

National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh Section
Annual Report for the Program Year 2006-2007
By Lynne Garfinkel, President

I am delighted to present the Annual Report of the National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh Section for the program and fiscal year 2006-2007. Last year, we constructed the Annual Report within the context of our 2004-2006 Strategic Plan, in order to give it meaning beyond a listing of events and accomplishments. We have completed this strategic plan and have entered into a new planning cycle, under the leadership of Organizational Development & Planning Vice President **Paula Garret**. Our goals align with those of the national organization and focus on strengthening the connection between community service and social action, increasing our influence and visibility, increasing financial support of Section to achieve our program goals, building leadership, and adapting to change to attract and keep members. I have had amazing support by the officers and directors of the Board as well as dedicated volunteers and the core of NCJW members. My thanks to all of you!

On a sad note, I want to recognize again the passing away of two of our most venerated, long time Board members, **Gert Caplan**, and **Bernice Herzog**. They were tireless, dedicated volunteers and leaders, and they are missed by all of us.

Where possible, we have included the names of volunteers on major project and program committees. In some cases, such as Designer Days, we have too many to name here (a good problem!). Please be sure to look at the Volunteer Recognition List—and if we inadvertently left off your name, let us know and we hope you accept our apology!

SOCIAL ACTION & EDUCATION

Our “Year of Advocacy” has been demanding, exciting, and rewarding. We have successfully brought our strategic plan into action, aligning our priorities with that of National while channeling our section’s individual passion and programs into concrete social actions that address the needs of women, children, and families in the Pittsburgh area.

We officially kicked off the “Year of Advocacy” with the 2006 Opening Program, featuring the inaugural **Rachel Porter Social Action Fund Program** and Washington power broker and former Gore-Lieberman Presidential Campaign Manager **Donna Brazile**. A diverse crowd of over 300 gathered at the Eddy Theater at Chatham College. The event was ably chaired by **Susan Nitzberg**, and co-chaired by **Ruth Garfinkel** and **Lynette Lederman** and the Opening Program committee of **Dena Chottiner, Judy Greenwald Cohen, Phyllis Cohen, Marion Damick, Karen Egorin, Elyse Eichner, Joan Ettinger, Lynn Farber, Lynne Garfinkel, Laurie Gottlieb, Lynne Jacobson,**

Nancy Polinsky Johnson, Judi Kasdan, Stefani Pashman, Laurel Rosenberg, Twyla Sable, Christine Stone, Connie Sukernek, Joan Weinbaum and Barbara Weschler. Judy Roscow and Pat Siger chaired a patron event afterward.

Shortly thereafter, 18 of us attended the Pennsylvania Governor's Conference for Women held at the Pittsburgh Convention Center, including **Kathy Arnheim, Sandy Chernen, Marion Damick, Karen Egorin, Lynne Garfinkel, Ruth Garfinkel, Pinky Lebovitz, Lynette Lederman, Susan Nitzberg, Laurel Rosenberg, Randi Shaw, Lynne Siegel, Christine Stone, Connie Sukernek, Judy Vernick, Melanie Weisbord**, as well as staff members Cindy Busis and Bonnie Rubin.

NCJW again chaired the March Against Domestic Violence was held on Wednesday, October 18th, as part of the YWCA's A Week Without Violence. We carried ten of our silhouettes from the County Courthouse to Market Square. Those in attendance for the rally against domestic violence included: **Karen Egorin, Lynne Garfinkel, Christine Stone, Twyla Sable, and Roxanne Wolk**, as well as staff members Bonnie Rubin, Luana Hollingshead, and Cindy Busis.

We were honored when, in December, our Washington, DC office asked us to organize and host a follow-up work shop for the NCJW-led Pennsylvanians for a Fair and Independent Court Judicial Nominations Coalition. The half day training for about 60 people at the Rivers Club focused on effective messaging to the public about the decisions and issues at stake within the federal courts, including the Supreme Court. The trainers included **Christine Jahnke**, President of Positive Communications based in Washington, DC; **Erica Swanson**, Field Manager at the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; and **Debbie Stillman**, Associate Director of the NCJW DC office.

