



Advocacy Update

Sent February 11, 2010

Jobs and Unemployment Insurance Extension Needed

Unemployment insurance benefits will expire next month for 1.2 million jobless workers and the number jumps to 5 million by June. A bill to extend benefits has been passed by the House of Representatives as part of a jobs bill, but the Senate has yet to do so. Urge your senators to pass a jobs bill that works for woman and extend unemployment insurance benefits.

[Click here](#) to support jobs and benefits for women now.

Sisterhood Breast Health Programming

Sisterhoods who have held outstanding breast cancer awareness and breast health programs, which were submitted for the 2009 Or Ami awards, can provide you with excellent models to replicate or adapt for your sisterhood.

Breast Cancer Awareness Program – Temple Shalom Sisterhood, Aberdeen, NJ – Sisterhood leaders sought to improve awareness of breast cancer risk and treatment options and raise funds for breast cancer research by holding several activities during October, which is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. The sisterhood held a program at which a physician spoke about breast cancer awareness (including genetic testing), diagnosis, and treatment options. The speaker discussed her decision to have a mastectomy based on her mother's early death from breast cancer and genetic testing, which indicated that she had a high risk of breast cancer. Later in the month the sisterhood distributed the WRJ breast cancer self-examination cards and raised money for research by selling sisterhood/breast cancer t-shirts and participating in a nearby community walkathon. All proceeds were donated to the American Cancer Society.

Breast Cancer Survivorship – Sisterhood, The Congregation Temple B'nai Jehudah, Overland Park, KS – The sisterhood participated in an educational program to introduce the community to the new concept of breast cancer survivorship and the critical issue for women of Ashkenazi-Jewish heritage who have a higher than average risk for BRCA 1 and 2 gene mutations. The sisterhood worked on this program with the sponsor, The University of Kansas Hospital Cancer Center – Breast Cancer Survivorship Center, Greater Kansas City Hadassah, Myriad Genetics Laboratories, and Back in the Swing, a nonprofit organization providing grassroots awareness, education, and fundraising on behalf of breast cancer survivors. The program provided an overview of breast cancer risk factors and cancer genetics and a personal tour of the new Breast Cancer Survivorship Center.

Hereditary Cancer in Jewish Families – Congregation B'nai Tzedek Sisterhood, Fountain Valley, CA – The sisterhood hosted a program to inform members of its congregation about cancers that are common in the Jewish community, such as breast, ovarian, and pancreatic cancer. This program showed how family history plays a role in cancer risk and the availability of DNA screening, as well as prevention, diagnosis, and treatment options. The program chair got in touch with the local hospital's cancer center and invited the coordinator of the Hereditary Cancer Program and a nurse administrator at the Hoag Cancer Center to speak. PR included a flyer in the temple's monthly newsletter and calling every sisterhood member.

For more information on WRJ and Social Justice, visit www.wrj.org/social-justice-home

Prior Or Ami Award submissions included:

Footprints for the Cure and Race Education Day (2007) – Beth-El Congregation Sisterhood, Fort Worth, TX – The sisterhood participated in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, sold fabric-footprints for five dollars each, and coordinated a Race Education Day program during Sunday school to raise awareness about the fight against breast cancer and to raise money for cancer research.

Distribution of Spanish Language Breast Self-Examination Cards to the At-risk Population of Women in Panama (1999) – Hermandad Kol Shearit Israel Sisterhood, Panama, Republic of Panama – In cooperation the Asociacion Nacional Contra El Cancer (ANCEC), the sisterhood adapted 5000 WRJ Spanish breast self-examination cards and arranged for distribution to at-risk women throughout Panama, including the Indian Territories.

Yachad: A Jewish Spiritual Support Group for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer (1997) – WRJ Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El of Great Neck, Great Neck, NY – The sisterhood developed this support group, which differed from traditional cancer support groups in that it explored how Judaism can help women with cancer.