JEWISH CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY NEWSLETTER Summer 2019

NEW NAME FOR AN OLD ORGANISATION

As a supporter of our cause we would love to keep you informed of our progress and news. In October 2018, we officially changed our name to Jewish Children's Aid Society (JCAS). We have redesigned and updated our website and invite you to have a browse. www.jcas.org.au

More training for more skills

This year, in a special project generously supported by Gandel Philanthropy, we trained assistants to help children make peer friendships and develop their social skills. We also ran a full day training before the students returned to school in January for assistants at all the Jewish schools. One hundred and fourteen assistants attended, a truly great start to the school year.

Some students need help to keep up with the academic demands of a classroom. There are children with intellectual disabilities like Down Syndrome who need their own learning program but are able to join in all other aspects of the school day. Others have a physical disability like Cerebral Palsy. These children need support in the physical aspects of the day, moving around the school, joining in sport or outside time. We also provide staff to support children with behavioural and social difficulties which often accompany an autism disorder diagnosis.

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Richard Kennet with Daniel Goldstein of Visual Domain

Every child belongs in our community

A whole generation of school children are being educated to embrace difference and welcome all Jewish children into the community.

Our goal at JCAS is supporting the Melbourne Jewish Day Schools to include students with a disability into their mainstream classrooms. Without question, the feeling of belonging and inclusion into the community is paramount to success for the child with disabilities and their family. We strongly believe that every Jewish child has a right to a Jewish education regardless of their special needs. In addition, and just as importantly, a whole generation of school children are being educated to embrace difference and welcome all Jewish children into the community. Teachers are specially trained, extra support staff employed and lessons altered to make inclusion achievable.

Our funds largely go to the pay for teachers' assistants and carers according to need. Some government subsidies are available but these cover a small fraction of the true costs involved. The NDIS does not fund schools.

Our funds, raised by our Posh Opp Shoppes, a major project of JCAS, run by our dedicated volunteer manager Rosalie Silverstein and her team. The shops will be celebrating their 20th anniversary this year and a fabulous party is planned.

Whilst we aim to provide as much funding as possible to help schools and families, with rising costs we have recognised the need to raise our profile to be better known in the community. In the past few months we have made a new promotional video (available on our website), which has been shown at JIFF, the Jewish International Film Festival, with generous support from the Erdi Group. With amazing generosity, the video company, Visual Domain, donated their time for free.

We are so proud to be a Jewish charity in which 99% of funds raised go directly to the cause. Our charity is run entirely by the members of our board, all of whom act in an honorary capacity. Our lawyers and our accountants are also honorary which keeps overall costs to a minimum.

The actual numbers are staggering. In the 2018 school year 271 children were given financial assistance. Approximately $550,000 was distributed and the Schools received assistance based on the specific needs of individual students. In the past 3 years two new schools have been given government accreditation and have joined our programme. We are now supporting all 11 Jewish Day Schools in Melbourne.

We are so grateful to all our generous donors for helping us as we strive to achieve our goals. We are stepping up our efforts once again in 2019 to close the large gap between funds available and the cost of inclusion.

Trevor Cohen, President

Patron: Ben Sternfeld OAM **President:** Trevor Cohen **Vice-President:** Rosalie Silverstein OAM **Treasurer:** Daniel Franck
Secretary: Richard Kennett **Board Members** Melody Curtis, Myrna Goldsmith, Michael Karp, Jeremy Stowe-Lindner