagnosed with cancer.  
I know how afraid you were.  
I know, I know.

I know you finally felt accepted.  
I know you finally felt the teacher found something in you.  
I know how proud you were of yourself when you said you had done something good.  
I know you felt good because you got up and you went, and no matter how hard it was, you persisted.

I know you asked the school before you left today “if they knew what they were doing to a kid who had really been trying so hard.”  
I knew you were asking them if they knew how hard it has been and how well you have done.  
And I know they didn’t have a reply for you.

I know you kept your mouth shut and could have said a lot more.  
I know what you could have done.  
I’m your mother, I know.

I also know, son, that there are really very few people who understand what it is to be different.  
What it means to be in a world where it is a struggle.  
What it means to change a lifestyle.  
I know, you know, but they don’t know.

And because I know all of this, I also know that you can survive this.  
That you can take that filled bag right back in there.  
And you can know, in full confidence, that you can do it.

I know you—you are not a quitter.  
You are not “tardy”—as they called you—by nature.  
You are a real survivor.  
I know that you have gotten yourself this far, against the odds.  
And you and I know that you are not going to give up now.

So hang on in there, my son.  
Life is tough, and there are rules.  
And you have to keep them.

And know one last thing.  
And that is that you are not alone.  
And He who is guarding you knows your struggles and your efforts and your amazing achievements.  
And after you understand that, there is nothing more to know.

*Hinda Schryber is the director of Orlenefesh, a psychiatric rehabilitation organization in Israel. She and her husband are the proud parents of three children, and live in Givat Ze’ev, Jerusalem. Courtesy of Chabad.org*

## The Golden Key

*When I lend a helping hand  
And open up my heart  
When I take the time to listen  
And hold your secrets tight-  
I’m empowered with something special  
I hold a key to locked doors  
If you let me hold your hand  
I can give you what is yours*

*When you let down your guard  
And accept to face your truth  
When you whisper all your fears  
Let your emotions all run loose-*

*I am challenged to empower you  
To pass on my golden key  
I know the pains of using it  
Life is not for free*

*I know the pain of hunger  
For simple humble love  
I know the pain of anger  
When it hasn’t come*

*I know the pain of trying  
And no one seems to care  
I know the pain of giving up  
You’re ready to despair*

*But for me, I made it worth it  
Another chance I’d give  
I searched my soul deeper  
Because I yearned to live*

*As I dug ever deeper  
I discovered this golden key-  
A key of faith, of openness  
A key of honesty*

*Now you, my friend, my sister  
My daughter and myself  
I hand you this key  
It’s your turn to use it*

*Let yourself go free*

*Devorah Zolotarev, originally from Ontario, Canada, now resides in Brooklyn NY with her husband and daughter. She is a prolific poet with a collection of over 70 poems. You can read more of her poetry at [www.devorahspoems.blogspot.com](http://www.devorahspoems.blogspot.com)*



## Editorial Got a Light?

Why is Chanukah the most well-known Jewish holiday? Some would credit Madison Avenue and the advertising world but in truth it may be because Chanukah expresses the central theme of Judaism: Light: “A mitzvah is a **candle** and Torah is **light**.” (Proverbs 6:23). The Jewish mission is to be a “**light** unto the nations.” (Isaiah 49:6)

Similarly, JEEP’s mission is to “shine the **light** of Jewish education for people with special needs and challenges.” Such challenges may threaten to make their life a dark place.

It’s certainly important to seek out environments for ourselves and our families which are illuminated with Jewish light-and even that can be challenging. But we also need to help those who are in the dark. During Chanukah we light the menorah in such a way as to illuminate the outside world as well as our own homes. So, too, besides lighting up our own lives we need to illuminate the way for those who are “outside,” temporarily disconnected from Judaism.

“But I’m struggling to illuminate my own life. Now you want me to light up someone else’s also?” Don’t worry, the job is not as hard as it seems. We needn’t create a new light within our fellow Jew (or even ourselves). We merely need to fan the natural spark which is already there into a robust flame. Every Jew has a spark of G-dliness within\*, “the spark of Moshiach\*\*” deep inside each one of us which merely needs to be nurtured and revealed until it fills our everyday life with good deeds, spiritual growth, goodness and kindness.

