"Acts of kindness are among those things that have no limit."

– Mishnah Peah 1:1
ISRAEL
ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIP
Former Soviet Union

Lifeline to the Poorest Jews
EUROPE

BORDERLESS
CREATIVITY
AND
EXCHANGE
ENDURING CONNECTIONS TO THE GLOBAL JEWISH FAMILY
EXPERTISE
FOR RECOVERY
AND GROWTH
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE WITH GLOBAL REACH
Over the course of 95 years, JDC’s work has spanned more than 85 countries around the globe, reaching Jewish communities and people in need on almost every continent. Today, JDC is touching hundreds of thousands of lives in more than 70 countries worldwide.
This year marks JDC’s 95th anniversary. For nearly a century, JDC has been improving the lives of millions of people in countries spanning the globe from Latin America to Asia. Working in the interest of the UJC (United Jewish Communities)/Federation system, which provides our primary financial support, we reach out to Jews in need around the world, fulfilling our commitment to the principle that all Jews are responsible for one another.

JDC is a constant in the lives of the poorest Jews on Earth—mainly in countries in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, where we provide life-sustaining assistance on a daily basis and continue to help both the new and old generations connect with their Jewish heritage. In Latin America, JDC has developed resources to help fight unemployment and poverty, especially in Argentina, where the large Jewish population is still feeling the effects of the country’s 2001 economic crash. In various countries in Africa and Asia, JDC enables small Jewish communities—some of which date back thousands of years—to maintain essential services and ensure a Jewish future for their youth.

In Israel, JDC responds to crisis-related needs, and works locally in partnership with governmental agencies to empower the lives of marginalized Israelis by opening doors to opportunity, education, and independent living.

And in the spirit of *tikkun olam*, or “repairing the world,” JDC’s International Development Program provides emergency relief and longer-term development assistance to non-Jewish communities around the world suffering the effects of natural disaster, war, or poverty.

Since 1914, when JDC was established to channel funds being raised to aid Jews in Europe and Palestine caught in the agony of World War I, we have played a critical role in the most important events in 20th- and 21st-century Jewish history. With decades of experience, strong partnerships on the ground, and the ability to intelligently leverage resources so funds have the furthest reach and impact, JDC is in a strong position to meet the challenges of the future.

We are grateful for the trust and support that we receive from Jewish community Federations throughout North America in partnership with United Jewish Communities (UJC), the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ), the Swiss Banks Settlement, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, World Jewish Relief, additional partners around the world, and a number of other important individuals and foundations.
The following table summarizes JDC’s annual budget with income provided by the United Jewish Communities/Federation System and the extent to which additional funds from various sources have been obtained and utilized. In sum, the JDC core budget of $79.8 million has leveraged another $289 million for total expenditures on JDC projects of $368.8 million during 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>JDC Commitment</th>
<th>Additional Funds from Partners</th>
<th>Total Expenses</th>
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<td>Albania</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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**Total**                  | **$79,805,785** | **$288,994,990** | **$368,800,775**

For a copy of JDC’s Financial Statements and Independent Auditor’s Report, email Eugene Philips, JDC Chief Financial Officer, at financials@jdc.org or access at www.JDC.org.
2008 PROGRAM BUDGET DISTRIBUTION

BY GEOGRAPHIC AREA

- Israel: 47.7%
- Commonwealth of Independent States (a.k.a. FSU): 34.6%
- Europe: 8.3%
- Africa & Asia: 2.6%
- Latin America: 3.7%
- Special Grants: 0.1%
- Transmigrants: 0.1%
- Transmigrants: 0.1%
- International Development Program: 2.9%

BY PROGRAM AREA

- Welfare Services for the Elderly: 42.8%
- Services for Children at Risk: 18.4%
- Jewish Life & Community: 17.4%
- Training & Leadership Development: 9.3%
- Research: 2.0%
- Non-Sectarian: 2.9%
- Israel Emergency Campaign: 7.2%
For 95 years, JDC has upheld its commitment to care for Jews overseas who are in danger or in need regardless of the difficulties. Today we face significant financial challenges, but JDC has been in similar situations before—under worse circumstances—and we have prevailed. Clearly, we need to work harder, but we will never abandon our constituents—the needy and vulnerable Jews around the world who look to JDC for sustenance and support.

This puts us at one with the founders of this organization who heard an appeal for help from Jews caught in the havoc of the First World War and recognized their obligation to come to the aid of their people. It is this feeling of kinship, this sense of areivut or communal responsibility, that has motivated JDC’s actions since 1914.

The environment in which we work changes faster and faster, and it has become more difficult to take care of our constituents adequately. In Europe and the former Soviet Union, some 225,000 needy elderly Jews and at-risk Jewish children look to us for help; so do hundreds of communities that search and reach for some way to identify as Jews. Our obligation remains “the three Rs” that define the JDC mission—Rescue, Relief, and Renewal. But those three Rs can go nowhere without the fourth R of Resources, and here we are enormously challenged.

Our country is facing its worst economic situation in perhaps 70 years, and the ramifications for philanthropic giving across the entire non-profit sector continue to unfold. We appreciate the continuing support of the UJC/Federation System, which remains JDC’s largest source of all-important unrestricted funds. But as Federations come face to face with increasing challenges at home, overseas allocations are declining. And the fluctuating value of the dollar affects our ability to deliver adequate aid.

As always, the wisdom of Jewish sages—in this case, two Tana’im of the Mishnaic era—can help us to navigate the times ahead. Rabbi Tarfon teaches us perseverance: “The day is short, the task is great ... It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task, yet you are not free to desist from it.” Today it appears that the task—and the challenges—are greater than usual. But daunting as the present situation may seem, JDC will persevere, and prevail. And taking inspiration from Rabbi Yochanan, who taught us the value of innovation to assure the continuity of Jewish life, we are exploring creative new ways to secure the resources we need to fulfill our obligation to our clients.

