As our concerns lie with the war between Israel and Hamas, JFCS is continuing the powerful value of tikkun olam, repairing our world.
Serving Current Needs, Looking Towards the Future

I write to you a few months into my term as board chair of JFCS, an organization that has served the Philadelphia community for over 125 years. My commitment to JFCS began over twenty years ago when I learned about the Holocaust survivors and other elderly Philadelphians who depend on our agency to manage their care thereby enabling them to live with dignity and respect in their remaining years. Further involvement introduced me to the array of JFCS services and its mission to support the stability and independence of families and individuals at key moments in their life journeys.

Over the years I have witnessed JFCS address the most pressing needs of our community. Most recently, we expanded our Mental Health Network to provide adolescents and adults greater access to critical services, initiated support groups for hoarders, and broadened our LGBTQ+ initiative. This past year, JFCS’ mobile basic needs program blossomed into a full-service, far-reaching program, Our Closet In Your Neighborhood (OCIYN), providing free quality clothing, healthy food and cooking instruction, as well as social work support at pop-up shops in partner locations throughout Philadelphia. At present, JFCS has been called upon to provide trauma informed counseling in connection with the war between Israel and Hamas and the rise in antisemitism. Whatever the need, JFCS is there and able to pivot in times of crisis.

Crucial to the sustainability of JFCS is the support of our partners and donors. This past year saw the return of in-person events supporting specific programs including Nourishing Community (JFCS’ Food Security Initiative,) Wellness Fest (Mental Health Initiative), Fête for Fertility (JFCS Fertility Fund: A Gift from the Heart), and Fashion For All (OCIYN). At our premier fundraising event last May, JFCS Center Stage, we highlighted our work in the mental health arena with offensive tackle and this year’s nominee for the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award, Lane Johnson, discussing his public battle with anxiety. As I look to the future, sustainable support of JFCS will become increasingly important.

I am continuously impressed by the knowledge and dedication of JFCS’ staff and proud to be part of an organization that lives its values of community, dignity, and repairing the world. Most importantly, I am grateful to each of you for being part of the JFCS community.

Sheree Bloch
Chair of the Boards of Directors and Trustees
Over the past four years, JFCS has been called on to respond to an unprecedented number of crises that have affected our community in profound ways, starting with the COVID-19 pandemic. For thousands of vulnerable individuals and families, this drastically increased financial stress, physical and emotional health challenges, and feelings of isolation as community was stripped away. In response, JFCS delivered vaccines into the arms of Holocaust survivors, older adults, and those living with disabilities. We also increased our financial aid, mental health support, and initiated virtual communities to keep people connected. Then came the surge in lockdowns — as staff members working in our city’s schools lived the daily reality of the worsening gun violence epidemic in Philadelphia. We turned our crisis response inward to ensure safe spaces for our social workers to process their feelings of danger and trauma. JFCS staff led and participated in panel discussions on how to support the many victims of gun violence, and we dedicated a community wide lecture to this very topic. In January of last year, as we started to move beyond the dangers of COVID, staff returned to a hybrid work schedule with a priority of seeing our clients face to face, and we began to stabilize and return to a sense of normalcy, we found ourselves facing a new crisis: the war between Israel and Hamas. On October 7, 2023, JFCS jumped back into crisis response mode — answering a barrage of calls from schools, college Hillels, and Jewish organizations in need of emotional support — scared for themselves and their families in Israel. Once again, our staff moved quickly into response mode working with groups as requested.

What does this tell me? JFCS will always respond to the needs of the community, whether it’s a global or individual crisis. We have and will always find ways to support the many individuals in need of emotional, physical, and mental support. We do all this while continuing to support our older adult and Holocaust survivor populations, Philadelphia schools, Hillels, Jewish Day schools, and adoptive families supporting birthparents through this process as well.

And we do this while always ensuring we are preserving the emotional health of our staff whose top priority is to serve the community — helping them find ways outside of work to manage their own feelings about wide-spread crises. For those who have supported our efforts to date, I thank you for having confidence in us to provide care for our community. JFCS is comprised of a remarkable team of professionals who are passionate about helping others. Thank you for enabling us to continue this essential work.

Paula Goldstein
President/CEO
MEETING BASIC NEEDS

503 Holocaust survivors supported with care management services; Over 120,000 hours of in-home nursing care and household chores to help Holocaust survivors age in their homes.

3,849 care management hours provided to individuals across programs, including: Older Adults, Holocaust Survivors, Vulnerable Adults, People with Disabilities, and beyond.

4,643 individuals served through pop-ups and emergency clothing package delivery.

17,790 pounds of fresh, healthy food distributed at pop-up shops.

32,661 clothing items, shoes, and accessories provided to children and adults.

166 volunteers sorted clothing donations, helped at pop-up events, and more.

$315,966 in direct financial assistance to 565 households (1,161 individuals) to help cover basic needs such as food, rent, mortgage, utilities, medical expenses, and other essentials.

$104,604 in direct financial assistance for food through Kavod Shef for 172 members of Holocaust survivor households.

$123,253 worth of necessities distributed to 296 client households through Food Package Delivery, Meals on Wheels and deliveries of household items such as electronics.
2,927 counseling and art therapy sessions held and 147 hours of support from a psychiatrist provided.

463 individual therapy sessions, 999 group session attendances, and 182 Professional Development attendees through JFCS’ Mental Health Network.

177 support group sessions held around issues such as hoarding, caregiver support, challenges facing the LGBTQ+ community, and more.

737 teachers and parents trained through suicide prevention workshops.

4,423 students educated through 218 Signs of Suicide group sessions.

175 1-on-1 hoarding support client sessions facilitated.

360 clients and professionals participated in 66 JFCS-hosted trainings and workshops on hoarding.

75% of Care Management clients were empowered to improve or maintain their mental health.
BUILDING POSITIVE LIFE SKILLS

2,183 prevention education sessions helped 9,838 students gain tools for managing alcohol, tobacco, drugs, violence, gambling, and possible suicidality in their lives.

94% of campers attending Camp Mariposa (for children affected by substance use in their families):
- demonstrated knowledge of self-care, coping skills, and identifying people/places to go for support
- learned substance avoidance skills among other helpful tools
- said they will graduate high school and achieve their dreams
CREATING & SUSTAINING HEALTHY FAMILIES

30 total adoptions facilitated by Open Arms Adoption Network and 106 women supported with options counseling.

Open Arms Adoption Network hosted over 20 parenting education events for over 400 individuals from adoptive families — from workshops and Coffee Talks to in-person socials and information sessions.

Nearly 300 children and teens benefited from Parenting/ELECT educational workshops focused on cultivating healthier familial relationships.
The NORC @ JFCS (a membership program helping older adults stay connected/age well in place) provided:
care management support to 231 individuals,
transportation services to 56 individuals, and home repair services to 132 residents.

99% of NORC members were adequately supported to remain living in their own homes.

2,524 individuals attended 103 LGBTQIA+ inclusive events through the J.Proud Network.

270 individuals participated in PLWD programming, engaging in 355 activities and events, receiving care management, and benefiting from counseling services.
JFCS partners with the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia and is a member of the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies and United Way. Social services for Jewish Nazi victims have been supported by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.