A Happy and Bright Chanukah

Yaakov and Miriam Karp

\* (Genesis 2:7, Siddur: Elokai Neshama, Tanya 1:2

\*\*Numbers 24:7, Jerusalem Talmud, Maaser Sheni 4:6



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This Rosh Hashanah, JEEP distributed 100 apple and honey baskets.  
Our sincerest thanks to  
Pipkin’s Fruit and Vegetable Market  
for their gracious sponsorship.

Thank you to Oasis Flowers for your beautiful floral arrangements, which have touched many members of the JEEP community.

***Jewish Spiritual Tools for Meeting Life’s Challenges***  
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## 8 Nights, 8 Lights – Illuminating Cincinnati One Person at a Time

Making light. A beautiful idea to contemplate. We are automatically drawn to a glowing fireplace, a roaring campfire, a candle illuminating a dark room.

We all make light daily in countless ways, many of them so simple we may not even notice. We smile. Listen. Share. Help. Hold. That's what we're here for. To make a dark world lighter, one kind act at a time.

In honor of Chanukah, Headlights is highlighting 8 of the many, many light makers in our community. Some perform profound deeds, some relatively simple. Stuff we all relate to, and find our own way to emulate.

### SCOTT MILLER—A HELPING HAND

Scott, a friendly young man, grew up in Blue Ash. For the last five years, he's been employed as an aide for special needs children. This year he is a one-on-one attendant for Sam (fictitious name) a young teen with autism, in a local high school.

"I follow him to all his mainstream classes, help him and modify his work, and help him fit in with his typical peers. This year Sam participated in the Cross Country team, so I ran with him and help him manage the practices and meets, and interact socially with his teammates", Scott says.

"I enjoy seeing Sam's progress. I like being a mentor to him. It's very rewarding to see him interact with his peers to the very best of his ability."

### IZZY K.—STRENGTH TO OVERCOME

Izzy is a young man in years, but has a focused maturity beyond his age, forged through some intense and trying times. Born and raised in Union, Ky., Izzy played high school and college sports. A sports injury led to pain-killers, which led to – addiction. Izzy's been courageously battling addiction for 6 years, and has been clean for 15 months. He is a pre-med student at NKU. In addition to the strength needed to stay clean, he is already giving back, as a mentor/sponsor for 2 young people in recovery, being personally available in their times of need.

"It feels amazing to give back what I was given," Izzy says. "It's rewarding to be sober—to experience life and be there for my mother and my friends."

### HOLLY ROBINSON— ROLLING UP YOUR SLEEVES AND DOIN' IT--- BIG TIME!

Holly has lived in Cincinnati for 12 years, and in addition to her work in the architecture and engineering field, she is one busy lady. Giving and helping organize others

to do the same. Holly has been the Gemilut Hasadim (Acts of Kindness) and Social Action co-chair at Northern Hills Synagogue for many years. She coordinates the congregation's volunteering at Over the Rhine Soup Kitchen, and serves down there herself on additional days, especially on holidays. She is active in the Inter-faith Hospitality Network when Wise Temple and Adath Israel Congregation host guest families, which helps provide housing for homeless families. She drives many older and infirm people to appointments and synagogue functions.

When we spoke for this article, Holly was yawning, because "I just spent the night as a sleeper, providing overnight supervision for 4 homeless mothers and a plethora of children at one of the temples. When the IHN bus came this morning, one of the children ran over to give me a hug." Holly is constantly busy not just talking the talk but walking the walk—helping and giving; one act, one meal at a time.

### MALKY LEVY—YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO CARE

Malky Levy is a bubbly 14 year old girl. Last year, her kindness and giving earned her first prize in an international competition, "Jewish Kids got Talent." Her talent was in something we all could do—but Malky actually did. She saw a need and did her best to fill it. Care. Give. Her time and her heart.

A young boy from overseas, Eli (fictitious name), was living in Cincinnati with his family, while he was being treated at a local hospital for severe injuries.

Malky visited Eli regularly and helped entertain and ensure that he have a happy, regular life during his stay in Cincinnati. Eli's recovery progressed to the point that his family was able to return home this past June.