Indeed, amid the difficulties of the past year, we can point with pride to some important accomplishments. A major milestone was achieved at the beginning of 2008 when the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (IFCJ), under the leadership of Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, formalized the IFCJ-JDC Partnership for Children in the Former Soviet Union. In so doing, IFCJ has expanded its ongoing support for at-risk Jewish youth in this region at the very moment that deteriorating economic conditions bring a sharp increase in their needs.

Another milestone was reached in Israel, where JDC continues to help the state serve the needs of its most vulnerable citizens. Ashalim, our three-way partnership with
UJA-Federation of New York and the Israeli government on behalf of children at risk, marked a decade of achievement. Over the past 10 years, it has developed more than 300 new programs in Israel for young people of all backgrounds and their families. In addition, our TEVET employment initiative with the Government of Israel helps to fight poverty among some 750,000 Israelis who have never been part of the workforce.

I greatly appreciate the support that my fellow Board members and past JDC Presidents have given me over the previous months. They are standing up, being counted, and doing all they can and more to help meet our clients’ needs. I am also grateful for the advice and support I have received from Steve Schwager, our Chief Executive Officer, as we grapple with the complexities of operating a global organization in this fast-moving environment.

To my predecessor, Judge Ellen M. Heller, I offer my thanks and those of our beneficiaries for all she has done to carry forward JDC’s important work. The Next Gen programming that she initiated expands our outreach and our horizons, while the Strategic Visioning process she championed helps us refine our course and conceive new strategies to deal with changing realities.

Since 1914, JDC has been there for Jews in need in the far corners of the world: from the child growing up in post-World War I Europe who thought the word “Joint” was English for “milk” ... to the survivor in the DP camp who relied on JDC to nourish both body and soul ... to the lonely elderly Jew in the former Soviet Union faced with the heartbreaking choice of buying food or medicine ... to Jews throughout the former Communist bloc who have sought to reclaim their heritage and take their rightful place in the world Jewish family.

We must never forget who we are, what we have done, and what we can do. Yes, the task is great, but it is precisely during difficult times that our Jewish community and JDC have risen to meet the challenges.

Dr. Irving A. Smokler
JDC celebrates its 95th birthday this year—and as we get older, we thankfully also get better. As of today, JDC’s reach has never been so wide, and thanks to our partners, the impact of our work has never been so formidable.

Morris Troper, as Chairman of JDC’s European Executive Council during World War II, witnessed one Jewish community after another fall victim to Nazi hatred and destruction. In a 1941 JDC document, he wrote that he was charged with bringing “heart-rending pleas for increased help from every distressed Jewish community … before the Jews of America so that they may know their duty of rescuing war-stricken and persecuted Jews overseas.” Today, as I reread Troper’s impassioned call to responsibility, I am reminded of the great sage Hillel’s comments in Ethics of the Fathers: “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?” We are a global Jewish family—we must take care of one another; and acting on our belief in tikun olam, we must repair the world on all levels. The time to do it is always now.

Through more than nine decades, JDC has sharpened and strengthened its role as the 9-1-1 of the Jewish world. How thankful we are to have been blessed with an unparalleled knowledge of the situation of Jews globally, and we use that knowledge to help Jews in need no matter where in the world they call home.

First and foremost, our responsibility is to the most vulnerable among us: those living in fragile, tenuous circumstances; those on the fringe of society; those subject to waves of violence or discrimination; and those who find it difficult to make a living and put food on the table.

When called upon in a crisis, we work quickly, effectively, and with an eye to making a lasting impact. When the Gaza conflict escalated in 2008, JDC and the Government of Israel initiated the “120 Strong” program to offer immediate outreach to the elderly and the disabled in the conflict zone. This was a critical program that used the resources already in place via the JDC-modeled Supportive Communities for these vulnerable citizens. We proved our reliability again during the 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict: JDC’s expertise and infrastructure gave us the unique ability to mobilize immediately, help relocate Jews in affected areas, and provide emergency relief. We were also in a position to remain in place after the conflict—to repair damaged homes, provide rehabilitation retreats, and ensure other long-term assistance where needed.

We are often counted on to be the dependable friend and partner who knows how to get the job done. In our long-term development work, we emphasize empowering people and communities with the tools to lead healthy, productive lives in dignity. In the former Soviet Union (FSU), we are helping ensure a Jewish future by invigorating Jewish community life, fostering self-sustainability, and helping people—young and old—connect with their Jewish heritage. In Israel, we touch the lives of those who are vulnerable, or who lack a support network—children, the elderly, the disabled, and immigrants. We help the government develop solutions for the problems these groups face—solutions which have impact on a national scale, ensuring that vulnerability will turn into empowerment.

Sometimes JDC’s role as a trusted partner to the world’s Jewish community is less tangible but just as crucial, as in India when we helped reinforce community solidarity following the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks that took the lives of six Jews.

Throughout our work, we pride ourselves on our flexibility—we listen, we adapt, and we respect innovation.
We improve our models and share them with others. And our approach attracts wise investors. In today’s economic climate, investors look for an organization that has both proven experience on the ground and the willingness to improve a practice if something isn’t working. They find those very qualities in JDC.

Our reach is global, but our impact is local. Today we work in over 70 countries, from Argentina to Azerbaijan, from Cuba to Croatia. Where lives have been crippled by poverty or disability, JDC is helping people become productive and independent; where people have lost hope, JDC is helping restore hope; and where communities have been harmed by manmade or natural disasters, JDC is helping them rebuild—and making them stronger in the process.

