

ARCHIVES: National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section – A Brief History

Our Greater Detroit Section is celebrating its 120th year of empowering women, following the precepts set forth by the founder of our National Council of Jewish Women, Hannah G. Solomon. Here are just a few highlights from those 120 years.

During our first 18 years, from 1891 until 1909, our Section organized a committee to visit the sick, established the first scholarship fund which began what is now our Education Assistance Program, protested to the U.S. Congress against inhumane practices in the Congo and prepared and served *Penny Lunches* to public school children in hardship areas (the impetus for the Detroit city-wide school lunch program).

In 1925, the Detroit Section officially joined the National Council of Jewish Women. Highlights of the next 75 years include the establishment of a residence and summer camp for women (1933); the first Council Resale Shop (1934), still going strong; local work with refugee children and service to foreign born (1946); national resolutions urging an open door policy for Jewish immigration to what was then Palestine (1947); clubs for older adults (1948), the “Golden Age Program;” ‘Councilettes,’ (1952) a special branch for high school age girls; the first Angel Ball (1955), a gala fundraising event; a program for convalescing psychiatric patients; Operation Friendship (1960); The Orchards (1962), a residential treatment home for emotionally disturbed young boys; Meals on Wheels (1973) to provide Kosher meals to homebound and elderly individuals; a workshop for single parents which became the SPACE community service program (1978); and Children’s Advocates (formerly CASA) for guardianship cases in Oakland County Probate Court (1980).

We continue many of these programs and projects to the present day as well as adding new ones, including tutoring in the schools; distributing backpacks filled with school supplies; facilitating teen dating abuse awareness; providing a safe house for victims of domestic violence and publishing the Teen Yellow Pages resource guide for teens. We also built All Kids Playground (the first barrier free playground in the area) and sponsored an Autism Symposium which provided experts, resources and information to the community.

Since its inception, NCJW has been at the forefront of social change throughout the years. Members and supporters are outspoken champions for progressive policies at the federal, state and local levels. Over the years, NCJW’s collective voice has changed the world for the better -- impacting the lives of women, children and families in the U.S. and Israel.

We continue to go from strength to strength with

A FAITH IN THE FUTURE. A BELIEF IN ACTION.®

Chairs: Margie Ansell, Janet Moses, Arlene Oppenheim