

**The Greater Kansas City Section of the
National Council of Jewish Women**

Bridge to the Future

*A campaign to strengthen the foundation of
Kansas City's oldest volunteer Jewish women's organization dedicated to
improving lives of women, children and families
and ensuring individual rights and freedoms for all.*

NCJW MISSION

The National Council of Jewish Women, Inc., is a volunteer organization inspired by Jewish values, that works through a program of research, education, advocacy and community service to improve the quality of life for women, children and families and strives to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all.

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THE BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE CAMPAIGN

Bridge to the Future is a campaign of the Greater Kansas City Section of the National Council of Jewish Women to raise funds to engage an executive director.

The vision of the campaign is to build the infrastructure needed to perpetuate the Section's legacy of improving lives of women, children and families and striving to ensure individual rights and freedoms for all.

How will an executive director achieve this vision?

An executive director will not substitute for volunteer leadership. An executive director will build an environment where volunteers will want to lead.

What will an executive director mean to Members?

- More trained and active volunteers
- More meaningful, focused involvement
- Program and meeting coordination
- Availability of resources
- Enrichment of volunteer culture
- Participation in vital advocacy initiatives
- Development of critically needed community services

What will an executive director mean to the Section?

- Credibility and visibility
- Budgeting and financial management
- Professional fund raising
- Office and record maintenance
- Strong relationships with other community organizations
- Pursuit of common goals

What will an executive director mean to the Community?

- Continuation of signature community service projects
- Bold initiatives in domestic violence, gun control and child care
- Ongoing advocacy and education to promote the vote, ensure reproductive rights and maintain separation of church and state
- A local, state and national voice for Jewish women

CARRYING THE LEGACY FORWARD

Hannah Greenebaum Solomon called for a women's organization to "shape the destinies" of American lives at the 1893 World Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair in Chicago.

A year later in 1894, with 17 members, Kansas City became one of the first communities in the country to form a section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW).

The projects they initiated – free baths, racially integrated free kindergartens, classes for children on thrift and economy, Sabbath religious school and an industrial school to teach children to make clothing for family use – reflect the values NCJW has cultivated, nationally and in Kansas City, for more than 100 years.

Those values – community service, education, tradition and advocacy – have rallied thousands of Section volunteers – to act on the wisdom of our sages, who said: "It is not for you to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it."

Far from desisting, the National Council of Jewish Women of Kansas City has been in the forefront of efforts to bring justice and equality to all, as illustrated by these highlights of Section history:

- 1901 NCJW represented at Juvenile Court
- 1933 NCJW awards first scholarships
- 1934 Parties for the Blind started
- 1938 Naturalization Council
- 1947 Hot Lunch Project
Transitional housing for refugees
- 1948 Weaving workshops for the blind
Sweaters for children in Israel
- 1957 Braille Library
- 1960 Kitchen for cooking classes at Psychiatric Receiving Center
- 1961 School for multiply handicapped children
- 1964 Kansas City's first preschool for disadvantaged children
- 1968 Model Cities
- 1969 NCJW Day Care Center for Menorah Medical Center employees
"Entertainmobile" for elderly shut-ins
- 1973 Equipment for Kansas City School for the Deaf
Volunteers for Renaissance West drug treatment center
Support to establish Judaic Studies program at UMKC
- 1974 Justice for Children Project
- 1975 Community-wide Tay-Sachs screening
Home Instruction for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)
- 1981 Mensch to Mensch for Russian immigrants

- 1982 Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Project established in Jackson Co. for abused and neglected children
- 1983 First of many Ruth B. Stern Memorial Lectures
- 1984 Hello Israel Project in schools
- 1985 NCJW National Convention Host
Johnson County CASA started
- 1986 Mothers in the Workplace Project
- 1987 Children as Witnesses in Cases of Child Sexual Abuse Pilot Project
- 1988 Community Child Care Conference
- 1989 Family Day Care Project
Pro-Choice Advocacy
- 1990 English as a Second Language Project in schools
- 1991 WarmLine for foster families
- 1992 Day of the Working Parent
- 1995 Advocacy Education
- 1996 Safe Child Program
- 1997 Silent Witness Project (domestic violence project)
- 1998 Emilie Levin Fund Community Service Projects
- 1998 Performances of the Hanukah play, *The Odd Potato* (performed through 2000)
- 1999 SAFEHOME Jewish Domestic Violence Outreach Project
Sponsored National CASA Convention with Keynote Speaker Rosie Grier