Should actions speak louder than words? Sure—but I also think it is rewarding and important to share JDC’s story, as we do in these pages. The highlights of JDC’s work in 2008 and early 2009 in this Annual Report not only give a glimpse of who we are at 95, they also speak to where we’re going. JDC is an organization with a long history, but we are forward thinking and committed to building our value as the organization of the global Jewish family.

It is only by a twist of fate that we and our children are not the needy Jews in the FSU or Poland, or among the Jewish families whose worlds fell apart in Argentina. Our responsibility, then—as Morris Troper noted—is to care for those who need us and, equally important, to teach the next generation to do the same. My hope is that they, too, will always be moved to lend a hand, open their hearts to charitable needs, and perhaps become passionately involved in JDC’s mission.

In the meantime, we’ll continue to do what we do best, and we’ll be here no matter what tomorrow brings.

I want to express a heartfelt thank you to our President, Dr. Irving Smokler, who has already put both feet into this important role as JDC’s global ambassador and my partner in this amazing enterprise.

Finally, I could not close without saying how proud I am of the efforts of the worldwide JDC staff. I thank each and every staff member for their dedication and professionalism. This year has seen its share of obstacles, but our impressive ability to approach any challenge head-on is in no small part due to the high caliber of our staff.

It continues to be an honor and privilege to be the CEO and Executive Vice President of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Steven Schwager
Israel is at the core of Jewish identity—it’s energy flows from and into the hearts of Jews everywhere. The nation holds a unique place in the heart of JDC, too—the organization was founded in 1914 to send relief to Palestinian Jews caught in the agony of World War I, and throughout its 95 years of history JDC has maintained a modest but important role in Israel’s story.

JDC is committed to reaching Jews in need wherever they are, a commitment that is given full expression through its work in Israel, home to the largest concentration of vulnerable Jews. The social and economic realities facing Israeli society give shape to JDC’s work here—such as the 30% poverty rates for children and the elderly, or the critical need to ensure a productive future for young Israelis from immigrant and other populations that are at risk of getting caught in a cycle of poverty.
Working locally in partnership with municipalities and communities, JDC helps the Government of Israel find innovative and viable ways to empower marginalized Israelis by opening doors to opportunity, education, and independence; and to weave those on the fringe of Israeli society into the fabric of the nation. JDC develops and tests solutions to national social challenges, and helps the government build upon the success of those solutions that work well.

The long-standing partnership between JDC and Israel is one of the most vibrant and concrete between North American Jewry and the Jewish State. The successful programs highlighted here illustrate JDC’s continued investment in Israel’s future.

ENSURING DEVELOPMENT FOR ISRAEL’S YOUNGEST ACROSS THE NATION

In Israel, 80,000 children age six and under face great obstacles to developing and thriving at home and in school. These children are often from immigrant families and are at risk of being trapped in a cycle of poverty. Their parents may lack the means—both financial and cultural—to help their young children adequately prepare for school.

JDC first developed PACT (Parents and Children Together) to help address these problems within the Ethiopian-Israeli community. PACT provides literacy enrichment, daycare subsidies, after-school activities, and health education for preschoolers and kindergartners, while also providing services and training that bridge cultural gaps for parents and community professionals. PACT ensures that the needs of the Ethiopian-Israeli child are at the center of this framework and coordinates all services accordingly.

The success of PACT led to the establishment of a similar program, ECHAD (Partnership for Early Childhood Achievement and Development) for Israeli Arab children, some 50% of whom live below the poverty line.

Today, with the help of JDC, the Government of Israel is implementing programs based on PACT and ECHAD in more than 55 cities through the New Beginnings partnership—effectively taking JDC’s model of development for Israel’s youngest citizens to the national level.

FIGHTING POVERTY THROUGH EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Many young Israelis are entering adulthood with few choices in terms of their own futures, yet they are a vital part of Israel’s future. Many come from immigrant families, and because of a number of cultural, economic, and social barriers, they encounter difficulty finding a job and making decisions about higher education.

JDC partnered with the government to establish programs that are successfully breaking through these barriers. For example, JDC brought Centers for Young Adults to over 25 cities across Israel—one-stop shops providing 18-to-30-year-old Israelis with job and education guidance, as well as volunteer opportunities to encourage leadership and service in a community. Today, the Centers for Young Adults are a platform for the successful, nationwide TEVET (Fighting Poverty through Employment) initiative. TEVET provides specially tailored services to vulnerable immigrants, the ultra-Orthodox community, individuals with disabilities, young adults, and Israeli Arabs—
35,000 people participating in the program since it began. By focusing on building knowledge in key areas like entrepreneurship, TEVET is propelling citizens who have never been employed into the 21st-century workforce.

BUILDING ENGAGED COMMUNITIES

JDC is an instrumental partner in innovative neighborhood-based initiatives throughout Israel that improve living standards, engage active participation in a residential area, and tap into the ability of community members to positively impact not only their own lives, but the lives of their neighbors.

For example, JDC helps establish and maintain Supportive Communities, enabling elderly or disabled Israelis to live independently and with dignity in their own homes. The Supportive Communities for the Elderly postpone or eliminate the need for elderly citizens to move out of their homes as their health declines, helping them age in place. The Supportive Communities for the Disabled address physical and social needs of Israelis living with a disability, ensuring they are safe, comfortable, and independent. In both of these successful programs, blocks of residents are provided with a “community parent” who maintains close contact, making sure individual needs are met. Residents also receive crucial services like a 24-hour emergency alert system, in-home medical services, and social and cultural programs. As these residential programs become financially independent, JDC is counted on solely for professional advice and support. The supportive community program currently reaches 42,000 elderly people in over 250 neighborhoods, and 1,100 individuals with disabilities in 15 neighborhoods.

