

Our family's involvement with Jewish Family Service formally began almost a quarter century ago, when we called upon JFS for a home study for the adoption of our oldest son, Justin. That process introduced us to the professional, educated, friendly and experienced staff at JFS, and although the faces have changed, those qualities continue today, under the long-time leadership of Executive Director, Karen Gustafson. Whether mental health counseling, financial assistance, parenting classes, adoption home studies, Yachad activities for developmentally-disabled Jewish adults, and community-wide suicide prevention efforts, JFS supports the most vulnerable in our community, and is there for us in our times of need. Omaha's Jewish community needs JFS, perhaps now more than ever.

Susie and Mike Norton

2019-20 HIGHLIGHTS

TELEHEALTH TO THE RESCUE

JFS launched its Virtual Counseling program on March 1st 2020, just before the pandemic hit. This new offering turned out to be invaluable when our whole office had to work remotely for over 3 months, as we continued to see and support our clients through this difficult and unprecedented time. Being an early adopter of telemedicine has given us the opportunity to blaze the trail for other Jewish Family Services around the country, by presenting a webinar hosted by the National Jewish Human Service Agencies Association (NJHSA), in September 2020.



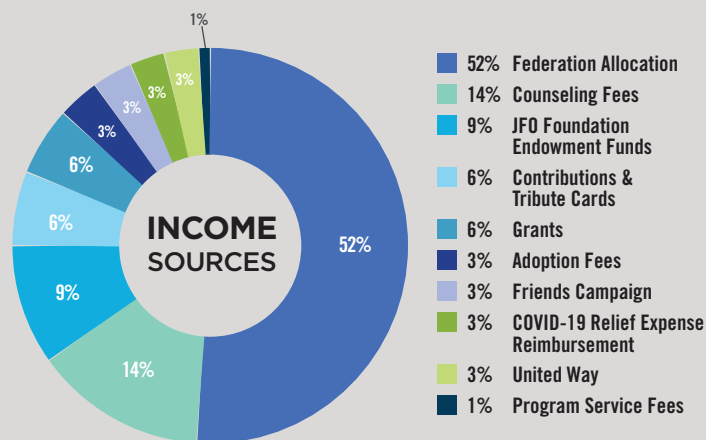
COVID-19 EMERGENCY RELIEF

Thanks to generous donations to the Federation and Foundation's Emergency Relief Fund, our Assistance Coordinator and group of volunteers were able to answer to 190 requests for food, rent, utilities and other expenses,

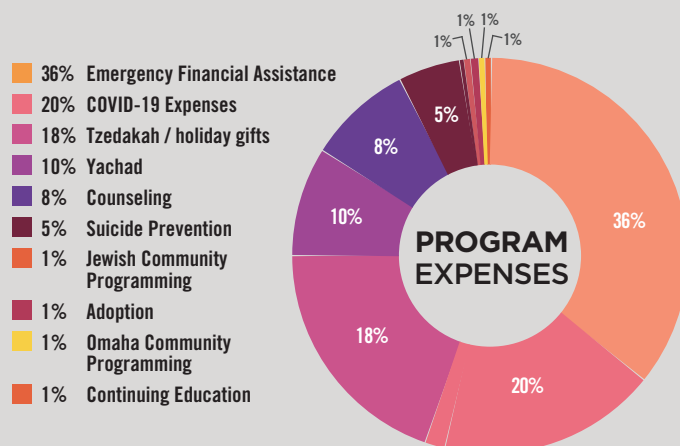
for a total of \$19,946 as of June 30, 2020. We continue to serve and be a resource to those families who were financially impacted by the pandemic.

GOING DIGITAL!

This year, JFS started a monthly newsletter through email, sharing mental health resources and hot-topics every month. We also launched our very own Facebook Page, where we share events, tips and photos/videos from our latest programs. Lastly, online fundraising through Omaha Gives was substantially higher than last year's, with the help of four community members who created cheer pages for JFS and shared our efforts on social media.



