



**Jewish Family Services**  
of silicon valley

## JFS SV Supports Our Community During This Challenging Time

During these challenging times, JFS SV is busy reaching out to our community in their time of need. Although our offices are closed, we're as busy as ever with virtual as well as "safe distance events" happening now. Our agency provides government-defined essential services, so we can reach our community during these times of need. Hear from our staff:

### **Gratitude from Galina**

*Galina Chyorny, Coordinator of Holocaust Survivor and Emigre Services*

I want to share with you many thanks! Twenty-seven of my [Holocaust survivor clients](#) have received meals prepared by Pars Kosher Market. They loved receiving them and expressed their gratitude for these tasty dinners.

Last week our volunteers and I brought Passover food packages to 190 of our Russian-speaking clients. One lady said that when she opened the door and saw the JFS Passover package, it reminded her of a Hanukkah miracle. I spend a great deal of time on the phone with my clients and they all tell me this: *they are happy that even though the building is closed, they are not forgotten.*

### **More Goodness from Galina: ([May2020 update](#))**

I just received a call from Tatyana at Rincon Gardens. Seven of her neighbors received food packages from JFS. Everybody is delighted and said that packages were like Hanukkah gifts. Last week we helped 40 holocaust survivors received challahs as gifts from ChallahFresh. For many of them it was a pleasant surprise, and made their Shabbat special.

### **Blessings from Sandra**

*Sandra Pannell, Project NOAH Social Worker*

Two of my clients in particular really needed help this past week. Both receive [counseling](#) by phone – and both received Passover food packages.

**DB** is a woman in her late fifties who lost her father in February. Her father's retirement funds covered most of the family's rent and when he died, DB, along with her daughter and grandchildren, had to find a new place to live. Of course, she is also worried about the virus. After talking for a while by phone, she stopped and said how much she appreciated my calling and listening to her. She said she has been depressed and wasn't comfortable talking with her daughter about the stress that's going on in her life. She said it felt so good to finally let it out to someone who cares.

**LR** is a man in his middle fifties who expressed how stressed and anxious he has become during this virus pandemic. Especially since he now can't work. He told me how hard it is to stay positive and not lose hope that things will change. I listened to LR and gave him lots of encouragement and emotional support. Before ending the conversation, LR stated that if it were not for his father and me, he would have given up. He wanted me to know how grateful he was for all the help and support I've given him this past year, and how he knows I will be there for him. Later this week I will bring him a supermarket gift card.

## Greetings from Nellie Rochon-Ellis

*Nellie Rochon-Ellis, Career Counselor*



I joined JFS SV on February 24th as the new [Career Counselor](#) and Job Developer. As with any new position one takes on, there is a bit of anxiety: "Will I perform well?", "Will the staff like me?" - and – "Did I make the right decision to join this organization?" I can truly say that this has been the most exciting start to any job I have ever taken!

On my third week of work, I caught a cold. So, my Director and I decided it would be best for me to work from home. Little did I know that I would not be returning back to work until April! I had to quickly learn how to set up a home work station and learn technology that I could use to connect with my clients. Finding a place to work in a household of 3 working-from-home adults, 1 unemployed adult and a 3-year-old has been a challenge within itself.

The management staff at JFS SV has kept us well-informed, provided us with up to date COVID-19 resources and keeps us motivated. I am so impressed with the staff's compassion to help one another, and our clients during these uncertain times despite our own challenges. *Did I make the right decision to come to JFS SV? Absolutely!*

### **More News from Nellie: ([May2020 update](#))**

My client Tuba was granted her U.S. asylum in January 2020. She holds a BA Biology and MA Microbiology from Turkey. She has impressive degrees but very little work experience. We enrolled Tuba in our [Connections to Work program](#). Tuba and I started work on her resume and interview preparation in February, and have continued by phone when shelter in place began. It was at first very challenging but gradually she began to understand why American employers ask things like, "Where do you want to be in 5 years?" Interview questions can be difficult for an American to answer, but can you imagine looking for work and not understanding the American work culture?