HIGHLIGHTS

Better Together
Dalia (left) made aliya from Ethiopia with her parents when she was a baby. As with many immigrants and children of immigrants, she faced challenges to succeeding in Israel’s mainstream society: her parents have trouble understanding Hebrew, and they don’t have a strong enough grasp of the Israeli education system and army service in order to advise their daughter on these parts of young adulthood. At a youth center in her neighborhood, organized through the Better Together program, Dalia found support, advice, and motivation to succeed. Better Together is one of the many initiatives developed by JDC’s Ashalim partnership for children and youth at risk. Now Dalia is an outstanding student. She participates in a youth leadership council and is part of Ben Gurion University’s excellence program for high school students in the sciences.

Revitalized Neighborhoods

Mishol—Hebrew for “Path” and an acronym for Immigrants Integration in Housing Clusters—focuses on entire apartment blocks in run-down neighborhoods in peripheral locations. Mishol helps residents establish tenant associations, improve living conditions, create community gardens, and undertake other activities that are transforming the environment in which they live.

Youth Making a Difference

JDC is mobilizing Israel’s more fortunate citizens to help the less fortunate by attracting Israeli donors who build on JDC investments, and by rallying in-country volunteer support, as with the AMEN Youth Volunteers. Above are three of the thousands of teenagers who have contributed more than 4 million hours of service in support of their communities. These efforts guarantee that JDC’s investment in Israel’s future has the greatest reach and sustainability.
JDC’s programs in Israel are made possible by contributions from Jewish Federations of North America, as well as charitable individuals, families, businesses, foundations, and restitution sources. JDC gives special thanks to the following donors whose extraordinary 2008 donations underwrote our work in Israel:

**DONORS – ISRAEL**

S. Daniel Abrahams Foundation  
The Nicole and Raanan Agus Family Foundation  
Ruth Albert  
Rita Allen Foundation  
Anti-Defamation League  
Isaac Applbaum  
Edward I. Asher Estate and Trust  
Asher Family Philanthropic Fund  
The Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation  
Alfred R. Bader  
Helen Bader Foundation  
The Baron De Hirsch Fund  
The Barron Millennium Fund  
Isidore Becker  
The James H. Becker Endowmen Fund  
Mandell L. Berman  
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JDC is a constant in the lives of Jews who live in the former Soviet Union (FSU), a region where the organization’s mission to provide material relief to the world’s poorest Jews, and to renew and invigorate Jewish communities where they have been diminished, is perhaps most clearly articulated on a daily basis.

The highlights in these pages illuminate JDC’s steadfastness in the face of the challenging economic realities these countries are currently experiencing. JDC is there to provide food relief when skyrocketing inflation raises the price of basic items like butter and flour beyond reach, or when the most vulnerable victims of poverty—the elderly and children—require medicine, winter clothing, or homecare. JDC is constantly evaluating and adapting its approaches to ensure the neediest are reached in the most effective ways possible.
As the world watches an expression of political and cultural individuality take shape in the region, JDC is ensuring another important expression takes shape: the renewal of a vibrant Jewish life. In the not-so-distant past, the Soviet Communist state squelched religious freedom, forcing Jewish life out of public view and pushing it into hidden places: into the diary of a Jewish grandmother in Kiev, stored in a cupboard; or into the heart of a son born into a Russian family whose Jewish identity would be kept secret.

Today, JDC, its partners, and the communities themselves help ensure Jewish life is celebrated openly and authentically. Stories, history, and traditions are being rekindled or learned for the first time, and passed from one family to another, from community to community. Jewish continuity is a legacy of these shared efforts.

**PROVIDING RELIEF AND BUILDING SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

By remaining nimble in the midst of difficult economic times, JDC effectively carries out its mission to safeguard the welfare and dignity of the most impoverished Jews in the FSU, now and in the future.

In 2008, *Hesed Avraham*, in St. Petersburg, Russia, celebrated its 15th anniversary. Since its establishment as JDC’s first community-based welfare center in the FSU in 1993, *Hesed* has blossomed into a vital and well-respected network of support to the region’s poorest Jews. By the end of 2008, this network was providing more than 168,000 of the poorest Jews in the world with social services and critical relief in the way of food, medicine, and homecare. *Hesed* is much more than a relief provider—the centers promote community involvement and volunteer service, aiming to foster self-sufficiency.

In 2008 and 2009, JDC has streamlined certain operations in order to most effectively reach the neediest. The organization expanded the use of *food cards*, an innovative and cost-effective way to ensure the neediest are able to put meals on their tables. Food cards are used like debit cards to purchase groceries, and are modeled on a similar program JDC developed in Argentina during the 2001 economic crisis there. In response to shifting needs among the aging population that the organization reaches, JDC is placing an emphasis on *homecare* for elderly Jews with limited mobility and little or no family to help.

**COMBATING THE EFFECTS OF POVERTY ON CHILDREN**

An unforgettable face of poverty in former Soviet satellite countries is that of the poor child who has barely enough food to make it through the day, tattered clothes, and a family who cannot provide for her—or worse, the face of one of the millions of children who live on the streets. The disheartening plight of poor children in the FSU inspired JDC and a partner organization to scale up the effort to fight Jewish children’s poverty in the region.

In 2008, the *International Fellowship of Christians and Jews* (IFCJ)-JDC Partnership for Children in the Former Soviet Union helped make an impact on the lives of approximately 25,000 of the poorest Jewish children in the region.

