

Developing Resources to Provide Services for Jewish Nazi Victims

Background

For over 50 years the Claims Conference has worked with the Jewish federation system in North America to provide social services to Nazi victims. In 2005, the Claims Conference made over \$20 million in institutional allocations for social services and emergency assistance grants to needy Nazi victims in over 100 agencies throughout North America from its Successor Organization as well as funds from the Looted Assets Class of the Swiss Banks settlement, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (ICHEIC) settlements, and the German and Austrian governments.

Federations have also made special efforts through their local system of agencies, organizations and religious institutions, most especially Jewish Family Service agencies, to provide services to those in need. Nevertheless, there are still unmet needs for Nazi victims. United Jewish Communities and the Claims Conference are in the process of working with the individual federations in developing additional resources so their agencies can better serve survivors. Federations have used a two-pronged approach, engaging in both private fundraising and public advocacy with state and local governments.

The federations of Cleveland, Miami and New York have developed fundraising campaigns for Nazi victims. In addition, Jewish federations in Florida, Michigan, New Jersey and New York have been successful in obtaining funds that allow them to expand services to Nazi victims.

The efforts of each community are summarized in the boxes below. The first section describes efforts in the area of philanthropy and the second section covers public advocacy.

Philanthropy

Cleveland

The Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland made a grant from its Endowment Fund to support subsidies for Holocaust survivors in need of assistance. The federation did not engage in a separate campaign or supplemental appeal and will not seek to do so in the future. Last spring, children of survivors made a public appeal to the community on behalf of the 1,800 survivors in Cleveland. The Cleveland Federation found that the needs of the 250-300 survivors who are regularly served by the community have grown and that their needs have been greater than the federation's ability to respond. This endowment was made to supplement the funds already given to the Jewish Family Service Association (JFSA) by the federation (unrestricted) in addition to the Claims Conference and restitution funds. Cleveland's JFSA delivers comprehensive services to Holocaust Survivors, including counseling and case management, personal care, social activities and help with reparation claims.

Miami

The Greater Miami Jewish Federation campaign was an effort of several key donors and leaders, including two of Miami's past federation presidents. These leaders made a personal commitment to ensure that Miami's local survivors' homecare assistance program never has a waiting list. They organized a large fundraising event, with the proceeds divided between survivor assistance and support of the local Holocaust memorial. The event was supplemented by a significant amount of personal fundraising and supplemental giving for survivor assistance programs, which continues to be ongoing. In addition, the federation has been steadily increasing its allocation to the program, which also receives a large share of its support from the Claims Conference.

New York

Over the last two years, UJA-Federation of New York has raised \$7.5 million for its campaign, the Community Initiative for Nazi-Victim Services. Ernie Michael is chairing the campaign and has been instrumental in leading their fundraising efforts to reach a goal of \$10 million. The federation has not established a deadline by which it wishes to reach this goal. Agencies in the greater New York area, including New York City, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island, use these funds for a variety of programs such as: social programs, cash assistance and transportation. There are 55,000 Holocaust survivors in the greater New York area, many of whom are concentrated in Brooklyn and Queens.

The federation carefully selects who they solicit in a methodical and low key approach. This includes individuals who already give to Holocaust causes; individuals who may have a connection, such as children of survivors; individuals who have private foundations that support elderly Jews but not necessarily Holocaust survivors; and local NY foundations. National foundations are hard to reach so they choose only local foundations to solicit.

In addition, the federation put together a brochure that outlines the purpose of the initiative and states the need for funding. While the flyer is useful, it is not the main tool used to persuade individuals to give. It has found the most effective way to compel individuals to contribute is by taking them on site visits so they can see firsthand how they can help. For example, donors can observe how one agency holds a social gathering at a coffee house for survivors, which includes food, music and a program.

Public Advocacy

Florida

For two consecutive years, the Florida state legislature has appropriated funds for the Holocaust Survivors Assistance Program in South Palm Beach County. State Representative Irving Slosberg and State Senator Ron Klein, both from Boca Raton, made the request on behalf of the Boca Raton Jewish Federation. In 2005, the Ruth Rales Jewish Family Service received \$100,000 for the program through the Palm Beach Area Agency on Aging, which was increased to \$200,000 in 2006. The program provides homecare, case management, counseling, food, socialization activities and transportation services for the 500 Nazi victims living in the area.

Michigan

Michigan State appropriations to its Department of Community Health include funds for multicultural groups, which benefit the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. In turn, the federation allocated \$20,000 of this budget line to the Jewish Home and Aging Services' Program for Holocaust Survivors and Families, which provides mental health services, weekly support groups and home visits to 2,000 Nazi victims living in the Detroit area.

New Jersey

The State of New Jersey gave \$400,000 to support needy Holocaust survivors through the programming of the state's 13 Jewish Family Service (JFS) agencies. The lobbying effort was supported by State Senator Byron Baer (D-Dist. 37). The grant was administrated by United Jewish Communities of MetroWest, which distributed the funds to the 13 JFSs according to the formula used for administrating funds from the Memorial Conference for that purpose (See chart below).

The funds expand the use of transportation to medical visits, home health aides, kosher meals-on-wheels, Café Europa, (a social coffee house program for survivors), and other services provided by Jewish family service agencies throughout the state. The survivor assistance program is open to any Jewish resident of New Jersey who lived under Nazi occupation in Europe between 1933 and 1945. The program offers assistance to survivors and their families coping with the lasting effects of Nazi persecution.

NJ Allocations Based on Current Formula

County	Percent	Amount
Atlantic	5.52%	\$22,080
Bergen	8.95%	\$35,800
Clifton	5.52%	\$22,080
Central	8.95%	\$35,800
Jersey City	4.29%	\$17,160
MetroWest	8.95%	\$35,800
NO. Middlesex	5.52%	\$22,080
Monmouth	8.95%	\$35,800
NO. Jersey	8.95%	\$35,800
Ocean	3.89%	\$15,560
Somerset	5.52%	\$22,080
SO. Middlesex	5.52%	\$22,080
Southern NJ	8.95%	\$35,800
Mercer	5.52%	\$22,080
Administrative Fee MetroWest	5.00%	\$20,000
Total	100.0%	\$400,000

New York

The New York City Council made a \$350,000 appropriation in fiscal year 2006 to its Department for the Aging for Services to Nazi Victims. This budget line item was the result of advocacy efforts by UJA Federation's Office of City and Public Affairs with individual City Council members. Selfhelp Community Services, which provides service to over 55,000 Nazi victims, is the main beneficiary of the grant. Its Nazi victim social services program provides case management, chore services, transportation, emergency assistance and information and referral services in the five boroughs of New York City and Nassau County.

Conclusion

UJC and the Claims Conference will work with federations to encourage these local efforts and can provide additional material regarding any of the programs described above.

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