Much has changed since the founding of the Greater Kansas City Section of NCJW. According to NCJW's recent study, *Opening a New Window on Child Care*, more than 78 percent of mothers with children over age six worked outside the home in 1999, compared to 50 percent in 1972. Time is their most precious commodity. Yet, women's commitment to volunteering remains strong. Sixty-two percent of women reported volunteering in 1998, compared to 49% of men, according to Independent Sector, a national umbrella group dedicated to enhancing philanthropy and nonprofit initiative.

Throughout history, women have often been first to provide joy to the lonely, education to the downtrodden and a voice to the disenfranchised. The Greater Kansas City Section's track record of progressive volunteer action has improved the lives of women, children and families for five generations. Nine-hundred members strong, it is well positioned to carry this legacy forward.

It is not for you to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.

Ethics of the Fathers 2:21

NCJW AT THE CROSSROADS

THE SECRET IS THE MISSION

For any organization to survive 100 years is rare. For those that do, the secret is the mission.

“I joined NCJW in 1994 because I wanted to get involved in a Jewish organization and make new friends,” says Dierdre Baker, owner of Rest Assured, Inc., an employment services firm based in Shawnee Mission, Kan. “But what really appealed to me about NCJW is what it stands for: protecting the rights of women, children and families.”

The Greater Kansas City Section of NCJW is and has for many years been the only Jewish women’s organization that works to save and change lives – regardless of race, sex, religion or ethnicity – in Kansas City, as well as at state and national levels. NCJW volunteers working in the community are visible reminders of Judaism’s great values of *tzedakah* (charity and justice) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). They are recognized and respected for their commitment to making a difference.

AN HISTORIC TRACK RECORD

“NCJW’s strength is in its history and strong volunteer base,” says Joan DeMerchant, the strategic planning and board development consultant who worked with NCJW in the fall of 1999 to address leadership issues. “The challenge today is that you can no longer run any program that’s heavily reliant on volunteers without a mechanism to support them.”

Under DeMerchant’s guidance, an NCJW committee explored how staff support might be beneficial to the Section. The committee concluded that the services of an executive director would most closely meet identified needs. The board voted in 1999 to raise funds to support an executive director’s salary and benefits.

A PLAN FOR CHANGE

Prior to embarking on any fund-raising drive, however, the Section recognized that it needed to develop a strategic plan that answered these basic questions:

- Where are we going?
- What are the issues on which we want to focus?
- What programs do we propose to address those issues?
- What structural changes do we need for our goals to be achievable?

The Section is extremely grateful to the Jewish Heritage Foundation, which provided the services of its former program officer, Laurie Rosenwasser, to assist the Section in developing an 18-month Action Plan (see page ____).

Over the next several months, the Section will hold small group meetings in homes hosted by board members to present the Action Plan to members. The goal is to personally solicit input and feedback on the plan from a cross-section of the membership. With consensus from membership, the plan will become the blueprint for activities guided by the executive director.

SECURING THE VISION

The vision is to take what has been best about NCJW for more than 100 years and revitalize it for a new generation of women who still care about their community and for a community that still needs what NCJW volunteers have to give.

The executive director is NCJW's bridge to that vision. (See Appendix for job description.)

"I feel we are at a crossroads," says Ann Stern, past president and 1998 recipient of the Section's prestigious Hannah G. Solomon Award. "We can become a provincial ladies group sitting around giving out scholarships, or we can be a major player in the community. And the only way we can do that is to hire an executive director."

I feel we are at a crossroads. We are posed to become a major player in the community, a vital voice for critical issues and a catalyst for community change. The only way we can do that is to hire an executive director.

Ann Stern
NCJW Past President
1998 Hannah G. Solomon Award Recipient

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AS LEADER

THE LEADERSHIP VACUUM

Fifty-five percent of Americans reported that they volunteered in 1998. While this was a 7 percent rise over 1995, it did little more than make up for numbers lost in the early 1990's. In reality, only 1 percent more Americans volunteered in 1998 than in 1989. Overall, Americans donated 400 million fewer hours in 1998 than they did in 1995.

