celebrate jfs

100 years of solving problems and helping families

We're having a party! Thursday, October 6, 5:30 pm. We invite you to celebrate with us as we honor a major milestone for JFS –100 years of solving problems and helping families in Western Massachusetts. For over a century, JFS has responded to the needs of the Jewish community and the community-at-large. The Centennial Celebration will be held at the beautiful Carriage House at the Barney Estate in Forest Park, Springfield. Our special honorees will be Martin and Marian Broder, in recognition of their many contributions to JFS and the greater Springfield community. We will also be recognizing our Past Presidents for their years of service.

Visit celebrateJFS.org for sponsorship opportunities and tickets.

The early years: A focus on relief

1887

The seeds for the Jewish Family Service were planted when Louis Rittenberg opened a dry goods store in Springfield. He helped Jews by giving them goods on credit to sell. These peddlers soon became successful, philanthropic members of community. In **1898**, the Hebrew Ladies Relief Association was founded. It was organized by volunteers and established to "help the sick and unfortunate."

In **1915**, we incorporated as United Hebrew Charities with an annual budget of $3,600 and had 200 members. UHC assisted needy Jewish families with unexpected expenses including food and shelter.

1920s

In **1927**, we incorporated as Jewish Social Services Bureau to reflect a new mission to "conserve, develop and foster normal and wholesome family life." First social worker hired.

1930s

The Jewish Social Services Bureau's budget increased to $9,675. Aid provided to 1,966 individuals for unemployment relief during the Depression.

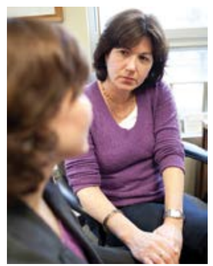
A shift from relief to service work

1940s

Located on Main Street in Springfield where we provided wartime services to families and post-war resettlement. In **1946**, with a budget of $9,619, we helped 134 families. Services included food and shelter for "transients," child care and emergency aid. We established our first formal resettlement program. We had three paid staff: Executive Secretary Jessie Josolowitz, a caseworker and an office secretary.

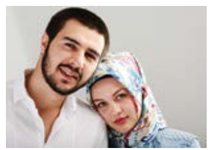
1950s

In **1951**, our annual budget grew to $12,646. Office moved to Mill Street in Springfield where two staff members, Executive Director Sarah Crovitz and a social worker provided counseling and adoption services focused on the Jewish community.



1960s

We moved to Pine Street and our programs included family casework, economic & employment aid, and resettlement. Our only staff member was Executive Director Lucille Stein.

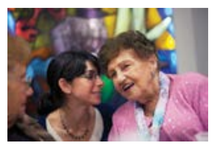


From passive referral program to active helping agency

1970s

In **1970**, we changed our name to Jewish Family Service of Greater Springfield, Inc. We received $28,650 from United Way and the Jewish Federation of Western Mass to serve 114 families. Our core programs were homemaker services, camperships, and emergency financial assistance. We established a licensed adoption program.

We moved back to Mill Street and started resettling the first modern wave of Russian Jews coming to Springfield. Our by-laws were updated to reflect other JFS agencies in the nation. We hired Arnold Nash as the Executive Director and added a new social worker and several graduate students.



1980s

In **1981**, we served 1,124 clients. In **1984**, we began an Elderly Guardianship Program under Executive Director Michael Leavitt. In **1985**, under the leadership of Dr. Arthur Weidman, we placed five children through our adoption program and provided over 4,257 hours of counseling services. In **1987**, we moved our Main office to 15 Lenox Street in Springfield.

Comprehensive non-sectarian service agency

1990s

In **1990**, we resettled 70 former Soviet Jewish émigrés. We ran Chesed House, a residential program for people with AIDS for several years. In **1994**, our budget was $438,189 with $50,245 in surplus. Our core programs included Resettlement, Older Adult, Adoption, and Child & Family Counseling. In **1995**, under the leadership of Executive Director Susan Broh, we celebrated our 80th Anniversary.

2000s

JFS modestly entered the 21st century with 7 employees and a budget of $480,000 with $80,000 deficit. In **2001**, we hired a new CEO, Robert Marmor. He worked to expand the resettlement program to aid non-Jewish refugees such as the Somali Bantu. In **2002**, we changed our name change to Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts. By the end of **2005**, our budget grew to $1.45 million. We were nationally accredited and opened offices in Pittsfield and Northampton. We were named the premier Jewish agency in the country for resettling non-traditional refugees. We expanded counseling to serve 1,477 clients. In **2011**, our budget was $2.3 million. We had 4 offices, 4 core programs and 40 employees. We opened an office on the Grinspoon Jewish Campus and expanded our Jewish programs to serve over 2,000 people. In **2015**, with a $2.9 million budget and almost 50 employees, new CEO Maxine Stein led JFS in service to over 5,000 people.

jewish family service of western massachusetts 15 lenox street, springfield, ma 01108 413.737.2601 celebrateJFS.org