

JFS Middlesex 2022 Annual Newsletter



From the Executive Director

What a year this has been! Thanks to our JFS family and friends, we have been able to serve more than 30,000 people in need of food, counseling, immigration/citizenship assistance, career development, Holocaust survivor services, Medicare guidance and more.

With our JFS staff and the help of our dedicated volunteers, we have:

- Coached job seekers on the post-COVID job market
- Delivered hot meals to homebound seniors
- Distributed groceries to food-insecure families
- Counseled those struggling with anxiety and depression
- Assisted with immigration and citizenship services
- Hosted lunch programs to keep seniors engaged and active
- Kept Medicare recipients informed of plan details and how to avoid fraud
- Provided critical services to Holocaust survivors to age in place safely and comfortably
- Supported women on their journey to become self-sufficient after the loss of a partner

Every week brings new challenges that we face together – our staff, board of trustees, volunteers and community partners. We hear the stories from those coming to us for help and we are humbled and inspired. With your support, we are feeding families, coaching job seekers, engaging isolated seniors, advocating for citizenship, supplying children with backpacks for school, providing holiday gifts for families in need and more. Together we have the power to help.



Shraga D. (left) Holocaust Survivor with Roni Salkin (right) Executive Director at Café Europa.

Our counseling center continues to strive to meet the growing needs of those struggling with anxiety, depression, conflicts and other issues. Volunteers deliver 750 kosher meals each week to homebound seniors. With your support, close to 200 Holocaust survivors receive critical homecare, medical and dental services, transportation and more as they age into their 90s and 100s. Together we have the power to help.

Thank you for your support and from all of us at JFS, we wish you and your loved ones a wonderful year filled with laughter, love and happiness. Together we have the power to heal.

With gratitude,

Roni Salkin

JFS Executive Director

“JFS pays attention to the little details. We would not change a single thing, we like everything here!”

-Mrs. E, JFS Kosher Food Pantries

2022: A Year in Pictures



Networking in Middlesex County



Mitzvah Day at Congregation
B'nai Tikvah



Helping individuals reenter the
job market



Café Europa hosts Holocaust
Survivors in-person after 2 years



Community Outreach- food
distribution to families in need



Citizenship Services- providing
advocacy for complex cases



Volunteers pack food for JFS
outreach events



Kosher Food Pantries- Food
donations from generous donors



SMP- spreading the word on
preventing Medicare fraud

2022: A Year in Pictures



Community Outreach- showcasing JFS services and programs



Citizenship Classes- supporting prospective U.S. citizens



Congregate Meals- nourishing & engaging seniors



School Supply Drive with interns and staff



Staff, volunteers, and community partners at JFS Annual Meeting



Hundreds of food bags distributed this year



Volunteers honored at the JFS Annual Meeting



Clients picking up food from the Pantries



Women's Center- Learning about nutritious meal prep

Call JFS Today!

732-777-1940



How We Help:

- Programs for Seniors & Holocaust Survivors
- Kosher Food Pantries
- Immigration & Citizenship
- Women's Center
- Career Services
- Counseling Services

Learn more at:

www.jfsmiddlesex.org

Jewish Family Services of Middlesex County (JFS Middlesex) is a nonprofit, social services agency offering an array of essential programs to help people from all backgrounds.

Our Locations:

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Success at the Women's Center



When it comes to achieving professional and personal goals, finding the right support makes all the difference. JFS Women's Center helps displaced homemakers (individuals who are single parents, divorced, separated, widowed or living with a disabled partner---who are seeking to achieve self-sufficiency) tackle life's challenges and attain success.

As Ms. A, a Women's Center client notes, "I was going through a lot of mental problems at home. The ladies here are very helpful -- helping me to pay for school, find a job, and through the workshops they have." She credits JFS staff with empowering her to change her situation. Now a Medical Assistant, Ms. A enjoys the work she does but admits that staying focused and being able to identify the type of help she needed was critical in achieving her goals.

