

# Jewish Healthcare Foundation of Pittsburgh

## GROWTH OF PITTSBURGH'S JEWISH

community in the 1890s and exclusion from existing services created a need for health care for this underserved population. To fill this need, community volunteer Annie Jacobs Davis met with 17 other women in 1898 to plan for a Jewish hospital in the city. Chartered two years later as the Hebrew Ladies Hospital Aid Society, the group worked with existing hospitals to improve care for Jewish patients and also brought health care into the community. They sought out the poor and the sick, rescuing victims suffering from typhoid, tuberculosis and pneumonia from cots in the cellars of the city's Hill District. Among other services, they funded the United Jewish Relief Society for treating tuberculosis, supported mental health programs and paid for a public health nurse.

Within a few years the group opened membership to men, expanded its fund raising and, in 1905, established the Montefiore Hospital Association. A year later the association paid \$60,000 for a Hill District site where in 1908 it dedicated the Montefiore Hospital. Among its initiatives, the hospital opened the city's first night clinic for social diseases and made periodic health checkups possible for the underprivileged. As Pittsburgh's Jewish population continued to grow, reaching 35,000 by 1913, the volunteers planned for a larger, 196-bed hospital nearby. Opening its doors in 1929, the hospital provided facilities and staff not only to treat illness but also to conduct research, teach and lead the way in public health education and community service. In 1950 the hospital added 131 beds, a medical and surgical teaching unit, and the area's first hospital-based research laboratory.

By the end of the 1980s Montefiore Hospital faced a financial crisis as government funding contracted and many patients lacked medical insurance. To keep the institution solvent, the hospital's board agreed to transfer responsibility to the University of Pittsburgh's Medical and Health Care Division, which turned over hospital management to Presbyterian University Health Services, Inc. The agreement also led to the 1990 creation of



the Jewish Healthcare Foundation of Pittsburgh (JHF), with the hospital board becoming the foundation's board. Karen Wolk Feinstein, Ph.D., was elected president.

JHF bases its programs on Jewish values and ideals as expressed through acts of social justice and charitable giving. The foundation fosters healthcare services, education and research, giving special attention to the elderly, underprivileged and underserved in both the Jewish and general populations of western Pennsylvania.

The foundation supports programs that improve the quality of health care through innovations such as the Pittsburgh Regional Healthcare Initiative; provide research, education and early detection for breast cancer, with the goal of making Pittsburgh a national center for these services; and develop initiatives that contribute to the region's emergence as an international leader in biomedical and biotechnology research. Other supported programs are designed to apply biomedical informatics, or information technology, to the healthcare industry, train healthcare professionals and prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. JHF also supports programs to enhance the quality of life of the senior population, increase

Dedicated in 1908, the first Montefiore Hospital was a converted mission in Pittsburgh's Hill District.

Members of the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society, Pittsburgh's first Jewish women's volunteer association, are shown in the 1880's



public understanding of depression and support its treatment, serve the particular healthcare needs of the Jewish community in collaboration with the United Jewish Federation, and provide physical and mental health services for children.

Major accomplishments made possible with JHF support include creation of the Jewish Association on Aging, the unique Coordinated Care Network, Pittsburgh ElderHostel, the Squirrel Hill Kosher Super Pantry, Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers of Southwestern Pennsylvania and the Caregivers Training Institute to educate those serving the elderly. In women's health, in addition to its breast cancer programs, the foundation has sponsored various components of the Race for the Cure and funded community-based screening for socially transmitted diseases.

An exciting and far-reaching JHF innovation, the Pittsburgh Regional Healthcare Initiative (PRHI) was formed in 1997 under the leadership of President Feinstein and Paul O'Neill, chairman and chief executive officer of Alcoa, who later became U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. PRHI's goal is to establish southwestern Pennsylvania as the world model for health system performance.

PRHI's strategy calls for achieving the world's best outcomes in patient care, focusing initially on heart surgery, hip and knee replacement, cesarean sections, and treatment of depression and diabetes. By adopting quality improvement methods proven in the business world, PRHI aims to produce a healthcare system that gives patients the treatment they need when they need it, without waste or errors. The initiative

empowers doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals to solve problems on the spot, measure results and share what they learn.

For children at risk, JHF helped develop and establish wellness centers in more than 30 Pittsburgh-area schools.

The foundation has supported the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh's counseling program for special-needs youngsters in child-care centers.

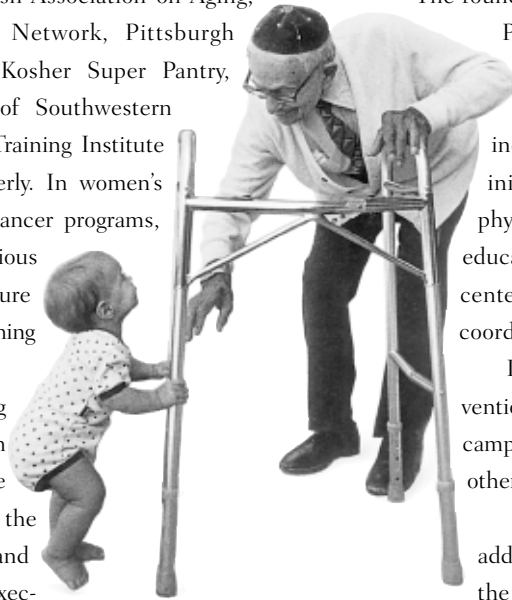
Parenting programs that JHF sponsors include Reach Out to Families — a model initiative combining home visiting, in-home physician services and community-based parent education programs-neighborhood family support centers and the Jewish — special-needs care coordination project.

In support of HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention, JHF sponsors outreach and information campaigns, an adolescent resources network and other support services.

For each of its supported populations, JHF addresses nutritional needs. Toward this end, the foundation formed Food to Grow, a collaborative with corporate leaders, food-industry representatives and public officials to plan programs, educate at-risk individuals and raise funds to combat poor nutrition and hunger.

Having provided about \$50 million in its first 10 years, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation plans to build on its successes and sponsor additional creative, problem-solving initiatives to benefit the entire western Pennsylvania community. This is the legacy of Annie Davis Jacobs and her friends, and of the countless professionals and volunteers who cultivated, and continue to cultivate, the seeds these women planted.

JHF is concerned with the healthcare of the entire Pittsburgh community, especially its vulnerable populations.



*Mi Shebeirakh* quilt by Louise Silk showing the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge symbolizes the Jewish Healthcare Foundation's mission, which relates to life and networks.