

# Inside JEVS

Vol. 6 | Fall 2005

## Transitioning From School to Work

### Employment Rates After High School

**63%** Youth in the general population

**43%** Youth with disabilities

**70%** Youth with disabilities  
*identified employment  
as a goal* after high school

Source: "After High School: A First Look at the Postschool Experiences of Youth with Disabilities." National Longitudinal Transition Study 2. April 2005.

### Old School Barriers, Real World Challenges: Our Youth and the Workforce

Accessing the workforce is about more than just obtaining a job. It's about helping individuals find their own niche. To do so requires breaking down the philosophy of "can't" surrounding job creation and workforce development for people with disabilities and fostering opportunities for professional growth. Data has shown that compared with students of the

general population, students with disabilities are less likely to gain employment after they exit school.

Employment profoundly affects social and emotional well-being, in addition to financial well-being. Employment also positively impacts the economy and fiscal well-being of federal, state and local governments. When people work, everyone benefits. For most though, pursuing a career isn't easy. It requires effort and can seem especially difficult for youth who haven't been previously employed.

(Full story continues on p.2)

## People Helping People

As a human services agency, it is natural for JEVS to offer a training program for those who want to become professionals in the human services field. In August, the Pa. Department of Education approved such a program to be taught at JEVS' **Orleans Technical Institute**. The school will launch the new human services training program in early 2006, upon accreditation approval from the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology.

The program will teach the skills required to work in numerous areas of the diversified "helping field." Students will gain knowledge of basic counseling skills, case management methods and effective intervention strategies. They will also learn how to work with a wide array of populations, including disabilities, welfare, homeless, disadvantaged youth, addicts, elderly, ex-offenders, refugees and HIV/AIDS.

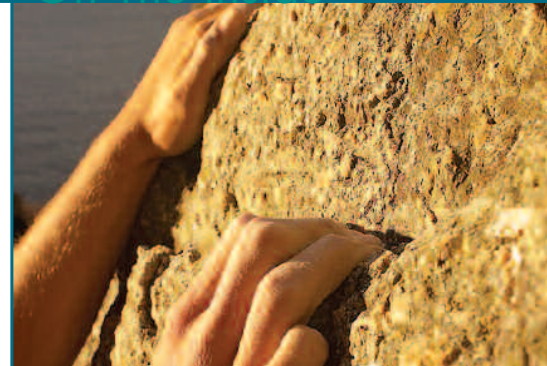
Courses will provide insight on ethics, advocacy, family dynamics and diversity, as well as research and job development techniques.

One goal of the human services program is to prepare people to enter the field with a high level of skill and experience. Therefore, students will take field trips, participate in internships, and receive a diploma upon program completion. The new training program was reviewed and applauded by several local human services agencies, which will then serve as future employers of program graduates.

The curriculum of the human services program is an expansion of a human service aide course offered three years ago at Orleans Tech to train direct care workers under a one-year grant from the Governor's Critical Jobs Training Act.

For more information  
Orleans Technical Institute • 215.728.4725

## On The Inside



Reaching the at-risk p.3



A fitting award p.6

## The Next Step

JEVS recently received funding to partner with the School District of Philadelphia on a School-to-Work transition program called STUDENTS' VOICE (Students' Vocational Opportunities Initiative and Career Education).

STUDENTS' VOICE will provide customized, pre-vocational training in school and in the community to youth with disabilities at Northeast High School. This program will divide each day's focus. Academic study will occur in the morning; pre-vocational curriculum and school- or community-based work experience will occur in the afternoon. Parents, local businesses, and support and advocacy organizations will partner to create successful community transitions and strengthen workforce development opportunities for students. This collaboration will play a critical role in the program's ultimate goal: placing and supporting youth in competitive employment.

Pre-vocational instruction coupled with in-school and community-based work experiences prior to exiting high school are crucial components to every student's success. Moreover, the personalized focus of STUDENTS' VOICE will increase skill levels and empower each student through meaningful experiences and recognition of their professional accomplishments.

