



SHERUT

Reaching Out While Looking In.

In the vibrant tapestry of our community life, JCFS Winnipeg embodies compassion, resilience, and empowerment. Our services are the pillars of support, embodying the values of **tikkun olam** (repairing the world), **chesed** (loving kindness), and **tzedakah** (justice and righteousness). Our mission, **"Strengthening lives in keeping with Jewish values"**, is our commitment to uplift individuals, families, and, our community.

Since the fall, we have been focused on providing additional community outreach in the form of groups, presentations, workshops, and more. Outreach is happening across all our service areas. Our targeted outreach are spaces to learn, connect, share, and build. Some examples include:

- Two major events, **Hear Our Voices** and **Surviving to Thriving**, shone light on challenging issues. **Hear Our Voices**, attended by nearly 1000 individuals near and far, spoke to the intersection of gender-based violence, antisemitism, and terror in the context of the October 7th Hamas terror attacks, while also examining the impact this has had on women and the feminist movement. **Thriving to Surviving** started a crucial conversation around self-care and stress. It offered hope to those looking to re-adapt their own wellness practices, and provided important skills to reframe self-care.
- Our **Rosh Chodesh** initiative, funded by the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, offers important space for women and girls. Our monthly **Rosh Chodesh** group, along with specific community workshops (e.g., **The Modern Jewish Woman, Navigating Interfaith Relationships**, and **Coffee, Chat, and Hug**), fosters relationships, enhances communication, and are safe spaces for peer-to-peer female-based learning.

- The **Serenity Shabbat**, organized by the Mental Health and Addictions Team, with support of our synagogues, paired spiritual practice with advocacy surrounding addictions. Utilizing the **Torah**, along with the lived experience of community members, it broke down stigma surrounding addictions, and offered families hope.

- