Did You Know . . .

. . . that Orchards Children's Services, Michigan's largest foster care agency and second largest adoption agency, started as an NCJW/GDS project?

Orchards Children's Services, which was once a community service project of NCJW/GDS, is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Like all community service projects of NCJW/GDS, Orchards was founded to meet an unmet need in the community. Jewish children with mental health issues were being sent away from their community for residential care. Members of GDS did research and fact-finding and in 1961 Orchards was born. The first home for young boys had an orchard behind the house. Jo Weiner, who was a former section president and national president, suggested the name "Orchards" projecting the notion that "our boys" would grow and develop like the fruit in the orchards behind the house.

Orchards continued to grow. Because of a generous donation from Sylvia Schwartz, a day camp for emotionally troubled preschoolers was developed. A residential program for teen-age boys and then a residential treatment program for adolescent girls followed. All of these programs were developed with the help of GDS volunteers. When the foster care program was initiated, GDS volunteers interviewed the prospective foster parents and did home inspections.

In the tradition of NCJW, we find a need, fill it and then pass it on to the community. Orchards Children's Services officially became an independent childcare agency in its own name in 1987. NCJW/GDS continues to maintain a relationship with Orchards by having a seat on their board and donating $2500 annually for scholarships to send 5 children to summer camp.

OCS no longer maintains the residential care services but has expanded the foster care, adoption program and family preservation program and currently services 4000 children and families each year.

We hope Orchards Children's Services continues to grow and flourish for another 50 years and longer. We <u>know</u> that NCJW/GDS will continue to meet unmet needs in our community.

Thank you to Marsha Zucker (z'l) for contributing this article to the Bulletin.