Tuba was getting phone interviews, but no offers and was becoming discouraged. I continued to encourage her, and provide her with interview strategies. On April 6th, Tuba was hired as a Production Test Technician for a Sunnyvale company called Cepheid. Cepheid is a molecular diagnostic testing company and is developing COVID-19 test kits. What an amazing and impactful 1st U.S. job for her!

## **Refugee resettlement update from Azita**

*Azita Eshagh, Resettlement Coordinator*

Two weeks ago, we resettled a family of ten from Afghanistan. A wonderful group of volunteers from our friends at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints shop and deliver food and clothing to them as well to two other refugee families. We have many very special volunteers from the Jewish community who answer our call for help every time we need them.

They are providing essential transportation and mentorship during this time, which is quite confusing for our refugee clients.

## Good thoughts from Hilla

*Hilla Flohr, Clinical Social Worker*



Like Galina, I have been enjoying [delivering meals](#) to my Holocaust survivor clients. Lydia told me, "Hilla, thank you so much! This is very sweet of you." Boris told me with a smile, "Thank you Hilla. Next time, please come and have coffee and cake with us." If only I could! The coffee and cake will have to wait – but I will stay in touch with him and bring more meals soon.

### More from Hilla (May2020 update)

Just to warm your heart, I want to share with you what two of our Holocaust survivor clients told me recently:

- ~ From Kira, after I delivered a food package to her: "Nobody is taking care of me like you do. Truly. I really appreciate it."
- ~ From Boris who has a new volunteer who brings him groceries: "During this difficult time, we know that we are not alone. Our volunteer is so sweet to us! Every help that we ask for, you are taking care of it right away. Thank you. We are so grateful to have you in our lives."

*[Hilla was featured in a recent Jewish Telegraphic Agency communication.](#)*

## Love from Lori

*Lori Cinnamon, Manager of Volunteer and Community Engagement*



For me the story is that [volunteers](#) are truly wanting to help and they are inspirational. They are sewing masks, signing up to grocery shop and run errands for isolated seniors, and be Friendly Visitor phone buddies.

The APJCC is recruiting volunteers including numerous Russian speakers to deliver to Russian-speaking seniors. It is taking a little time to screen and onboard these volunteers yet it all shows the remarkable strength of character and willingness to give during these difficult times. *If you'd like to volunteer, email Lori at [loric@fjssv.org](mailto:loric@fjssv.org)*

## More Love from Lori: (May2020 update)

Like you, I have been learning each day how to stay positive and to cope with living and working in these difficult times. For me, daily long walks and journaling outside are so important. In communicating with our volunteers, I hear how they cope. There are so many ways to stay positive! Our volunteers are *astounding*. Our clients – and staff - appreciate how much volunteers perform acts of lovingkindness in our community. Some stories for you:

**Our Chaplain Aides**, Harry and Joanne Cornbleet along with Judy Holtzman, led a meaningful Zoom Shabbat service for Belmont Villages. Since Passover small gatherings are no longer allowed at senior facilities with whom our Chaplain Aides work, so our wonderful Chaplain Aides have been calling the residents so they can maintain their regular connection.



Our **Knitzvah volunteers** are busy sewing, knitting and crocheting. They have sewn masks and head coverings for nurses at O'Connor Hospital and Valley Medical Center. They have also made masks for Chai House residents, UCSF student midwives, Bill Wilson Center volunteers and Lunardi's staff. Knitzvah members have big hearts and abundant energy to give to others.



Our **volunteer meal delivery and grocery shopping program** grows each week. Our grocery shoppers bring light and nourishment of body and soul to our frail, homebound and isolated seniors, especially those who don't have local families. Many grocery shoppers become friendly phone buddies and form lasting social connections.