"I visited Eli and played with him about once a week. We played hide and seek, tag, we colored, read books together, and played on the Wii, I enjoyed cheering him up and it made me happy myself! From spending time with Eli I realized that we shouldn't take life for granted and we should be happy with what we have. May he continue to have a speedy recovery!" said Malky.

### MIKE M.— HEALING BODY AND SPIRIT

Mike M., a warm and friendly middle-aged man, is a Cincinnati native, with long time family roots in the Queen City. He is a skilled Orthotist—working in physical rehabilitation with bracing and therapy, to ameliorate pain and discomfort and increase functionality for his patients.

But at the end of the day, when Mike hangs up his white coat, his healing work has only just begun. He

*A few weeks ago, I hosted two families with three young children, age 2, 4 and 5. On Friday night, I announced that we would have a "Victory Shabbat," and explained that throughout the weekend, whenever anyone said that they were doing something difficult, I would put a raffle ticket in the box I had prepared.*



*Throughout the weekend we all had fun mentioning our own victories, which were different for each person.*



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*One adult said, "I'm having a victory and not taking a second piece of cake." The kids caught on quickly. The five-year-old's victory was not to rock the chair as he ate. The two-year old's victory was to take her vitamins. The adults had little need to scold or admonish the children all weekend. They were amazed at the childrens' motivation and self-monitoring.*

**The Victory Technique provides opportunities to feel support and pleasure when we resist temptation instead of feeling deprived.** This spiritual joy offsets the pain of missing out on the immediate physical pleasure which comes from indulging in our physical desires. We can become habituated to seeing ourselves as disciplined and inner-directed.

When children internalize a victory mind-set, parents do not have to hover over them to make sure that they act properly. They learn to act right on their own, hearing that voice that celebrates their victory. They are used to doing acts that will make them proud of themselves and being tuned into that pleasure, instead of transient pleasures and escapes of a drug, food, or object.

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# How to Drug-Proof Your Kids

## Celebrate and strengthen their acts of self-will with the Victory Technique

Adapted from an article by Dr. Miriam Adahan

*A mother, who had been in my parenting classes years ago, called with exciting news. “Miriam,” she enthused, “I just want to thank you for teaching us the Victory Technique. You promised that we would reap great rewards with our teens if we started using this technique when they were small, and you were right.*

*“My 15-year-old ADHD son recently went to a party. The next day he told me that there had been drugs and alcohol, but that he hadn’t taken them. I was proud, but curious as to how he had done it. I asked him if all the work we had done on victories as he was growing up had helped him resist the temptation. He looked at me intently said, ‘That’s the only thing that helped! I thought back of all the times you helped me celebrate my self control and victories, and decided try it with myself. I told myself that it’s no victory to smoke dope or get drunk!’ I was so proud of him. When my children were young, I spent a lot of time each day talking about my own victories and theirs, but I didn’t know how much he had internalized until that moment!”*

What is this “magical” Victory Technique? All you need to do is simply notice and publicly cheer the

small daily victories of you and your children. A *victory* is the term used when we resist our “animal” urges, like the urge to be mean, vengeful, lazy, greedy, jealous or selfish. It can be as simple as not eating junk food, doing a small act of kindness for a neighbor, giving



tzedakah. We all have hundreds of victories each day—the responsible acts we do that don’t usually provide immediate self-gratification. If you start noticing and mentioning your children’s victories, and they hear this over and over, they eventually start to think, “I’m a responsible, trustworthy person who can resist temptation and stand up to pressure.”

Self-discipline is a crucial foundation of self-respect. Self-discipline is often very hard. We often feel like helpless victims of irresistible and uncontrollable urges. Moods descend on us. People insult and betray us. We experience endless frustrations, irritations and losses.

**Research shows that 80% of children enter first grade with a sense of self-worth and 80% leave twelve years later feeling defective and inferior.** The Victory Technique can “immunize” our children against the inevitable attacks on their self-esteem and competency. By cheering our children for “doing the difficult,” whether it is studying for a test or not insulting a sibling, they develop faith in themselves and build “character muscles.”

