



**LEARNING** the English language is one of the most difficult hurdles facing new Americans. Jewish Family and Children's Service helps Jews from the Soviet Union adjust to the new life they are beginning in Greater Pittsburgh. Funds for resettling the New Americans are provided by contributions to the annual campaign of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh.

## *275 new Russ-Americans* *— stress new coordination*

Noting that 275 new Russian Americans are expected in Pittsburgh this year, Joel Smalley, president of the Jewish Family and Children's Service, (JFCS) commended the activities of the New Americans Resettlement Committee which is working with JFCS to help integrate the increasing number of new Soviet Jewish arrivals into the Greater Pittsburgh Community. (See *Dulzin on dropouts, Page 4.*)

JFCS is the principal community agency charged with delivering direct services to the new Americans.

Dean J. Hirschfield heads the New Americans Resettlement Committee, which was established by the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh to reach out into the community and coordinate volunteers activities "to help avoid duplication of efforts."

"When a Jewish family leaves the Soviet Union," said Smalley, "it faces a multitude of problems — problems which require the efforts of the total Jewish community."

He said, "when the family first arrives in Pittsburgh without friends, without knowledge of the English language, without means of support, the family turns to the Jewish Family and Children's Service which assumes the major professional role for helping the new Americans expected this year to adjust to their new surroundings."

"We are constantly looking for apartments and we try to have a reservoir ready for the families waiting in Rome," said Shirley Imber, director of Professional Services.

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# 275 new Russian Americans

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She explained that the resettlement department of JFCS consists of a senior resettlement worker, two assistant workers and a resettlement clerk. "The resettlement clerk checks out each apartment to make sure that it is near public transportation and adequate for the needs of a specific family to be resettled."

"We are always appealing to the community for donations of used furniture and we supplement this furniture with moderately priced new furniture," said Phyllis Rifkin, Resettlement Clerk. She pointed out that contributions for furniture and supplies are marked for the New Americans can be made by calling JFCS at 683-4900.

Shirley M. Levine, Senior Resettlement Worker, explained that the family in Rome flies to New York on a special charter plane. They usually stay in N.Y. overnight because they arrive late. "The following morning the family is met at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport by volunteers from the National Council of Jewish Women," she said. "The Council volunteers bring the newcomers to the agency where they are introduced to their resettlement worker."

"The New Americans are given a brief

introduction to the role of JFCS in resettlement and a check for groceries and other needs," said Mrs. Levine. "We also give them a book about Pittsburgh, written in Russian, preparing them for resettlement."

The book, written by the resettlement staff, explains medical services, schools, health care and what to expect as a member of the Pittsburgh Jewish community.

"The family also receives a 'Welcome Box' as a gift from NCJW, and Poale Zedeck Congregation provides information on the significance of Jewish holidays," she said.

Volunteers take the family members to the bank to cash the check, to purchase bus passes and then "home." Pittsburgh volunteers also take the New Americans to the supermarket this first day so that they can buy foods of their own choice. Staples and items of immediate need have already been placed in the apartment by JFCS.

Once the newcomer is settled in his home, the weekly appointments begin with his resettlement worker, who assists him every step of the way through the tasks he must undertake in order to start life here.

JFCS explains the public school system to the New Americans with children. "Almost all the families elect to send their children to Hillel Academy," said Faye Liepack, Assistant Resettlement Worker.

The resettlement worker also acquaints the family with the health services available at Montefiore Hospital and arranges appointments if necessary. She tells the elderly members of the family about programs at the Pittsburgh Section National Council of Jewish Women - Anathan House - Jewish Community Center.

"Without the ability to read English, the newcomers find real challenges in the supermarket," said Ms. Liepack, who speaks Russian. "A package of flour looks the same as a package of sugar. We try to arrange for the families to begin learning English as soon as possible after they arrive."

Under the auspices of JFCS employable adults immediately begin English as a Second Language classes in the Jewish Community Center. The program is supervised by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

Vocational Rehabilitation Center offers

skilled counseling and vocational guidance to the newcomers. The costs of resettlement are provided by the annual campaign of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh.

"Local synagogues," Mrs. Imber said, "have asked to be notified immediately upon the arrival of a new family in order to welcome the newcomers with group branches and personal contacts. Several congregations offer special programs such as an English class in the daytime or during hours when it is convenient for those who cannot otherwise attend classes."

Dora Bastacki, who is in charge of Service to Foreign Born, noted that the family may continue to have problems that can be helped by the resettlement worker.

"We provide help to search out relatives and arrange for family and friends to come to the United States," she said. "We also give assistance when there is a need to change status or citizenship."

The Jewish Family and Children's Service is a beneficiary of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh and the United Way.