

THE 2011 GOODMAN AWARD SUBMISSION FORM

Program Title: JCARES: Partnership for Safer Synagogues
Agency Name: Jewish Child and Family Services (Chicago)
Date Program Began: 2009

Initial Problem(s) to be Addressed by the Program: Across the lifespan, across the Jewish community, in homes, day schools, and synagogues, we see the consequences of sexual abuse, child abuse, physical abuse, teen dating violence, bullying, and elder abuse. A Chicago Jewish Community Health Survey (2004) found that nearly one-third of households included a victim of abuse. One-fourth of those interviewed were more likely to turn to rabbis with problems than anyone else. With 150 Chicago-area congregations, synagogues are a key partner in community efforts to prevent and respond to abuse, but many lack the knowledge and resources to be effective.

Brief Overall Program Description: JCARES, administered by JCFS, is a diverse coalition that educates, advocates and collaborates to promote innovative policies and practices addressing abuse across the Jewish community. With a grant from the Michael Reese Health Trust, JCARES created the Partnership for Safer Synagogues in 2009 to promote safer synagogue environments and improve access to support for individuals who are experiencing abuse. During the pilot year, 26 rabbis, board members, school administrators, educators, and congregants from four synagogues engaged in synagogue policy review, participated in seven core trainings and began developing institutional action plans (e.g., activities, policies, education) that support healthy Jewish relationships, homes, and communities.

Jewish Component: *Love your fellow as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18). *Do not wrong one another* (Leviticus 25:17). *Kavod. Chesed.* The Partnership for Safer Synagogues is grounded in Jewish values, incorporates Jewish content in all training sessions, and combats the myth that abuse does not happen in the Jewish community. The program brings rabbis and other synagogue leadership awareness, knowledge and skills to respond to abuse situations in a way that is effective, healing, and spiritual.

Community-Building Component: Many layers of community building enrich this program. JCARES itself is a coalition drawing on the strength and expertise of 50+ Jewish and secular agencies and advocates, many of whom donate time to lead Safer Synagogues training and serve as community resources. The Safer Synagogues initiative was developed and is overseen by a community committee that includes a rabbi, clinician, community organizer, advocate, business person, and former synagogue administrator. Each participating synagogue forms a congregational team to collaboratively learn and plan. Participating synagogues also have a unique opportunity to share challenges and congregational best practices with other synagogues.

Outreach Component: When congregants see the Safer Synagogues certificate of completion presented during a Shabbat service, they know the congregation values a safe and healthy community. When thousands of readers see an ad in local Jewish press congratulating Safer Synagogue graduates, they gain awareness about the issue and the role that synagogues are taking to address it.

Outcomes of the Program to Date: 1,800 families at the four pilot synagogues are now more likely to receive accurate information about community resources and appropriate responses from congregational leadership if they come forward with challenges related to abuse. This number will increase exponentially as the model is replicated. Based on specific evaluation findings, 100% of participants indicated that the program increased their knowledge about abuse across the lifespan, encouraged them to think about the issue of abuse in new ways, and increased their knowledge of community resources. The majority agreed that participating in the program has: heightened their understanding of how abuse impacts congregants (88%), heightened their understanding about their responsibility and legal obligations in preventing and addressing abuse (88%), increased their confidence and capacity to recognize and respond to congregants experiencing abuse in a way that is appropriate, effective, spiritual, and healing (81%), and increased their understanding of how to incorporate the concept of safe and healthy relationships into their congregation's programs, activities, and overall message (80%).

Evaluation Method: Following each training session, participants complete a written evaluation to determine whether learning objectives were met. In addition, a comprehensive written survey is completed at the end of each program year. All findings are analyzed by the agency's continuous quality improvement team and used to inform future program direction.

Total Program Cost: The total CY11 budget is \$32,234, and is supported with a \$20,000 grant from the Michael Reese Health Trust, \$11,484 in-kind from the partnering agencies, and \$750 in synagogue fees.

Agency's Plans for the Continuation of the Program: JCARES is launching a second cohort with 3 - 5 new synagogues this year, with plans for additional cohorts in subsequent years. A forum of all participating synagogues will be convened annually to share challenges and congregational best practices. The model is currently being adapted and replicated in a second key setting – the Partnership for Safer Schools will be piloted in 2 –3 local Jewish day schools this fall. In addition, JCARES inter-faith colleagues have expressed significant interest in the creation of a replication manual so the model can be adapted by other faiths.

Contact Information

- a. Contact Person's Name: Amy Rubin
- b. Contact Person's Title: Director of Community Services
- c. Contact Person's Telephone Number: 847.745.5432
- d. Contact Person's Email Address: AmyRubin@jcfs.org