**Need for a Spanish speaker:** We currently need a volunteer who is fluent in Spanish to be a lively phone buddy for an older woman. Please let me know if that describes you. More needs pop up each day. We continue to develop creative ways to stay connected and help others during this difficult time. If you are interested in volunteering email me at [loric@jfssv.org](mailto:loric@jfssv.org). With Deep Appreciation for you.

## **Caring from [JFS@Chai House](#) – Sumi and Caroline**

*Sumi Kamiya, Chai House Senior Services Social Worker*

*Caroline Golpashin, Chai House Case Manager*

Even though we've closed our onsite office at Chai House, our staff is busy helping the residents. We talk to as many residents as we can by phone. We check in on them, help them apply online for different purposes, and connect them with caregivers and other resources. Sumi buys and delivers groceries and medications for those residents who can't get out.

We are also working on a [JFS@Chai House enewsletter](#) that will be emailed to residents next week.

The enewsletter will include some funny content to make them laugh, an activity and some information about mental health and coping tools to use during this time.

We would like to thank the Chai House Board, management company, and of course, the dear residents for the great job they are doing following the guidelines during this difficult time.

### **[Chai House Update from Sumi and Caroline: \(May2020 update\)](#)**

We've just printed [our third Chai House enewsletter](#). Residents love keeping in touch and doing the puzzles, too! Over the past few weeks, we've received many cloth mask donations from Knitzvah and a donor from the community. We've distributed 25 masks and counting. Everyone is grateful for the support! We stay in constant touch with as many residents as possible so no one is alone, and bring meals to those who can't get out. Our first virtual group at Chai House will be Thursday, May 7 at 3pm. We're all looking forward to it.

## **Distance learning with Natalie**

*Natalie Lazar, Coordinator of VESL Education*

[Vocational English as a Second Language](#) classes are going strong! I am using different online tools to make sure that the students are engaged as much as possible with their lessons. I have been video conferencing by using WhatsApp to have face-to-face meetings to review homework. I am emailing my students assignments with online resources such as YouTube videos and ESL online websites that are related to the homework.

Students send their completed assignments for review by emailing or texting. During the week, I call to check on their progress. I'm currently teaching 4 levels of VESL remotely. I create different lessons plans that are customized for each level. It's challenging, but I enjoy it.

## **News from Danya**

*Danya Hazeghi, Preferred Communities Coordinator*



My success story this week is about a recently-arrived refugee who I began counseling because of her post traumatic stress syndrome and related mental health issues. She's been so dedicated to her emotional wellness and has overcome many obstacles in the past few months, but as you can imagine, the Shelter in Place order has been potentially destabilizing.

Our in-person meetings have been replaced by phone calls several times a week since the order took effect. Our conversations have ranged from the clinical -- observing and monitoring her destructive thought patterns and practicing interventions to interrupt the cycle -- to more humorous topics like royal family gossip and silly Facebook postings. It's been SO gratifying to see the wonderful choices she's making to take care of herself and how she's maintained a relatively clear mind despite all the chaos around her.

## **Sunshine from Sandra:**

*Sandra Pannell, Project NOAH Social Worker*

I have a 71-year client, a breast cancer survivor who completed her treatments five months ago. Since the shelter in place has been enforced, I've been checking in with her weekly. This week, she told me she was able to purchase some healthy foods with the grocery gift cards I gave her last week. She also shared how grateful she was for our weekly conversations. She said our talks made her feel "uplifted, comforted and safe". She expressed her appreciation for all the help and support she has been given.

## **Knitzvah Blankets the World with Love**



In addition to providing blankets for our newly arrived refugees, **Knitzvah members have been making masks for Valley Medical Center**. Our contact in the palliative care unit contacted Knitzvah member Renee and gave her their needs, preferences and a safe hand-off procedure. As of a week ago, they had made 50 masks – and counting!



**JFS SV Continues to do its work to support our Mission:**

Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley empowers individuals and families facing life's challenges by providing quality human services inspired by Jewish values.

**Your support with a donation is welcome.**



May 1, 2020