



An Open Letter to the Community

Dear Friends:

This is not a fund raising letter. It is an update to keep you abreast of JUF/Federation's efforts to address the current economic crisis.

There is no denying that we are in the midst of the perfect economic storm. The stock market is on a roller coaster ride the likes of which the country has not seen in decades. Members of our community are losing their jobs, their health insurance, even their homes, and the economic downturn has led to a dramatic increase in people seeking emergency assistance throughout the JUF/Federation system.

Families who have never before had trouble paying their bills are coming to our partner agencies for help with their mortgage, rent and utilities. Senior citizens on fixed incomes are unable to pay for life-preserving medications. Many single mothers, working poor families and veterans simply are not getting by. And the demand for food assistance for Jews of all ages is spiraling beyond the current capacity of our meal programs and food pantries.

Meanwhile, State and federal governments have slashed support for our local agencies precisely as the community's needs are growing. And as you would expect, Federation's investment results are also down.

It will be a challenging year for our agencies, schools and synagogues as they strive to respond to the needs born of this economic crisis. Though JUF/Federation annually directs significant resources to provide for the basic needs of the most vulnerable members of our community, the increased demand is significant.

A financial emergency like this underscores the need for our JUF/Federation system: stable, far-reaching, and poised to respond to emerging challenges. We have a responsibility to care for our own, and our system is uniquely positioned to do so. In its 108 years, this institution and this community have experienced many ups and downs, but we have never failed to find the resources to do what we need to do.

Our efforts will be funded out of a variety of sources including the 2008 JUF Annual Campaign, and the 2009 Annual Campaign. JUF/Federation has established a special initiative to help our agencies tide over the newly-unemployed, those severely-strained members of the middle class, and, as always, the most vulnerable members of our community. **J-HELP: A Boost in Tough Times** will provide emergency relief—particularly food, utility and rent assistance—to help people weather this storm for perhaps the next 18 months.

In addition to providing financial resources, our JUF/Federation system also is poised to mobilize the human resources to assist those who are struggling. From serving meals to organizing clothing drives, our volunteer network stands at the ready at this critical time. If you are willing and able to volunteer, call the TOV Hotline at 312.357.4762 or e-mail: tov@juf.org.

We cannot pretend that JUF/Federation will be able to fix every problem born of this economy, nor can we address every individual need. But we can marshal our strength and tighten the safety net that is central to our tradition and indispensable to our community, plugging the holes and service gaps to assure that people do not fall through the cracks at this challenging time. We will of course give priority to the JUF Annual Campaign in the months ahead to assure that we have the necessary resources to accomplish this. If you're in a position to do so, we do hope you will consider increasing your commitment.

Together, we will weather this storm.

Sincerely,

David Sherman
Chairman of the Board

Steven B. Nasatir
President

PS—If you personally are in need of assistance or access to resources in our community, please contact the J-HELP Hotline at 312.357.4949 or e-mail: JHELP@juf.org