

HAVE WE GOT NEWS FOR YOU!

Summer 2004



Why this Seder was so different

New book of Jewish signs

Blazing Summer in Finchley

JDA launches express interpreting service

Young peoples' groups forging ahead!

See back page for 2004 / 5 activities at the JDA...

TALKING

The JDA has increased its services for Deaf-Blind people, who often become terribly isolated because so few of us in the hearing world have learnt the one-to-one 'hands-on' sign language they use to communicate. The JDA now makes sure that a trained guide attends its weekly Day Centre sessions, to make sure that Deaf-Blind members are fully included in all the proceedings – which could range from translating the lunch menu to keeping them company during the day. When a speaker visits the Day Centre, or the JDA holds a special signed service for a Jewish festival, personal communicators are arranged for each Deaf-Blind member, so they don't miss out on anything – including the 'social' afterwards!

HANDS



And it doesn't stop there. The JDA also co-ordinates befrienders to visit Deaf-Blind people in their own homes, to help with simple jobs around the house and to ease the inevitable loneliness and boredom.



'As soon as each woman walked into the room, there was an unspoken understanding between them, an instant friendship that seemed to come from their mutual experiences of being young, Jewish, deaf and hard of hearing women who don't use sign language.' - Jacqui Press, (Co-ordinator, Services for Families and Young People) after the first meeting of a new group for young deaf and hard of hearing people.



The JDA is very excited about the success of its innovative pilot programme that has so far brought together over 40 young Jewish deaf and hard of hearing people in their 20s and 30s who communicate using speech rather than sign language. Men's and women's groups now meet regularly, resulting in life-changing discoveries about themselves and the services and facilities available to people with a hearing loss. Valuable information has been exchanged, friendships forged and many have gained the confidence to improve their careers and social lives thanks to the information and support they have received from each other, together with practical assistance and guidance from the JDA.

The programme will be launched officially at a party to be held at the end of July when a new 'brand name' – LIPSINC – will be introduced to encompass all the groups established so far. The aim is not only to attract new members but also to bring together the various existing group members so that they can meet socially and work together to develop a choice of specialised project teams according to their interests. It is also hoped that new LIPSINC satellite groups will be set up in the near future.

In addition, the JDA will continue to offer support, practical advice and information on ways to tackle the various challenges that life throws at young people with a hearing loss - from specialised equipment to use at home or at work, lip reading or sign language classes, help with careers advice and job/university applications, to practical support in the workplace, as well as information on social and cultural activities for deaf and hard of hearing people.

For further details about LIPSINC or the launch event, please contact Jacqui Press on: 020 8446 0502 (tel) or 020 8369 5329 (textphone) or email her at: jacqui@jda.dircon.co.uk

New Service for Signers

How does a deaf person cope when visiting the doctor, attending a hospital appointment or going for a job interview? Research shows that, at best, even a good lip reader only picks up around 30% of what is said to them, leading to misunderstandings that can range from the acutely embarrassing to the truly dangerous.

With a critical shortage of sign language interpreters, and often without the knowledge of how to book one, many Deaf people battle on alone - especially elderly people who have no friends or family to take along to appointments. Bookings must be made up to two months in advance and fees are around £30 an hour, putting the service out of reach for many people.



That's why the JDA has set up a pilot scheme for an in-house interpreting service, where all its members will have access to an interpreter at short notice, four days a week, to accompany them to health appointments, visits to social security offices, meetings with professionals - such as solicitors and bank managers - and to accompany them to special religious occasions such as funerals or mourning prayers. The service will also help to make communal religious ceremonies and events more accessible, so that the Deaf people who attend will be able to understand and participate in the proceedings, whilst freelance interpreters will offer additional support for those people who have special communication needs, such as Deaf-Blind members or deaf people who do not sign.

Pension Day Windfalls



JDA member Eddie Abrahams chats to a member of staff from the Pension Service

Complicated forms and lack of confidence in approaching the relevant authorities means that many Deaf sign language users miss out on their entitlements.

So this spring, the Jewish Deaf Association joined forces with the Pension Service, local service, Barnet, to organise a Pension Credit Advice and Information Day, which was held at the JDA's community centre in North Finchley. Open to all, this was an unusual event in the Deaf community and was organised to help Deaf pensioners to apply for Pension Credit and other entitlements, such as Attendance Allowance.

Seven sign language interpreters were present, enabling the pensioners to be seen individually and in total privacy.

The JDA provided a safe, welcoming atmosphere in which its members felt relaxed and at home, so that information could be communicated clearly and in their own language.

The event was highly successful, as evidenced by JDA member Eddie Abrahams, who said afterwards; 'I'm very happy that the Pension Service came here today. They have filled out a Pension Credit application form for me and hopefully I will get some extra money.' The Pension Service member of staff who helped Mr Abrahams said that he should be better-off by approximately £30 per week.

Now that's what we call a result!



Kids come first!

Last year's outing to Finchley Fire Station was an unqualified success for our parent's and children's group – so much so, that they have another event planned for this July.

The group, which brings together hearing parents and their young deaf and hard of hearing children, has been enormously popular and is growing steadily as word gets around.

The parents benefit from the opportunity to get together regularly, to swap stories about their children's progress, chat

about common issues and share information about anything from schools to specialised equipment and educational support for their children. The kids benefit from mixing with other deaf children and their hearing siblings for teatime events and outings that provide full access and involvement and bring a whole new dimension to the word 'fun'!

For more information about the group, call Jacqui Press on 020 8446 0502 (tel) 020 8369 5329 (textphone) or email her at: jacqui@jda.dircon.co.uk

Sign book launched. ▶

The Jewish Deaf Association has published the first-ever guide to around 50 signs related to Jewish culture, as used by the British Jewish Deaf community.

The A5, full-colour, 60-page guide – **SIGN LANGUAGE IN JUDAISM** – will provide an invaluable reference guide for Deaf people, BSL interpreters, tutors and students, rabbis and anyone else with an interest in BSL and Judaism. The book uses clear, full-colour photographs to illustrate each sign, with directional arrows and additional instructions where necessary, as well as pronunciation tips which can be used for 'voice over' interpretation when a Deaf person is signing to hearing people.

The guide was conceived with two purposes in mind: to offer a basic explanation of Jewish practices to Deaf people about their cultural and religious heritage and as an historically important way of preserving specific Jewish signs for future generations.



To purchase the book, which costs £9.99, please contact the JDA General Office on Tel: 020 8446 0502 (voice) 020 8446 4037 (textphone) or see our website: www.jewishdeaf.org.uk

A SEDER WITH A difference

The Jewish Deaf Association's annual Seder is certainly different to all others! This year's event was a lively mixture of rituals, questions, explanations and songs – all in sign language.

Over 60 Deaf members of the JDA took part, most taking their place on the stage to sign the blessings and take part in the proceedings.



Rev. Avromi Freilich and his daughters sign the Mah Nishtanah

Among the participants were a couple who had travelled from Belgium and three Deaf-Blind people (one all the way from America) who were able to take part in the proceedings thanks to the one-to-one 'hands-on' communicators provided for each of them (see opposite page, top).

A special Haggadah, which had been translated by the JDA into language tailored specifically to that used in British Sign Language – making it was easier for everyone to sign – was distributed to the Deaf participants.

A table of fascinated hearing guests, currently studying British Sign Language at the JDA, sat spellbound as Rev Avromi Freilich, a recent graduate of the JDA's Level 2 British Sign Language course,

explained the traditions and meanings behind Passover in sign language.

To ensure access for everyone, an interpreter was present throughout and a lip speaker enunciated the entire afternoon's proceedings for those Deaf people who do not sign.

'The Seder is one of the highlights of the Jewish Deaf Association's cultural and religious programme,' says JDA Executive Director, Sue Cipin. 'It's the only chance for Jewish Deaf people in this country to celebrate the festival of freedom in a service they can fully understand. It develops appreciation of their heritage, strengthens their identity and gives them a great sense of belonging to a very special and totally unique community.'

...STOP PRESS ...STOP PRESS...

The London Beth Din has recently updated its ruling on the wearing of hearing aids on Sabbath and festivals.

Congregants with hearing aids will be able to participate fully in the service, if the synagogue has a loop system in operation, by ensuring that their aids are switched to the joint 'M/T' position – or the 'M' only position if there is no loop – prior to the commencement of the Sabbath or festival. The aids should not then be adjusted until after the termination of the sabbath/festival. People without an M/T joint switch on their aids should contact the JDA on: 020 8446 0214 (voice/text phone) or the Lotus Hearing Centre on: 020 8455 4210 for more detailed information.



Evelyn Gee
Chairman

A message from the Chairman

I'm so proud of the achievements of the Jewish Deaf Association! In the past year alone, **groundbreaking new projects** and special events have been springing up almost monthly to meet the ever-changing needs of Deaf and hard of hearing people in the Jewish and wider communities - and this includes programmes and social groups for their families and carers too. We could do so much more for all of them **if only we had the funds.**

As a totally independent charity, **we rely entirely on donations** and the efforts of our small band of fundraisers to finance our work. Last summer, for instance, they raised a magnificent £14,000 when hat designer and sculptor, David Shilling, spoke at a lunch held at the House of Lords. Would you have a little time to spare to **join our fundraising group** - or perhaps consider starting one of your own? If so, please contact Sue Cipin at the address below and she'll tell you more.