We are very proud of Ms. A's achievements including her steadfast confidence in her own ability to succeed.

The JFS Women's Center offers free individualized support for displaced homemakers. For more information, email womenscenter@jfsmiddlesex.org or call 732-777-1940. Please consider donating to support displaced homemakers as they work hard to improve the future for themselves and their families.



The Kosher Food Pantries Are Fighting Food Insecurity

Each week the JFS Kosher Food Pantries feed families who are struggling with job loss, financial setbacks, or unexpected emergencies. Throughout life's challenges, JFS supports the most vulnerable and is committed to challenging food insecurity in our community. We refuse to allow our neighbors to go hungry – we are here to help.

For Mrs. N, her greatest concern is caring for her family, especially her grandson. She notes that she appreciates the friendly staff and the support JFS' Kosher Food Pantries have given her. The groceries received help Mrs. N budget for other essentials for her family. As she puts it: "it's difficult to find balance when so much of the prices are going up and driving to the store is now an added expense."

The JFS Kosher Food Pantries provide healthy kosher food options to all Middlesex County residents in need regardless of background.

Learn how you can help by arranging a food drive, helping at community events, or donating online by calling 732-777-1940 or email office@jfsmiddlesex.org



Mrs. N receives food for her family from the JFS Kosher Food Pantries.

"I appreciate the groceries JFS gives me and my family. The pantry is here when my family needs it the most." - Mrs. N



And Now, On The Road, Too!

Thanks to your generosity and a grant from Middlesex County, JFS received a new delivery van in October! Thank you for helping us reach more families facing food insecurity and transportation challenges.



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Fighting Medicare Fraud with SMP & SHIP



This was a busy year for SMP & SHIP outreach staff. Pictured: SHIP Coordinator, Michelle B. (left), SMP Outreach Specialist, Joel S. (center) and SMP Project Director, Charles C. (right).

The Senior Medicare Program and the State Health Insurance Assistance Program go above and beyond when it comes to informing seniors of their Medicare rights and privileges. Back in June, SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) and SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) counselors greeted seniors at local health and wellness fairs organized by St. Peter's Healthcare System. And in November, Charles, SMP Project Director, ventured out to Parker in Somerset to host an educational seminar on Medicare and how to detect and prevent Medicare fraud during the open enrollment period.

Senior Medicare Patrol of New Jersey (SMP) and State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) provide Medicare beneficiaries with assistance and advocacy. For more info on SMP, see www.jfsmiddlesex.org/senior-services.

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A Holocaust Survivor Shares Her Story



“I hope that it will never happen to anybody again, that nobody has to ever go through what I went through.”
--Lois Holocaust Survivor

Lois Flamholz, part of the JFS' Holocaust Survivor Services Program, shares her harrowing experience of surviving Auschwitz and losing her family during World War II at the 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust. This event was organized by the Jewish Federation of Northern Pennsylvania to help younger generations remember those lost and acknowledge the stories of living Holocaust survivors.

It has taken Lois several years to be able to speak about what she went through and to process her grief of losing her parents and siblings at the hands of Nazi soldiers. Despite the grim reality of what it means to be a survivor of genocide, Lois is focused on sharing her story to remind current and future generations to remain vigilant of inhumanity and come together to prevent such events.

Lois is an example of resilience and resolve to create a better life. She dedicated her life post-WW-II to building a strong, healthy family and staying active within her community. Though she lost her family at a young age, Lois is committed to having her story, and the lives of her parents' and siblings' remembered. Lois is a great-grandmother to fourteen great-grandchildren.

JFS Holocaust Survivor Services provides essential services to nearly 200 survivors so they can age in place with comfort and dignity.

Thanks to your support, JFS ensures survivors receive the care they need even as the costs of medical and home care increase dramatically.

Thank you for your support!