A busy spring followed the winter with three outstanding and well attended programs. NCJW presented a very well-received Teen Dating Violence program as well as a Poverty Simulation, in cooperation with the Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners and the JCC. We also held an emotional and compelling mini-unveiling in the Criminal Court to honor the memory of domestic violence victim Andrea Umphrey, organized by **Joanne Witkowski**. Many thanks to **Phyllis Cohen** and **Dr. Jamie Stern**, co-chairs of the Teen Dating Violence program, as well as **Joanne Witkowski**, who also presented, and **Dena Chottiner, Karen Egorin, and Twyla Sable**. **Susan Nitzberg** and **Lynne Jacobson** chaired the Poverty Simulation, in which over 40 people, including former State Treasurer **Barbara Hafer**, participated. In April, NCJW served on the host committee of a path-breaking conference in Pittsburgh sponsored by **Theresa Heinz Kerry** and the Heinz Endowments on Women's Health and the Environment.

As always, NCJW worked closely with a variety of community coalitions, including Compassionate Assistance for Rape Emergencies Act with PCAR, Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition, Jewish Domestic Violence Task Force (**Hilary Spatz** and **Jamie Stern**, representing NCJW). Our Silent Witness Initiative silhouettes traveled to the SAVE walk, in collaboration with 6 victim service agencies including the WC&S and to a number of other sites and events around the region this year. I want to thank outgoing

Silent Witness Initiative chair **Twyla Sable** for years of devoted service and boundless energy, and welcome to incoming chair **Joanne Witkowski**.

The Year of Advocacy established a “theme” for the year, which carried through all of our programs, events, and activities, from Opening Meeting in September through Annual Meeting at the end of May. Vice President for Communications **Laurie Gottlieb** took the lead in creating consistent, branded publicity and marketing pieces as well as press releases that carried NCJW to a new level of professionalism and visibility in the community. Many thanks to Laurie for her expertise and numerous hours of effort!

State Public Affairs Network

Pittsburgh Section continued to be a mainstay of the State Public Affairs Network, chaired by NCJW Inc. Board member **Eleanor Levie**. The core group of vice presidents **Karen Egorin** and **Joan Weinbaum**, with **Marion Damick**, **Christine Stone**, and **Cindy Busis**, participated in the mostly monthly calls that update the state NCJW network on critical public policy issues for education and advocacy. Christine throughout the year developed policy briefings and sent out action alerts to our expanding email list.

NCJW’s busy year resulted in no fewer than five proclamations from City Council and the Mayor’s Office, further testimony to our visibility and the importance of our work. All of our events and activities were linked to ongoing projects, such as the Children’s Rooms in the Courts and Pic A Bag. The “icing on the cake” was acknowledgment by National with the *Building Bridges From Community Service to Advocacy* award at the 2007 NCJW Washington Institute—which also had the largest Pittsburgh Section delegation in years, including **Beverly Block**, **Cathy Cohen**, **Karen Egorin**, **Lynne Garfinkel**, **Stefani Pashman**, **Sharone Pasternak**, **Laurel Rosenberg**, **Christine Stone**, and **Barbara Weschler** (staff members Cindy Busis and Bonnie Rubin also attended). But the real recognition goes to Social Action Vice President **Christine Stone**, who made all of this happen—and who has just been named State Public Affairs Vice Chair for Pennsylvania!

COMMUNITY SERVICE

National Council of Jewish Women Pittsburgh Section built its reputation over the past 114 years on identifying and addressing unmet community needs through innovative projects that improve the lives of women, children, and families in the region. Vice President **Jenn Finkelstein** led this important mission-based area of NCJW. I welcome **Jamie Feldstein** as co-Vice President of Community Service in 2007-2008.

