

## Author Paula McLain to Share Experiences as a Foster Child at NCJW's Lois Zaas Advocacy Lecture

Noted author Paula McLain and Bellefaire JCB COO Jeff Lox come together on Wednesday, Nov. 18, to discuss "Aging Out of Foster Care: Overcoming the Odds," the 12th annual Lois Zaas Advocacy Lecture presented by National Council of Jewish Women/Cleveland (NCJW). The event takes place at Temple Emanu El, 4545 Brainard Rd. in Orange Village. Doors open at 6 pm.

This forum features a best-selling author's odyssey as a foster-care child and a social worker's overview of foster-care children and the system, as well as the Ohio legislature's responsibility for foster care. The event includes a Resource Fair prior to the program where attendees can learn about organizations and services supporting foster children.

McLain, author of *The Paris Wife*

and *Circling the Sun*, was born in Fresno, California. After their abandonment by both parents, she and her two sisters became wards of the California Court System, moving in and out of foster homes for the next fourteen years. Her book, *Like Family: Growing Up in Other People's Houses, A Memoir*, is the powerful and haunting story of the years she and her sisters spent as foster children.

When McLain aged out of the system, she supported herself by working as a nurses' aide, a pizza-delivery girl, an auto-plant worker and a cocktail waitress before discovering her writing talent. She received her MFA in poetry from the University of Michigan in 1996.

Jeffrey A. Lox, MSSA, LISW-S, ACSW, is chief operating officer

for Bellefaire JCB. He is the agency's chief clinician and clinical liaison to the community and is responsible for administering operations of the agency's program divisions, program development, agency performance-improvement initiatives, and clinical-training programs.

Lox is chair of the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation's Mental Health Disaster Team and chair of an Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) project supporting the mental health consultation needs of a "special populations" branch in Israel. His areas of clinical interest include disruptive behavior disorders, juvenile offenders, reactive attachment disorder and improving the quality of life for foster children.

"There are 1,600 children in foster care in Cuyahoga County

who are susceptible to poverty, homelessness and human trafficking when they age out," said Linda Barnett, president, NCJW/Cleveland. "NCJW has developed programs with a focus on foster care to educate the community and serve these young people."

The Lois Zaas Annual Memorial Advocacy Lecture is sponsored by the family of the late Lois Zaas, who was an NCJW local and national activist. The event is free and open to the public with reservations requested at 216.379.2204, ext. 100, or [www.ncjwcleveland.org](http://www.ncjwcleveland.org). A dessert reception follows the program. Dietary laws observed.

Attendees are requested to consider bringing a new stuffed animal to be given to foster children, to offer security as they are shuffled from place to place.