

JFS helps Ohioans face life's challenges

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Jewish Family Services' mission could not be clearer: JFS helps individuals and families facing life's challenges.

Celebrating the organization's 100-year anniversary, the agency has been engaged in what organizers characterize as a major writing project - "100 Years, Hundreds of Stories" - a compilation of interviews given by current and former JFS clients, board and committee members, staff and other members of the community whose lives have been touched by the agency.

Through these stories, organizers hope to educate Central Ohioans about the hope, strength, guidance and encouragement that agency professionals have provided to numerous individuals and families over the years, according to the JFS Web site, www.jfscolumbus.org.

The agency's reach has been extensive enough to resettle a Louisiana woman and her children after being displaced by Hurricane Katrina, assist a Jewish man seeking reparations from European governments that collaborated with Nazi Germany during the darkest days of the Holocaust, and a Columbus-area senior in need of health-care assistance.

More broadly, the agency is known for serving people in the two most important aspects of their lives - family and work.

"We are the only agency in Franklin County, and one of only a half dozen Jewish Family Services nationally, which provides this unique blend of mental health and career services to create an effective combination of empowering tools for clients," the organization claims.

Established as an independent autonomous agency in 1953, JFS has evolved continuously to meet the challenges of Central Ohioans. Whether it is counseling, outreach or career and workforce-related assistance, the agency has striven to be a customer-focused, quality leader creating best practices, according to the site.

For residents interested in fine-tuning quests for their next careers, JFS offers a variety of services, including career management coaching; job search support services; professional résumé writing services; interview coaching; career testing; a program for seniors not yet ready to leave the workplace; a dislocated worker program; and a refugee employment program.

The agency's clinical services include child, adolescent and adult counseling, individual and group therapy, marital and premarital couples counseling, and counseling for children and families with school-related issues

In addition to offering parenting resources, JFS' Family Violence Prevention program seeks to promote peace in the home by promoting healthy relationships in the family through empowering family members to give themselves and others a safe and respectful environment.

Additionally, the program offers court advocacy, outreach, referral, case management and safety planning/emergency services for victims, while coordinating with the greater community to provide needed services for families struggling with domestic violence.

Jewish Family Services is nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and it is a model of the active practice of the Jewish value, Tikkun Olam, which translates to "repairing the world," as it fulfills its mission as the local Jewish community's representative to all individuals and families facing life's challenges.

The agency's vision assures Central Ohioans that no one should face life's challenges alone.