Children’s Playrooms in the Courts

Over 5,000 children this year received temporary childcare in the three rooms in the Lobl, Criminal, and Municipal Courts while their parents or caregivers attended to court

business. This includes the incorporation of prospective and empanelled jurors' children into the Lobl Waiting Room. NCJW is instrumental in supporting the courts' goal of increasing diversity in the jurors' pool as our service facilitates parents and caregivers serving on juries. New supervisor **Corinn Copsky** has brought a new dimension to the Room.

The Advisory Committee, chaired by **Lynne Siegel** and **Mona Strassburger**, had its first fund raising event, highlighting the Lobl Waiting Room in the Family/Juvenile Court and the inauguration of service to jurors. We honored **President Judge Joseph James** and **District Court Administrator Ray Billotte** for their support of the Rooms and for enabling us to implement child care for jurors' children. **Judge Lawrence Kaplan** and PA Supreme Court **Justice Max Baer** spoke at the program, remarking on the importance of the Rooms in furthering diversity of the jurors' pool.

Volunteers are an integral part of this NCJW project. This year, twenty-four adult volunteers, three college students, and one teen volunteer have contributed a total of 1,578 hours to the children!. Thanks to the diligence of **Joan Levy**, our volunteer chairperson, we have added two new volunteers **Karen Miller** and **Cheryl Dee**. The project strives to provide a rewarding and constructive experience that fulfills the volunteer while engaging the children. Other than the knowledge that every volunteer is making a difference in a child's life, we try to thank our volunteers in small ways. At the Annual Recognition Luncheon the Rooms honored **Joan Levy** for her 15 years of dedicated service. **Marilyn Asimow, Ethel Gill, Elaine Israel, Bernice Levine, Annette Lutz** and **Carole Wolsh** for their five years of dedication to the children.

Many thanks to director **Ellen Siegel** and the Rooms staff –**Corinn Copsky, Jacy Eastland, Judy Ehrenwerth, Danita Hicks, Rose Pian** and **Zoya Semenova**.

Pic A Bag

Pic A Bag remained busy throughout the year, under the direction of chairperson **Cynthia Abrams**. We began the program year in late August with a major new “spin-off”—collaboration with Pittsburgh Steeler **Charlie Batch** and his Best of the Batch Foundation. Through a meeting initiated by past president **Lynette Lederman**, we created the “NCJW Batch Packs for Kids” project, teaming with Charlie and his foundation director, **Latasha Wilson**, to collect school backpacks and supplies for 100 children attending Barrett Elementary School in Homestead. Charlie himself distributed the backpacks and the children, with the guidance of NCJW volunteers, got to “shop” for their own supplies to fill the bags. 14 NCJW volunteers served on this project committee and assisted at the event, including **Cynthia Abrams** (chair), **Rachel Blaufeld, Elyse Eichner, Jenn Finkelstein, Lynne Garfinkel, Dana Himmel, Joelle Krasik, Lynette Lederman, Elana Slesnick, Hilary Spatz, Gerri Sperling, Melanie Weisbord,** and **Marla Werner**. This coming year, we will expand the project to include each and every student at Barrett Elementary School.

We continued to supply the Allegheny County Department of Children and Youth Services with bags for children removed from their homes to foster or medical care, as well as the homeless and women’s shelters served by the Homeless Children’s Education Fund and the Allegheny County Intermediate Unit. We expanded beyond Allegheny County into Washington, Fayette, and Greene counties. Chairperson **Cynthia Abrams** sourced a new supply of duffel bags to meeting the ongoing need for this service. Over 200 bags have been distributed this year. Once again, many volunteers showed up for “stuffing parties and NCJW played host to two Mitzvah Days—one on December 25 for the UJF, and one in April for the Rodef Shalom/Calvary Church activity. Many thanks to behind the scenes organizers and promoters, including **Lynn Farber, Jenn Finkelstein, Dana Himmel, and Melanie Weisbord,**

Book Drive

The re-invigoration of the Book Drive for the Children’s Rooms at the Courts continued with chairperson **Hilary Spatz** at the helm. Hilary contacted book companies for donations and ran the second annual Book Drive at the Allegheny Courts, organizing a simultaneous drive at schools around the city, to once again celebrate the Month of the Young Child in April. Thanks again also to **Laurie Moser** and Read 365 for collaborating.

