Framingham, MA – November 21, 2019 – Jewish Family Service (JFS) of Metrowest is pleased to announce the honorees for the 30TH annual Seize the Dream Gala to be held on Thursday May 7, 2020 at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel and Conference Center:

Bob Fields and the team at CommCreative

Retiring CEO of JFS,
Marc Jacobs

and receiving the
JFS Max Michelson Humanitarian Award:
Barbara and Samantha Shapiro

Seize the Dream honors area leaders and volunteers who have demonstrated an unflinching commitment and personal dedication to supporting vulnerable children, families, and senior adults in the local community and beyond. This year’s honorees have made it their life’s work to stand up for those left behind and it is a privilege to recognize these exceptional individuals.

Bob Fields and the team at CommCreative

Entrepreneur. Volunteer. Husband. Father. Musician. Artist. Bob Fields has led a distinguished and colorful life in which he has worn many different hats. After a career in marketing at leading brands like Gillette and Foster Grant, Bob founded CommCreative, which has grown into one of the industry’s leading B2B marketing agencies.

Bob has distinguished himself by applying his entrepreneurial spirit—and love of the arts—to community work. He founded the Community Kiln at the Brick Stack Arts Center in Framingham, a studio where everyone is welcome to come together to experience, learn about, and celebrate ceramic arts.
Over the years, Bob has dedicated his time to serving on several boards that reflect his various interests, including the Framingham State University Foundation, The Danforth Museum of Art, WICN Public Radio, and the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce.

JFS however, remains closest to his heart. Bob has been a board member since 2010 and during that time, he has played a significant role in JFS’s mission to help strengthen the community through programs that offer support and comfort to seniors, immigrants, low income families, and more. Both as a board member and in harmony with his exceptionally talented and responsive team, Bob has embodied CommCreative’s “THINK WITH YOUR HEART” philosophy and fueled impact with strategy and expertise that accelerates JFS’ drive to advance social, health, and educational equity in our community. Now retired, Bob continues to address community needs wherever he goes. He truly Thinks and Acts with his big heart every day.

**Marc Jacobs**

Marc Jacobs, MSW, LICSW, has been the Chief Executive Officer of JFS since 1996. His career exemplifies civic engagement, a moral compass unrelenting in addressing social and health inequities, and building collaborative partnerships to have collective impact.

Marc held mid-level and senior staff and management positions in organizations serving youth and families at risk prior to joining JFS. He has led national training and curriculum projects; and is widely published in the areas of youth development, life skills education with adolescents, and foster parent training. He holds Master's Degrees from Boston University School of Social Work and from Clark University.

Marc has received significant leadership awards. In November 2018, he was named Middlesex Savings Bank Foundation’s 3rd Annual recipient of the John R. Heerwagen Award for Nonprofit Leadership. The award recognizes a strong, nonprofit leader whose work has significantly benefited the lives and wellbeing of residents within the Foundation's community.

In 2017, William James College awarded Marc its prestigious Mental Health Humanitarian Award for his social justice leadership. Also in 2017, The Joukowsky Family Foundation awarded its Sharp Rescuer Prize to Marc and his team for their tireless work supporting Syrian refugees in a large community wide project.

As Marc’s hero and legendary civic leader Hubie Jones recently wrote, “You are truly a long distance runner for social justice”.

**2020 JFS Max Michelson Humanitarian Awardees: Barbara and Samantha Shapiro**

Barbara and Samantha Shapiro are committed to social justice. They both love children and helping others. And they are inspired when working side by side as a mother-daughter team. Their passions aligned in 2016 when they became a part of the JFS Syrian Refugee Humanitarian Project. With their family, they helped set up homes, shopped for baby gear, collected donations of clothes and winter gear, and developed relationships with newcomer Syrian families. Barbara had the privilege to be at the airport to welcome most of the eight Syrian refugee families resettled by the program.
"They embraced the family as an extension of their own. They provided the kids with memories and experiences they will never forget – like going to the beach, seeing the Big Apple Circus, and going trick or treating – and they celebrated every important milestone with the family since they arrived – including Hayat's birth! Rekanz thinks of Barbara as a second mom."

--- Lucia Panichella, JFS Senior Director, Programs and Partnerships

Barbara serves on the boards of Horizons for Homeless Children, Beaver Country Day School, and formerly JFS of Metrowest and The Rashi School. Barbara plays a number of volunteer roles in the community and has been a classroom volunteer at Horizons for Homeless Children for over 11 years. In addition to remaining actively involved with some of the families welcomed by the JFS Syrian Refugee Humanitarian Project, Barbara is a trustee and involved in efforts led by her family's foundation, The Shapiro Foundation, which is focused on global refugee causes and improving the lives of the world's most vulnerable populations. Prior to retiring to become a full-time parent and community volunteer, Barbara had a career in marketing and advertising.

Samantha Shapiro is 17 years old and a senior at Beaver Country Day School. From a young age, Samantha has been exposed to social justice and has sought opportunities to make a difference. She volunteers at Family Table, packing and delivering groceries to those in need. In grade school, she collected school supplies to deliver to Yemin Orde Youth Village in Haifa, Israel. She visited refugee camps with her family in Lesbos, Greece. She is a summer camp counselor and babysits every chance she gets. And she spends as much time as she can visiting Syrian families and their children...and practicing her Arabic (which she takes in school)! Samantha plays hockey goalie and is captain of her tennis team. She is part of the Jewish Actors Workshop (JAWs) at Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley and recently filmed a documentary about the journey of one Syrian refugee family.

Barbara and Samantha reside in Needham with husband/father Ed, and son/brother Joshua (when he’s not away at college). They are members of Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley.

In celebration of these extraordinary community partners, this year’s Seize the Dream Gala will be a festive affair with dinner and refreshments provided by over 16 local caterers and restaurants, as well as an online and silent auction featuring 100+ unique items, ranging from dining and vacation packages to electronics and autographed sports memorabilia.

To learn more, please visit www.jfsmw.org.

About Jewish Family Service (JFS) of Metrowest

JFS is a community-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that is dedicated to standing up for those left behind, serving over 5,000 people within the Metrowest and Greater Boston regions each year. The proceeds of the Seize the Dream event support a wide variety of programs including extended-day tutoring for at-risk children, nutrition assistance for low-income families, and support services that enable frail older adults to live independently. JFS’ sound fiscal management practices have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America’s largest independent charity evaluator. To learn more about JFS, visit www.jfsmw.org.

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