

JPAC Action Report

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January 2007

Good News From the Bronx...



The United Odd Fellow and Rebekah Home announced plans to erect a building with 72 one-bedroom units for seniors with very low income next to the 215-room nursing home it is currently building in the Castle Hill section of the Bronx.

Funding for this project was secured through the efforts of Congressman Joseph Crowley, Councilwoman Annabel Palma and Borough President Adolfo Carrion. The United Odd Fellow and Rebekah Home received over \$9 million dollars from HUD, which has funneled approximately \$65 million into New York State to assist low-income seniors and persons with disabilities access affordable housing.

Although HUD has provided most of the funding for the construction of this new complex, it has also given a \$1.5 million renewable grant to subsidize rents for seniors. The ground breaking for this construction will take place in 2008 and hopefully by 2009 it will be occupied.

Information for this article was taken from "Odd Fellows Announces Plan for 72 Units For Low-Income Elderly" written by Jennifer Procaro published in Bronx Times on November 16, 2006.



- Bola Aribidesi
Bronx Coordinator

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We are still enjoying the positive aura surrounding our recent graduation. Although our ceremony lacked the physical presence of our founder, the late Dorothy Epstein, she continues to provide our graduates with inspiration through her lifelong efforts. The day was memorable thanks to the assistance of many of our JPAC members from the Advisory and IFSA Steering Committees...And, yes, we have already started recruiting for our Spring '07 semester. If you or any of your friends and/or colleagues have not attended IFSA, I have included the following thoughts from one of our recent graduates for your consideration:

I was hesitant to join the IFSA program. I was unsure that the class would help me become the activist I wanted to be. The skills needed, to my thinking, were way too numerous and varied. It seemed to be out of my grasp. Gosh, was I wrong! The very first class set the tone. The methods used to integrate us into a cohesive group were very impressive. We were broken into groups and told to draw (no words) aspects of our lives. It was a daunting assignment until we were assured artistry didn't count. We then formed partnerships within each group and introduced each other to the other groups. After this great introduction, conversation followed.

Each class emphasized that we were together on so many levels, in our ways of handling the challenges we faced in our lives. The class consisted of about 30 students from different parts of the world, varied backgrounds, religions and customs. The barriers were removed for the most part when we found out our concerns were universal. Each session, continued with the extremely interesting guest speakers with knowledge and humor. Participating became easier. In fact, just about everyone had something to say which added to the learning process. After the second class, I was convinced this was one of the best things that could have happened to me.

There are many issues ready to be tackled and I for one feel ready to take on my responsibility. Thank you IFSA for being there. Thank you Bola Aribidesi (JPAC's Bronx Borough Coordinator), Pat O'Malley, (MSW at the Riverside Senior Center) and the Social Action committee of the center, with whom I worked. Of course, thank you JPAC, Molly & Steve.



- Shirley Small, IFSA Fall '05

For more information about IFSA, please contact Steve Swidler at 212-273-5261. Our Spring 2006 class will begin on March 15th.

- Steve Swidler
IFSA Project Director

JPAC '07 Membership Recognition Page...

JPAC continues to thank and recognize all of our members and organizations that continue to support JPAC by paying their annual dues.

Abrams, Vivian
Anderson, Allamay (Lifetime)
Bailey, Barbara
Barrow, Geraldine
Bilander, Rose
Bosik, Seymour
Collins, Paulette **(Lifetime)**
Davidson, Jesse
Dobrer, Florence
Donohue, Patricia
Fastook, Mary Ann
Felstein, Sue
Fox, Melvin & Natalie

Friedman, Stephen
Green, Lowell
Green, Rebecca
Hans, Carole
Hazelwood, Barbara **(Lifetime)**
Holness, Elba
Horowitz, Ruth
Ishikawa, Jean
Jaffe, Jacob & Irma
Johnson, Myrtle
Kinon, Harvey
Leonard, Julie
Moore, Sylvia

Muravchik, Miriam
Nuesslein, Henry **(Lifetime)**
Palagy, Steven & Susanne
Rivera, Jorge
Roberson, Myrtle
Rogovin, Anna
Rudorfer, Sylvia
Sachs, Herb
Sherwood, Muriel
Slader, Millicent
Thomas, Cynthia
Vanderhalle, Harold
Wightman, Jean

JPAC would also like to thank the **Senior Organization of Dorie Miller** for supporting JPAC by paying their annual membership dues.