(Continued from p.1)

### School to Work

Career counseling, training and placement services provide critical direction and support to students seeking employment or furthering their education. However, gaps in such services along with the traditional focus on college-bound students prohibit entrance into the workforce. Students with disabilities are disproportionately affected by these issues.

#### The Groundwork

In 1994, to help students enter the workforce, the federal government adopted the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) as public law. STWOA identified three points of focus: (1) school-based learning through career awareness, exploration and counseling; (2) work-based learning through internships and summer jobs, job shadowing, workplace mentoring, and community service; and (3) connecting activities through a series of learning experiences integrated with classroom studies.<sup>1</sup>

STWOA functioned as the stepping stone for School-to-Work transition efforts, and in 2001 the legislation expired. When legislation ended, advocates were concerned that programs would end as well. However, this was the beginning of a paradigm shift and program redesign at the federal level.

#### A New Vision

In line with schools integrating classroom and community experiences, the focus of School-to-Work began shifting to partnership and interagency cooperation. "The principles of School-to-Work are embedded in a number of laws and parts of laws," acknowledged Beth Brinly, workforce program unit chief at U.S. Department of Labor and former education program specialist at U.S. Department of Education. Instead of funding programs separately, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education have

collaborated to create the New Youth Vision. This interagency approach to serving young people strives to develop the young workforce comprehensively.

#### Walking the Walk

JEVS is taking its own steps to put School-to-Work concepts into practice. Ilene King, director of business development and marketing for **JEVS Work and Recovery Services**, formed and now leads the School-to-Work Coalition at JEVS. The Coalition began in August 2005 in response to funding from Pennsylvania's State Office of Mental Retardation to provide follow-along services for youth with disabilities. Members represent Philadelphia's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, State and County Offices of Mental Retardation, School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania CareerLink, Pennsylvania Protection & Advocacy, Penn State and Temple University.

The Coalition's mission is to develop a standard for best practices for school-aged youth with disabilities transitioning into the workforce. As the coalition grows, its hope is to approach School-to-Work transitioning proactively instead of reactively, and in doing so will serve as a "powerful vehicle as we move forward with School-to-Work efforts," said King. Critical to success is a change in practice and ideology. Providers, schools, employers, parents and advocates must all work together to understand the value of a School-to-Work program, the quality of training, and the benefit to all of hiring program graduates. "Everyone has a place in the community," says King, "it is our job and responsibility to help them find it."

For more information

JEVS School-to-Work Coalition • 267.808.3454

1 - "How Psychology Can Contribute To The School-to-Work Opportunities Movement." American Psychological Association's School to Work Taskforce. 2001.

# Serving Jews at Risk

## Self-Sufficiency Initiatives Deliver Vital Services

Nationally, a fifth of all Jewish households are low income. In the Greater Philadelphia area alone this accounts for 57,000 people or 24 percent of the region's Jewish community.<sup>1</sup> "Considering how small the Jewish population is, these numbers are disconcerting," observed Penny Kardon, program director of JEVS Career Strategies.

In response to these alarming statistics, the Jewish Family and Children's Service (JFCS), in 1998, conducted a further analysis of the region's low-income and at-risk Jews, including seniors, immigrants, and those who are under- and un-employed. These individuals are often faced with such conditions as living on the brink of homelessness and lack of access to public transportation and child care.

"After JFCS conducted the study, Federation decided that the next step was to convene the local Jewish social service agencies and look at additional ways that the agencies can work together to help the Jewish poor," said David Rosenberg, director of the Center for Social Responsibility of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

## What's Being Done?

The Federation funds a number of targeted initiatives to bring a full spectrum of employment-related services to at-risk Jews at no charge. Services are provided through JEVS Career Strategies, which offers comprehensive career management services as well as a variety of career-related workshops in surrounding communities, synagogues and local Jewish Community Centers.