Student Scholarship

This year the Student Scholarship program awarded a total of \$12,992 worth of scholarships to thirty-one (31) students, an increase over last year in both the amount of distribution and number of recipients. We were proud to include our own NCJW Post-Secondary Scholarship Fund (formerly known as the NCJW Anniversary Fund), the criteria for which are:

- 3.0 or equivalent GPA
- Female student at any post-secondary level
- Profile reflecting missions and values of NCJW
- Demonstration of financial need

Chairpersons **Nancy Israel** and **Dana Himmel** worked closely with Central Scholarship Service of the Jewish Family and Children’s Services and ably led the NCJW committee: **Judy Cohen, Gert Kaplan** (of blessed memory), **Roberta Feldman, Elaine Krasik, Estelle Kruman, Lynette Lederman, Sally Libson, Laurie Moser, Claralyn Phillips, Karen Ross, Madelain Tauberg, Frommie Whitman, and Paula Zunder.** Many thanks to NCJW executive assistant **Lisa Boehmke** for expertly staffing this project.

Suit Yourself and the “Shop Project”

The Suit Yourself project is a natural outgrowth of Thriftique, which raises revenue for NCJW as a social enterprise. We are able to offer organizations that assist women, men, and families in programs of re-entry, self-improvement, and job readiness vouchers to

purchase clothes and, in certain critical situations, furniture and house wares at the store. The **Thriftique staff** this year, on their own, initiated a new project in which they select additional organizations serving the most vulnerable in their neighborhoods to invite up to 10 clients in for a “shopping spree.” Over 400 vouchers through Suit Yourself and an additional eight agencies participating in the “Shop Project” resulted in more than \$20,000 in merchandise value given to those in need. Organizations benefiting included POWER, Workforce Development, the Urban League, Hill House, JF & CS, Bethlehem Haven, Healthy Start, Mercy Behavioral, Turtle Creek Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center, Career Links, Parental Stress Center, Neomya, Community Human Services, Deborah House, YMCA Homewood, and more.

Oral History

Past presidents **Marcia Frummerman** and **Gene Dickman** continued their work on the Oral History project. We are delighted that **Jill Aizenstein** carried on with the development of the curriculum evolving from our project; Jill will be teaching “In Their Own Words: Voices and Choices of Pittsburgh Jewry, 1850’s-Today” at CMU’s Academy of Lifelong Learning. The course uses, in Jill’s words, the vast oral history archives compiled by NCJW Pittsburgh Section as well as photos from the archives. Jill expects to receive her Ph.D. in Hebrew and Judaic Studies from New York University in the fall of 2007. Also on the NCJW Oral History curriculum committee and guiding the development of the course are **Dr. Alex Orbach** and **Dr. Joseph Eaton**. We were sorry to say good bye to long-time Oral History volunteer and professional librarian **Betty Berger**, who worked tirelessly to transfer all of the taped interviews from 1993-2000 and to help catalog the archive of NCJW organizational materials housed at the University of Pittsburgh Archive Library Center. As Betty retired and moved with her husband from the Pittsburgh area, we were fortunate to find **Lillian Casper** to continue the efforts in reviewing quality assurance of the tapes. Vice President **Jenn Finkelstein** has taken a keen interest in this project and works closely with Marcia and Gene.

