

# JFS Matters

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## SPECIAL INSERT

Tributes



JEWISH**FAMILY**SERVICE

## OLDER ADULT SERVICES

### Walking With Clients to Improve Their Quality of Life

Andrea\* walked arm-in-arm with Yelena Mushkatina down the hallway toward the laundry room of her new senior housing.

Andrea has washed clothes hundreds of times since her eyesight began to deteriorate in 2003. She is now legally blind. But having someone to help her count the steps to nearby amenities and familiarize herself with surroundings in a new home was just what Andrea needed on the path to improving her overall well-being, health and stability.

Yelena, a JFS Geriatric Care Manager, connected with Andrea through a string of referrals last year. At the time, Andrea had hit a difficult point in her life. Worsening eyesight, the loss of the stepfather who helped raise her and rising rent coalesced into an overwhelming situation.

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**"I turned 66, prices went up and the world didn't work for me anymore."**

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That same year, Andrea's disability assistance transitioned to social security, resulting in a loss of monthly income. Her budget grew tighter as the cost of living in the Puget Sound region continued to rise. "I turned 66, prices went up and the world didn't work for me anymore," she said. "With rent being what it is in this area, finding something on my own wasn't happening."

JFS helped her find a more affordable place, a difficult task, even for organizations like JFS. While volunteers and her caseworker Yelena helped Andrea settle into her new home, JFS also helped ease some of the financial burden of relocating. A JFS volunteer now stops by about once a week.

Andrea's Friendly Visitor is about her same age, and in addition to companionship, Andrea's visitor helps by reading her mail to her and other tasks around the home.

It has been a learning lesson for all, including Yelena. "Andrea taught me a lot," Yelena said. A large part of that learning was understanding how to balance assistance and autonomy. As a care manager, Yelena provided assistance, but with Andrea, she also honed her skills as a partner, developing

*(Continued on page 3)*



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## EXECUTIVE NOTE

**BY RABBI WILL BERKOVITZ, CEO**



*Will Berkovitz*

"If you are elderly, Jewish and have worrisome problems, chances are that Miss Susan Molin, staff member of the Jewish Family and Child Service, is on her way to help you."

So it was in 1971 when the Jewish Transcript reported on the agency's senior services, and so it is at JFS today. Older Adult Services is still here to help vulnerable people maintain dignified lives and the highest quality of physical health, mental health and social connections possible.

In 2000, 9.1 percent of the King County population was 65 or older. In 2030, that percentage is expected to be 18.3 percent — more than double. The need is only expected to increase, as this fast-growing population confronts the challenges of our region's housing landscape and the crisis of affordability on a fixed income.

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**"Loneliness, in itself, is a problem and when one expects company, it seems to act as an incentive to get dressed, bake cookies, etc... It's amazing what good therapy this can be."**

**- SUSAN MOLIN, JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILD SERVICE, 1971**

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JFS care managers regularly work with older adults — including a growing number of Russian-speaking Holocaust survivors and other low-income Jewish community members — to first stabilize their housing costs. Even when clients qualify for affordable housing, they face long waitlists and overwhelming bureaucracies. Care managers stay with clients through the process, and often, JFS advocacy makes the difference in a senior securing a home that will be affordable over the long-term.

Just as Miss Molin pointed out nearly 50 years ago, when it comes to quality of life and well-being, practical and physical needs are only part of the story. Our team of professionals relies on a robust cadre of volunteers who build meaningful relationships with isolated seniors through a variety of volunteer activities.

In American culture, it's easy to forget where we've come from, and even easier to forget those who have travelled the road before us. There is much we can and should be giving our elders — and even more we will receive when we listen to their stories.

# **“JFS has improved my quality of life. Quality of life comes in moral support and in people.”**

## **OLDER ADULT SERVICES** (Continued from page 1)

a greater understanding of when to be an advocate for her client and when to be a partner with her.

Andrea wanted help with her transition and daily chores but not someone to just do it all for her.

She didn't need someone to do her laundry; she needed help taking the steps to do it herself and be

independent. “I explained how they could help make things user-friendly for me,” Andrea said. “They don’t assume how you need something done. They focus on individual needs.”

Because Andrea’s vision loss came later in life, she’s had to adjust while also managing the changes of aging. Her sight issues started in her 50s, impacting her health and well-being. “I liked my life. Then, all of a sudden, my life as I knew it was gone,” Andrea said.

