

NCJW Wins Excellence in Mission Award

At this year's annual awards dinner benefiting the Center for Nonprofit Management the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Dallas Section, was awarded the Excellence in Mission award given to agencies with budgets under \$1 million.

NCJW is a volunteer organization made up of compassionate Jewish women who courageously take a progressive stand on issues affecting women, children, and families. To ensure individual and civil rights for all, NCJW works through a program of research, education, advocacy, and community service.

The Excellence in Mission award is given to an organization that exemplifies distinctive achievement in nonprofit management, and was awarded to NCJW for its Kids in Court project. NCJW, Greater Dallas Section started Kids in Court – in partnership with the Office of the District Attorney of Dallas County -- almost 25 years ago. Since then it has helped more than 1700 children and their families deal with one of the most stressful situations any person can face – testifying in court.

NCJW's Kids in Court helps prepare children who have been victims and witnesses of felony crimes – most often felony child abuse – be both credible witnesses and psychologically healthy kids. Several times a year NCJW volunteers assist the District Attorneys to make the courtroom and its procedures familiar to these children in order to make the courtroom environment more familiar and less intimidating. While the children are engaging in kid-appropriate informative and fun activities, their adult guardians meet with the Chief of the DA's Child Abuse Unit and a counselor from Dallas Children's Advocacy Center for adult-level support.

“Little do they [CNPM] know how far under \$1 million our budget is, let alone that the budget for Kids in Court is only \$1500,” says NCJW Dallas president Sue Tilis. “It just goes to show how we can make a difference through compassionate and caring volunteers, and how important it is for us to perform mitzvahs that fill a need no one else is addressing.”

After the three finalists for the award were announced, a video describing the project was shown. Cheryl Pollman, incoming president, spoke about the NCJW mission and the importance of Kids in Court. Judy Hoffman, Chair of the Kids in Court project, accepted the award on behalf of NCJW, and did so with grace.

In attendance at the NCJW table were Sue Tilis, Sheryl Bogen, Cheryl Pollman, Judy and Joel Hoffman, two Kids in Court volunteers, Elaine Stillman and Marla Mendelsohn, and Felicia Wasson and Chris Jenkins from the DA's office.

As the winner, NCJW received a beautiful etched crystal plate from Tiffany, a two day leadership development seminar and a check for \$5000.

“Our organization strives to fill unmet needs in the community and it is especially gratifying to be recognized by our peers,” says Ms. Tilis about the receiving the award.