Services to the Elderly

The Services to the Elderly committee, chaired by **Dr. Barbara Shore and Marion Damick**, met throughout the year. The committee again planned and presented a major program to the community, in collaboration with AgeWell and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Partnership for Aging. This year’s program, presented in October to a full audience in the JCC’s Levinson Hall, was entitled “A Looming Crisis: The Changing World of Older Adult Services” and featured speaker Mary Anne Kelly, Executive Director of the Southwestern PA Partnership for Aging. . The committee continued the “resident profiling” project, which involves interviewing seniors to provide information on their doors to would-be visitors and caregivers at Charles Morris and Weinberg Terrace. **Maxine Horn** continued to write educational pieces on aging/needs of the elderly for each NCJW Bulletin. This committee continues the legacy of service to the elderly that has long been a part of NCJW Pittsburgh Section. This dedicated committee also includes **Fran Caplan, Jenn Finkelstein, Marcia Frummerman, Joan Glickstein, Bernice Herzog (of blessed memory), Amy Rosenberg, and Sharyn Rubin.**

Children's Tutoring Project

This project, which is carried out under NCJW auspices but functions independently, is coordinated by **Jan Engelberg**. The volunteer tutors continue year after year working without fanfare but with commitment and effectiveness with several local elementary schools, which have included Linden School and Colfax School. Many thanks to volunteers **Fran Fall, Marian Finegold** (also a volunteer at the Lobl Playroom!), **Gary Geller, Nancy Gold-Cohen, Elizabeth Gordon, and Carole Katz**.

RETAIL

The 2006-2007 year for retail operations has been very successful. Thriftique looks beautiful, sales are on target with revenue goals, and we continue to improve our processing Designer Days sales exceeded our goal this year! We maintained our visibility in the community and our customer base increases all the time. Many, many thanks to Vice President for Retail **Roxanne Wolk**, who puts in so much time on all aspects of this social enterprise, which accounts for about half of our total operating budget!

Thriftique

We continue to need additional volunteers to help process and sell even more merchandise, and our ability to get best quality designer donations is challenged due to consignment shops, general retail environment and increase in labor costs. Fortunately, we offset these obstacles with quality merchandise at affordable prices and experienced staff with low turnover.

And—the most exciting news—we currently are planning to expand retail operations into new territories. We have developed a business plan for a second location—a designer boutique consignment shop—which we hope to open later this summer in a beautiful, street level space on Ellsworth Avenue. It's a new venture, and therefore a risk, but we think it has so many positives! We hope that women who prefer consignment to donation will come to us. Our differentiation is that we will take everything—anything that cannot be consigned, or doesn't sell as consignment—would be cycled to the Designer Days event or to Thriftique. This will be more convenient for donors who normally have to remove any merchandise that is not accepted by consignment shops. We also hope that more volunteers will want to give their time in at a high end consignment shop.

Thanks again to our core group of dedicated Thriftique volunteers. Our success is directly related to their consistent support. **Nancy Recht** has amazing knowledge and unequalled commitment to NCJW retail. Year after year she applies her expertise to pricing accessories, collectables and furniture. She continues to keep the “dealers” honest and makes sure that we command the best price for our “special” items.

Many thanks to regular Thriftique volunteers **Lenore Schwartz, Joan Reich, Robin Rosen, Marlene Litman, Marsha Stern and Rita Tauberg**. They are in the store nearly every Monday. **Karen Egorin, Ruth Garfinkel and Lynne Jacobson** also come

in, finding time in addition to all their other NCJW responsibilities, and help hang, sort and tag the endless donations in the back room.

Our dedicated staff, including Retail Director **Bonnie Rubin, Deb Teese, Liz Jones, Brandon Hampton, Jon Brunetti, Maryanne Karabinos, Agnes Morgan, Pam Wakefield, Luana Hollingshead and Lori Katsos** work hard to make THRIFTIQUE the best resale operation in Pittsburgh!

Designer Days

In the upcoming year, Designer Days 2007 will take on even more changes in an effort to move the event forward and keep it fresh. This past year, we experimented with opening Designer Days 2006 at 1:00 p.m., rather than the traditional 6:00 p.m. This greatly increased sales the first day and accounted for the boost in revenue from the event. We also were fortunate in 2006 to have received a large donation of urban street wear from MOGEAR. A huge “thank you” to **Pete Sofayov**, the owner of **MOGEAR and Printex Promotional Products**.

