Ever wonder who turns to the Polack Food Bank to help put food on the table? Take a minute and draw that mental picture in your mind. Now, meet Tiffany.

She’s a 33-year-old single mother of three who served two Army tours of duty — one in Iraq’s Diyala Province in 2010, the other in Afghanistan’s Kandahar Province in 2012. Today, Tiffany is a full-time Seattle Central College (SCC) student, has a work-study job as a Veteran Peer Support Specialist and contributes her time to the Veterans of Foreign Wars. And, she’s both a client of and volunteer for the Polack Food Bank.

“Veterans are horrible about taking care of themselves. They’re food insecure and time insecure,” Tiffany noted and then continued, “Is time insecure a thing? Time insecure should be a thing.”

Food insecurity is definitely a thing among college students, and the Wisconsin HOPE Lab’s “Still Hungry and Homeless” (bit.ly/2H72k3f) report bears this out. The report notes that 36 percent of university students described themselves as food insecure in the 30 days preceding the survey.

Even before the 2018 report was published, Polack Food Bank staff had begun outreach to SCC to understand the needs of its student body and ways in which JFS resources could benefit this neighborhood population.

“IF YOU NEED FOOD, WE WILL FIND YOU FOOD. BECAUSE FOOD SECURITY SHOULD BE FOR EVERYONE.”

— Tiffany

Food Bank Manager Esther Magasis got connected with SCC’s Veterans Services and in conversation with three staff there — Kerry Holfield, William Schwab and Yuval Peled-Schwartz — it became clear that, among veterans who had returned to school at SCC, there was both the need for food as well as significant obstacles to accessing JFS Food Bank resources.

Tiffany put those barriers into real terms when she explained, “One of the biggest hiccups in the system of services is showing up between blank hour and blank hour .... And, it’s hard to make it anywhere else
EXECUTIVE NOTE

BY RABBI WILL BERKOVITZ, CEO

“People are experts in their own experience,” is something we often say at JFS. It is foundational to being client-centered — one of our core values.

When we talk about being client-centered, we mean that everything we do will be focused around meeting the needs of those who trust us enough to turn to us at their most vulnerable moments. We honor that trust by listening deeply to what people share and then responding with the respect that every human being deserves. In turn, this drives our decisions, so that what we do is deeply tied to what we have learned from our clients telling their story in their own way. We don’t make assumptions or presumptions. We work together in partnership with the people we serve from a place of equality — putting dignity at the center.

A recent example of this philosophy in action is our food pantry for student military veterans at Seattle Central College. This much-needed option for highly motivated but often very vulnerable students emerged from dialogue with the experts — the student veterans themselves. The generous support we receive through the year, and especially at the Community-Wide Food Drive (September 9 – 30), stocks our shelves with healthy food. But, it is through conversation with someone like Tiffany, a student and Army veteran, we ensure we are meeting people where they are to get them what they need.

This approach is what you’ll find across JFS. The Project DVORA and Counseling teams have been in close collaboration for a couple of years, and we’re seeing the results of their integrated vision through two new services.

Every day, domestic violence advocates and therapists working with families who have experienced trauma see clients’ most urgent unmet needs. Most women leaving a domestic violence situation face legal challenges. Yet, most lack resources for the representation necessary to protect themselves and their children. In response, JFS has hired a full-time staff attorney devoted exclusively to domestic violence cases. From listening to parents, we also know the lack of accessible child therapy is a major obstacle for families struggling to create a healthy path forward in the wake of domestic abuse. Our new child therapist is now part of the wrap-around services we can offer these families.

I am always proud to share good news, like these new programs, with this community because it is this community that makes our work possible — thank you.
besides school. When you’re at school, you basically just live there.”

Thinking and planning progressed with Kerry, William and Yuval, an Israeli Defense Forces veteran who is now the Polack Food Bank Inventory & Home Delivery Assistant. In addition to the logistical challenges, Esther wanted to understand what other obstacles were keeping student veterans from the Food Bank. Yuval explained that, “Most people who served at some point in their life were, through basic training, taught to be self-sufficient.”