(A) In Georgia, the difficult reality of children’s poverty is addressed through the holistic JFS model, which tackles factors affecting the whole family. (B) In Moldova, where some of the poorest Jews in the world live, an elderly woman receives vital JDC welfare support. (C) A mother and son in Kiev, Ukraine are amongst many families who receive food, medical care, youth programming, and other assistance at Beitenu centers across the country.
through the provision of nutritional assistance, medical care, clothing and blankets, winter relief and heating, and essential home repairs. This assistance is provided through the holistic and effective Jewish Family Service (JFS) Model, which approaches the problem of children’s poverty from multiple angles, addressing factors like parenting and family crises, unsafe housing, healthcare issues, and regional differences in poverty.

**ENSURING A JEWISH FUTURE THROUGH RENEWAL**

JDC remains solidly committed to the renewal of vibrant Jewish life in the former Soviet Union through initiatives that bring people together—young and old—to understand and celebrate the richness of Jewish religion, culture, and heritage. JDC recognizes that these efforts are crucial to ensuring a Jewish future in the region, and in 2008, nearly 60,000 people took part in JDC-sponsored renewal activities across the FSU.

Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) have become a cornerstone of this effort. JCCs are centralized locations where community members may tap into a variety of Jewish programming and activities, and in this way, they are the beating heart of Jewish community life for the tens of thousands of people they serve. The Odessa Beit Grand Jewish Campus debuted in 2008 and has already become a dynamic meeting ground for the community through its offerings, including concerts, Jewish holiday celebrations, dance and sports studios, a violin ensemble, a writers’ club, and more. JDC family retreats also invigorate Jewish life by inspiring multiple generations to become more knowledgeable and potentially more committed to preserving their heritage. The retreats teach participants about Jewish topics, point them to Jewish activities and resources in their communities, and provide an authentic Jewish experience which resonates long after the retreat has ended.

**CULTIVATING JEWISH LEADERS**

The Soviet-era repression of Judaism in the region may have been lifted, but left in its wake a dearth of the important community leaders and professionals needed to rebuild Jewish life. With the understanding that effective local leadership and skilled professionals and volunteers will go far in maintaining a vibrant Jewish community life, JDC supports leadership initiatives and training institutes that enhance academic expertise, foster economic self-sufficiency, and provide training in welfare and community work.

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**HIGHLIGHTS**

**Jewish Life Celebrated Generation to Generation**

A young girl proudly shows off her craft project at a Jewish family retreat in Belarus. Family retreats throughout the FSU not only provide an introduction to Jewish tradition for many young people, they also have a lasting ripple effect as they open eyes to Jewish resources that participants can tap into when they return to their home communities.

**Ukrainian Idol Radiates Jewish Pride**

Vladimir Goodkov (right), a 2008 Metsuda Young Leadership Program participant, showcased his leadership capabilities and Jewish pride when he was chosen as a finalist on “Ukrainian Stars Factory,” a popular television talent show similar to “American Idol.” A singer who had developed his talent at the JDC-supported Beit Dan JCC in Kharkov, Vladimir openly identified as a Jew on the show, inspiring countless young viewers across Ukraine. He then went a step further when he won the option to have a wish granted by the producers: instead of a trip to Cannes or a first CD recording of his music, Vladimir chose to celebrate Shabbat with his friends in the studio, with traditional prayers and a festive meal. This national television broadcast of a Shabbat celebration was a first in Ukrainian history.
JDC’s programs in the former Soviet Union are made possible by contributions from Jewish Federations of North America, as well as charitable individuals, families, businesses, foundations, and restitution sources. JDC gives special thanks to the following donors whose extraordinary 2008 donations underwrote our work in the former Soviet Union:

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JDC’s work in Europe spans across decades of change and upheaval. Today, JDC faces the challenge of responding to the economic emergency that began in 2008 and has led to one of the most dramatic rises in welfare needs in the region in decades. As a result of this financial crisis, certain countries are having difficulty meeting the essential needs of their poorest citizens, especially the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

JDC is no stranger to challenge in Europe: it became the lifeline to Jews in the region who were displaced by World War I, and later it provided vital aid to hundreds of thousands of Jews during the Holocaust and its aftermath. In the wake of Nazi devastation, and then as the boundaries dividing East and West became more permeable and European Communism waned, JDC continued to provide support and expertise on the ground to ensure that a vibrant Jewish community life was reinvigorated in places where it had been repressed or nearly destroyed.
JDC currently works with local and international partners in 23 countries in the region, providing critical welfare services to Holocaust survivors and other Jews in need, helping strengthen community leadership, and reviving the vibrancy of Jewish life for young families who had previously been cut off from each other and from their heritage. A significant aim of JDC’s work in Europe is to help communities bolster their own self-sustainability through approaches that are both innovative and grassroots.

Twenty-first century Europe is essentially a borderless Europe, and JDC programs here build on a common ground among Jews who may come from different countries but share language, culture, and heritage. This common ground smooths the way for a free exchange of ideas and experiences, and out of this exchange, a revitalizing spirit continues to emerge and flourish.

FORGING PATHWAYS TO JEWISH IDENTITY

JEWISH CAMPS Each year, JDC-supported Jewish camps in the Baltic countries, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, and Romania provide thousands of children and teens with their first significant immersion in Jewish life. In addition to offering recreational activities and enrichment in Jewish culture, these camps foster leadership skills, and many counselors go on to become leaders in their home communities.

YOUNG FAMILY PROGRAMS In February 2009, over 100 people attended a JDC-supported Young Family Shabbat retreat outside of Warsaw, Poland. The retreat was a chance for young Jewish families who are in many ways isolated from Jewish life to become acquainted with their heritage and understand their Jewish identity. The retreat is part of JDC’s Young Family Program, which helps the new generation of European Jewish parents navigate the questions they have about Judaism so they can make informed decisions on raising their children in a Jewish home.