Designer Days 2007 will feature “preview party”, opening Designer Days on Friday, November 2, for the afternoon. Sponsoring the event and early opening will be **Jon Prince** of McKeesport Candy Co. Designer Days will continue on Saturday, from 1:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m., and then on Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. with everything 50% off. We think that these new hours will enable more customers to take advantage of the discounted day and increase the traditionally slow Sunday sales. **Roxanne, Cathy Cohen, and of course Retail Director Bonnie Rubin** worked hard to assess the event, modernize it to make it more successful.

Returning DD chairs for this year include: **Sandy Chernew** and **Marsha Stern** (set up), **Phyllis Cohen** (food), **Joan Ettinger** (new donations), **Laurie Gottlieb** (marketing), **Ruth Garfinkel and Cheryl Braver** (frontline), **Leslie Grodin** (volunteers), **Mel Weisbord and Lisa Rudick** (boutique) **Nancy Defiore** and **John Spears** (Furs), **Judy Cohen** (backroom), **Cathy Cohen** (customer service), **Jon Prince** (special events) and **Rita Tauberg** for special event/volunteer sign in.

Alliance of Nonprofit Stores

NCJW and Retail Director Bonnie Rubin have been critical players in growing the Alliance of Nonprofit Stores (ANS). Current partners include: NCJW, Bethlehem Haven, Goodwill Industries, Junior League, Salvation Army, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Treasure House Fashions (affiliated with a number of agencies assisting women in need), and the YWCA of Westmoreland County. ANS completed its strategic business plan in 2006 and now is working on a joint marketing plan to be implemented in 2007. Paul Guarino, an intern from Duquesne University, will be helping to implement our marketing endeavors. The goal of ANS to educate the public to responsible donation practices, brand our locations to promote responsible shopping and educate the public to

the community service projects of our member organizations. For more information, visit the website at www.shopans.org.

FUND DEVELOPMENT

Stay At Home Ball

Vice President **Cathy Cohen** spearheaded a major initiative this year to integrate the disparate parts of our fund development efforts, underscore that funding enables NCJW to deliver the community, educational, and advocacy services that are core to our mission, and to approach this important support activity in a comprehensive and contemporary manner. Following strategic planning led by **Paula Garret** last August and a workshop for the Board by fundraising specialist **D.J. Oshrey**, we launched the Stay At Home Ball campaign.

This year's SAHB theme paralleled the Year of Advocacy and featured all of our past presidents joining together as honorary co-chairs. Through 100% participation of the Board and tremendous effort on the part of co-chairs **Merrille Weissman** and **Elaine London**, along with **Barb Siegel**, we exceeded our goal and ended the 2006-2007 campaign at \$65,000, several thousand dollars higher than previous years!! Many thanks to **Judy Cohen, Gene Dickman, Elyse Eichner, Barbara Felman, Liz Finegold, Marcia Frummerman, Patty Hourvitz, Lynne Jacobson, Judi Kasdan, Mina Kavalier, Pinky Lebovitz, Lynette Lederman, Margaret Libson, Ruth Lieber, Carol Williams, and Gert Caplan** (of blessed memory).

Anathan House Capital Campaign

With a goal of about \$400,000 needed to complete the second stage of the renovation, the complete refurbishing of the first floor and building stairwell, Anathan House Capital Campaign Chair (and renovation chair!) **Lynne Jacobson** dove into Phase II of the campaign last spring and didn't let up. A generous matching grant to name the second floor NCJW offices for beloved past president and Hannah G. Solomon awardee **Frieda G. Shapira** (of blessed memory) early in Phase II sent us on our way to exceed our goal and raise over \$446,000 in less than one year! Major gifts came in from several funds of the Pittsburgh Foundation (including the above-mentioned gifts from the Frieda G. and Saul Shapira funds; several from the Anathan Fund thanks to the generosity of the Anathan Family relatives; the Pauline Frankel memorial Fund; and the Carlton B. & Margaret K. Jansen Fund); UJF Foundation Lillian and Dr. Henry J. Goldstein Endowment Fund; PNC Charitable Trust, estate of Kate Wurtenberg; Department of Community and Economic Development (sponsored by State Rep. Dan Frankel), and the Hafner Fund/JAA. An additional 34 individuals also made gifts toward the Campaign in Phase II, and we again achieved 100% Board participation. Many, many thanks to all!