Sue Cipin
Executive Director

A message from the Executive Director

If you ever had the impression that hearing loss only affects elderly people, then just look inside and see how our innovative and popular **new programmes for the younger generation** are keeping one step ahead of their ever-changing lifestyles! With support from the JDA, Jewish families with deaf and hard of hearing children are forging links through **vibrant networking groups**, whilst young Jewish adults who have always lived in 'the hearing world' are experiencing the liberation of belonging to a **group designed especially for them.** It's a time of revelation, celebration and even further expansion at the JDA as we rise to the challenge of providing vital information and a new range of social opportunities for a new group of people. We may be small ... **but we're at the cutting edge** ... and we're living up to our promise to be there for anyone who needs us!

'SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT THE JEWISH DEAF ASSOCIATION'

British Sign Language classes (BSL) CACDP Foundation Certificate in Deaf Studies

Wednesday evenings or Thursday mornings, starting October and incorporating:

Course 1: Level 1 BSL & Deaf Community & Culture
3 terms £175

Course 2: Deaf Awareness & Communication Tactics
1 term £55.

CACDP Level 2 BSL - Monday evenings.
£90 per term. 4 terms starting September.

Level 1 Plus BSL - Monday mornings.
£60 per term. Ongoing. For people wishing to improve their skills.

Summer BSL taster courses for teenagers.

'Signing Social' - sign language practice and social events, Thursday evenings twice a month.

Activities and Services for Deaf People

- Day centre - every Wednesday
- Sunday Social Club
- JDA outings and special events
- Signed synagogue services, cultural activities and celebrations of Jewish festivals
- Opportunities for involvement through committees
- Information, advice, practical assistance and one-to-one support services
- Computer classes in sign language - Tuesday and Thursday evenings
- 'The Chat Room' - contemporary social venue with internet cafe
- Quarterly magazine
- Interpreting service for members

What's On for hearing parents and families with deaf children

Support, networking groups and unbiased information services for parents of children with a hearing loss. Parent and toddlers group meets regularly and holds occasional social events.

Services and social events for hard of hearing people

- Personal consultations with independent hearing aid specialist (by appointment only)
- Private one-to-one counselling sessions with qualified counsellor (by appointment only)
- 'Sounds Social' - social and cultural group meets Tuesday afternoons, once a month.
- Short courses to help people handle their hearing loss.

JDA LIBRARY

A vast range of books and videos about Deaf issues, learning sign language, and topics related to hearing loss.

Deaf Awareness training sessions

Tailor-made to your group, school or cheder class, the sessions educate hearing people so that they understand the challenges encountered by deaf people in their daily lives - and offer advice on communication with deaf people.

Tinnitus self-help group... ...and tinnitus management courses.

Tinnitus self-help group meets every three months on Tuesday afternoons.

Tinnitus relaxation courses; four-week courses one morning per week.

LIPSINC - For young Jewish deaf and hard of hearing people (non-signers in their 20's and 30's) and their friends.

- New social opportunities to meet people with similar life experiences
- Involvement in project teams organising events
- Discussion groups and information events
- One-to-one practical advice and guidance for individuals
- Up-to-date information about specialised technology

Contact Jacqui Press on:
020 8446 0502 (tel)
020 8369 5329 (textphone)
or email her at: jacqui@jda.dircon.co.uk

Classified

HEARING LOSS! - For professional advice, unbiased information and the chance to try out specialised equipment to help you lead a more independent life at home and at work, why not visit the JDA's Resource and Technology Room?

- Expert advice in comfortable and relaxed surroundings
 - Try out: • Flashing doorbell/phone alerters • Telephone equipment
 - Wake up/fire/baby alarms • TV aids • Tinnitus relaxers.
- Strictly by appointment only - see below for contact details.

Minibus Driver Wanted...

The JDA urgently needs a reliable, friendly, caring minibus driver to transport elderly Deaf people to and from its North Finchley Day Centre on Wednesdays (weekly or fortnightly) and on occasional outings.

Clear communication essential. British Sign Language an advantage. For more information see www.jewishdeaf.org.uk or contact Lisa Katz at the JDA (see below).

FUNDRAISERS

Do you have some time to spare, lots of energy and a few good ideas to raise money for the JDA? If so, please contact Sue Cipin at the address below and she'll tell you more.

BEFRIENDERS

- for deaf (non-signing) people.

The world can be a lonely place when you've lost your hearing - especially when you're elderly. Cut off from everyday life, it's easy to become bored and isolated. Even a visit to the shops or the doctor can be fraught with difficulty.

The Jewish Deaf Association is seeking befrienders for elderly ladies and gentlemen who are deaf or hard of hearing, to keep them company and help with simple tasks like shopping and transporting them to clubs and appointments.

Contact Hilary Shaw at the address below for more information.

How to contact the Jewish Deaf Association

Address: Julius Newman House, Woodside Park Road, North Finchley, London N12 8RP

Telephone: 020 8446 0502

Textphone: 020 8446 4037

Fax: 020 8445 7451

Email: jda@dircon.co.uk

Resource Room: 020 8446 0214 (voice & textphone)

Web: www.jewishdeaf.org.uk



jda
jewish deaf
association