The Impact of Volunteering

Where would JFS be without the dedicated volunteers who support us? The spirit of service and volunteerism is essential. It is the backbone that supports communities, especially those in underserved areas. We are honored to more than 200 volunteers serving the community through JFS, and in many different ways too.

Volunteers can serve as drivers for the Kosher Meals on Wheels program, stock the Kosher Food Pantries, help prepare people for their naturalization interviews, organize JFS events and fundraisers, and much more. Volunteers often represent JFS at different outreach events, helping us connect with local communities.

**We couldn't do it without your support--
Thank You!**



Volunteers help make outreach events a success!

Alan B., Driver for KMOV and Holocaust Survivor Services, says:

To give back to the community. I love visiting the people. I spent a lot of time volunteering and giving my time even before I retired so this is a part of me."



Volunteer Alan delivering food to seniors in the KMOV program

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Café Europa: Back in Person!

After two years of online entertainment and home-delivered meals, Café Europa reopened its doors on July 26th with a big celebration. More than 60 Holocaust Survivors gathered for a hot meal and socialization with friends. They enjoyed roast chicken and sweet noodle kugel, along with a spirited performance from violinist David Podles. The delicious meal, lively entertainment and companionship of friends made for a very memorable day.

Café Europa is a monthly socialization program that encourages and supports bonds among Holocaust Survivors while they enjoy nutritious food and live entertainment. JFS staff and volunteers work hard to ensure that the Holocaust Survivors have a great time with their friends. Please consider a donation to help us ensure that they have what they need to age safely and comfortably at home: call 732-777-1940, email or donate online today.



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Helping Local Kids Each School Year



There is no doubt that each academic year starts with a period of transition from easy-breezy summer days to structured routines and schedules. But for many families, the new school year brings the additional stress of limited resources to buy essential supplies. This year, we are especially grateful to everyone who donated school supplies to make our annual backpack giveaway a success!

JFS' Women's Center and Kosher Food Pantries supplied 150 backpacks to children grades K to 12. Each backpack was filled with essentials to help children start the new year with less stress so they could focus on learning, meeting new friends and enjoying the opportunities of the 2022-2023 academic year.

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73-Word Story: Second Generation Experience



"Although we hadn't personally experienced the Holocaust, it was indelibly imprinted on our psyches."

- Sara Ullman, Short Story Author

Read Sara's 73-word short story below:

SECOND GENERATION

By Sara Ullman

Decades ago I attended a Second Generation group for the children of Holocaust survivors. Our gruesome legacy, woven into the fabric of each family, bonded us.

At age eight, my mother escaped Vienna on the Kindertransport, an organized effort to rescue the innocent children of Europe from the horrors of Nazi persecution.

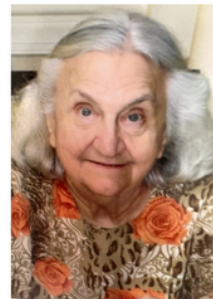
She was eventually orphaned.

Although we hadn't personally experienced the Holocaust, it was indelibly imprinted on our psyches.

When Sara Ullman, JFS' Kosher Meals on Wheels Coordinator, challenged herself to write a short story for this year's "73 Words in the 732," a contest organized by the East Brunswick Public Library, she knew immediately what she wanted to write about: Erika Ettner, her mother and Holocaust survivor, one of 10,000 orphaned Jewish children who escaped Nazi persecution. The hardest part was selecting the right words to express and honor her mother's life while acknowledging her own experience as a child of a Holocaust Survivor. Sara notes, "for my mother, she was orphaned at age 8 and escaped Vienna on the Kindertransport [...] when she came to the U.S. she stayed with family but then was taken in by a foster family--her experience impacted her emotionally."

While Sara's 73-word story is a moment of remembrance, it reminds us that no two Holocaust Survivors' stories are the same, and neither are the experiences of survival and resilience that persist through the children of survivors. She learned the impact the Holocaust had on her mother and her family at a young age--this exposure inspired Sara in adulthood to support remembrance projects, focus on connecting with educational initiatives, and honor her mother's story as part of her own story of how we can find our way out and through tragedy.