You are never too old to start this process. Even if you think you are inferior or incapable of self-control, you can change your brain patterns. Start now. It is a victory to read this article. You had victories when you got up on time this morning, brushed your teeth, showered, paid your bills, spoke politely, made hundreds of decisions about what to say, eat and buy. It is this awareness – not beauty, awards, money or grades – that is the source of true self-worth.

is a compassionate sponsor for folks in recovery from addiction to narcotics. A good listener, a caring heart, and a doer, Mike has been there and is eager to share the hard-earned fruits of his own struggle to stay clean.

“I became addicted to narcotics over thirty years ago. I was a ‘60s’ child. Started using in 1967 or so., I fooled myself until I found that the disease of Addiction had complete control of my life,” Mike relates. “I first got clean in August 1980. After struggling through much of the eighties, I was clean from 1988 until 2000, when surgery set me back, and I ended up using again until February 2007. I’ve been back in solid recovery since then.

In recovery, we have to serve G-d, take care of self and be an active member of society in service. The 12th step of recovery, the culmination of all this effort, of finally cleaning my house—is to carry the message to the addict who still suffers. The heartbeat of the program I work is sponsorship— helping others seeking recovery to achieve it.

Yeah, being a sponsor means getting the call at 3 am; but you gotta answer it. When it’s something involving recovery, we generally never say no. We’re always willing to share our experience, strength, and hope.”

### DR. SANDRA BERG—NURTURING A LOVE FOR LEARNING AND READING

Dr. Sandra Berg grew up in Cincinnati, arriving in our fair city when she was 2 weeks old. She has a Masters in Reading and a PhD in the Social Foundations of Education. She has worked in many facets of education, as a reading specialist with young children, a public school administrator, writing curriculum on the state level and developing and teaching curriculum for English as a Second Language.

In 2009, Dr. Berg started volunteering at the Cincinnati Hebrew Day School library. Though she could have taken it easy after an active and innovative career, Dr. Berg did not shy away from learning a whole new skill set to do what was needed. “I really didn’t know anything about running a library. It took a while to learn how to do things, even process a book. It’s been a real learning experience for me.”

Dr. Berg volunteers from one to two days a week to read to the children and additional time for library maintenance and upgrading. She says, “I’ve always enjoyed the company of young children.”

A true giver, Dr. Berg goes beyond her comfort zone. “Today, actually, I was quite tired,” she said with a laugh,” but I knew how much the children enjoy coming to the library, especially the little ones. Being the librarian, you get to see the children develop and grow throughout the whole school career, not just for one year. It’s really delightful.”

In her down time? The focused volunteer takes home books to catalog into the new automated system. “I’m

one of those people who doesn’t stop, the job has to get done, and I don’t count the hours.”

### ANDY NADEL—BUILDING JEWISH CONNECTION AND SHARING FRIENDSHIP

Andy Nadel is a Cincinnati native, a soft-spoken, mild mannered young man. Andy is employed as a clerk at the Hamilton County Prosecutor’s Office. In that busy, perhaps impersonal building, Andy has decided to share a little Jewish warmth. In his quiet way, he’s become a Jewish outreach agent. He’s enriched his co-workers, by giving out apples and honey packages before Rosh Hashanah, hand-made shmura matzah before Passover, and hamantaschen- shalach manos packages before Purim.



Andy finds that people appreciate his efforts. “It’s usually very positive and friendly, people seem glad to have the reminder of the upcoming holiday and happy to get a holiday food to eat and enjoy the special time with,” Andy says.

In addition, Andy visits one of the few Jewish residents of a local nursing home, almost every week. He didn’t know the man previously, but started doing it in conjunction with JEEP.

“I enjoy it, it’s a good feeling,” Andy says, when asked how the visits go. “Dave says he’s stuck there and is happy to have someone come and visit him. We can always find something to talk about, even if it’s just the weather or the news. I’m glad to help someone feel better. I understand his situation, if I was in it, I’d like someone to come and visit me.” f

### THE EIGHTH LIGHT— STEP RIGHT UP, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN....

...Dear Reader, Dear Friend—  
Can you guess how this story will end?  
Look in the mirror right now; please do—  
The eighth shining light is none other than... YOU!  
Your smile, your caring, going out of your way—  
It can change a life, bring joy to someone’s day.  
You are so full of light—just let it shine  
--a little brighter  
-- a little warmer  
-- take another minute or so  
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*Chanukah is a great time to get together with friends in recovery and meet new people. Menorah lighting, dreidle games, delicious home cooked meal (with latkes and doughnuts), relaxed and accepting atmosphere, enjoyable and useful conversation.*