JPAC Membership Dues Renewal...

It's that time of year again...2007 JPAC Membership Renewal Time!



Annual Membership Dues:

\$15 (Individuals)
\$20 (Couples)
\$100 (Lifetime)



Annual Organization Dues:

\$50 = 50 Members or less
\$75 = 51 - 100 members
\$150 = 101 - 500 members
\$200 = 500 -1000 members
\$250 = 1000+ members

Please use the Membership Application Form on page 12 to send in with your JPAC dues. Be sure to include ALL of your recent information, name, address, etc.

All checks should be made out to JPAC/JASA.

If you have any questions regarding your current membership status, Please contact Tasha at (212) 273-5262 or email her at tforsythe@jasa.org.

110th Congress Begins in January



Recently, *Newsday* columnist Saul Friedman provided some insight regarding expectations of our new Congress. He wrote “We are headed into a period of debate about issues of concern to older people and at least modest reform on issues such as Medicare Part D....House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the new Democratic majorities - however impatient they may be to clean up after the Republicans - are expected to move slowly. For George W. Bush is still president and is armed with a veto.... Republicans can't just say no to everything Democrats will seek. Bush may be expected to call on Democrats to put up or shut up, say, on Social Security or immigration. But Democrats can be expected to seek, at first, a modest agenda.

...Pelosi has promised to...authorize Medicare to use its bulk buying power to negotiate with drug companies for lower Part D prices;... (and) use at least some of the savings on drugs to close or shrink the Part D coverage gap, or doughnut hole,... Although Bush's plans to slash and privatize Medicare and convert Social Security into private investment accounts will be off the table, Democrats will be under some pressure to deal with the long-range fiscal problems in both programs. But in addition to trying to pick legislative fights it can win and planning for 2008, Democrats have another less-understood weapon to wield and gain credibility with the American people during the next two years. I'm referring to the power of the committees they will control and the power of oversight, a vital part of the Congress' job...Beginning in January...Democrats will run the committees and their staffs, with the power of subpoena and sufficient budgets to investigate.”

The new leaders of the upcoming Congress are as follows:

Senate Democrats

- **Harry Reid** (Nevada), Majority Leader
- **Richard J. Durbin** (Illinois), Majority Whip

Senate Republicans

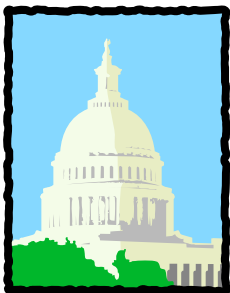
- **Mitch McConnell** (Kentucky), Minority Leader
- **Trent Lott** (Mississippi), Minority Whip

House Democrats

- **Nancy Pelosi** (California), Speaker of the House
- **Steny Hoyer** (Maryland), Majority Leader
- **James Clyburn** (South Carolina), Majority Whip

House Republicans

- **John Boehner** (Ohio), Minority Leader
- **Roy Blunt** (Missouri), Minority Whip



-Steve Swidler
IFSA Project Director

America's Health Care System

Our health care system is spiraling out of control. Annually, \$7,100 is expended per person. This cost is projected to increase to \$12,000 in 2015. These huge expenditures may be buying the United States the best *amenities* in medical care, but not the best health.



Canada spends only 60 percent as much per person on health care as the United States. Although it is true that, in Canada, the wait for medical care can sometimes involve delays in non-emergency situations, the delays could be shortened with small increases in funding. An article in *Health Affairs*, investigated the issue and found that the actual number of Canadians who come to the U.S. to avoid these waits is small. Britain spends only 40 percent as much as the United States on health care, but according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, "middle-class insured Americans are much less healthy than their English counterparts." Although Americans spend twice as much per person on health care as the other 21 wealthiest countries, data from the World Health Organization shows that of the citizens of these nations, Americans live the shortest amount of time in good health.

