JCC raises $1,300 for Penny Harvest
Thursday, January 14, 2010

The Kaplen JCC on the Palisades embraces the importance of giving as central to its mission, and last year, it was the first New Jersey agency to join forces with Penny Harvest – a "common cents" initiative inspired by a child – that collects unused pennies gathering in jars and pockets all across America to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless and to make a difference in the lives of others.

The Children’s Department at the JCC led the effort, where second to fifth grade students who attend the JCC after school program, Finish the Day at the J, and others in the community participated.

The program was an enormous success, raising more than $1,300 to support families in need in our community.

Third to fifth graders will participate again this year, where a dedicated committee will inspire a new cohort of kids with a passion for giving.

"Teaching kids to think about others and supporting charity is a great thing," said JCC Youth Services Director Judi Nahary. "It is a perfect age for inspiring children to believe that they can really make a real difference; that every penny – and every dollar – they collect is theirs to give away.

And, in addition to teaching children to be charitable and to think of others, a program like this empowers them with the belief that every person can contribute to changing the world."

Children participating in the program will collect money in a giant Menorah-shaped container during the holidays, in honor of Hanukkah. It will be placed in the JCC lobby, where members and visitors can deposit their "loose change." Meanwhile, the children will meet on a regular basis from November to January, where the will "harvest" their pennies and learn about teamwork, community and moral character.

They will also create a wheel of "caring and sharing," where they will have the chance to learn about various local causes they can support.

"We are very excited about this year’s program," said Michal Kleiman, JCC Finish the Day at the J director. "Philanthropy and performing mitzvahs are values we should look to inspire in children and this is a fun and passionate way to teach them the rewards that come from it."

The Penny Harvest receptacle will be displayed in the JCC lobby in December and January and we encourage everyone to support the project by making donations. All coins and bills will be accepted (not just pennies!).

For more information on the JCC involvement in Penny Harvest and how you and your children can get involved, contact Judi Nahary at 201-569-7900, ext. 369 or e-mail jnahary@jccotp.org.