Match Spotlight – Alan Karbachinsky and Navid Kanani

Two and a half years ago, Alan, who was 14 years old at the time, was homeless and living in a Salvation Army group home with his mother and sister. Although Alan admits that he felt lonely and misguided at the time, when his mother first told him about a program called Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles (JBBBSLA), he thought it was “a silly idea” and something he didn’t need in his life. However, it only took one brief 15 minute introductory meeting with his soon to be Big Brother, Navid, for Alan to have a complete change of heart.

Alan said, “I felt I found someone I could talk to about important things in my life, found someone who would listen, and someone who I knew I could look up to.”

Navid was equally touched from this first meeting. He thought, “This is going to be something great!” Navid heard about JBBBSLA from his temple. His strong desire to give back to a Jewish cause along with wanting to be a mentor created an opportunity that he describes as “far surpassing anything I thought I would ever get out of a volunteer experience.” Navid added, “Knowing someone is looking up to you makes you want to better your own life and be a better role model to others. I try harder, push harder for the things I want, which in turn shows Alan that anything he puts his heart and effort into, he can get something out of it.” Navid summarizes his match perfectly, “It’s two ways; on the one hand he is feeding off of me, and then I am feeding off of him.”

Since 1915, JBBBSLA has been successfully matching Big Brothers/Big Sisters with Little Brothers/Little Sisters. Our amazing program is based on the traditional mentoring model, in which a young Jewish person is paired with a Jewish adult in a one to one relationship. This model enables the mentor and mentee to develop their friendship and explore youth’s needs and interests in unstructured settings of their choice.

Joining Forces for Foster Youth

What do the Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, Camp Max Straus, and Stephen Cooper, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer have in common? They all have a very strong belief that foster youth benefit from attending Camp Max Straus.

Thanks to a very generous grant from the Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, more than 40 foster care youth attended Camp Max Straus this summer. Continuing to recruit foster care youth will not only remain a focus for summer camp but also for Team Max Straus. TMS, an arts, sports, and leadership development weekend program held in the fall, winter, and spring, is generously supported by the Amy Phillips Charitable Foundation.

But it was this letter from CASA Volunteer of 10 years, Stephen Cooper, that captures just how important Camp Max Straus was for three foster boys.

continued on page 3
A Note from Leadership

“The reality is, in today’s non-profit world those who don’t challenge the status quo, and don’t lead, don’t last.”

– Randy Schwab

During spring and summer, JBBBSLA is brimming with energy and excitement. Each year we reflect upon ways to enrich our programs and activities in new and innovative ways. We celebrate the outpouring of support and success of our fundraising events. We are creating new strategic community partnerships in an effort to serve more kids. We are exploring new ways to recruit “Bigs” and “Littles.” We are discovering new ways to extend our outreach in underserved Jewish communities. And, we guarantee that Camp Max Straus is ready to provide an unforgettable overnight summer camp experience to all who attend!

JBBBSLA is proud to be celebrating its 98th year and Camp Max Straus is turning 75! Without a doubt our programs have left an impression on the lives of more than 55,000 children.

In 2013, thanks to the generosity of individuals, foundations, and corporate sponsors we will provide: support services and recreational activities for nearly 200 mentor matches; summer camp and wilderness experiences for over 1000 children; arts, sports and leadership development for 300 children through Team Max Straus; and award JBBBSLA and Arnold S. Nelson scholarships to 60 young adults pursuing higher education. We hope that after you read the stories within this newsletter you are inspired and want to get involved. We would love to hear from you.
JBBBSLA has expanded its marketing and outreach efforts to encourage participation in our membership programs. Our efforts have targeted the Persian, Israeli, LGBT, Bereaved, and Special Needs communities. We have received additional funding to offer more community building opportunities that include both secular and non-secular activities for all Big Brothers/Sisters and Little Brothers/Sisters. These sponsored activities include: Shabatton weekends, a Hanukkah Party, a Passover Seder, a community service project (Tikkun Olam), as well as ice skating, bowling, fishing, picnics and more. Additionally, many Little Brothers/Sisters attend JBBBSLA’s Hanukkah Camp that is held at Camp Max Straus and, new this year, is one week of Jewish summer camp, “Kibbutz Max Straus” in August. To further create Kehilla (community), JBBBSLA sponsors mixers for Big Brothers/Sisters to get to know each other and introduce friends who may be interested in being mentors.