Both the U.S. and international studies show that the more a health care system relies on primary care, the better the outcomes and the lower the cost. American medicine is heavy on specialists and getting heavier. A Kaiser Family Foundation poll this fall found that nine out of 10 considered the following issues important in determining their vote on Tuesday, November 7th 2006: problems with quality of health care; the cost of health insurance and prescription drugs (the United States being the only industrialized country that lets drug companies charge whatever the market will bear); and the number of uninsured Americans, 47 million and growing.

While many we encounter in our health system are decent, dedicated providers, much of the environment promotes maximizing profits and not delivering our health care in an efficient manner. Cost effective does not have to mean diminishing good health care to patients!

It is only a very few of our legislators that are really addressing the crisis in affordable, quality health care. While there is probably no health program that is absolutely perfect, it is obvious that there is much to be changed and improved in our system. Our nation is rich, smart and has the capability to do great things. Please let us get involved and contact your legislators regarding this important issue.

(Based upon an article written for the Los Angeles Times by John Abramson, a clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School who is the author of "Overdosed America")

- Adele Bender
Queens Coordinator



“Baby Boomers” and Volunteerism

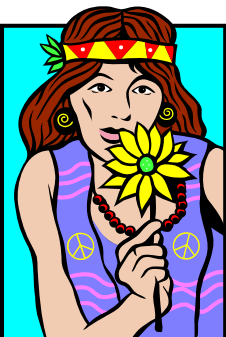


“Baby Boomers” are defined as those born between 1946 and 1964. They make up 28% of the U.S. population. The oldest of this group will turn 61 in January 2007. The Boomers will begin retiring in large numbers in the next several years. “The 77 million post-World War II Baby Boomers can live longer, happier lives by trading leisure in their golden years for volunteer community service” according to a study released by the Harvard School of Public Health. As David Jones, the CEO of the Community Service Society pointed out in a recent meeting I attended, “Work defines you in the United States, not leisure.” It is for this reason that this writer believes that the Boomers will volunteer in service organizations in unprecedented numbers. There is an ongoing campaign sponsored by the Harvard School of Public Health and the MetLife Foundation to encourage them to do just that.

The volunteer work that these new retirees perform will be very different from volunteer work done by those of past generations. Volunteer service organizations will need to revamp their appeals and in some cases change their organizations in order to enlist Baby Boomers, who according to the Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, are “independent, self-starters, impatient, willful and are not likely to take kindly to invitations to stuff envelopes.” One suggestion by Marc Freedman, who is President of Civic Ventures, is that the Boomers will more likely model their post-career lives after former President Jimmy Carter.

Already retirees are working as rape crisis counselors, educators and mentors in the public schools and hospitals, advisors/consultants to non-profit corporations, etc. Boomers will expect intensive training and continuing education in their volunteer service. They may commit to working twenty hours a week or more in these roles. One idea being discussed in some volunteer circles is the need to provide these volunteer workers with small stipends for meals and transportation. As one young retiree (62 years old) who works in Communities in Schools, which helps at risk students in Detroit stated, “I think the purpose of mankind is to serve mankind. If you're not doing that, you're not the answer. You're the problem.” Hopefully, there will be millions of boomers with similar feelings.

Take Action: The Mayor's Volunteer Center of New York City (formerly known as the Mayor's Volunteer Action Center) brings together individuals, corporations, government agencies and non-profit organizations in order to connect people and facilitate meaningful volunteer opportunities that significantly improve the quality of life in New York City. Call the Mayor's Volunteer Center at 212-251-4016. Another source of volunteer opportunities is Hearts & Minds (212-280-0333), which is located in Morningside Heights on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. It is an all-volunteer, non-profit information clearinghouse. Their stated goal is to help you get involved in effective, fulfilling ways.



- Woody Goldberg
Brooklyn Coordinator

Herpes Zoster Vaccine (Shingles)



Zostavax, made by Merck, was licensed May 25, 2006 by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use primarily in people 60 years old and older to prevent shingles. Zostavax does not treat shingles or post-herpetic neuralgia (pain after the rash is gone) once it develops. A single injection has been proven effective in cutting, by at least 50%, the chances of a shingles outbreak. Once a vaccine is licensed by the FDA, the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) votes on whether to recommend this vaccine, and if so, who should get it and at what ages. Neither the ACIP nor the federal government makes mandates or laws requiring immunization for adults. Recommendations made by the ACIP will be reviewed by the Director of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The ACIP, at their meeting on October 25, 2006, announced its unanimous approval of the vaccine.