In Germany, the Bambinim program offers a full range of activities designed to strengthen Jewish family and community bonds, including childhood music classes in Russian and Hebrew, and a course in Jewish holidays taught through arts and crafts, dance, and song.

CARING FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN NEED

The current economic crisis has forced many young families from their middle class lives into the ranks of the “new poor.” In order to effectively improve the lives of the most vulnerable Jewish children throughout the Baltic countries, JDC and its local partners are using the holistic Jewish Family Service (JFS) welfare model, which looks at the needs of a child through the lens of the family. JFS provides children with basic necessities like food, medicine, and clothing, while also working to address the underlying issues that have trapped a family in a cycle of poverty, thereby empowering the family and helping it move forward.

Leveraging this model, in 2008 JDC opened the Jaffe Jewish Family Service Center in Hungary, which effectively...
combines social worker outreach, material support, active partnership with the local community, and volunteer engagement.

**CONTRIBUTING TO DYNAMIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

**LEADERSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE** With an eye to facing the challenges of an evolving European landscape head-on, JDC supports Jewish leadership and knowledge initiatives through the JDC International Centre for Community Development in Oxford, England. For example, the **Buncher Community Leadership Program** enhances the skills of promising Jewish leaders through intensive courses in management and social services. **Leatid Europe (Center for Jewish Leadership)** brings together professionals, lay leaders, and rabbis from across the European region and the former Soviet Union to strengthen Jewish knowledge and hone management skills.

In 2008, JDC launched the **Bereshit program** devoted to teaching the foundations of Jewish thought to adult Jewish students of varying ages and backgrounds. The program has already succeeded in bringing high-level Jewish studies to a diverse population in Central and Eastern Europe, filling a void in access to Jewish education there.

**MEANINGFUL EXCHANGE** JDC and its partners have developed a regional framework that bridges Jewish communities with a common culture, language, and geography. Through this framework, which includes a wide network of **Jewish Community Centers**, a sparkling exchange of ideas, programs, and interactions is happening—an exchange that transcends borders and is enriching the Jewish experience for thousands of people.

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**HIGHLIGHTS**

**Beyond JCC Walls**

Jewish culture exuberantly spilled out into the streets of Budapest, Hungary, when nearly 10,000 people celebrated the richness of Jewish art, music, and food at **JUDAFEST** street fairs in 2008 and 2009. **JUDAFEST** is one of the innovative **JCC Without Walls** outreach programs bringing unaffiliated Jews into the fold of Jewish community life by sharing the Jewish experience in a way that is accessible and appealing.

**Buncher Community Leadership Program**

Simon Gurevitchius attended the **Buncher Community Leadership Program** six years ago as a promising young leader involved with the Jewish youth club in Vilnius. A life-altering experience, the Buncher program inspired Simon to dedicate his life to the Jewish community. Today he is a key Jewish figure in Lithuania, and he directs the JDC-sponsored **Olameinu** camp that hosts over 500 children from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania each summer.

**Gesher**

Among JDC’s regional networking initiatives, the annual **Gesher Conference** (*Gesher* is the Hebrew word for “bridge”), held recently in Greece, brought together 400 Jews from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, and other countries in a forum where they established close personal and cultural bonds and learned more about their shared Jewish heritage.
JDC’s programs in Europe are made possible by contributions from Jewish Federations of North America, as well as charitable individuals, families, businesses, foundations, and restitution sources. JDC gives special thanks to the following donors whose extraordinary 2008 donations underwrote our work in Europe:

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(J) Keeping seniors healthy and involved in Jewish community life in Bulgaria, golden age clubs provide year-round social, cultural, and fitness opportunities.  
(E) Preschoolers and their parents have their own special activities at the JDC-supported Balint Jewish Community Center in Budapest, Hungary, which offers a wide range of programs for all segments of the community.

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JDC helps small, vibrant Jewish communities in Africa and Asia not only survive, but thrive, and connects these otherwise isolated populations to each other and to the larger, global Jewish family. JDC and its partners fortify the cornerstones of Jewish life by supporting formal and informal Jewish education, helping to develop new community leaders, and engaging youth.

Some of these communities have roots going back thousands of years. Morocco’s Jewish community, for example, has 2,000 years of history. JDC first came to Morocco in 1950 to address the needs of poor Jews living in overcrowded mellahs (walled Jewish quarters). Today, the organization is helping this 4,500-strong Jewish community blossom well into the 21st century.
In Tunisia, JDC helps renew and provide relief to Jewish populations, including on the island of Djerba, which holds one of the world’s oldest Jewish communities. The organization touches the lives of Jews in Asia by cultivating new leadership in Turkey or engaging teenagers in India. In Africa and Asia, JDC also aims to enhance the status of Jewish communities by nurturing cooperation and acts of goodwill toward their non-Jewish neighbors.

Throughout these colorful, culturally rich communities, JDC remains committed to maintaining a high quality of care and the viability of Jewish life.

**ENRICHING JEWISH EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP**

JDC recognizes that the education of Jewish children and the cultivation of leadership are crucial to maintaining a vibrant Jewish life, especially in the small Jewish communities of Africa and Asia. JDC supports Jewish schools in Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey, including the only Jewish day school in Tunis, and JDC is the only organization providing primary support to the vital network of Jewish schools on the island of Djerba. Recently, JDC has been helping Djerba’s schools revise their curricula, improve teaching methods, and establish state-of-the-art computer laboratories for the students.