Time, location and the stigma of seeking help — especially from outside the tight-knit community of veterans — were the impediments. But, they were, by no means, insurmountable. Tiffany, Yuval and Esther began sketching out ways to get food to campus and, literally and figuratively, meet people where they were.

Today, the Polack Food Bank serves student veterans and their families with a food pantry located at the SCC Veterans Services office. Vets are invited to make their own selections and pack bags they can take home. There are also “grab and go” options for hungry students to get the calories they need during long days at school.

As with the onsite Food Bank at JFS, SCC pantry bags are available on the consumer-choice shopping model to respect the dignity of the people being served. They are customizable, so people can access healthy food that fits their individual and family needs, including dietary restrictions, access to cooking facilities and other preferences.

For Tiffany and her young family, this is a huge win. Her household grows some of its own produce, and she clearly articulates the connection between healthy food and health outcomes, “I don’t want my kids to be sick, and I don’t want them to be malnourished just because we’re poor.”

Tiffany values the quality of product available in the JFS-supplied food pantry. Even though most products are non-perishable, the pantry is built around whole foods, avoids processed selections and limits items that are high in sugar. Tiffany plainly states why this matters, “I’m not going to give my kids a lot of donuts because they’ll end up with diabetes.”

In her role as Veteran Peer Support Specialist, Tiffany sees the value of the pantry for those who would otherwise be unlikely to get the extra food they need to have the energy to study, work and take care of their families.

“It’s awesome, our food pantry at the school, because it gives me the opportunity to say yay! Something I can eat right now. Or, hey, our food stamps don’t come until later in the month, so I can fill up a bag and just fill out the form… and, then I can grab what I need, and I can actually tailor it to me.

“And there’s no stigma. At our school, we’re like, if you’re hungry, eat. If you need food, we will find you food. Because food security should be for everyone.”
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES

A Lawyer Joins Project DVORA

Liz Coleclough, Director of Project DVORA and Counseling & Addiction Services, sat down with us to talk about a new service.

Why is Project DVORA adding legal services?

One of the major barriers survivors face when domestic violence (DV) occurs is that, inevitably, a legal scenario is going to emerge. This is especially true if they are married to the abuser and/or share children with the abuser. Survivors are often coming in at a real disadvantage because the legal system is complicated and not user-friendly. And, for a person who has a history of trauma, that’s going to be even more overwhelming.

How do you plan to address the tremendous need that exists?

We’re drawing on learnings from many partners to develop our own triage model. On a scale where every client is vulnerable, the largest group that is the most functional will have legal consultation that prepares them to represent themselves in court. Another significant portion of clients might receive temporary representation directly from the attorney. And, for a few clients with the highest level of vulnerability, the goal is for our attorney to represent them all the way through.

What distinguishes the Project DVORA legal model from others in the Puget Sound region?

I think the thing that will make our legal services stand out is that they are embedded in a domestic violence program. We have advocates. We have flexible financial assistance. We have clinical therapists, including one specializing in children and youth. That wrap-around model is not common, but it is considered to be a best practice.

What benefits do you hope DV survivors receive?

When an attorney is on site where survivors receive other services, client attrition decreases. The ability of a client to continue a case with an attorney increases because that survivor has to go to only one place. And, it’s a place where she has already established trust. Our attorney is on the same team as our advocates and mental health clinicians, so the opportunity to coordinate, collaborate and use our connected values in support of our clients really makes this special.

Who is the Project DVORA Lawyer?

Hannah Rosenberger has a civil legal aid background. She built and managed a program focused on disabilities and homelessness at the Seattle Community Law Center. She has experience navigating complicated systems for people who have close to nothing. We’re branching out into something new, so we are really lucky to have someone like Hannah, someone who has an entrepreneurial mindset and the character needed to fight for the most vulnerable.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS BEING ABUSED, CONTACT PROJECT DVORA AT (206) 861-3159.