Although Andrea has worked to adjust to her major life changes, JFS was able to help as difficult situations compounded.

“JFS is such a big part of my life right now,” Andrea said. “They know

important resources, and the people are amazing.... It has made a beautiful relationship for me.”

Because Andrea knows it is a transition from sighted to blindness, emotionally and physically, she wants to help others in situations like hers. “What I want to do is be a resource and be a mentor for those going through that,” she said.

Andrea wants to provide support the way JFS has done for her, she said. “It’s all about community,” she explained. “JFS has improved my quality of life. Quality of life comes in moral support and in people. I don’t have the adequate words to say what a difference JFS has made in my life.”

\* Name has been changed for privacy.



*Andrea*

## **WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM OLDER ADULT SERVICES?**

- Low- and moderate-income Jewish or Russian-speaking older adults.
- Holocaust survivors.
- Family caregivers supporting an adult with a disability.

**Contact [oas@jfsseattle.org](mailto:oas@jfsseattle.org) to learn more.**

# FRIENDLY VISITORS

## A Slice of Companionship

BY DENA SCHOEN



Dena Schoen

**“Nothing has been more fulfilling or meaningful than becoming a Friendly Visitor.”**

Seattle is beautiful and booming, but it can also feel unwelcoming, as the tired cliché “the Seattle Freeze” attests. Like so many people, I migrated here for a new job, new life and renewal. I was met with great disappointment and unfortunate circumstances, even in the Jewish community where I longed to belong.

A series of health, emotional and professional situations eventually left me trying to figure out how I could find — or make — the Jewish community I was longing for. So, I went to Jewish Family Service and became a volunteer.

I started out delivering Chanukah baskets to people in the community who would otherwise be alone at the holiday. I enjoyed that work. The endless hugs I received from one recipient — and the jar of jam she insisted on giving me as a thank you — will be etched on my brain forever.

As heartwarming as those casual interactions that came through delivering holiday food and gifts were, nothing has been more fulfilling or meaningful than becoming a Friendly Visitor. It has been life altering.

I love Bettina\*, the very senior Kindertransport survivor I visit. Bettina is smart, tough, curmudgeonly and so funny. She is a raconteur. She has lived a very full life, but the trauma of displacement and loss has never left her.

As a Friendly Visitor, I give Bettina a small slice of companionship in a society that casts aside its elders and so easily forgets its history.

**“Her vitality and powers of endurance help me.”**

Like so many single seniors, Bettina feels isolated and invisible, but she is too youthful of mind and spirit to be secreted away in senior housing. So, we hang out and gab. We went to a seder. Her vitality and powers of endurance help me. As far as I’m concerned, she is a friend for life.

Truly, it’s ineffable. The only way I can express it is: become a volunteer yourself. Reach out to a lonely soul, a displaced person, somebody who needs to know that another person — you — knows that they are. It’s so easy. It’s free. It taps into every teaching Judaism has to offer. It taps into everything you’ve ever done, or will do, or where you’ve been or are about to go. I will never stop doing this kind of work, as it has restored me to life.

*\*Name changed for privacy.*

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### WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Contact [volunteer@jfsseattle.org](mailto:volunteer@jfsseattle.org).

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## NAMED FUNDS

### Family Tree Legacy Circle

The Family Tree Legacy Circle recognizes supporters who have informed us of their intent to leave a bequest to JFS, those of blessed memory who have already left such a gift and those who have made a monetary gift to the JFS endowment in their lifetime.

A Named Fund may be established with a gift of \$100,000 or more — either now or through a bequest. A Named Fund can provide an endowment for ongoing support of the community needs closest to your heart.

#### **STEVEN BARAL FUND FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS**

The issues of refugees and immigrants have always been close to my heart. My late father, Martin Baral, was a Holocaust survivor. He arrived in Australia at the age of 17, alone, without any family. The country welcomed him, and he was helped by several kind people who he never forgot his whole life. When he established his own business, he made a point of hiring refugees and immigrants from a wide range of countries. In many cases, he hired people for their first job in their new country.

This is a difficult time in our country for refugees and newcomers, and I looked for ways to help. I knew about the JFS resettlement program, and I decided to start an endowment to support this program which helps so many people in so many ways. For me, this decision also fulfills our Jewish values. It is the mandate to help the stranger, and in honoring the humanity of refugees and immigrants, we honor G-d.