In Turkey, JDC partnered with the Jewish community in order to cultivate a new generation of leaders through a unique leadership education initiative called Hadracha College. Hadracha College brings a formerly untapped resource—“retired” youth club leaders—back into the fold of Jewish community affairs, ensuring that strong Jewish leadership is embraced, not lost.
Caring for the Elderly

As a trusted partner, JDC helps Jewish communities in Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, and India care for their elderly by supporting the operation of facilities like the Casablanca Jewish Home for the Aged in Morocco. The Casablanca home provides residential care, full medical services, recreational and therapeutic services, excursions, and holiday events for its residents.

Engaging Jewish Teens in India

In 2008, JDC established JYP Juniors, an extension of JDC’s Jewish Youth Pioneers (JYP) program, which is the only program in India offering Jewish activities and socializing opportunities to young Jews. JYP Juniors engages teenagers (ages 13 to 15) who have outgrown the Sunday school at the JDC-supported JCC in Mumbai, but are not yet old enough to enter the JYP program, which reaches out to those 16 and up.

Nurturing Cooperation Between Jews and Non-Jews

In the realm of humanitarian work, it is clear that communities divided by religious tensions can be brought together by a common goal: to help their most vulnerable neighbors. JDC cultivates this goodwill as a way of strengthening understanding and reducing tensions between Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

JDC has been facilitating an ongoing cooperative effort between Turkey and Israel to improve the detection, treatment, and rehabilitation of hearing-impaired children in Turkey. Sevgi Yüksela, a Turkish mother of a hearing-impaired boy and member of the Turkish Association for Hearing Impaired Children, recently joined a group of specialists, professional trainers, and social workers invited to participate in a training program at the Institute for the Advancement of Hearing Impaired Persons in Israel. The goal of the program is to empower participants to better assist with the social integration of children with hearing impairments. She was impressed and inspired by what she saw. “They respect hearing-impaired children’s individuality and create a stimulating learning environment that gives happiness to them,” Yüksel said of the program. “Music, art, games, and animal therapies are used to motivate them through the use of sounds. Best of all, families participate in the training sessions. I completed the program feeling more empowered as a trainer and a mother.”

Highlights

Safe and Independent Living

JDC recently celebrated the opening of the Fred and Velva Levine Community Residence in Morocco, which will house 45 needy elderly Jews, all of whom had been living in rundown housing in unsafe neighborhoods. The residence is an independent living arrangement and occupants may also take advantage of cultural and social programs provided through the adjacent Casablanca home.
In Latin America, Jewish communities are scattered from the Pacific coast of Chile to the Caribbean island of Cuba, with the largest concentration of Jews in Argentina. JDC responds to the needs of these communities through a mix of critical welfare and relief assistance where needed, and long-term support for initiatives that bring people together to celebrate their Jewish heritage.

A critical moment in JDC’s role in the region occurred when Argentina’s economy crashed in 2001, causing unemployment to rise alongside soaring inflation and financial uncertainty. In the Jewish community, many families that were once solidly middle class suffered the loss of income and savings and were cast into poverty. JDC continues to fight the effects of that crisis, and through partnership, it has made a difference in the lives of tens of thousands of people who have needed food, medical care, help finding a job, or other critical assistance.
JDC-supported centers that fight unemployment or care for the elderly have inspired other models across the region, and have become platforms for fortifying local Jewish communities through their ability to bring people together under one roof to share experiences, bond, and learn from each other.

Recently, a Cuban teen performed his Bar Mitzvah under makeshift light supported by a generator, on a warm Shabbat some days after a hurricane ripped across the island. In Argentina, a boy made progress in his studies and started forming friendships for the first time in his young life. JDC and its partners in Latin America continue to reach out to ensure significant moments like these are shared by Jewish families across the region.

**FORTIFYING COMMUNITIES THROUGH EMPLOYMENT**

In 2008, JDC continued to support employment initiatives in Latin America, including the Ariel Job and Business Center in Buenos Aires, the Activa organization in Mexico, and the Ariel Job Centers in Chile and Brazil.

JDC created the first Ariel Job Center in Argentina to reduce unemployment resulting from the country’s 2001 economic meltdown. Today, the center continues to help put people back to work: through JDC support, nearly 6,000 people have found jobs, and more than 14,000 have received some form of skills training. It has also paved the way for the launch of 320 Jewish-owned small businesses.

The success of the Ariel model in Argentina inspired the creation of similar centers in Chile and Brazil, both of which provide invaluable employment tools. In addition, JDC continues to aid employment programs in Brazil, Mexico, and Uruguay, offering expertise and guidance to their staffs so they may further hone their services.

**PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN**

In 2008, JDC expanded its Baby Help program in Argentina, which now reaches over 800 children age five and under across the country. Baby Help provides diapers, formula, vitamins, medications, and early childhood development assistance to newborns and toddlers in poor Jewish families.

Also in 2008, JDC created the Child Help program in Argentina through local fundraising efforts as a way of providing some continuity to Baby Help assistance. Child Help integrates kindergarten-age Baby Help participants into Jewish schools. Child Help covers the cost of transportation to the school, food, and half of the tuition; the school itself assumes the other half of the scholarship cost.

**ADVANCING A SUCCESSFUL MODEL OF SENIOR CARE**

Today, the JDC-supported LeDor VaDor home for the elderly in Buenos Aires, Argentina, is operating at full capacity, with nearly 300 residents. The waiting list is testimony to the success of this multifunctional center, which has been noted as a model of care by the local government. The complex is used as a training facility for nursing and medical students specializing in gerontology, and in 2008, the JDC-supported Baby Help program moved in.