In Memory of
Erika Ettner, December 1930 - October 2014
Mother, Daughter, Friend and Holocaust Survivor



Helping our Clients Achieve a Milestone

When Mrs. P, a student in JFS' Citizenship program, started attending classes this summer, she was very nervous, yet ready to commit the next 12 weeks to preparing for her interview. She came to the U.S. from India 10 years ago, and through the encouragement of her family, she applied for citizenship in the hopes of voting, traveling with ease, and continuing her life as a citizen.

On September 15, ahead of Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Ms. P passed her naturalization interview and took her oath as a new U.S. Citizen. She stopped by JFS' Citizenship class to share the good news and bring in treats to encourage her classmates to keep learning and practicing. She greeted her class with a smile and said, "I am an American Citizen." Congratulations Mrs. P!



**"I'm an American citizen,
and I did it with JFS!"**

JFS Immigration and Citizenship Services provide help with family visa petitions, consular processings, work authorizations, and green cards, all at a low cost. We also provide advocacy for complex immigration cases, representation at USCIS interviews, and free citizenship classes online and in local community centers. Call to schedule an appointment at 732-777-1940, and scan the QR code for the 2023 citizenship class schedule.





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Art for the Soul, Food for the Body



For Richard Hoffman (80), art has always been part of his life. He grew up knowing he was “always an artist.” Richard fed his creative soul at a young age with doodles in the back of his notebook and with drawings of his favorite cartoon characters. Born and raised in Newark, NJ, he attended Weequahic High School and went to college at Seton Hall. Though his parents were not thrilled with him choosing art as a career, Richard notes “I knew I couldn’t help myself, I had to draw.”

He was driven to trust his talents and found work as an illustrator. He focused on developing his comic strips and illustrating and writing children’s stories that brought his life into his art. Richard self-published four illustrated books highlighting his love of visual storytelling and favorite Jewish recipes. Richard taught art and driver’s education, which inspired him to share his talents within his community. Whether he was sketching and painting a mural at a hospital or creating a 3-foot replica of the constitution, Richard filled his life with creative pursuits and trusted his artistic vision to: “If I can see it, I can do it!”

One of his last murals was in 2015 at the age of 73 when he recreated The Kiss (“Der Kuss”) by Austrian painter Gustave Klimt for a senior center in northern Israel. When speaking on this experience, he shares that he was honored and delighted to be invited to uplift the spirits of seniors abroad. Over the years, he has expressed himself through shapes, colors and textures, which has helped him embrace life’s beauty and nourish his soul. JFS staff recently visited Richard, where he shared his appreciation for JFS’ Kosher Meals on Wheels (KMOW), and the kind and caring staff who reach out to him weekly. He states, “The meals are important. I stay at home and appreciate JFS checking in.” When asked what his favorite dish from KMOW was, he said “the stuffed cabbage.” Though, he admits it doesn’t compare to his wife’s stuffed cabbage--a recipe he includes in one of his illustrated books.

Update: JFS was saddened to hear of the death of Richard Hoffman. He was a talented artist and a beloved member of our community. Thank you for all that you did Richard.



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JFS Honors Volunteers at the 2022 Annual Meeting

At JFS, we strive to meet our mission every day with the help of our volunteers, staff, leadership and community partners who work together to make an impact in the lives of families in Middlesex County and across New Jersey. On October 27, JFS hosted its Annual Meeting and Volunteer Appreciation event to review our accomplishments and honor our amazing volunteers. JFS volunteers donated more than 17,500 hours in 2021, and their presence is felt each week throughout the JFS services they support. The Shirley Segal Volunteer of the Year and Rose Wachtel Memorial New Volunteer of the Year awards were given to Barbara and Jerry, two of our hard-working volunteers.

Barbara delivers meals to seniors under JFS' Kosher Meals on Wheels (KMOW) program.