"It's a new trend," says Sara Melendez, president of Independent Sector, which compiled this data. "People are volunteering, but when they do, it's more of a one-shot deal."

NCJW's experience corroborates Melendez's observations. Of 900 members, about 300 are active in some way, including about 50 volunteer on an ongoing basis. However, outside the board of directors, few are willing to serve as leaders.

Hello Israel exemplifies the dilemma. Here is a program that:

- Teachers say they love, according to a recent evaluation by Dr. Sarah Small.
- Has educated thousands of students about Israel since 1983.
- Readily attracts dozens of volunteer presenters.
- Has the potential to grow beyond the Shawnee Mission School District, reaching thousands more students in the urban core and outlying areas.

Yet, here is a program that lacks ongoing committed leadership. Volunteers enthusiastically embrace the opportunity to present the *Hello Israel* curriculum in schools several times a year. But ask someone to take charge of the program and you're likely to get turned down.

The leadership vacuum is arguably the Section's most critical challenge.

With most volunteers amenable only to short-term commitments...

- Current program management is compromised.
- The feasibility of new program implementation is uncertain.
- Administrative and programmatic continuity is difficult to sustain.
- Lacking consistent spokespersons, the Section cannot relate as effectively as possible to other community organizations and the media.

An executive director will not substitute for volunteer leadership. An executive director will build an environment where volunteers want to lead.

THE BURNOUT FACTOR

Over the past decade, as leaders became increasingly scarce, the same women time and again stepped up to the plate. Some burned out. Thankfully, a core of dedicated volunteers remain at the helm, but the Section realizes that this is not conducive to healthy growth and creativity.

There is reason to believe that the tide is slowly turning. The Section has recently benefited from an influx of women whose energy, business skills and positive attitudes about volunteerism are fueling renewed excitement. Empty nesters and retirees are looking for ways to meet new people and give back to their community. Younger women, like Paulette Giarratana, are “timing out” of professional careers to stay home to raise children.

“I got involved in NCJW,” says Giarratana, “because it fulfills my need to do something for the community and I enjoy working with other women.”

Giarratana serves on the executive committee as corporate secretary. This year, she will chair the Stay-at-Home Ball fund raiser and is excited about helping the Section develop its new gun control initiative.

Women like Giarratana seek organized and professional volunteer experiences that are organized and professional looking. They want career development and training. They want to feel cared about and appreciated. Most of all, they want their work to be meaningful.

The challenge ahead for NCJW is to reach out to these women and place them wisely:

- To carefully match assignments to their interests and skills.
- To regularly thank and recognize them for their efforts.
- To provide them with the office support they need to do the job well.
- To avoid asking too much of the same people.

A key charge for the executive director will be to ensure that these fundamentals of sound volunteer management are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Section struggles – like many grassroots nonprofit organizations – to raise funds to meet its annual budget. At the same time, the Section is obligated to provide “program support” to its national offices in Washington, D.C., and New York City. Program support enables the national organization to:

- Monitor issues

- Develop national programs
- Support a network of advocates
- Inform and educate legislators, business and media
- Testify before congressional committees
- Convene and participate in national coalitions
- Support programs in Israel
- Conduct research, publish and maintain a website
- Develop leaders through Washington Institute, national conventions, leadership conferences and regional events.
- Provide technical assistance to sections

National NCJW sets the amount of program support each section must contribute according to a formula based on section size. There are ___ NCJW sections throughout the United States. The Greater Kansas City section, with 900 members, is one of ___ considered “large” sections. Sections with more than 1,000 members are considered “large large.” The Section’s 2000 national support obligation is \$40,500, which represented 31percent of its \$129,846 budget for the year.

Suffice it to say that there are differences of opinion among Section members as to whether this level of program support is worthwhile. For now, the Section remains committed to making every effort to meet this obligation.

Still, in the absence of professionalized fund raising, this will become increasingly difficult. Here’s why:

- Section dues (\$36/year) cover only 11 percent of the Section’s \$129,846 budget for 2000.
- More than 520 members have opted for Life Membership for a one-time fee of \$350. Unfortunately, many life members no longer contribute on an annual basis.
- Most members – including board members – are reluctant to fund raise. This results in a lack of capacity to write grants and strategically cultivate donors and prospects.
- Competition for dollars has never been tougher.