*No alcohol served. Friends and family are also welcome.*

*Rsvp: 513-133-4400, Rabbi Yaakov Karp or Rabbi@JewishEducation.org Next Sober Shabbos Dinner: Jan 6, 2013, 7:30 PM*



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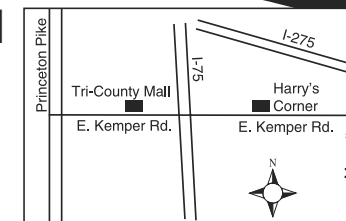
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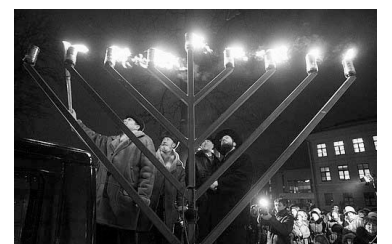
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## Look Beyond Wrinkles. And Learn.

By Frank Kaiser

Mary will be 91 years old by the time you read this.

As you can see from my photo, she wears those years well. There is perhaps nothing more lovely than a woman of this certain age, cheerful and bright with life.

Mary's my neighbor. Older than most, she reminds us of how sweet life should be — can be — as we age.

Petite, with a generous smile and pure heart, Mary confirms life can be most beautiful at its sunset.

Born in Poland, Mary was but two when her mother died.

The youngest of four small children, she held tight her sisters' coattails as her dad, new mom and grandmother hustled through Ellis Island, fleeing the war-torn Europe of 1919.

In Chicago's Jewish-Polish enclave, Mary flourished. She swam, learned Hebrew and English, graduated high school at 16.

Then, just as America was losing hope under The Great Depression, Mary found love at the deep end of the Jewish People's Institute swimming pool. Bernie Lyon, a young Glaswegian eight years her senior wooed and won Mary in marriage. His steady job at Metropolitan Life won a favorable impression from her father.

At age 18 she welcomed their first child, Annabel, now married nearly 50 years herself.

And when Bernie was drafted into the Army at age 38, Mary assumed his responsibilities at Met Life. For two years, each evening after tucking in her children, she made sales calls, occasionally outselling all the men in her district. "It was the bravest thing I ever did," Mary recalls.

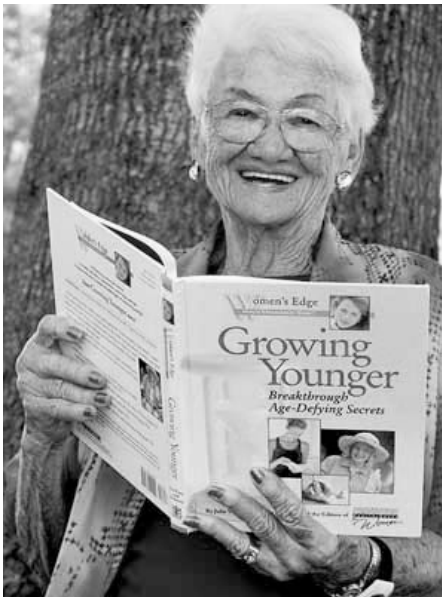
Bernie came home. The children grew up and had children of their own.

Eighteen grandchildren attended Mary's 90th birthday party last year.

Bernie died on their 69th wedding anniversary. Mary says she still feels his presence every day.

By any account, this woman has led a full and remarkable life. She still travels the country visiting her offspring. She's in touch daily with many of her grandchildren through the Internet and Instant Messaging. She swims, she mah-jonggs. She e-mails me jokes.

This lovely, tiny woman, barely five feet tall, who says, "I've never felt that short," towers above us all.



I've never heard Mary say a wicked word about anyone.

When I asked about the worse aspect of aging, Mary replied, "I don't see any 'worst.' I'm not blind. I just see things in a different light."

Her light shines brightest in her compassion for all people. "One thing about being nice to everyone," Mary grins, "it blows them away!"

