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For Immediate Release

JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF SAN FRANCISCO ANNOUNCES CHIEF JEWISH OFFICER

SAN FRANCISCO, July 8, 2011—The Jewish Community Center of San Francisco (JCCSF) has announced the appointment of Rachel Brodie as Chief Jewish Officer. Brodie, the co-founder and Executive Director of Jewish Milestones, will take up her new position at the JCCSF on August 4, 2011.

The JCCSF's Executive Director, Barry Finestone, said, "I'm thrilled that Rachel will be the first Chief Jewish Officer in the organization's history." Finestone explained that the JCCSF's goal was to add to its senior management team an officer wholly dedicated to providing leadership for all things Jewish throughout the entire organization. "We are re-envisioning the 'J' in JCC," he said. "Across the JCCSF, we create outstanding programs for an extraordinarily diverse community. Whether those programs are Talmud or travel or ceramics or sports, Jewish values and wisdom are the heart and soul of everything we do. Nobody understands or innovates around that mission to serve all people Jewishly better than Rachel Brodie."

Brodie is a renowned Jewish educator with an international reputation as a dynamic force on the landscape of contemporary Jewish life. Jewish Milestones, the organization she founded in 2004 to support those planning meaningful Jewish rituals and ceremonies, has every single year since been named by *Slingshot: A Resource Guide for Jewish Innovation* as one of North America's 50 most inspirational organizations in Jewish life. She was also the Founding Director of the Jewish Retreat Center in New York and co-founder of its Teva Learning Center, a unique Jewish environmental education program, and has worked with such innovators on the national stage as Keshet, Mayyim Hayyim and Storahtelling. A winner of a prestigious Senior Educators Fellowship at Hebrew University's Melton Centre for Jewish Education, with an M.A. in Rabbinic Literature from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and a B.A. from Brown University, Brodie has served as scholar-in-residence at Jewish institutions across the country. In her two decades as an educator she has taught at more than half of the synagogues and some of the largest JCCs in the Bay Area, and has worked with many more of Northern California's most prominent Jewish institutions, from the Contemporary Jewish Museum and Lehrhaus Judaica to the Bureau of Jewish Education and the Jewish Community Federation.

JCCSF Board President Sophie Ross said she was excited about the hire as well. "Rachel brings a lot of creative energy to the organization and to Jewish practice. She invented the term 'Wide-Angle Judaism,' which is such a wonderful description of what we do every day at the JCCSF." She added, "Rachel believes Judaism and Jewish peoplehood are larger than any single approach, and she has spent a career creating tools for people to find and create meaningful Jewish experiences for themselves."

Reflecting on her new role at the JCCSF, Brodie said, "There's already a 'J' in JCCSF, deeply embedded in the values of the institution. What is unique and visionary about the CJO position is

that it extends beyond the realm of programming. My role will be to be a thoughtful advocate for Jewish perspectives and values, Jewish questions and experiences throughout the agency.”

She went on, “Part of the impetus for creating Jewish Milestones was to overcome some deep-seated misconceptions of what constitutes ‘good’ or ‘authentic’ Judaism. Jewish life is bigger than any one institution, denomination or historical moment, but my excitement about this new position is based on a profound conviction that everything a JCC does is Jewish. And at the JCCSF, the elements that have come together – visionary leadership, creative staff, financial stability, a reputation for excellence and a staff who are already creating rich Jewish programming – offer an incomparable opportunity to support the quest of every member of the community for health – mental, spiritual and physical – through Jewish wisdom and experiences.”

Along with Brodie, two of Jewish Milestones’ projects will become part of the JCCSF. The Ritual Resource Lending Library is an extensive collection of Jewish ritual objects and materials on contemporary Jewish rituals. Rachel comments, “The one thing that the collection has been missing is foot traffic, and with 4,500 people walking through the JCCSF’s doors every day, we fully expect that the library will prosper and benefit the community in its new location.” Amphora Albums – formerly known as the Chemotherapy Siddur – is a book of prayers and poems, photos and personal notes for people undergoing medical treatment. Jewish Milestones developed and piloted the albums through educational workshops that Brodie says “are wholly in alignment with the JCCSF’s methodology of concretizing abstract values such as health, spirituality and communal support.”

The **JCCSF** has been serving the Bay Area since 1877 with programs that help individuals and the community to flourish. A home away from home for San Franciscans of all faiths and backgrounds, the JCCSF welcomes more than 4,500 guests each day, presenting them with world-class cultural events, a state-of-the-art fitness center and hundreds of inspiring educational, recreational and social programs. From three outstanding preschools and a renowned after-school K – 6 enrichment program to hot kosher lunches and daytime activities for older adults, the JCCSF offers singular programming designed to meet the needs of children, teens, parents, interfaith families, Russian émigrés and many other segments of the San Francisco community.

Programs are made possible through generous community support, enabling the JCCSF to provide free and low-cost programs, career development courses and other programs for those experiencing economic displacement, and generous financial assistance – ensuring that the Center is accessible, welcoming and nurturing to all.

The JCCSF is located at 3200 California Street (at Presidio). For more information, please visit www.jccsf.org.

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