The FDA has licensed the vaccine as safe. The vaccine has been tested in about 20,000 people aged 60 years old and older. The most common side effects in people who received the vaccine were redness, soreness, swelling or itching at the shot site, and headache. CDC, working with the FDA, will continue to monitor the safety of the vaccine after it is in general use. In a clinical trial involving thousands of adults 60 years old or older, Zostavax prevented shingles in about half (51%) of the people and post-herpetic neuralgia in 67% of the study participants. While the vaccine was most effective in people 60-69 years old it also provided some protection for older groups.

While details are evolving, it is anticipated that zoster vaccine will not be covered under Medicare part B (which covers influenza and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine as well as hepatitis B for moderate and high risk persons). The vaccine will instead be reimbursed through the Medicare Part D program and EPIC. Beneficiaries should contact EPIC and their Part D plan for more information. The cost of the vaccine ranges from \$150 to \$300. Under EPIC, the charge for Zostavax is limited to \$20. However, not all pharmacies sell the vaccine. Due to individual considerations, please discuss the matter with your physician to determine if the vaccine is appropriate for you.

The CDC National Immunization Program (NIP) of the US Government's Department of Health and Human Services was a source for this information.

Take Action: CDC officials estimate that of the 50 million Americans older than age 60, more than 95% have had chickenpox as a child, making them vulnerable to shingles. Without vaccination, approximately 20% of those will eventually get shingles, and if one reaches the age of 85, their chance of contracting shingles approaches 50%.

Contact your Federal elected representatives to advocate for coverage of the vaccine by Medicare Part B.

- Steve Swidler
IFSA Coordinator

Recommendations to Protect, Improve and Expand Medicare



J PAC supports the following recommendations which were put forth at the recent meeting of the New York Network for Action on Medicare and Social Security (NYNAMSS):

- **Preserve** Medicare as a financially sound and universal social insurance program by repealing the arbitrary 45% general revenue budget cap that could trigger new benefit cut-backs and eligibility limits; repeal the means test for Part B premiums.
- **Improve** the new Part D drug benefit by repealing the ban on Medicare negotiating prices directly with the drug manufacturers; allow Medicare to offer the benefit directly; allow existing state pharmacy assistance programs (like New York's EPIC) to be a primary Part D plan; and eliminate the asset test for low-income enrollees to qualify for extra help.
- **Improve** existing Medicare by expanding benefits to include full coverage for mental health, dental, vision and hearing needs.
- **Expand** Medicare for a national health plan for all!

H.R.676, a proposed national health plan for everyone, is House of Representatives Bill 676, otherwise known as the **United States National Health Insurance Act**. This bill would create a publicly-administered, privately-delivered health care program that would provide health care for all Americans. 42 million Americans are now covered by Medicare. **H.R. 676** would improve and expand the Medicare system to cover all Americans - regardless of employment, income or health status.

H.R.676 is a "single payer" system. A "single payer" plan gives American citizens the power to unite and negotiate as a single entity for effective health care - at a reasonable price. Virtually all other industrialized nations have "single payer" plans and, as a result, their citizens enjoy better overall health care, while paying much less than we do in America.

Take Action: **H.R.676** currently has been endorsed by 71 Congressmembers. But that isn't enough - yet - to pass the bill in the House of Representatives. You need to let your voice be heard. Contact your representative in Congress to let them know you support **H.R.676**. If you don't know who represents you in the House, go to www.house.gov to find out the best way to contact him/her and tell them you want to know where they stand on **H.R.676** and to ask them to endorse the bill. You can also be connected to your representative by calling **1-800-426-8073** toll-free and ask to speak to your representative. If you do not know who your representative is, the operator will help to connect you. Additionally, contact your NY City Council Member to request that NY City lead the way in this effort by supporting (City Council) **Resolution Number 75-2006** which strongly urges the United States Congress to pass **H.R.676**.