**- STEVEN BARAL**

#### **FRIEDA AND GUNTHER SONDLAND FUND FOR SENIOR ASSISTANCE**

In addition to our involvement as volunteers with Jewish Family Service and across the community, our families were also closely involved with JFS as “consumers.” As our parents aged, our family meaningfully engaged with Older Adult Services and Counseling. JFS was there for us with the support we needed at a time of vulnerability. We decided to honor our parents’ memories and the role JFS played in our lives by establishing this fund. We know this endowment will continue to provide funds so that others in the community can access JFS services that are delivered with respect and support the dignity of aging loved ones and their families.

**- LUCY & HERB PRUZAN**

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**If you would like to learn more about establishing a Named Fund — or if you have already designated JFS as a beneficiary in your will — please contact:**

Lisa Schultz Golden, Chief Development Office, (206) 861-3188 or [lgolden@jfsseattle.org](mailto:lgolden@jfsseattle.org)

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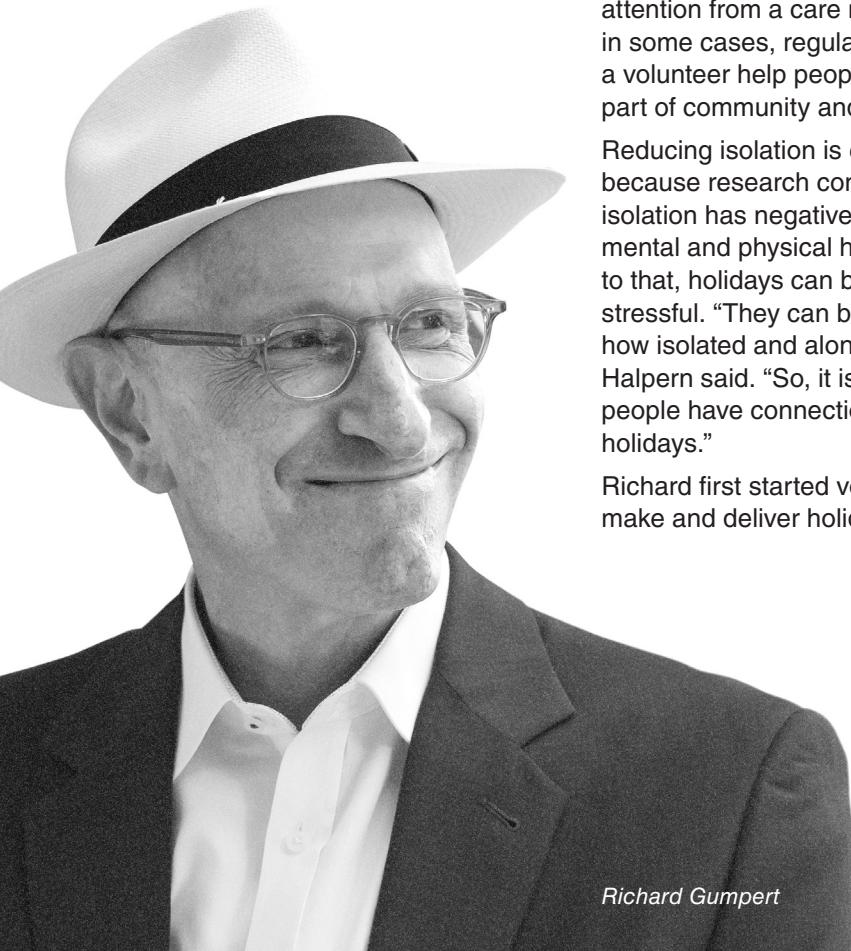
## VOLUNTEERING

# It's Not About the Baskets, It's About the Company

Like old friends greeting one another, warm smiles are exchanged before Richard Gumpert and his wife Evie share a JFS holiday basket with Anna. This exchange is about more than a holiday gift basket. It is about company and conversation.

"We are happy that you don't forget us," Anna said. "I like Richard and appreciate his attention. Each time he comes we speak about Jewish history and a lot of other things. His visits are very important."