MEMBERSHIP

I thank Vice Presidents **Phyllis Cohen** and **Lynn Farber** for a spectacular year in membership—and to **Bonnie Rubin**, Membership Coordinator. We gained 25 new members this year! Phyllis has been the consistent Membership leader over the past four years, and I am delighted that she will remain on the Board as a special appointment in a new—but related—capacity, that of chairperson of programming. Phyllis will have primary responsibility for implementing the strategic goal of overseeing the mission-based components of NCJW through the yearly educational and awareness programming. As this past year’s “theme” of A Year of Advocacy was so successful, in the forthcoming year, we will promote the theme of Women’s Wellness in our programs, fundraising, and membership drives. I am thrilled that **Jamie Feldstein** is the new co-vice president for membership, working closely with Lynn, who did a wonderful job and will serve as an excellent mentor to Jamie. In the upcoming year, membership will be woven into all that we do, as will fundraising—as we recognize that the driver for both membership and fundraising is the amazing work we do in the community and in advocating for women’s reproductive rights, children, families, and civil liberties for all.

The year was particularly marked by a relationship that we forged with the AEPi sorority at the University of Pittsburgh. AEPi selected NCJW to do its required community service, and we lost no time in putting the young women to work at Designer Days 2006! In January, NCJW hosted a Shabbat dinner for all of Hillel JUC—and had the happy problem of so many of our Board members wanting to join in that we had to make an additional donation to underwrite the students themselves! In February 2007, we invited AEPi to a reception at Anathan House, where our leadership made presentations on our history and current community service projects. Silent Witness Initiative leaders **Dr. Jamie Stern** and **Joanne Witkowski** went to the sorority in April to present a very special and very well-received program on dating violence. I was delighted that one of the women of AEPi, **Sharone Pasternak**, joined our delegation at Washington Institute in May.

May, of course, brought Annual Meeting. This year we spotlighted our literacy related programs, including tutoring, Book Drive for the Children’s Rooms in the Courts, and Oral History. Themed, “Everyone Has A Story”, the program also featured author **Jane Bernstein** and her daughter, filmmaker **Charlotte Glynn**, speaking on how they told the story of their developmentally disabled daughter/sister Rachel with a pen ... a camera ... a memoir ... a film. It was wonderful to recognize **Richard Rauh** at the Annual Meeting for his philanthropy in support of the Oral History program and to award the Dawn Hirsch Memorial Award to **Melanie Weisbord**, who does so much “behind the scenes” to organize and carry out Book Drive, Pic A Bag, fund development, and so much more. I also want to note the contributions of **Tammy Berkowitz**—her fabulous desserts—and **Jeanne Baseman** for her linens at the Annual Meeting. Congratulations and thanks to all; of course many thanks to **Phyllis Cohen** and **Lynn Farber** for chairing a wonderful Annual Meeting this year.

I want to thank as well **Twyla Sable, Karen Egorin, and Dena Chottiner** for a fun event—a shopping night at Chico’s to benefit the Silent Witness Initiative. This was our second successful shopping event of the year for the membership, to benefit our projects—the first was an Ellsworth Avenue shopping event in October. Many thanks to **Susan Rosenblatt** and **Saralee Grotstein** for hosting this event! .

