

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## JFCS evaluates program amid recent staff retirement and changes in adoption and foster care

Pittsburgh, PA –February 8, 2018– JFCS announces the impending retirement of JoAnn White, Director of the agency’s adoption division known as JFCS Family Hope and formerly known as Family Hope Connection. White has worked for the organization for 20 years and joined JFCS in 1997 to found the adoption and foster care department. She will officially retire at the end of this month.

Originally created to address a need in the Jewish community when Jewish families and children were being turned away from religious-based adoption agencies, JFCS Family Hope evolved in providing services for non-traditional families and individuals under the belief that everyone deserves love, support, and ultimately a family.

“I am so fortunate to have worked for an organization that believed in my vision of building strong, loving families,” said White. “I’m proud of our decades of service, grateful for the dedication of my staff, grateful to our clients who entrusted us with their hearts, and now I’m looking forward to exploring new pursuits in retirement.”

Today, while adoption has been possible for many more families from all walks of life, several factors led to a decline in the need for JFCS Family Hope’s services in recent years.

“JoAnn’s decision to retire gave JFCS the opportunity to evaluate the JFCS Family Hope program and consider the changing landscapes, and social tides in the world of adoption and foster care,” said Dr. Jordan Golin, JFCS President & CEO. “We had many conversations with our Board of Directors, community partners, stakeholders, as well as JoAnn and her staff and we came to the difficult but certain decision that as an agency we can better direct our resources to have the greatest impact and benefit to the communities we serve.”

As of February 2018, JFCS will cease adoption services for new clients. White and her staff will be working to see current open cases through to conclusion, no matter how long that takes. No current clients will lose access to any services. Existing and former clients who require supportive and post-adoption services will be referred to JFCS Counseling Services whenever possible, or to partner agencies in the community.

“JFCS Family Hope has been a beacon of hope for families and children in our community for more than 20 years and we are absolutely confident that we are not leaving a gap in services in the Jewish or greater communities,” Golin said. “I am heartened by how adoption agencies and our society have changed to recognize the benefits of family diversity and inclusion of all types of individuals and families. And we are not losing touch. We have committed ourselves to being a community resource for families in need, and we will be a referral partner for other adoption agencies in the area.”

Over the past 20 years, thousands of children and families have benefited from the tireless, compassionate work of White and the staff of JFCS Family Hope. From supporting a pregnant woman through perhaps the hardest decision of her life, to seeing prospective parents through every complex regulation and setback, JFCS Family Hope has served the community with dignity and grace.

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