Quotes from the Book of Mary:

You stay young by smiling, by doing the best you can do, by never living by another's standards, and by turning mountains into molehills.

Never say ill of anyone. It just makes someone miserable.

Take the best parts of life and go with them.

Mary's one complaint is that some treat her as a senile old lady. "They don't know that I'm not old," she fusses. "I hate it when the airport security people speak to me like I'm a child."

Mary's true love is her family. It is her life, her greatest gift in every sense. So when 15-year-old grandson Bryce wrote her the following, it ended up framed on her already-crowded wall.

"I am just so glad that I had the wonderful pleasure of having such

a special human being in my life. You really make a difference, as someone I can talk to and have a good time with. You always know how to have a good time and keep people happy. Your spirit has never broken, and I keep you as an inspiration in my heart to strengthen my spirit and character."

Right on, Bryce. Your grandmother is an inspiration to us all.

Of all those I know and love, I most want to be like Mary when I grow up.

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This year, JEEP will be sharing the light and joy of Chanukah with *over 50 Jewish Seniors* living outside of the Jewish Senior Community.

Throughout the holiday, Rabbi Levi Fuss will be bringing the joy and meaning of Chanukah to Senior facilities in Dillonvale, Hartwell, Kenwood, Madeira, Madisonville, Montgomery and elsewhere.



Please contact us if you know a Jewish Senior anywhere in the Greater Cincinnati area, who would appreciate a visit (replete with a care package) at any time. 513-733-4400

### Lights in the Darkness- A Chanukah Story

*Rabbi Yisroel of Bluzhov kindled the wick and there in a barracks at Bergen Belsen, the light began to burn. Afterwards, one of the Jews came up to the Rabbi with a question.*

*"Rebbe," the man continued, "when hundreds of dead Jewish bodies are lying just a few feet away from this menorah and thousands more are being massacred every day, should we recite that third blessing and thank God for keeping us alive at a time like this?"*



*"I had the same question," the Bluzhober Rebbe replied. "That's why I stopped before reciting the final blessing. I wanted to ask the advice of my fellow Rabbis to see if it was, indeed, permissible to recite such a blessing during these terrible times. But when I turned and saw the faces of all the Jews eagerly crowding around me-when I saw their eyes alive with fire and love for this mitzvah – I knew that not only was it permissible, it was obligatory!"*

*"After being privileged to see with my own eyes," the Rebbe continued, "that the faith and the fervor of the Jewish People still lives – despite all that we have endured – how can I not thank God for keeping me alive to see this time."*

*Excerpt from The Candle of God is the Soul of Man, Libi Astair 2001*

## Making Light:

*A snapshot of JEEP's work in our focus areas-- planting seeds of caring and connection*

### Hospital chaplaincy—A timely visit

A young Israeli couple was distraught. They faced a difficult medical decision in the midst of the wife's second pregnancy, and went back and forth between the alternatives. The husband, Amit (fictitious name), paced back and forth by his wife's bedside in a local hospital. Suddenly he thought, "I really wish I could talk with a rabbi, pray with tefillin on, for real, and get a more spiritual perspective." A few minutes later there was a knock on the door. Rabbi Karp, the volunteer chaplain, was on his regular rounds. As usual he brought his tefillin "just in case." During the visit, Amit donned tefillin for the first time in many years and prayed. Afterwards he felt inexplicably calm and clear. The medical decision was made and a short time later their new baby boy was born. Both baby and mommy were fine. Rabbi Karp helped ensure that there would be a bris.

Rabbi and the couple lost touch but several years later, in November 2011, Rabbi Karp "happened to be" locked out of his car outside of a synagogue where he was visiting relatives in W. Bloomfield, Michigan. A young Israeli congregant "happened to be" a locksmith and agreed to help out the stranded rabbi. "I see your phone has a Cincinnati area code," Rabbi Karp noted. As they talked, the rabbi and the locksmith recognized each other. "Rabbi!" the locksmith said as he recognized the chaplain from the timely visit years earlier in the maternity unit in Cincinnati. "Amit!" Rabbi Karp realized. The locksmith was the once-distraught father of that newborn boy.

