

39TH AJFCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MAY 15-17, 2011

The Westin Hotel, Calgary, Alberta

THE GOODMAN AWARD SUBMISSION FORM

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I. General Information

- a. **Program Title:** Supports to Achieve Independent Living (SAIL)
- b. **Agency Name:** Samost Jewish Family & Children's Service of Southern New Jersey
- c. **Date Program Began:** 2006

II. Summary

- a. **Initial Problem(s) to be Addressed by the Program:** In 2006, Jewish Family & Children's Service of Southern New Jersey began a program called "Supports to Achieve Independent Living (SAIL)." SAIL was created in response to the requests of parents whose young adult children with "high functioning autism" and other special needs did not have social or recreational opportunities after they graduated from high school. Parents said their children felt marginalized and did not fit within organizations that provided services for individuals with more severe disabilities.
- b. **Brief Overall Program Description:** The SAIL Program is a recreation and life skills program that provides a calendar of activities to "high functioning" young adults who have graduated from high school. Currently, the group has 40 active members, with new participants joining every year as they graduate from high school. The average age of participants is 25 years old. Each month a calendar of activities are developed by the SAIL Coordinator and the participants.

Participants can expect to find repeat activities on the monthly calendar, along with new special events. Some of the regular activities are: bowling, dinner and movie, volunteering at a senior apartment facility, guys' discussion group, and girls' discussion group. New special events may include a trip into the city to a museum or a play, an amusement park or a holiday celebration. In addition, the SAIL participants can join a Special Olympics team and participate in practices and games. Another unique program is an eight-month Financial Literacy Program, where participants learn how to manage their money and set specific saving goals.

At each SAIL event there are two staff facilitators. The role of the facilitator is to model and encourage appropriate social behaviors, as well as foster group dynamics. "SAILORS" are encouraged to contact one another outside of the group activities, to help round out their social interactions.

III. Components

- a. **Jewish Component:** Holiday programs are planned around the Jewish holidays. The group celebrates Jewish holidays with a Hanukkah Latka party, Purim with a Purim ball, Passover with a community Seder, and Sukkot with Pizza in the hut.

A major Jewish component to the SAIL Program has been two Birthright Trips. In 2008 and 2010, the SAIL Program joined with the Jewish Childcare Association in New York for a ten-day Taglit Birthright Trip. Not only did these trips help to foster a greater sense of Jewish identity, but for most of the participants, it was the first time that they traveled without their parents.

- b. Outreach Component:** We believe that it is very important for the group to give back to the community, so monthly volunteer opportunities are incorporated into the calendar, such as distributing food from our Food Pantry to seniors residing in the Jewish Federation Senior Housing Program. The group has also volunteered to pack hospital “goody” bags for teens in the hospital, and cook at a local synagogue for a homeless shelter. In doing these volunteer activities the group is learning the value of “Tikkun Olam”, and they are educating others in the community about the SAIL Program. This helps to change perceptions about individuals with disabilities.
- c. Community-Building Component:** The SAIL Program has not only fostered a wonderful sense of community among the participants, but it has among the parents as well. Each month JFCS holds a SAIL parent meeting. These meetings provide opportunities for parents to learn about community and government resources, as well as network with each other. Many friendships have been formed, and these families have learned a tremendous amount from each other. The families have also built a strong sense of community through their child’s participation on the JFCS Special Olympics Team.

IV. Outcomes

- a. Outcomes of the Program to Date:** Satisfaction surveys are completed on an annual basis by the participants of the SAIL Program and their parents. 40 current members of SAIL benefit from the programs and services that SAIL provides.
- b. Evaluation Method:** Quantitative (testimonials and survey responses received from SAIL Program participants and their parents) and Qualitative (the number of SAIL participants and continued increasing membership.)

V. Sustainability

- a. Total Program Cost:** The SAIL Program cost \$86,500 this fiscal year. Staffing accounted for \$80,000 and program expenses and supplies accounted for \$6,500.
- b. Major Income Sources:** The major sources of income for this program are private donations and a small allocation from Jewish Federation.
- c. Agency’s Plans for the Continuation of the Program:** SAIL continues to expand its program offerings and its membership. We hope expand SAIL from simply a recreational and social program into an educational program by partnering with local colleges and offering a SAIL University program.

VI. Contact Information

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