

Jewish Social Services

Thoughts From Adrienne

By Adrienne Rosenberg
JSS Director

There are three usual questions people ask each other upon first meeting: 1) What is your name? 2) Where do you live? and 3) What do you do? This latter question, of course, means "what is your occupation?" The answer carries with it status, a sense of identity, and the approximate amount of money a person earns. We Jews have placed ranking, pride and importance on someone's occupation ("My son or daughter, the doctor or lawyer, etc.").

For most people, one's career or job is a great part of their identity. Males, particularly, in our society have a history of the importance of their role in the work force. Now with more women employed, this is fast becoming a shared role for both sexes. In fact, we often see articles or television programs where homemakers complain they are not accorded much status in our society because they lack earning power. Therefore, imagine the feelings of someone who has been laid off from his/her job, is unable to find work, or is dissatisfied with his/her job, especially if this continues for some time. Not only are there the financial concerns, but one's identity and status are affected. One's self-worth is often at state, especially if one has achieved in the past a position that made one feel successful. It is not uncommon for depression, frustration and feelings of rejection to occur, especially when job leads or interviews do not pan out. The sense that one is "overqualified" or "underqualified" for positions can be devastating to someone who has skills but finds they are specialized, unappealing to personnel departments, or nontransferable.

Jewish Social Services is not the first place most people come when they are unemployed. But when they do call, it is often with the thought that we are a placement agency and can "find them a job." In fact, our vocational component is often the most misunderstood but fre-

quently called about. This year alone, we have served 110 vocational clients at a time when the economy is supposedly going well overall.

The vocational component is designed to help provide those skills which help to do job search while people are between jobs. This includes resume preparation, interview skills, talking through the self-doubts and decisions about what type of job, where to look, and promoting support to both the individual and his/her family during this time of crisis. We provide job leads wherever possible; we can provide vocational testing; we live through the panic with people who face the problems of being unemployed and Jewish in a society which promotes materialism, status and beau-

ty. We are trained to look at those blindspots in people's personalities that may be causing them difficulty in seeking and holding jobs. We can work with people on these problems.

There is a fee connected to our vocational service, but we do not bill someone until after they have found a job, except for the vocational testing which is payable at the time of the service. The emphasis, however, is not on the fee but on the importance of this unique service to those who need and want it.

If we can be of help, please call Jewish Social Services at 366-5007.



Adopt-A-Grandparent

Do you wish you had grandchildren and family members in Charlotte? Do you miss sharing with a young family, especially on the Jewish holidays? If the answer to both of these questions is "yes", perhaps you would be interested in the Temple Israel Sisterhood's Adopt-A-Grandparent program, coordinated with Jewish Social Services.

There are several families who miss having grandparents in the area for their children. They desire to connect with seniors who want to have contact on a regular basis.

If you are interested in finding out more about this new program, please call Jewish Social Services at 366-5007.

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