Thanks to these partners for their help in developing this legal service: Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence, Eastside Legal Assistance Program, King County Bar Association, Northwest Justice Project, YWCA, and lawyers from the JFS Board of Directors, including Michael Adler, Rochelle Goffe, Carol Gown and Avi Lipman.

LEARN MORE

“Crime After Crime” Film Screening & Panel Discussion

Thursday, October 25 at 7:00 p.m. | jfsseattle.org/crime-after-crime
Access to child and youth therapy is limited in the Puget Sound region and across the nation. When trauma, including domestic violence, are part of the equation, finding the right therapist for a young person can become even more daunting.

Liz Coleclough (who directs Counseling & Addiction Services as well as Project DVORA Domestic Violence Services) and her team realized the complex challenges faced by families experiencing domestic violence and other trauma, and thus, the position of Child & Family Therapist came into being at JFS.

“These parents are often struggling with the challenges of parenting as well as how best to offer protective and supportive interaction with their children. Plus, many survivors don’t have access to the financial resources to support child therapy,” Liz said. “We chose to add to our program in this way so that parents and families can feel confident with a provider who understands the specific circumstances that can emerge in a domestic violence situation.”

Erica Wickstrom, Child & Family Therapist, has been with JFS in a variety of roles, including with Supportive Living Services and most recently with client intake. She continues to do client intake part-time and is also establishing the child and youth therapy practice embedded within the greater network of domestic violence, counseling and addiction services at the agency.

Erica describes her role as a natural extension of the holistic approach JFS takes and also makes it clear that her service is a distinct part of the bigger picture. “My client is the child,” she explained, “So, the child is at the center of all decisions. The child’s trust in me is so important that I work hard to engage them as a collaborator.”

According to Erica, children who have experienced trauma express that experience in a variety of ways. They may have difficulty in school, and that may present as an attention or focus issue. They may experience social challenges or regression, like bed-wetting or difficulty sleeping alone in their own bed.

Even an experienced pediatrician could have difficulty identifying the underlying issues without the benefit of knowing the crisis a family is undergoing. By having child-centered therapy as part of the larger suite of domestic violence services at JFS, parent, she takes special care to make sure there are no surprises.

“Kids who have experienced trauma have lost control. That feeling of loss of control can follow them through life,” Erica described. “By modeling a safe and healthy relationship with an adult in therapy, we create an experience where the child gets to reclaim some control and be the expert in their own experience.”

Erica is most impassioned when she describes the unique potential of early intervention for children who have experienced trauma. “In childhood and youth, brains are more elastic, so there is a greater capacity to learn new information, to reflect with support and ultimately to grow into the self they are meant to be — into their true and full and joyful selves.”

MY CLIENT IS THE CHILD.

—Erica
DID YOU KNOW...

- Project DVORA always leaves a spot open to respond to emergencies in the Jewish community?
- Older Adult Services has increased care management hours for outreach to Holocaust survivors and to provide service to low-income Jewish seniors, including those who are Russian-speakers?
- JFS is training more than 100 staff, volunteers and third-party home caregivers to provide trauma-informed care to Holocaust survivors?

This special acknowledgement honors leaders in our community who have made an extraordinary financial commitment to JFS and whose generosity truly lights the way for others. We extend our deepest thanks to these inaugural members of the Lamplighter Society:

Anonymous (2) • Diane Aboulafia & Peter Shapiro • The Isaac Alhadeff Foundation
The Sam & Barbara Altabet Giving Fund • Steven Baral • Karyn & Joe Barer • Lynn & Howard Behar
Becky Benaroya • Donna Benaroya • Joyce & Raymond (z”l) Benezra • Kathy & Steve Berman
Joann & Carl Bianco • Susan & Jeffrey (z”l) Brotman • Alison Danz • Carolee Danz • Judy & Krijn de Jonge
Amy & David Fulton • Berthe & Stan Habib • Ambassador Suzi & Eric LeVine
The Loeb Family: Frankie & Dick, Dianne & Steve, and JoEllen & Don
Inge & Hal (z”l) Marcus • Catherine Mayer & Martin Selig • Lucy & Herb Pruzan
Michele & Stan Rosen • Sheri & Howard Schultz • Karen & Gary Schwartz • Isabel & Herb Stusser

LEARN MORE Please contact Lisa Schultz Golden at lgolden@jfsseattle.org or (206) 861-3188.