For instance, Career Strategies' Northeast Initiatives program provides job placement services for immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Started in 1999, the program serves approximately 225 individuals per year. Over the past six years, more than 500 participants have found employment.

The Helping Hands program provides career guidance, skills assessment, job placement and case management services to Jews at risk. Begun in 2004 as a pilot, Helping Hands is now in its second year. When the program was initiated it served only residents of Northeast Philadelphia, but now is open to Jews living in the Delaware Valley. "This recognizes that Jews at risk are everywhere," emphasized Kardon.

Helping Hands, funded by the Federation's Center for Social Responsibility, is a partnership between JEVS and JFCS. Federation Early Learning Services, Jewish Community Centers, and HIAS and Council Migration Service of Philadelphia are collaborators with JEVS and JFCS on this program. "We take a team approach to the client," said Kardon, "because the only way to make people self-sufficient is to break the cycle."

Working for Success, initiated in 2004, addresses the specific needs of Jewish women who are under- and un-employed and provides them with career counseling and job placement services. This is the second JEVS program funded by Women of Vision, a committee of Federation lay persons. Working for Success received second-year funding from the Hettie Ann Weideman Endowment Fund and Juliet Guttler Fund of the Federation.

JEVS continues to work with the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia to raise support for these vital programs in the Jewish community.

For more information  
JEVS Career Strategies • 215.854.1874

# Greater Philadelphia's Jews at Risk<sup>1</sup>

15,200

are living on incomes below the federal poverty guidelines

65%

of households with incomes below the federal poverty guidelines live in Northeast Philadelphia

The majority

of the region's low-income Jewish households are NOT eligible for public benefits

# The Inside Track

For more information Development Department • 215.854.1827 • On-line donation form at [www.jevs.org/supportjev.aspx](http://www.jevs.org/supportjev.aspx)

## Strictly Business

Thanks to our sponsors and supporters, this year's Strictly Business event raised more than \$137,000. Proceeds from Strictly Business fund scholarships to JEVs' vocational assessment, job readiness, skills training and career management services for individuals in need.



Representatives from Corporate Express, this year's Strictly Business Event Sponsor.



CBS 3's Larry Mendte, event emcee for the fifth year in a row, presented the **JEVS Inspiration Award** to Carmen Castilean, a hard-working client from JEVs Community Job Service.



Former Board Chair Frank Ash, Board Chair and Strictly Business Event Committee Chair Benjamin Zuckerman, JEVs President & CEO Jay Spector, Vanguard Chairman & CEO John Brennan (Event Keynote Speaker), and Former Board Chair Ned Kaplin.



Mark Stewart and Juanita Gomez of JEVs' Retail Skills Center with Gaylene Gordon (center) of The Home Depot/King of Prussia, recipient of the **JEVS Workplace Solutions Award** for its commitment to the training, promotion and wellbeing of its employees.



Honeywell Business Solutions received the **JEVS Business Leadership Award** because of its 10-year partnership with JEVs' Orleans Technical Institute.



Chief Operating Officer of JEVs Employment & Training programs Gail Zukerman with Mary Moorhouse, Sarah Conrad and Kathy Mannes of the National Retail Federation Foundation, winner of the **JEVS Economic & Workforce Development Award** for its relationship with JEVs in raising the customer service standards of the sales and service industry.

# Strictly Business Sponsors

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## Donor Profile

Since Strictly Business' inception in 1999, Bob Cohen, former board member and current council member at JEVS, has helped raise nearly \$45,000 to support needs-based scholarships for motivated adults wishing to attend a JEVS job training or skills assessment program.

"For me, JEVS represents the most basic ideas of helping other human beings," said Cohen, President of Acme Corrugated Box Company. "Not just by helping them learn a trade or a craft, but giving people the skills to live a full and productive life. At the recent Strictly Business luncheon, I was reminded once again of the 'noble purpose' served by this wonderful organization."

Not only does Cohen support the event personally, he has encouraged his friends and business acquaintances to do the same.