**"WE ARE HAPPY THAT YOU DON'T FORGET US."**



*Richard Gumpert*

Four times a year, JFS and its volunteers deliver Jewish holiday baskets to more than 100 people. Many recipients are older adults or people with disabilities who can often feel isolated from their neighbors and Jewish community. The company that comes with basket deliveries is part of a collective support system that depends on volunteers like Richard and Evie.

"Having that visit is more important than the honey cake inside the basket," said Adam Halpern, Director of Older Adult Services. "It's really about human connection." The basket deliveries are one way JFS focuses on reducing the isolation vulnerable people can experience. The deliveries, along with personal attention from a care manager, and in some cases, regular visits from a volunteer help people feel more a part of community and less alone.

Reducing isolation is essential because research continues to show isolation has negative effects on mental and physical health. To add to that, holidays can be particularly stressful. "They can be reminders of how isolated and alone people are," Halpern said. "So, it is important people have connection around the holidays."

Richard first started volunteering to make and deliver holiday baskets

**"WE SPEAK ABOUT JEWISH HISTORY AND A LOT OF OTHER THINGS. HIS VISITS ARE VERY IMPORTANT."**

with his friend, Gordon Godfred, about a decade ago. "It became very clear soon after we started that this was not just about the food," Richard said. "It was about the visit."

Some recipients warmly accept the holiday baskets and say their thank yous, while others invite Richard into their homes. "I can't tell you how many cups of tea and cookies and coffee cake we were offered to entice us to stay and visit, which we are happy to do" he said. "To sit with someone and create a relationship is what most of them want."

At times, Richard and Evie are some of the closest friends their holiday basket companions have. One man, who has since passed, told the couple they were the most important people in his life next to his daughter. "I look forward to these visits more than anything else," Richard recalled him saying.

Never was it more clear. It is not about the baskets. It is about the company.

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**WANT TO GET INVOLVED?**

Contact [voluteer@jfsseattle.org](mailto:voluteer@jfsseattle.org).

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# 125 Years of Service and Caring

**1892** The Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society is founded to assist European and Mediterranean Jews arriving in the Puget Sound region. Their concerns are homelessness, hunger and unemployment.

**1921** The agency hires Bernice Degginger Greengard, its first paid professional. She serves as executive secretary and caseworker.

**1937** JFS helps resettle Jewish children escaping Germany.

**1948** In addition to immense postwar resettlement, the agency still provides emergency services to families in need, counseling for individuals and families, and services to older clients.

**1968** More than 100 Jewish individuals receive financial help, and about half are elderly clients accepting a monthly kosher food allowance.

**1973** The federal government assigns Ugandan refugees to the agency, its first non-Jewish resettlement clients.

**1975** The official Russian Resettlement Program begins, and 17 families from the Soviet Union are resettled.

**1986** With generous community support, the Polack Food Bank opens.

**1987** JFS begins providing services for people with disabilities and still does so today through Supportive Living Services.

**1999** JFS launches a program for domestic violence survivors known as Project DVORA.

## 2017-2018

JFS celebrates 125 years of service and caring and today offers: Counseling & Addiction Services, Emergency Services, Food Bank Services, Older Adult Services, Project DVORA Domestic Violence Services, Refugee & Immigrant Services and Supportive Living Services (people with disabilities).

With special thanks to  
Carolee Danz for  
“Shards of Light,”  
a history of JFS  
from 1892 – 2012.



JEWISH**FAMILY**SERVICE

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# Community of Caring Luncheon

**MONDAY, APRIL 23, 2018**

**Sheraton Hotel**

Event Chairs: Bobbi Chamberlin and JoAnn Forman

**Register Now!**  
[jfsseattle.org/luncheon](http://jfsseattle.org/luncheon)



## **MISSION**

JFS helps vulnerable individuals and families in the Puget Sound region achieve well-being, health and stability.

## **APPROACH**

Jewish history and values guide our work; therefore, we provide effective services to people of all backgrounds and also have a responsibility to meet the particular needs of Jewish individuals and families in the region.

Michele Rosen, Board President  
Rabbi Will Berkovitz, Chief Executive Officer  
Deborah Frockt, Editor & Writer  
Rachel Seymour, Writer

Jewish Family Service is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3) social service organization. Contributions are tax-deductible under section 170 of the Internal Revenue Code.

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**There are so many ways you can volunteer to help. Contact [volunteer@jfsseattle.org](mailto:volunteer@jfsseattle.org) or (206) 861-3155.**