

AJFCA VISTA Project 2015-2016

Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit (West Bloomfield, MI)

Year 1 Accomplishments: Conducted a community needs assessment by holding multiple town hall meetings with survivors and their children which resulted in a vast increase in requests for services, improving the reach of JFS in the community. Additionally the project was responsible for the development of an ongoing newsletter for Holocaust survivors and the creation of a training program for JFS staff.

Year 2 Goal: Expand the agency's capacity to respond to the needs of Holocaust Survivors by building on the lessons learned from the detailed community needs assessment conducted in year 1. Objectives include continuing outreach and education on available resources, creating a training system for professional, volunteer and family caregivers providing support for survivors, and developing sustainable and cost-efficient fundraising strategies to serve the needs of Survivors not provided for by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc.

VISTA Member: Michael Eisinger



Michael is a returning VISTA member at JFS Detroit. He completed his master's degree in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from West Chester University in West Chester, PA in 2014 where he was employed at the university as a media consultant in this area of study. Michael has been an invited lecturer to a number of conferences, seminars and symposiums on the subject of the Holocaust and genocide, most recently at the University of Giessen in Germany where he lectured on the Rwandan Genocide and its memorialization culture. Following the lecture he was invited to work on a PhD through the university, basing his studies on Metro-Detroit Holocaust Survivors.

Bet Tzedek (Los Angeles, CA)

Year 1 Accomplishments: Developed training manuals and processes, planned and implemented trainings for pro bono attorneys, and disseminated information on assisting Holocaust survivors with denials, reductions, or terminations of US government benefits resulting from the receipt of Holocaust reparations payments. Also conducted an assessment of the Holocaust Survivor Justice Network by speaking with Jewish social service agencies across the country.

Year 2 Goal: Expand Bet Tzedek's capacity to assist Holocaust survivors with a broader set of legal issues, including: (1) denials, reduction or termination of US government benefits; (2) elder law issues such as Elder Abuse Restraining Orders and Advance Life Planning; and (3) Holocaust reparations programs. The project aims to build capacity through organizing and conducting trainings in Los Angeles and across the country that prepare pro bono attorneys to represent Holocaust survivors, maintaining a registry of those trained pro bono attorneys and social workers, and building out Bet Tzedek's Holocaust Survivor Justice Network website.

VISTA Member: Anna Darr



Ms. Darr was admitted to the State Bar of California in December of 2009. Ms. Darr graduated from Purchase State University of New York with a BA in Political Science and was a recipient of the Best Senior Thesis Award. Ms. Darr graduated Magna cum Laude from Southwestern Law School in 2009. She was a recipient of the Paul W. Wildman Scholarship, Dean's List Scholarship, and the CALI Excellence for the Future Awards, Human Rights Law, Copyright Law, & Interviewing, Negotiating and Counseling. While attending law school, Ms. Darr was a Teacher's Assistant and Student Academic Counselor in the Academic Support Office.

Jewish Social Service Agency (Rockville, MD)

Year 1 Accomplishments: Identified services and resources available to Russian-speaking clients and developed programs and recruited volunteers to serve this population, created a new eye care program to provide free lenses to Holocaust survivors in partnership with 5 eye care centers in the Rockville area, developing a hearing aid program in partnership with Siemens and the University of Maryland, and developed and implemented home care training for the agency's home care staff on working with survivors.

Year 2 Goal: Build on the first year's initiative to maximize opportunities for the Former Soviet Union Russian-speaking survivor clients. The primary objectives include: to conduct a detailed assessment of survivor needs that can be addressed by volunteers; to create, identify and secure donors for smaller, localized, more focused socialization events within the Russian-speaking community; and to continue to build homecare aide trainings for JSSA's homecare agency Premier and other homecare agencies that are serving Holocaust survivors.

VISTA Member: Lauren Fedewa



Lauren recently graduated from the University of Maryland with a dual degree in History and Germanic Studies. She has a wealth of experience from interning with the Maryland General Assembly, the Museum of History Baden-Wurttemberg in Stuttgart, Germany, and several years

interning with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Through her work at the USHMM Lauren has developed a passion for working with the survivor community and is eager to use her academic training to help this worthy group.

Samost Jewish Family & Children's Service and the Goodwin Holocaust Museum and Education Center (Cherry Hill, NJ)

Year 1 Accomplishments: Provided ongoing coordination of socialization for Holocaust survivors and educational programs to increase community awareness of the history and needs of survivors, developed a homecare training program for a local Jewish nursing home, and received a grant for intergenerational programming. In addition the project is developing a program to connect volunteer families with isolated survivors.