"Bob introduced us to JEVS in 2002, by simply asking us to consider being an event contributor," said Mike Stepnowski, President of Stepnowski Bros. Inc., General Contractors. "Strictly Business' presentation of JEVS programs and achievements was so profoundly moving that so many people left the event gratified to have supported such a proficient and compassionate organization. I am thankful to Bob that I was able to be one of those people."

Cohen's support of this event and his ability to get others to contribute has helped JEVS to advance its mission of helping people help themselves.

# Ways to Give

A donation to JEVS in memory or in honor of a loved one is a special and lasting tribute to those cherished and respected. Your gift not only expresses your deep regard for your loved one or friend, it also helps JEVS advance our mission of creating an environment where those who can, work; each who will, achieves; all who care, serve.

One of the most thoughtful ways to honor a person is to link his or her

name to a gift that will help JEVS continue to provide vital services to our clients.

JEVS has created coupons that you can use when making a gift. If you would like a coupon book mailed to you, please contact the Development Department at 215-854-1827.

An appropriate acknowledgement will be sent as directed without disclosing the amount unless otherwise requested.

The official registration and financial information of the Jewish Employment and Vocational Service may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

# One Size Doesn't Fit All

## At 45, Getting First Job Suits Him Just Right

The light blue plastic nub stands for Large; XL is black. Pant hangers get a different set of colorful numbered nubs....

The process is tedious and time-consuming—getting shipments of clothing, separating items by size, putting them on hangers, then matching up the correct sizer nub. But Carmen Castilean embraces the responsibility with untiring spirit. Getting paid to do this, he says, is his “proudest accomplishment.”

The South Philadelphia native has spent most of his adult life managing his mental illness. Carmen focused his energy on one hurdle at a time: socializing, living independently, building self-confidence, and now earning a paycheck for the first time in his life at age 45.

In recognition of these important milestones, the Ross department store employee was presented the “JEVS Inspiration Award” at the organization’s annual Strictly Business event in November. With his parents, brother and boss beaming over this achievement, an overwhelmed Carmen took the stage to a standing ovation.

“I feel like I’m a celebrity,” he said. “My family is proud. My father was crying tears of joy. I put my award in the living room on the entertainment system where I can see it every day.”

### Aisle 1: Journey to Work

Carmen worked toward his career goals with help from JEVS’ supported employment program, **Community Job Service**, a form of vocational rehabilitation for individuals with mental illness. Here participants learn the life skills necessary for getting and keeping a job and get a real feel for the workplace by volunteering in a number of organizations across the city. When the participant demonstrates job readiness, the program transitions him/her into employment that provides work at competitive wages, offers the opportunity to work with non-disabled co-workers, and ensures ongoing post-placement support.

With the help from JEVS, Carmen is leading a productive, independent life. He is using public transportation, following a schedule, and meeting his responsibilities at work. But the mission of getting his first paying job at Ross wasn’t without obstacles, according to JEVS instructor Jackie Starr, who has worked with Carmen since 2000.

“Work keeps your mind occupied. I don’t worry about a thing. I like having a paycheck. I feel really good and proud of myself.”

– Carmen Castilean



Carmen at work with job coach, Isaac Darby, and at Strictly Business with his family, Dominic, Carmen Sr. and Catherine

# The Inside Scoop

"Carmen was shy, unsure of himself and the way others acted toward him," said Starr. "With a lot of one-on-one work, he overcame his fears, and now he's out there with thousands of customers interacting and doing his job well."

## Aisle 2: Work/Life Balance

Those around Carmen describe him as easy-going, sweet, fun and caring. In addition, his eagerness and can-do attitude have earned the respect of his boss and co-workers.

"We all understand that Carmen had challenges," said Reggie Johnson, store manager of the Center City Ross store. "As we witness Carmen coming into work on time, he's out there every day exemplifying what we want: dedication and a good work ethic."