THE SHIRLEY SEGAL AWARD

Barbara, Volunteer of the Year

As the recipient of The Shirley Segal award for Volunteer of the Year, Barbara notes, "It is my pleasure to help others and to work with the many dedicated volunteers. Each of the volunteers does an excellent job and treats JFS clients with compassion and respect, they all deserve this award."

Jerry delivers meals for JFS KMOW and helps restock JFS' Kosher Food Pantries.



THE ROSE WACHTEL MEMORIAL AWARD

Jerry, New Volunteer of the Year

As the recipient of The Rose Wachtel Memorial award for New Volunteer of the Year, Jerry shared "When I retired, I knew I needed to do something to help others. To give. I enjoy volunteering because I wanted to bring something to someone that needed it."

Thank you Barbara, Jerry and all our committed volunteers for your dedication and support of JFS, helping us to make a difference locally and reach more families in need.

The JFS Board Renew Their Pledges



In addition to honoring all the dedicated volunteers of JFS, the Annual Meeting also served to renew the JFS Board's pledge to serve and guide their community. Thank you for reaffirming your commitment toward the staff, volunteers, and 30,000 clients served by JFS!



The JFS Gala Drought Is Over, At Last!

Mark your calendar: JFS One Community Gala is coming back on June 11, 2023, after a three-year hiatus. Admission includes a cocktail hour, dinner, live entertainment, and a silent auction. Join the JFS community of supporters for a night filled with connection and celebration! Check out website for updates.

• JFS' 2023 Outlook •



Women's Center

"We're looking to expand our outreach in order to reach more displaced homemakers in need of our assistance. We also are looking forward to next year's School Supply Drive and Holiday Gift Drive."

-Lisa B., Women's Center Coordinator

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

"2023 will be the start of a new 5-year grant, which will allow SMP to hire new staff. SMP looks forward to working with partners, old and new, to spread the message of the SMP: PREVENT, DETECT AND REPORT Medicare fraud."

-Charles, SMP Project Director



Career Center

"Looking forward to developing new connections to assist clients with job search leads. We are also hoping for more outreach to communicate JFS' career services"

-Diane, Career Development Specialist



Happy New Year

2023

• JFS' 2023 Outlook •

Kosher Meals on Wheels (KMOW)

"The KMOW numbers are trending upward again, so we anticipate a very active 2023. We are currently serving approximately 130 recipients and hope to be able to deliver nutrition to all the beloved seniors of our community who are isolated and struggling with meal preparation."

-Sara, Coordinator of Kosher Meals on Wheels



Kosher Food Pantries

"We're looking forward to more community food distribution programs with our Food Pantry on The Road program while also seeking new sources of revenue to purchase food."

-Lisa, Executive Administrator/Grants Monitor/Essential Needs Supervisor

Immigration & Citizenship

"Looking forward to opening up Citizenship classes again for the new year. In 2023, we are expanding our citizenship outreach to South Jersey, so be on the lookout for many new faces."



Happy New Year
2023

• JFS' 2023 Outlook •

Transportation

"Looking forward to receiving a new vehicle from NJ Transit to help transport our clients to senior congregate meal programs and medical appointments. In 2023, our fleet will consist of 3 adapted vehicles with ramps for ease of access for our clients and a fourth regular mini-van."

-Lisa, Executive Administrator/Grants Monitor/Essential Needs Supervisor



Counseling Services

"For the clinical department, we are looking to hire several new therapists as we expand our new office in Monroe. In addition, we will be looking to provide psychiatric care with medication in the new year. We want to be able to meet the need in the community on a timely basis to provide quality behavioral healthcare to our consumers."

-Bill, Associate Executive Director/Clinical Director



Lunch With Friends

"Since we've come back in person after almost 3 years, we're bringing back the fun that we missed. The friends and volunteers look forward to these weekly congregate meals, and we're looking forward to new programs in 2023!"



Happy New Year

2023



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