Amit excitedly told Rabbi Karp, "Your visit and help, right when we needed it, started a chain reaction. I remembered that intense connection I felt when I prayed with the tefillin as we struggled with that very hard decision in the labor and delivery room. I started praying once in a while on my own. When we moved up here we started getting actively involved in the synagogue community, giving our children a Jewish education, and building a Jewish life!"

### Youth with Special Needs—The Jewish connection

Several years ago on Chanukah, Rabbi Karp pulled up to a stoplight, his large menorah on his car roof a reminder of the holiday. A woman at a stoplight rolled down her window, pointed at the

giant menorah and asked, "Hey, where can I get a menorah for my kids?" They both pulled over and Rabbi Karp handed her a menorah kit, complete with candles, dreidle and Chanukah gelt.

Cheryl (fictitious name) lived in a run-down, rough neighborhood, suffered from poverty and mental illness, but was raising two young girls and teaching them what she could about their Jewish heritage. Rabbi Karp visited regularly, offering material and spiritual support, tutoring the kids and bringing an extra measure of stability and friendship into their life. Eventually the family moved out of state and the children are being raised by relatives but JEEP has maintained the long distance friendship, with calls, occasional visits and holiday packages.

### Recovery—Getting the Right Placement

Saul (fictitious name) was seeking recovery information and support, to help his daughter Susan. He found Cincinnati Jewish Recovery on the Jewishrecovery.org website and called us. At that time Susan was using drugs extensively but wanted desperately to become clean in order to retain custody of her baby son. We helped her make contact with someone who specializes in appropriate recovery placement, and Susan was able to begin her clean time in a recovery house along with her baby. She is now marking one year clean and participates regularly-with a friend and her baby--in JEEP's individualized Jewish Recovery meetings where she learns how Jewish spiritual tools can help her strengthen her recovery one day at a time.

### Seniors—Apples, honey and support

Rabbi Fuss went to visit seniors at an area nursing home, bringing them apples and honey for the upcoming Rosh Hashanah. On his way down in the elevator, he helped some workers loading a huge palette of furniture onto it. When they discovered that he was a rabbi visiting Jewish residents, they said, "There's someone you should see. This load belongs to a Jewish lady who's moving in right now. She could really use a visit from a rabbi—she's very distraught."

Rabbi Fuss went to see her, and she was very grateful for the support. She was overwhelmed, confused and upset. She said that her husband was not well, in the dementia unit and she was very worried about him. When Rabbi Fuss said he

## JEEP in NUMBERS

**8** hours/week: Individualized instruction for children

**300** visits/year: With Jewish seniors outside of Cedar Village

**25** classes/year: "The Jewish Hour" at a local Senior Retirement Home

**50** /year: Pre-Shabbat and Holiday parties with residents of Halom House

**280** : Special hand-baked Matzos delivered before Passover to hospital patients, residents of nursing homes, etc.

would check up on him, she relaxed somewhat. She was very touched by the apples and honey, which elicited memories of her traditional childhood. She was also glad to be told about the other Jewish residents in the facility. The rabbi visited her husband and had a congenial visit. He sang Jewish songs with the elderly man, which aroused fond memories, clear memories from long ago.

### Adults with Special Needs—Shmoozing and Shabbos

Rabbi Fuss's weekly pre-Shabbos party with the Halom House residents has evolved into a precious, warm and social time. As the friendship has deepened over the months, the residents know and trust him. There's the regular routine of songs, Shabbos table and challah, accompanied by clapping, singing and sometimes dancing. When asked who wants to start a song, someone always starts singing Hinei Mah Tov. Then comes the schmooze session: Someone always tells Rabbi Fuss when their birthday is, there's an ongoing debate about whether New York or Cincinnati challah is better. Folks talk about their day, week, and work, and ask the rabbi about his. Rabbi Fuss is asked about his children, and about what's going

**850** /year: Visits to Jewish patients in hospitals

**12** /year: Sober Shabbos and holiday celebrations for people in recovery

**500** /year: Individual Jewish recovery sessions

**100** : Apple and honey packages distributed personally before Rosh Hashanah in hospitals, nursing homes, etc.

**15,108** : Total miles logged by members of our Chai Walking Club where walking is known as "the healthy addiction."

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