LeDor VaDor is more than a home for the elderly—it sponsors intergenerational activities and is bringing people into the fold of local Jewish life. In this way, it has invigorated the Buenos Aires community.
CELEBRATING JUDAISM IN CUBA

JDC is a lifeline to the Jewish community in Cuba, a country that continues to endure stifling economic hardships. JDC came to Cuba when broader religious freedom was granted in the 1990s, and quickly set forth helping the island’s Jews connect to their heritage. Today, JDC helps revitalize and solidify this 1,500-member community through support for religious services, libraries, holiday celebrations, youth activities, and a Bar and Bat Mitzvah program.

HIGHLIGHTS

Child Help

In Argentina, four-year-old Dylan was having difficulties learning and making friends. Things were tough at home—his mom’s bouts of depression made it challenging for her to maintain job stability. In March 2008, he started attending a Jewish kindergarten through Child Help assistance, and his teachers report that he is already making great strides in learning and developing his potential. Dylan’s mom says, “I always tell my son that it is thanks to the great generosity of many people who make it possible for him to attend this school he loves so much so that one day, when he grows up, he will remember all this and help others in need.”

Jewish Coming of Age in Cuba

Juan David grew up in Havana, Cuba, without his Jewish father, who had died in an accident when Juan David was three. Juan David’s mother, Ana, who had converted to Judaism, was steadfast in her desire that her two sons perform their Bar Mitzvah. Through the JDC-supported Bar and Bat Mitzvah program, on a warm Shabbat in August 2008, Ana’s dream came true: Juan David took on the responsibilities of a Jewish adult, passionately chanting the prayer verses from the bimah in the presence of his exuberant family.

JDC’s programs in Latin America are made possible by contributions from Jewish Federations of North America, as well as charitable individuals, families, businesses, and foundations. JDC gives special thanks to the following donors whose extraordinary 2008 donations underwrote our work in Latin America:

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When helping create a nurturing haven for orphaned and vulnerable teenagers in Rwanda so they may gain the tools to build a promising future; when building wells and schools in rural Ethiopia so that a family may enjoy better health and productivity; when providing emergency relief to countries devastated by natural disaster, such as an earthquake or tsunami—JDC acts in the Jewish tradition and spirit of *tikkun olam*, or “repairing the world.”

Through its International Development Program, JDC reaches out to non-Jewish people suffering from poverty, natural disaster, and the effects of war and instability. With 95 years of experience, JDC is in a unique position to export its core expertise, sharing its time-tested models and knowledge while engaging and empowering local organizations through active partnership. The result is a mix of immediate crisis relief and mid- or long-term development assistance that has had a lasting, sustainable impact on communities across the globe.
Breast cancer is a leading cause of death in women worldwide, and early detection is the most important factor in fighting the disease. Through JDC’s Women’s Health Empowerment Program (WHEP), women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Hungary, Montenegro, Russia, and elsewhere are empowered with the right information about breast cancer—how to detect it and how to treat it—and are reaching out to each other in a network of support.

WHEP gained major momentum through its partnership with Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the world’s largest breast cancer organization. In October 2008, the first JDC and Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure was held in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The race joined 2,400 Muslims, Jews, Serbs, and Croats who walked together to promote breast cancer education and treatment.

One of the most rewarding elements of this work is bridging community members, local organizations, and government officials who band together for a common cause, regardless of political, cultural, and religious differences.

RESTORING HOPE FOR ORPHANS IN RWANDA

DEEP SCARS The 1994 genocide in Rwanda stole the lives of nearly one million men, women, and children, and in its wake, this tragedy left the country with 1.2 million orphans. The scars of loss run deep in the country, and many Rwandan youth have been left to fend for themselves.

VILLAGE OF HOPE The plight of the young and orphaned in Rwanda inspired the creation of the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village: a safe, nurturing environment where up to 500 Rwandan teenagers may learn, volunteer, gain training, and restore hope to their young lives. A unique partnership among JDC and US, Israeli, and Rwandan experts, the village is modeled on an Israeli Youth Village that housed Holocaust orphans and immigrant children in the 1950s.

BUILDING A FUTURE The state-of-the-art Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village contains a school, a health and wellness center, housing, and other facilities. Counseling, volunteer opportunities, and vocational training are combined with formal education. The village opened its doors in December 2008, and is already helping young Rwandans gain the tools to build a promising new future.

EMPOWERING WOMEN

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HELPING COMMUNITIES IN ETHIOPIA ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY

Ethiopia faces humanitarian challenges that require long-term solutions and strong partnerships. In Ethiopia, JDC focuses on helping communities achieve sustainability by improving access to fresh water, broadening healthcare, and creating education opportunities.

WATER AND SANITATION Limited access to clean water has a ripple effect on communities. Disease and illness can spread, causing disability and taking lives. Also, productivity and
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education are hindered—when a child spends hours a day carrying water from a distant source to her home, she is unable to go to school. JDC helps communities in the Gondar district build freshwater wells, making clean, safe water locally available. JDC also helps these communities improve overall sanitation and health through the construction of latrines and the promotion of sanitary behaviors.

HEALTHCARE Through key partnerships, JDC brings life-saving medical treatment to Ethiopians. JDC works with the Mother Teresa Care Center to reach children and young adults suffering from severe spine disease. Through a program with Baylor University, JDC helps bring medical experts to Ethiopia to provide treatment and training and expand local medical expertise.

EDUCATION A lack of adequate school facilities in Ethiopia has contributed to low literacy rates and, in many cases, has trapped families in a vicious cycle of poverty. Working hand-in-hand with communities, JDC is helping build new schools, and rebuild old ones, in the Gondar district. In addition, JDC established a college scholarship program for Ethiopian women.
JDC’s programs are supported primarily by contributions to the annual campaign of the Jewish Community Federations throughout North America in partnership with the United Jewish Communities (UJC).

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