

MEDIA RELEASE



Jewish Family Service of Greater Dallas

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Jewish Family Service Activities to Raise Awareness for Special Needs Awareness Month

Dallas, TX – With the theme “Keys to Inclusion,” The Special Needs Partnership (SNP) of Jewish Family Service will host and support activities to raise awareness throughout February’s Special Needs Awareness Month—part of a national effort to raise awareness and navigate the journey of inclusion of people with special needs. The SNP works with local synagogues, day schools, preschools and organizations to bring education and community programming to help others better understand the daily challenges of disabled individuals and provide opportunities for inclusion.

“We charge our community leaders to embed inclusion into their year-round objectives,” says Julie Chapman, SNP Community Organizer. “We believe their number one ‘key to inclusion’ will be listening closely to the shared insights of individuals with disabilities, always the single most important key to building a fully inclusive Jewish community. Individuals with disabilities want *their* voices to be heard over and above the voices of those who desire to speak on their behalf.”

JFS is hosting multiple events to support Special Needs Awareness Month.

Friendraiser

7 p.m. Private residence. This event will bring together community members to learn about the JFS Special Needs Partnership initiatives to help build a more inclusive community for those with special needs and their families. Attendees will take part in the interactive Inclusion Experience to better understand the challenges that individuals with special needs may face, hear about the work of SNP and the Special Needs Resource Team of JFS and connect with other community members to learn how to raise awareness.

SNP Movie Night

6 p.m., reception; 7 p.m. movie screening. Studio Movie Grill, 11170 N. Central Expressway at Royal Lane, Dallas 75243. Free. Advanced reservations requested, but walk-ins are welcome. *The Other Sister*, presented by the SNP, is a 1999 film reflecting the power and need for self-advocacy in a story about an intellectual developmentally delayed young woman who proves to be every bit as capable as her “perfect” sister. The movie honestly addresses the desires of adults with special needs for meaningful personal love relationships, just like individuals without disabilities. Directed by Garry Marshal and starring Juliette Lewis, Diane Keaton, Tom Skerritt and Giovanni Ribisi, some content may be inappropriate for children under the age of 13.

Inclusion Experience

Trained volunteers will take the SNP Inclusion Experience to two organizations during the month of February, Temple Emanu-El and Adat Chaverim. The Inclusion Experience is a workshop for local organizations to better understand the day-to-day activities that are challenging for those with special needs. Through a series of interactive stations, volunteers take participants through different tasks that simulate disabilities, both physical and developmental. The purpose of the Inclusion Experience is to empower organizations and individuals to make changes toward inclusion while raising awareness.

“These events are really just the beginning says Ms. Chapman. “At the end of this Special Needs Awareness Month, we want to hear from our partners about the ways in which *they* were able to increase the ability of those with special needs to fully participate in their communities.”

For more information about JFS services for children and adults with special needs, visit www.JFSdallas.org.

Jewish Family Service provides professional, effective and affordable mental health and social services that promote lifelong self-sufficiency and well-being for anyone in need regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or ability to pay.

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