



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JCYS Welcomes Director of New Family Center in Wicker Park **Michael R. Lutz Family Center Scheduled to Open in Fall 2016**

JCYS is pleased to announce the hiring of Marissa Gray as director of its new Michael R. Lutz Family Center in Wicker Park.

Since entering college, Marissa has committed herself toward a path focused on two passions: children and service. While majoring in early childhood education at Miami University of Ohio, she participated in initiatives including Ambassadors for Children, Earth Expeditions Education Program in Africa, and Changing Worlds in Chicago, among others. After graduating summa cum laude, she joined AVODAH: The Jewish Service Corps, where she worked as a resource coordinator for America SCORES Chicago, managing after school programming, developing student/parent needs assessments, and recruiting and managing volunteers.

Subsequently, as a graduate student in the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, Marissa continued working with children during her internships. After earning her master's degree, she worked as a school social worker at the Esperanza Therapeutic Day School and in the LEARN Charter School Network in Chicago, working closely with young children and their families. In this capacity, she implemented social and emotional supports for students with developmental and emotional disabilities, conducted evaluations, and developed Individualized Education Plans. Perhaps with a nod to her future work with JCYS, she also integrated play therapy, mindfulness, structured teaching, applied behavior analysis, and emotional regulation strategies to meet the social and emotional needs of students.

“Marissa thinks holistically about children and their families, focusing on serving the family unit as a whole and not just the individual child,” says JCYS Executive Director, John Thomason. “She has experience in program management, program development, and curriculum development, all of which will serve her well as she leads this brand new center for JCYS.”

The new facility is essentially complete and the agency is now working through the details to ensure compliance with DCFS licensure and City of Chicago license requirements. Once those steps are completed, the agency will begin registering children for the 2016-17 school year.

For information about programming at Michael R. Lutz Family Center, contact Director of Chicago Operations Jean Sellmyer Losek at (773) 281-2533 or jlosek@jcys.org, or visit www.jcys.org.

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Guided by Jewish values and culture, Jewish Council for Youth Services provides educational and recreational programs for Chicagoland's children and, through board service, develops the next generation of Jewish civic leaders.

Jewish Council for Youth Services (JCYS) is proud to offer educational experiences to families of all religions and backgrounds. JCYS programs serve over 2,000 children and their families in Chicagoland.