ANATHAN HOUSE, ADMINISTRATION, AND FINANCE

Anathan House

Taking a deep breath, we plunged into the next stage of Anathan House renovation, focused on complete refurbishment of the first floor, home to Anathan Club. The first floor is very special as the house originally was purchased by **Bessie Anathan** in 1963 for the senior citizens program then run by NCJW, and it has housed a seniors program in one form or another ever since. The current occupant, Anathan Club, is a day program for seniors with early Alzheimers or other dementia and is operated by the Jewish Association on Aging (JAA). The JAA approached us in 2005 to renovate the Anathan Club space in order to bring it into full compliance with ADA and County codes.

We undertook a complete renovation of the kitchen, bathrooms, and sun porch (raising the floor to be even with the common area space floor), as well as cosmetic improvements including new flooring, carpeting, wall covering, painting, lighting fixtures, and the like. To achieve the renovation in the most efficient manner, we moved the Anathan Club to the third floor of the house after the Pittsburgh Affiliate of The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation vacated that space in July to move to larger space in Regent Square. Everyone worked together, and in early December, Anathan Club “took possession” of its beautiful new space on the first floor—just in time for a brand new tenant, Or L’Simcha congregation—to move into the third floor!

I cannot sufficiently thank **Lynne Jacobson**, chairperson of the Anathan House renovation, for her constant attention to detail and consistent overseeing of the project. I also want to recognize **Liz Murphy** and her colleague, **Ellen Ankney**, for their time and expertise in managing the interior design aspects of the renovation. **Dan Rothschild** provided architectural services, and many thanks to **Tom Keane, Doug Till, and Bruce Hooper** of Keane Construction for their excellent work, diligence, efficiency, and courtesy in getting the job done!

I am particularly pleased to welcome **Jeff Pallatino** on the full-time staff of NCJW as our building manager. Jeff has done a remarkable job of keeping Anathan House secure, safe, and spotless. His wife **Sonya** recently joined NCJW and fills in as administrative assistant from time to time.

Administration and Finance

Amy Himmel has served so ably as Vice President of Administration. Her purview included all of the work in preparation for the renovation and leasing of space. Thank

you, Amy, and thank you for continuing on the Board as a special appointment as chairperson of bylaws. I am delighted to welcome **Susan Jordan** as incoming Vice President of Administration. Like Amy, Susan is an attorney. She is highly regarded in Pittsburgh and had already been so helpful in advising NCJW on human resource issues and policies. **Robin Elson**, CPA, will continue as Vice President of Finance. Robin is instrumental in advising on budget, audit, and investment concerns and has helped us institute new and revised policies in all of these areas. **Judy Vernick** has lent her expertise in an analysis of our operations to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. The results will be new, comprehensive operations manuals for all processes.

I want to thank the staff of NCJW who work out of our administrative office in Anathan House—**Cindy Busis**, Executive Director, **Cheryl Devecka**, Office Manager, and **Lisa Boehmke**, Executive Assistant. Cheryl keeps tabs on everything and administers the day-to-day operations, and Lisa expertly administrates and support personnel, the scholarship program, technology, and so much more! Cindy has her eyes on the details and the big picture, which we appreciate!

Please be sure to check our brand new website, www.ncjwpggh.org. We are so lucky to have **Laura Schneiderman**, a web designer, come into our life. Laura has spent countless hours designing the new site, which now features comprehensive information on our history, community service projects, advocacy, retail operation, events, and more! We can now accept fundraising and membership payments online, as well as event registration. Thank you so much, Laura!

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As we begin the 2007-2008 year after our 2007 Annual Meeting, I look forward to another twelve months of important and engaging programming, advocacy, and service. This is the hallmark of NCJW Pittsburgh Section. This year, I will have at my side **Susan Nitzberg** in the position of Executive Vice President. Her nomination and election to this new position signals a new era in strong governance and NCJW leadership development and the achievement of another important strategic planning goal. Along with the new position of Executive Vice President, NCJW will be instituting a leadership development program to bring into the pipeline and educate in critical skills groups of women who have the passion and interest in taking a major role in NCJW into the future. I thank past presidents **Judy Cohen** and **Lynette Lederman** for developing the program, and I am honored to be in their company—in the company of all of our past and current leadership—here at NCJW.