



## THE SIBLINK | July 2016

[RECAP](#)

[COMING UP](#)

[SIBLING SCRIBBLINGS](#)

[SIB RESOURCES](#)

[FROM THE DESK OF...](#)

### Thank you Vivian & Welcome Scot

*It was so nice to see so many of you at the "Thanks for 30! Vivian" Farewell! We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge Vivian for her leadership and her support of the Bruce K. Smith Sibling Network. She will be missed.*

*And, we would like to welcome Scot to JFGH! We look forward to working with Scot and introducing him to the siblings.*

### RECAP

#### Sibling & Resident Brunch Outing

May 1st was a rainy morning in Georgetown but that didn't keep JFGH siblings away from our annual gathering at Nick's Riverside Grill. Fifty JFGH siblings (and a few cousins) met for a lovely indoor brunch as guests of Nick Cibel. There was a fire going in the fireplace to welcome us and help everyone dry off. We mingled and walked among the tables chatting before we sat down to eat. It was so nice to see you all have the chance enjoy meeting each other and share your stories and experiences.

During brunch, I briefly talked about returning and reconnecting with JFGH after 25 years. I talked about my vision for the JFGH Bruce K. Smith Sibling Network and how it was my hope that the same kind of connection will continue to be forged among siblings connected to JFGH.

I hope you enjoy these photos on the next page from the wonderful and fun event!

~ Beth



JEWISH FOUNDATION  
FOR GROUP HOMES®  
*Independence starts here.*

## THE SIBLINK

*A publication of the Bruce K. Smith Sibling Network*



### COMING UP

#### Save the Date!

Join us at the next Bruce K. Smith Sibling Network event for a discussion on voting rights for individuals with disabilities. Watch this [informational video](#) on voting with an assistant.

#### Date:

Wednesday, August 31

Continued >



**Time:**

7-8:30 pm

**Topic:**

Disability Equal Voting Rights: Voting With An Assistant

**Speaker:**

Carla Satinsky of The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County

**Where:**

The Joy W. and S. Robert Cohen Building  
1500 East Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20852

**Sibling Survey**

In the next issue of SIBLINK (October 2016), we hope you will participate in an online survey to gather demographics about the Bruce K. Smith Sibling Network. The data you provide will guide us in developing targeted programs and facilitating meaningful connections. For instance, we are interested in knowing how many siblings live locally, nationally or internationally. We also understand that you are in different life stages ranging from college-age to grandparents. We look forward to sharing the data we collect in a future issue of SIBLINK.

**SIBLING SCRIBBLINGS**

***My Sister Was "Different"***

**By: Shakir Jackson-McDonald, sister of JFGH resident Rakir**

As a child I'm embarrassed to say that I resented the fact that my sister was "different" than the siblings of my peers. And, that my sister required extra attention or accommodations to do things that I and others took for granted. As a child, I didn't understand or value the richness of my sister's differences.

Now, as an adult I revel in them.

When my sister Rakir was younger, she would frustrate me as I would try to teach her "normal" things. In later years, she has effortlessly taught me the power of the "abnormal." Rakir has taught me the unique ability to love others without condition or pretense. She loves and welcomes everyone regardless of race, gender, class and/or ability with open arms and a warm heart and/or hug.

Rakir's ability to recognize a face or recall a name of someone she hasn't seen for 20 years and greet them with a nickname or warm hug, is the power of recognition. But more importantly, she herself is equally unforgettable.



*Rakir in front with sisters, Kyli and Shakir.*

Continued >

Rakir is always the first to the dance floor and the last to leave. She has never met a song she didn't like or an opportunity to celebrate or dance with the joy of a life lived abundantly. This is a metaphor for how she lives and encounters life. Rakir is the first to bring her radiant spirit to any setting leaving an endearing lasting impression.

Rakir lights up a room, has never met a person she didn't like and loves so freely it's awe inspiring. While I once thought her autism was her disability, I now know it to be her super power and I'm so proud to call Rakir my little sister.

As my other sister Kyla said, "To sum up a person that you've known and loved for almost thirty years is impossible. Rakir captivates a room regardless of the situation. Knowing Rakir, you just have to love her."



*Rakir (left) and her sister, Keisha dancing at the JFGH Hanukah Party.*

**Relatable**  
**Adversity**  
**Kindhearted**  
**Indescribable**  
**Resilient**



*Rakir with her 6 siblings. From L to R: Kyla, Keisha, Ishy, Kila, Shakir, Rakir and Juwanza with mom Deborah in front.*

***If you have a sibling story you'd like to share, please email [BShapiro@ifgh.org](mailto:BShapiro@ifgh.org)***

Continued >

## SIB RESOURCES

### **Disability Scoop: *ABLE Accounts Make Debut***

"For the first time, people with disabilities can open special accounts where they can save money without jeopardizing their government benefits." [Continue reading...](#)



### **We recommend...*Born This Way***

*Born This Way*, an award-winning reality television series offers perspectives from both the parents and the person with a disability. It features seven young adults with Down Syndrome who work hard to achieve their goals and overcome obstacles. The executive producer Jonathan Murray [shares his insights](#) about producing the series. Season 1 (six episodes) are available to stream on [www.aetv.com](http://www.aetv.com) and Season 2 just premiered this past week.



## FROM THE DESK OF...

### **Beth K. Shapiro, LCSW-C, JFGH Director of Social Work**

Did you know that JFGH has a special fund to help residents who may not have the financial resources to pay for necessary dental care? The Diener Dental Fund provides JFGH residents with the best possible access to dental health care and maintenance from their own dentist or a dentist participating in this program with us. Residents receive treatment covered under the program as needed depending on available funds and as approved by the Fund Administrator.

Below is a brief outline of the application process:

1. A need is identified for financial assistance to pay for dental care
2. The resident completes the application which includes:
  - A description of the nature of the work to be performed;
  - A Consent for Release of Information;
  - The cost; and
  - An amount a resident (or family) can contribute
3. The JFGH Director of Social Work processes the application and forwards it to the Fund Administrator for approval.

If you have any questions, please speak to your brother or sister's staff or reach out to me any time at [BShapiro@ifgh.org](mailto:BShapiro@ifgh.org) or 240.283.6018.

Have a great summer,  
Beth



**JEWISH FOUNDATION  
FOR GROUP HOMES®**  
*Independence starts here.*

# THE SIBLINK

*A publication of the Bruce K. Smith Sibling Network*

## THE SIBLINK

*A publication of the Bruce K. Smith Sibling Network*



Jewish Foundation for Group Homes  
1500 East Jefferson Street  
Rockville, MD 20852  
P: 240.283.6000 | F: 301.576.4574  
[www.jfgh.org](http://www.jfgh.org)

Partner Agency of  
**The Jewish Federation**  
OF GREATER WASHINGTON



**United Way**  
United Way  
of the National Capital Area