COMMITMENT TO TRANSPARENCY AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY





OUR MISSION: To strengthen and preserve life in the Jewish Community and the community at large through every stage of the life cycle.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We provided community members in need with 571 gifts of assistance for a total cost of \$31,416. We had 333 visits to the food pantry between July 2019 and March 2020, for a total cost of \$13,291.75. After we closed the pantry to the public due to COVID-19, we answered 171 requests for groceries with electronic grocery cards instead, as of June 30, 2020.



TZEDAKAH AND BEYOND!

Holiday food baskets were delivered to 229 community members for Rosh Hashanah, Hanukkah and Passover. Our Back to School program served 29 children, compared to 18 from the previous year. We provided Thanksgiving meals to 53 individuals, and distributed Hanukkah presents to families with children for a total of \$4,637 through Project Dreidel.

COUNSELING SERVICES

We served 132 clients, totaling 949 therapy sessions, and are a partner in the Project Harmony Connections Program. Between March and June 2020, while working remotely, our staff conducted over 180 virtual sessions with clients through a HIPAA compliant Telehealth platform.



YACHAD

We were able to provide adults with developmental disabilities with 31 JCC personal training sessions, 12 Yoga sessions and various community activity programs throughout the year. These included: Fun Day at Funplex, Sarpy County Fair, Mahoney Park Day Camp, Fall Dance, The Addams Family Play, Hanukkah Party, Durham Museum visit, Cookie Making for Purim, Lauritzen Gardens and a cooking class at No More Empty Pots.



ADOPTION HOME STUDIES

Our staff conducted 10 Home Studies, compared to 4 last year, and 3 Home Study Updates, needed to extend the validity of the study for another year. These numbers are a record-high for Jewish Family Service!

PARENTING CLASSES

Since 2001, we continue to facilitate "Parenting the Love and Logic WaySM" classes twice a year. This year, our spring class had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but JFS was able to reconvene classes in October 2020. Our staff was also contracted to present at various schools, religious organizations and other agencies for 6 parenting classes, reaching 114 attendees combined.



PROGRAMMING FOR FEDERATION AGENCIES, SYNAGOGUES AND THE OMAHA COMMUNITY AT LARGE

JCC SUMMER CAMP COUNSELORS TRAINING (3 hours)

Topics were Child Abuse Prevention and Policy, Team Building and Behavior Management.

PINWHEELS FOR PREVENTION

We continue to support the "Pinwheels for Prevention" program during the Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.

FRST TEAM

JFS is a member of the FRST Team (First Responder Support Team), facilitating workshops and educational sessions on trauma mitigation, spouse support and on how to prevent the effects of trauma.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

We are part of the Metro Area Suicide Prevention Coalition, led by the Kim Foundation, and we participated in the September "Out of the Darkness Walk for Suicide Prevention".

From July to December 2019, JFS has facilitated 5 Suicide Prevention and Education programs. We have already started to offer additional programs in 2020 after taking a pandemic-related break.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

JFS COMMITTED TO OVER 100 HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION IN ORDER TO STAY CURRENT AND FURTHER OUR ABILITY TO SERVE OTHERS

Topics included: Scams, Identity Theft, Insurance Options for seniors (AARP); Medicaid Expansion in NE (DHHS); Good Grief-Bereavement (VA/JSO); Telehealth Certification (NJHSA); C.L.A.S. Culturally and Linguistically appropriate Service Standards (UNO); Integrating Culture in Child Centered Play Therapy.



Karen Gustafson
Executive Director/
Therapist



Teresa Drelicharz
Therapist / Adoption
Coordinator



Linda Cogen
Assistance
Coordinator



Mariana Nieto
Assistant to the
Executive Director



Joyce Ryan
Yachad Coordinator



Paula Watson
Yachad Assistant



Volunteer of the Year
Bruce Meyers

PART TIME STAFF