The executive director will be expected to oversee all fund raising, budgeting and financial management of the Section.

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

“When I got married 42 years ago, you signed your marriage certificate and you wrote out a check for NJCW,” says Alayne Mooney, 1993-1995 Section president. “This was an organization that people stood in line to serve on the board.”

Few may be standing in line now, but there are many – like Jewish Heritage Foundation Executive Director Steve Israelite – who still believe that the image of days past can and should be melded to the future.

“If NCJW can get their membership behind a vision – like the group that developed the CASA Project – it can be the shining example in the Jewish community for quality innovative and effective social service programs that it once was,” said Israelite. “As Jewish institutions move to the south, NCJW could go a long way toward maintaining a Jewish presence in Kansas City, which to me is vital because the synagogues are no longer doing it.”

“But,” continues Israelite, “they need a paid staff person to do that. Total volunteer organizations are not as effective.”

An executive director will strengthen the Section’s relationship to our larger community. An effective executive director will position the Section to:

- Demonstrate to funders that NCJW is a well-managed organization producing worthwhile programs that benefit the entire community.
- Build relationships with other organizations and the media that enhance Section involvement in the community on a continual basis, without interruption as elected officers change.
- Ensure that the Section has a seat at the table where important issues in the Jewish and general communities are discussed.
- Nurture collaborations that leverage Section resources.
- Produce important community service projects.
- Advocate and educate on issues of importance.

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toward maintaining a Jewish presence in Kansas City, which to me is vital because the synagogues are no longer doing it.

Steve Israelite
Executive Director
Jewish Heritage Foundation

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

The Greater Kansas City Section of NCJW – like most sections across the country – has relied totally for most of its 106 years on volunteers. But the Kansas City Section is not the first to recognize the need to change.

Of the 34 sections across the country surveyed by Merle Cole, 1998-99 co-president, eight have hired executive directors, most within the last three to five years. Another eight of the sections surveyed have administrators or office managers and three have secretaries.

Like Junior Leagues, professional associations and many grassroots nonprofit organizations, NCJW sections find themselves in need of a bridge to help move them realize their action plans. For most, that bridge is staff.

“I believe a good executive director can help the Section in several ways,” said Rosenwasser, who helped guide development of the Action Plan. “A director can keep them focused. Guide volunteers. Encourage transition to a policy-making board. Cultivate membership and leadership. And say, ‘Now what? Where do we go next? And what leg work can I do to help?’”

There are, indeed, some Section members who are not convinced that hiring a full-time executive director is the correct strategy. First and foremost, they are concerned about the cost. Some fear that professionalization will foster the loss of a volunteer culture where women work together as equals for the greater good.

“The fact is,” says Rosenwasser, “that even with an executive director, “it’s going to have to be a partnership between board and staff. Volunteers are still going to have to do an awful lot.”

“We’re the only Jewish women’s organization that is as involved in community service,” says Ellen Dalen, 2000-2001 president-elect. “Our volunteers get out in the community and actually change lives. I believe an executive director will cultivate that volunteer culture.”

The fact is that even with an executive director, it’s going to have to be a partnership between board and staff. Volunteers are still going to have to do an awful lot.

Laurie Rosenwasser
Former Program Officer
Jewish Heritage Foundation

THE ACTION PLAN

The following draft Action Plan, developed by the Section with assistance from the Jewish Heritage Foundation and approved by the board of directors, will be modified in accordance with feedback provided by members over the next several months.

The executive director hired as a result of the Bridge to the Future campaign will be responsible for overseeing the implementation, management and evaluation of this plan under the auspices of volunteer leadership.

Community Service

- Continue ongoing community service projects
 - Hello Israel
 - Parties for the Blind
 - Scholarships
 - Odd Potato
- Domestic Violence
 - Continue involvement with Silent Witness program.
 - Continue involvement with SAFEHOME Jewish Outreach program.
- Gun Control
 - Participate in statewide campaign leading to passage of a handgun bill.
 - Identify and evaluate all existing state level gun control laws.
 - Ascertain plans and programs of national gun control organizations.
 - Complete strategic agreements with organizations throughout Kansas, including Jewish women's organizations, for legislation.
 - Educate and raise awareness of gun violence throughout Kansas through a visible community activity in conjunction with partner organizations.
- Child Care
 - Adopt a child care related community service project
 - Study need
 - Study existing programming
 - Study models from the community and the country
 - Develop partnerships and appropriate KC plan