Outreach within the Israeli Community

Helping more kids in the Israeli community of Los Angeles is a priority for JBBBSLA. According to recent studies, Los Angeles is the second largest gateway for Israeli immigrants in the United States. With this in mind, JBBBSLA has created marketing materials targeting this community. We hired Effie Bitton, an immigrant from Israel since 2000, who has a long history working in the Israeli community in Los Angeles, having spent the last ten years working at the West Valley Jewish Community Center. Effie is actively reaching out to temples, schools and other community entities within the Israeli community. Recently, she met with key executives at the Israeli American Counsel (Former ILC). Finally, JBBBSLA sponsored and staffed an information booth at the Israeli Festival in Los Angeles on April 21st, yielding over 40 interested mentors. JBBBSLA also sponsored the popular and coveted “Camel Ride” at the Shavuot Fair in the San Fernando Valley on May 19th. Reaching out to the Israeli community has been very rewarding and they have welcomed us with open arms.

Joining Forces for Foster Youth cont. from Cover Page

Dear Camp Max Straus,

As a CASA volunteer I had the opportunity to send three of my foster care boys to Camp Max Straus. Last year, it was a 10 year old that I advocated for, who at the time was living with his grandmother. This young man was living in a gated housing complex located in Watts often frequented by drug dealers and guarded by armed security to help prevent violence. During the day he was able to go to school and feel safe, however the summer months left him with little opportunity to enjoy the outside or be able to play in a safe environment.

This year it was two brothers, taken from their homes due to abuse and neglect, who at first did not want to attend. They were not athletic, had very little interest in sports, and had never been swimming before. Their lives were recently turned upside down and going to another place that felt “unknown” to them was frightening to say the least.

One week at Camp Max Straus opened their eyes to behavior and activities they never experienced before. They spoke about the friends they made and the unlimited amounts of healthy food they could eat. They spoke about the counselors and love that surrounded them each and every day.

In my eyes, Camp Max Straus gave these foster boys the opportunity to be with children their own age and an opportunity to hear their stories – many of hope and inspiration. One week at Camp Max Straus helped these youth realize that there was more in life then gated housing complexes and broken families. When one of the brothers got off the bus last month, the first thing he said to me was “can I go again next year?” He then went and hugged his counselors before we left, and the three of us left with tears in our eyes knowing that he had a nurturing, safe and fun experience. “Did you make any friends?” I asked when we were in the car driving home. “Lots” he said.

Thank you Camp Max Straus and the Pritzker Family on behalf of all my boys for opening their eyes to possibilities that they do not get to see where they are currently living.

Best wishes, Steve Cooper
Sara Baseri first heard about JBBBSLA through a classmate who was a Little Sister in our mentoring program. Sara made the initial inquiry call to learn about the Big Brother/Sister program because her single mother only spoke Farsi. Although she was just 16, she knew it was up to herself to better her life situation.

Today, Sara is a 22-year-old student at Roseman University. She is just one of many driven youth who receive a scholarship from JBBBSLA. Sara recalls, “My mom couldn’t help me with the scholarship application process,” so she turned to her Big Sister who helped her complete the paperwork. Going to college has meant a great deal to Sara and her family. She says, “It is very rewarding for my Mom to see me attending college and furthering my life. My brother, sister and I are the first ones in our immediate and extended family to go to college. My mom is extremely proud of us. Knowing that there are people out there supporting and believing in me has helped open the way for me to pursue my dreams. It was the push I needed.” Upon graduating Sara plans to work as a pharmacist, get married and have a family, and give back to the Jewish community in some meaningful way.
Going to camp is a rite of passage for many of our children and grandchildren, yet for most children living in Los Angeles it is a luxury they cannot afford.

Like most nonprofit organizations, Camp Max Straus has faced great challenges over the past five years. Overcoming these challenges has made us stronger and more resourceful. Now as we celebrate our 75th anniversary we stand poised to serve more children than ever before, thanks to the generosity of all our supporters.

- We built a rock climbing wall, greenhouse, and created a new pond and waterfall area.
- We broke ground on a new Camp Lodge thanks to the generosity of the Arnold S. Nelson Family and Rabinovitch Foundation.
- We paved the way resurfacing our roadways and upgrading our cabins and restrooms thanks to the support of the Jewish Venture Philanthropy Fund, BreitBurn Management Company, Robert Margolis, and Real Estate Principals Organization.
- We created a space for community groups and local schools to hold retreats and successfully raised an additional $100,000 in rental income to support our core programs.

For the first time, JBBBSLA will be offering Kibbutz Max Straus for underserved Jewish children. Kibbutz Max Straus is a one week camp experience that focuses on incorporating Jewish values, culture, and traditions into the camp curriculum. This year children will enjoy a newly built greenhouse and learn about healthy eating thanks to The Edelstein Family Charitable Foundation.

