

State grant boosts UJF Residential Services

State Rep. Ivan Itkin of Pittsburgh presented a \$70,000 check on Friday, July 20, at the UJF building to Jewish Residential Services Inc., for a residential program for mentally ill Jewish adults.

Itkin, who obtained the funding from the 1989-90 budget, said the home will provide supervised care, allowing up to nine residents to function in society while maintaining cultural and religious integrity. He said the home is the result of a 1985 United Jewish Federation report, which called for a culturally based residence to meet the needs of emotionally handicapped Jewish adults.

Itkin said the home will be located in Squirrel Hill, where most of the residents likely will come from, and where their friends and family live. "However, people of all faiths will be accepted into the home,"

he said.

"The home will provide care and guidance to emotionally disabled people who have difficulty dealing with the demands of everyday life. It will allow them to learn to function on their own in a nurturing environment which allows them to practice their religious beliefs and customs," he said.

Primary funding for the home will come from private sources in Pittsburgh's Jewish community. The state money will help establish the program, Itkin said.

"Studies have shown that people with mental illness have a much better chance of recovery if they are allowed to remain in their home or community," Itkin said. "This residential facility will fill that need, and, because it is a private facility, it has the added benefit of lifting some of the burden from the county's mental health programs."

Jewish Residential Services, Inc. (JRS) is a newly independent, tax-exempt non-profit corporation which was organized to develop and administer supportive housing programs for the chronically ill and disabled within the Pittsburgh area Jewish community.

Although the facility will be nonsectarian in its admissions policies, it will provide kosher food, sabbath and holiday observance, and therapeutic activities.

The cultural program orientation will be complemented by a firm commitment to 24-hour mental health care and supervision. Although clients will be capable of many aspects of independent living, clinical personnel will be on-site and available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

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