Advocacy

- Promote the Vote
 - Coordinate a luncheon at the Hallbrook Country Club
 - Coordinate a fall forum with Mainstream Coalition/JCRB
 - Involve non-member voters in the 2000 elections through "Promote the Vote"

- Domestic Violence
 - In conjunction with SAFEHOME, educate persons in Greater Kansas City about domestic violence through a community education program.
- Continue Ongoing Advocacy
 - Reproductive rights
 - Separation of church and state
 - Other national issues as they arise

Membership/Programming

- Involve members who are not presently involved in NCJW programs, activities, community service and advocacy projects.
- Engage members in new NCJW activities and provide a new entry point into the organization through the establishment of a minimum of three new social groups.
- Solicit members' input into the Action Plan.
- Sponsor a minimum of two large membership events.

Administrative

- Explore the opportunity for childcare at every organizational event.
- Develop and propose a new leadership structure to membership.
- Formulate an Advisory Board.
- Hire and train an Executive Director
- Evaluate current community service projects and restructure as appropriate.
- Expand fund-raising opportunities.
- Become more fiscally responsible.
- Ensure standing committees operate on ongoing basis.
- Establish criteria for submission and edition of the Bulletin.
- Continue to communicate effectively with membership and community.
- Publish and disseminate an update during Bulletin interim months.

I was in the first Jackson County CASA training class. CASA was my hot button. There are a lot of volunteers out there, and we need to hit their hot buttons. But a volunteer president and volunteer board can't do it alone anymore. Too many of us have our plates full.

Betty Barnett
 Past Board Member & Long-Time Volunteer
 Former Chair, Johnson County CASA

ABOUT YOUR CONTRIBUTION

The Greater Kansas City Section of NCJW is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit tax-exempt organization that depends on private philanthropy.

The Section receives charitable contributions and bequests primarily from members. Local businesses and foundations also support the Section through grants, sponsorships and advertising.

The Bridge to the Future campaign seeks to raise \$_____ by _____ to cover salary and benefits for an executive director for ____ years.

The Section would be happy to work with you to arrange a charitable contribution that best meets your personal and financial goals. There are several ways to make a gift. Depending on how much and in what form you give, you can realize financial benefits from your gift in the form of current income tax savings, future estate tax savings and possibly even current income.

Because NCJW is tax-exempt, in some instances, your gift is worth almost twice as much to the Section as it costs you to give it!

You have several giving options to consider:

- **Cash** – The simplest and most common type of gift that is tax deductible.
- **Pledges** – Pledges provide the flexibility to extend your gift and its tax benefits over an extended period of time up to ____ years.
- **Securities and Real Estate** – Appreciated assets such as securities or real estate are popular alternatives to cash donations and can provide even greater tax benefits. Gifts of long-term appreciated property, which are deductible at their full fair-market value and not subject to capital gains tax, generate the greatest tax benefits.
- **Personal Property** – Gifts of art, rare books and collectibles also qualify for deductions. If the property has been held long-term and is used to further the Section's mission or can be converted to cash within IRS guidelines, you may also receive a charitable deduction.
- **Planned Giving** – You may wish to consider a life income plan, a gift of life insurance, a bequest or other planned giving approach that provides valuable support while managing your finances effectively.

LIKE OUR MOTHERS BEFORE US

More than a century ago, the Greater Kansas City Section of NCJW led the way nationally in providing a voice for Jewish women to take stands on important issues and channeling their drive to give back to the community.

Through the decades, Greater Kansas City Section of NCJW piloted cutting-edge programs, winning attention, admiration and confidence while providing critical services:

- Services for the blind
- Scholarships
- Hot lunches
- Refugee resettlement
- Education for handicapped and disadvantaged children
- Child care
- Reproductive rights
- Child abuse
- Domestic violence

Today, the Greater Kansas Section of NCJW stands at a crossroads. Like our mothers and grandmothers before us...

- We must not shy away from controversy.
- We must give generously on behalf of organizations and causes that we, as women, know matter the most.
- We must honor our progressive tradition by changing with the times.

Our community needs to secure the oldest Jewish women's organization for future generations to come. The time is now. The bridge to the future is clear. Let us build it together.