- Steve Swidler
IFSA Director

Excerpt of the testimony submitted to the New York City Board of Election on November 21, 2006 in Support of Paper Ballots and Precinct-Based Optical Scanners With Accessible Ballot Marking Devices



Throughout the country, there have been incidents of Election Day concerns largely attributed to the new electronic voting machines. Reports show that the electronic voting machines confused poll workers and caused some precincts to extend their voting hours or switch to paper ballots due to electronic glitches and human error. Election officials from Ohio and Illinois were inundated with calls from voters upset that poll workers did not know how to operate new electronic equipment. Voting in Cook County, Ill., continued past the scheduled closing time after apparent computer error prevented voters from casting ballots. In Marion County, about half of the 914 precincts reported difficulties getting machines started. In Delaware, voters in 75 precincts were frustrated because the cards that activate machines had been incorrectly programmed.

The NYS Board of Elections (BOE) is in a unique position because unlike the other states, the board was not hasty in its decision to purchase electronic voting machines. The BOE can learn from other precincts, throughout the country, and take appropriate measures to ensure that the integrity of New York City's voting process is not compromised by faulty voting machines. It is critical that the Board of Elections chooses voting machines that give every New Yorker, both young and old, an opportunity to easily and comfortably vote with accurate, verifiable results.

JPAC is deeply concerned about the possibility of the BOE purchasing touch screen electronic voting machines. We do not believe that electronic voting machines will provide a secure, accurate and cost effective system for New York residents. Optical scan systems are accessible to all voters; they are reliable, auditable, re-countable and cost effective. They give persons with disabilities and language barriers an opportunity to participate in the voting process. Presently, precinct-based optical scan systems are used by approximately 49% of the counties in the United States. They are proven and tested voting systems and are being used by many states to comply with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

When discussing voting machines, JPAC members want simplicity and accuracy. A majority of seniors vote. Many have never used a computer. Electronic voting machines could systematically disfranchise many seniors who are intimidated by computers. Additionally, a large percentage of poll workers are older adults who may have never used a computer. The BOE has a responsibility to poll workers and voters to provide both groups with the easiest and most accurate machines. JPAC urges the Commissioners of our New York City Board of Elections to adopt optical scanners and ballot marking devices as New York City's new equipment for rapid HAVA compliance. Our democracy demands fair and honest elections, with results that can be trusted by the public. Only through the use of paper ballots and optical scanners can the integrity of the voting process be maintained.

Some wording and formats of this testimony has been changed or deleted for the purpose of the space available for this article. Information for this testimony were cited from:

"Electronic Voting Machines Confound Some Poll Workers, Prompt Extended Voting Hours," <http://www.iht.com>
November 7, 2006.

Linn, Brad. "New Electronic Machines Bedevil Voting," <http://www.theglobeandmail.com>
August 11, 2006.

- Bola Aribidesi
Bronx Coordinator



OWL NEWSLETTER

*The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
January 2007*

Greater NY Chapter Older Women's League
Box 1242, Ansonia Station
New York, NY 10023
Tel . 212-663-2932

Remembering...Matt Baylen

It is with deep regret and sorrow that we announce the death of Matt Baylen, the husband and of our beloved leader and founder, Joyce Baylen. Matt Baylen was a good friend of OWL/GNY and he and his family continues to be active in our chapters after Joyce's death in 2000.

Thank you Matt, we will miss you!



New York Statewide Action Council's 2007 Raffle Calendar Now Available

StateWide is pleased to announce that our 2007 calendar is now available. The price is again \$20. We think you will be pleased again with our new calendar that depicts colorful scenes of New York State. Those who purchase the calendar will also be sent a list of the important telephone numbers for senior services in New York State.

This calendar is one of StateWide's most important grassroots fundraisers for the year. So buy one for yourself or as a nice holiday gift for a family member or a friend. Call the toll-free number (800) 333-4374. Calendars will be on sale at the holiday party on Monday, December 11, 2006.



The Uninsured Climb to 46.6 Million

Every year, the U.S. Census Bureau reports on health care coverage. Here then, is a quick-and-dirty snapshot of the state of our ever-worsening health care system (thanks to the UHCAN folks):

- The number of people without health insurance in 2005 increased by 1.3 million to a total of 46.6 million. In 2000 the total was 39.8 million.
- The percentage of people covered by employment-based insurance continued to drop to 59.5%.
- 800,000 people got themselves into government health insurance programs, mostly Medicaid and the Veterans Administration.