Year 2 Goal: Build on the initiative of the first year, continuing to work on enhanced programming and community education for Holocaust Survivors and community members by building and maintaining best practices in providing services and programs to Holocaust survivors, expanding donor and volunteer bases, and developing and marketing fundraising efforts in the community in the Cherry Hill area. Additionally the project will aim to recruit volunteers to assist survivors by accompanying them to medical appointments and assisting with follow through with medical recommendations.

VISTA Member: Jordan Wohl



Jordan graduated from the University of Delaware in May, 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts and a major of psychology. He is currently applying to medical school and would like to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA so that he could give back to his community. He volunteered with the Jewish Federation's Bookmates Program, which has a mission to increase literacy rates in schools in Camden, New Jersey and "reaped the rewards" of helping others in his community.

UJA-Federation of New York (New York, NY)

Year 1 Accomplishments: Brought together key partners in the New York City community resulting in the creation of new socialization programs, volunteer opportunities to connect young adults and families with Holocaust survivors, and education events to teach community members and organizations about the needs of aging survivors in the New York area.

Year 2 Goal: Continue raising awareness and educating members of the New York community on the needs and challenges facing the large number of Holocaust survivors that live within the

region. Objectives include: create systems and strategies for mobilizing volunteers to address the needs of Holocaust survivors and to enhance the capacity of local agencies serving this population; to create tools and resources and develop and plan regular volunteer projects serving survivors that members of the community, including donors and other affinity groups, can be a part of; and to design site visits and other mechanisms for exposing community members to the needs and challenges facing survivors so as to raise awareness and by extension funds.

VISTA Member: Elizabeth Uretsky



Elizabeth Uretsky is a recent graduate of NYU and grew up in Los Angeles. While she has spent most of her college internships at law offices, she is very excited to have the opportunity to experience working in the nonprofit world with the Holocaust survivor population. She has taken many courses on the Holocaust in college and has a personal connection to the Holocaust as some of her family members are Holocaust survivors. She is bright, articulate, passionate and very motivated to take the VISTA position at UJA-Federation to new levels!

Ruth and Norman Rales Jewish Family Services (Boca Raton, FL)

Year 1 Accomplishments: Expanded the pro bono dental assistance program, created ongoing socialization opportunities for survivors, and ensured that the agency system is compatible with Electronic Health Reporting. The agency also partnered with the “From March to Miriam” program that matches Holocaust survivors with March alumni and students that are planning to participate in the March to strengthen ties between the older and younger generations.

Year 2 Goal: Continue to work to support socialization programming and expand the pro bono dental assistance program by further developing dentist participation, promoting the program, providing recognition of program participants, and streamlining client/provider connection to facilitate speed and ease of care. In addition, the VISTA project will build capacity to meet the need among survivors for simple legal services in their community by identifying survivors in need of services such Power of Attorney or wills and streamlining the client/provider connection.

VISTA Member: Amanda Jarvis



Amanda M. Jarvis is a graduate of Florida Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers, Florida. She has a degree in Communications/Public Relations and work experience in the non-profit area as a marketing coordinator. Amanda has a heartfelt commitment to volunteer and community services. She currently resides in Coral Springs, FL.

CJE SeniorLife (Chicago, IL)

Year 1 Accomplishments: Built program capacity and sustainability by creating a new database system for tracking new client requests and information, mapping and tracking community resources for survivors from multiple organizations in the community, and developing a volunteer training manual, all with a focus on identifying and meeting the needs of the large number of Russian-speaking survivors in the community.

Year 2 Goal: Work to build a vetted and trained volunteer corps in conjunction with partnering agencies and community organizations to assist Holocaust Community Services staff, engage with survivors at socialization events, conduct an assessment of community demographics and need, develop tools and approaches to enhance ongoing evaluation of the needs within the Chicago-area survivor population, and continue to improve current existing programs.

VISTA Member: Heather Klain



Heather Klain is a recent college graduate and an engaged human rights activist from Chicago. Her career goal is to work in the field of genocide prevention, and she approaches this endeavor with compassion and determination. She is eager to apply her knowledge and interests to our special population of Holocaust survivors, as she will be working with Holocaust Community Services at CJE SeniorLife to facilitate provision of services to survivors in the Chicagoland area.