When the hard-working Carmen is not at work, you may find him at his West Philadelphia apartment, visiting his family, food shopping, or bowling with his friends—his favorite pastime. He's very active in the community. He's also put his newfound confidence to good use as a role model and mentor at JEVS, where he shares his experiences with other clients about work and the added advantages that it brings to one's life.

For more information

JEVS Community Job Service • 215.629.5627



## Grant Award

The Citizens Bank Foundation has announced a new initiative entitled "Citizens Community Bridge" to assist low- and moderate-income families in the Greater Philadelphia region. The Foundation donated \$250,000 to the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia to support new initiatives, as well as the expansion of existing programs. The funds will be distributed by the Jewish Federation, over two years, to selected Jewish agencies.

As one of the beneficiaries of the grant, JEVS will receive \$65,000 for vocational scholarships to be used for students at JEVS' **Orleans Technical Institute**. The scholarships will be granted to individuals in need of vocational training.

The Citizens Bank Foundation's support is granted with the goal of "building a bridge to a brighter community." By receiving intensive skills training, students at Orleans Tech will be better positioned to find and retain employment in a competitive job market. This employment is a vital component for a future in which a graduate can be a contributing force to building the brighter community that the Citizens Bank Foundation envisions.

For more information • 215.728.4712

## News Briefs

### Project PROMote Comes to Successful Completion

JEVS **Project PROMote**, a job retention, career advancement and rapid re-employment program, has come to a close. Project PROMote, a program of the JEVS Welfare-to-Work Department, provided career counseling and job development to 600 customers over the course of six years. Those served by the program were employed on a full- or part-time basis. A key factor in the success of the program was the personalized tailoring of services for each participant. The PROMote team provided support for housing, career training, child care, family concerns, and clinical assistance as well as individualized assistance in other areas. Funded by the Pa. Department of Public Welfare, the program ended as a result of the state pursuing new directions in job retention services.

For more information • 215.854.1875

### Welfare-to-Work Begins Work Plus

JEVS is using its Vocational Research Institute assessment tool, CareerScope, in its new welfare-to-work program **Work Plus**. This program will provide assessment services for 500 individuals who have been receiving welfare benefits for five years and, partly due to their involvement in this program, are eligible for extended TANF benefits. JEVS Welfare-to-Work Department is the subcontractor to Ross Learning, Inc., who is receiving funding for this project from the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation. Qualified individuals will receive a comprehensive assessment including educational, vocational, barrier identification and a psycho-social assessment. After this two-week assessment is completed, Work Plus vocational rehabilitation counselors will develop customized reports, and outline the next steps and career recommendations for Ross Learning, Inc.

For more information • [workplus@jevs.org](mailto:workplus@jevs.org) or 215.854.1875

1845 Walnut Street, 7th floor  
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JEVS provides a broad range of services, from health and rehabilitation to skills training and job placement, that help people from all walks of life across the Greater Philadelphia community achieve their personal and employment goals.

Helping People Help Themselves Since 1941  
Learn more at [www.jevs.org](http://www.jevs.org)

Inside JEVS is produced by the JEVS Communications and Public Affairs Dept.  
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Inside JEVS is the winner of the 2003 Apex Award for Publication Excellence

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## On The Cover



Transitioning From School to Work  
Old School Barriers, Real World Challenges:  
Our Youth and the Workforce



## From The Inside Out

Imagine that you are an 18-year-old wanting to work or continue on to college after high school. Now imagine that you are unable to find the supports you need or find few adults—with the possible exception of your parents—who share your hopes and aspirations. You watch from the sidelines as your friends apply for jobs, choose from among technical schools or apply to colleges.

This is the frustrating situation that thousands of youth with disabilities face each year. As you will read in our cover article, the psychological and social impact—not to mention the economics of ignoring a potentially vital untapped workforce—make this situation grave. We envision a vocational training program that targets students during the course of their education and includes a life skills and prevocational curriculum, a community-based instruction program and competitive employment. Our challenge is to identify the best practices and mobilize the resources to ensure that *truly* no child is left behind.

Jay Spector • JEVS President & CEO