The worst news; in spite of increased enrollment in SCHIP and Medicaid, is that "The number of uninsured children increased by 361,000 to 11.2 million." And in Washington, nobody's head rolls.

To these disheartening numbers one must add, as Dr. Steffi Woolhandler says, the untold millions whose coverage is "so skimpy that a major illness would bankrupt them."

Enough. It's time to kick out the money-grubbers and get national health insurance for all.



Beyond “Senior Moments”

What you need to know about Dementia...



What is dementia?

“Dementia is defined as a decline in cognition – whether it be one’s memory, language skills, spatial orientation or decision-making capacity-that leads to the problems performing familiar, everyday activities,” explains Jeffrey Sevigny, MD, a neurologist at Beth Israel Medical Center. The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer’s disease.

Unfortunately, dementia often goes undiagnosed in its earlier stages, when treatment can be most effective. Arriving at a dementia diagnosis starts with a thorough medical history and performing a battery of non-invasive neurological exams, including blood tests, an MRI to look for structural abnormalities in the brain, a SPECT or PET scan to view the brain’s metabolic function and a neuropsychological exam to test specific cognitive areas of the brain.

Once a patient is diagnosed with dementia, doctors focus on treatment options. For Alzheimer’s, for example, there are medications that have been shown to help with behavioral symptoms and slow the rate of progression of cognitive symptoms.

Physicians also provide support to caregivers and family members and tell them what to expect as their loved one’s condition progresses, as well as refer them to organizations like the New York City chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association for additional resources.

Doctors also advise patients and caregivers on obtaining home services, handling assets, making future health decisions and assigning a health care proxy.

Save the Date

Upcoming Gray Panther Meeting:

Coming in 2007 – January 10th, “The Outlook for Medicare,” February 14th (Valentine’s Day), “Peace and Love,” March 14th, “Making NYC Parks Accessible for All.”



**Best Wishes for a Healthy,
Peaceful 2007 -
To all our sister OWLs and
friends!
Don’t Agonize, Organize!**

We Need You!

Renew your JPAC 2007 Membership Today!



If you haven't already done so, please send in your 2007 membership dues.
Also, encourage your senior center, church, synagogue, and retiree group to join JPAC.

(please check one)

ANNUAL: \$15 _____ \$20 _____
(Individual) (Couple)

Sliding fee: \$ _____ *(Whatever you can afford)*

LIFETIME: \$100 _____ \$150 _____
(Individual) (Couple)

ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL DUES:

\$50 = 50 Members or less
\$75 = 51 - 100 members
\$150 = 101 - 500 members
\$200 = 500 - 1000 members
\$250 = 1000+ members

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

*Don't forget, you get recognition in the next month's JAR!
Please make all checks payable to JPAC/JASA and mail it into the JPAC office at
132 West 31st Street, 10th Floor, NYC 10001*



Please keep this handy



January
2007

JPAC Calendar of Events
Happy New Year!

4 Thursday	1 p.m. - Membership Committee Meeting - @ JPAC for Older Adults, 132 West 31st Street, 10th Floor, (between 6th & 7th Avenues). Please RSVP to Bola at (718) 365-4044.
5 Friday	1 p.m. - Mental Health Committee Meeting - @ JPAC for Older Adults, 132 West 31st Street, 10th Floor, (between 6th & 7th Avenues). Please RSVP to Woody at (718) 934-7718.
12 Friday	10 a.m. - Staten Island Borough Meeting - @ the Staten Island Jewish Community Center, 1297 Arthur Kill Road. Please RSVP to Steve at (212) 273-5261.
16 Tuesday	1 p.m. - Housing Committee Meeting - @ JPAC for Older Adults, 132 West 31st Street, 10th Floor, (between 6th & 7th Avenues). Please RSVP to Adele at (718) 286-1528.
29 Monday	10 a.m. - JPAC Citywide Meeting - @ Jasa Cooper Square, 200 East 5th Street, NYC. Please RSVP to Tasha at (212) 273-5262.



Jewish Association for Services for the Aged
JPAC for Older Adults
132 W. 31st St. - 10th Floor
New York, NY 10001

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JPAC Action Report

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Tasha Forsythe, Administrative Assistant

☎ (212) 273-5262 ☎

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JPAC is sponsored by the
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JPAC is strictly non-partisan