**Happy 75th Birthday Camp Max Straus!**

**SAVE THE DATE**

Sunday, October 6, 2013 • 10:30 am - 1:00 pm

The Foundation for Camp Max Straus invites you to the
The Lisa & Ernest Auerbach Family Foundation

2013 Brunch & Family Day at Universal Studios Hollywood

Honoring

**Tom Schiff**

Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters Board Member & Chairman of the Camp Max Straus Committee

Presented by the Isdaner, Shane & Sigal Families

The day will include a fabulous Wolfgang Puck brunch, tickets to visit Universal Studios and a few surprises!
The 2013 Big Event was a huge success raising more than $550,000

For the past 20 years, JBBBSLA has honored leaders who have made a lasting impact in the lives of the community’s youth and epitomize excellence in mentoring. On January 31st at the Beverly Hills Hotel, more than 420 guests honored: Doug Gold, Big Brother of the Year; Robin Agranoff, Big Sister of the Year; and the Nelson Family with our Legacy Award. The event, highlighting the great work of the organization, featured exotic small plates, international food stations, cool cocktails, and a decadent dessert display. Mark your calendars for next year — The Big Event will be on January 30th, 2014 at the Beverly Hills Hotel.
Edelstein Family Foundation

Camp Max Straus’ Healthy Eating Program is stronger than ever thanks to the very generous support of The Edelstein Family Charitable Foundation. Thanks to their passion and commitment, more than 1,000 children, many from low-income families in Los Angeles, will have a positive camp experience that includes three nutritious, fresh, and delicious meals a day plus healthy snacks. In addition to sports, recreation, and arts, camp activities will include edible gardening and food preparation.

“Our goal for campers is to develop an awareness of healthy choices when it comes to eating and build a desire within each child to grow their own food and prepare meals for themselves when they return to their own homes and communities.” — The Board of Directors: Marvin Burns, Fred Simmons, and Susan Rothenberg

It is an honor to be a grant recipient of The Edelstein Family Charitable Foundation. We deeply appreciate their unwavering support.

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Thank you to all our donors, we couldn’t do it without you!

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The 2013 Golf Tournament

On June 17th 2013, JBBBSLA held its 18th Annual John W. Carson Foundation 18 Pockets of Joy Charity Golf Classic at the prestigious Valencia Country Club. The tournament raised more than $200,000 and ensures that more than 900 underserved children experience summer camp regardless of religion, race, or ability to pay. The day was filled with a series of golf competitions, specialty cocktails, massages, hand-rolled cigars, shoe shines, dinner, an awards ceremony and live auction. Four hole-in-one competitions featured a Porsche Cayenne V6, a Porsche Boxster, and exclusive golf trips to Pebble Beach and Bandon Dunes. Our prizes and auction items included a three-night stay at the amazing Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea, a limited edition luxury timepiece from Corum, a $1,000 gift card from Geary’s Beverly Hills, golf outings to private country clubs, certificates to 5-star restaurants, a Beverly Hills Police Department Ride-Along, and stays at the Montage Beverly Hills, Beverly Hilton Hotel, and Luxe Hotel in Brentwood.

And finally, a very special thanks to our major sponsors and our amazing co-chairs Joey Behrstock and Steve Miller and the entire golf committee.
Now, more than ever, your gifts are critical. Your financial support is valued and important to further our mission and to build brighter futures. It is through the generous financial support of people like you that we are able to continue to provide and expand our programs and services to those in need.

**Direct Donation** - Make an immediate difference in the life of a child with a direct impact gift. We accept checks, credit cards, and stock donations. You may also consider a recurring gift each month that is charged automatically to a credit card.

**Tribute/Memorial Donation** - What better way to acknowledge a birthday, anniversary, special event or memorialize a loved one than helping a child in need? PLEASE NOTE: THIS DONATION WILL RESULT IN A CARD BEING SENT TO WHOMEVER YOU DESIGNATE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE OCCASION OR MEMORIAL.

**Sponsorship of Special Events** - Your support of our events helps fund programs, scholarships and services that will make a significant difference in the lives of the children we serve. Sponsorships include special benefits such as tickets to events and advertisement of your name or company’s name.

**Planned Giving** – This is the gift you give to yourself. By including JBBBSLA of Los Angeles or Camp Max Straus in your estate plan, you will make a difference in the lives of so many and achieve tax benefits for your family. Ask your financial advisor about the benefits available to you today.

**Gifts In-Kind** – Make a child’s future brighter by donating new sports equipment, backpacks, art supplies, gardening supplies, tickets to special sports events and more.

**Volunteer Opportunities** - Spending time with a child can make a difference that will impact their whole life and yours. Consider donating your time during special events such as our upcoming 2014 Big Event being held at the Beverly Hills Hotel on January 30th.

If you would like to learn more about ways to give please visit JBBBSLA.org or contact our Director of Development, Laurie Feldman at (323) 456-1147 or by email at lfeldman@jbbbsla.org.