WANT TO KNOW ABOUT JFS EVENTS?
JFSSEATTLE.ORG/CALENDAR

NATIONAL REFUGEE SHABBAT AND COAT DRIVE

OCTOBER 19 – 20

National Refugee Shabbat is a moment for congregations, organizations and individuals around the country to create a Shabbat, or other meaningful experience, dedicated to refugees. JFS is coordinating efforts in the Puget Sound region, and we’re asking participants to donate new, winter coats for resettled refugees and others JFS serves.

LEARN MORE
jfsseattle.org/national-refugee-shabbat
FAMILY TREE LEGACY CIRCLE
A Gift That Continues to Bloom

Sam and Barbara Altabet, of blessed memory, were dedicated to Seattle’s greater Jewish community. Sam and Barbara planned for the bulk of their estate to be dedicated to making major gifts to five charities, including Jewish Family Service, that represented their most cherished values.

The Altabets were both Northwest natives. Sam was born in Seattle. Barbara (nee Shaw) was born in Portland, but her family moved to Seattle during her childhood. Sam served in the Navy during World War II and earned a Purple Heart for his harrowing service during the Normandy invasion. When he returned to Seattle and with the help of his brother Al, Sam started a Capitol Hill business that eventually became Broadway Central Florists.

Sam and Barbara exchanged vows in 1959 — a modest and shy floral artist with his outgoing bride, who would become their local Toast Mistress chapter president. The couple was married for 43 years, until Sam’s passing in 2003.

Barbara then moved to Kline Galland and lived until 2016.

The Sam and Barbara Altabet Giving Fund is a bequest managed by three trustees. Gifts from the Fund are anticipated to be made annually over a period of five years. In accordance with what the trustees perceive to have been the Altabet’s own wishes, JFS is a major and continuing beneficiary of Sam and Barbara’s generosity. This year, the Fund supports two critical JFS programs — Project DVORA Domestic Violence Services and Emergency Services, with an emphasis on housing assistance.

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN WRITE YOUR LEGACY
Please contact Lisa Schultz Golden at lgolden@jfsseattle.org or (206) 861-3188.

“CRIME AFTER CRIME” FILM SCREENING AND PANEL
OCTOBER 25
Join JFS, the Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence, Stroum Jewish Community Center and other community organizations for this Sundance Film Festival documentary. It tells the story of Deborah Peagler, who experienced years of abuse by a violent boyfriend before being sentenced to life in prison for his murder.

Through the voices of Deborah and her attorneys — one of whom is an Orthodox Jew — the film shines a light on the troubled intersection of domestic violence and the justice system.

REGISTER NOW
jfsseattle.org/crime-after-crime

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID
OCTOBER 5 or NOVEMBER 28
This free, eight-hour course prepares you to interact with an adult in crisis and connect them with help. Mental Health First Aid training offers concrete tools for people who are not mental health professionals to be first responders.

REGISTER NOW
jfsseattle.org/event/mental-health-first-aid/
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.

Marty Nelson, 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.

jfsseattle.org
(206) 461-3240

Values into Action.
Help into Hope.

Remember to recycle this newsletter.

SAVE THE DATE!
Community of Caring Luncheon
TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2019
Sheraton Hotel
Event Chairs: Michele Rosen and Rabbi Dan Bridge

For information about sponsorship or becoming a table captain, contact events@jfsseattle.org.