



Advocacy Update

Sent February 22, 2012

Jewish Disability Awareness Month

February is Jewish Disability Awareness Month. Take this opportunity to increase sisterhood and congregational awareness of the prevalence of disability among Jews and the need to make our structures more welcoming and our communities more inclusive!

The URJ website's section on disabilities notes that its "goal is the full participation in the spiritual, educational and communal aspects of synagogue life for people living with disabilities and for their families." Help fulfill this goal!

Awareness of the communal needs of families is especially needed regarding the family caregivers of individuals with Alzheimer's. Begin a conversation with your board about the impact of Alzheimer's on the patients and their caregivers. Circulate this e-mail to your board members, asking them to read Benjamin J. Dubin's blog "Reducing Loneliness for Caregivers" on www.RJ.org. Plan a brief discussion at your next board meeting to begin brainstorming about ways your women's group could help to reduce the isolation of the caregivers of Alzheimer's patients in your congregation. Benjamin Dubin suggests programs and services that would provide "comfort and help to caregivers. These include support groups, sermons, newsletter articles and educational programs that highlight caregivers' needs; respite care, enabling caregivers to participate in congregational activities; and training volunteers to make friendly visits to the home of the person with Alzheimer's."

Contact Rabbi Edythe Mencher, Specialist on Caring Community and Jewish Family Concerns, at emencher@urj.org for Jewish texts, as well as resources on aging and caregiving for individuals with cognitive impairments. You can also obtain information from the [Alzheimer's Association](#) and [The Well Spouse Organization](#).

Report on UN Statement on Persons with Disabilities

Janet Stovin, WRJ's Representative to the UN Department of Public Information/Non-Governmental Organizations, reported today on the recent statement of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development (CSD) Mr. Shuaib Chaiken. She indicated that he spoke of upcoming meetings on disability and indicated that their goals include mainstreaming of the efforts on behalf of disabled persons' empowerment and inclusion in all aspects of human endeavor.

URJ Hosting Webinar – Fighting Hunger One School at a Time

Date: Thursday, March 1st, 2012
Time: 2:00PM – 3:00PM EST

Do you want to help end childhood hunger in America? Join the webinar to learn how to establish partnerships between your sisterhood, local food banks and schools to provide food for children in need. "Backpack Buddies" programs, currently being run in communities throughout North America, provide nutritious meals to children from food-insecure homes. Each Friday afternoon, students receive a

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backpack filled with balanced meals and healthy snacks for the weekend, when they don't have access to free or discounted school meals. Your sisterhood can become a sponsor and coordinator of this program in your community!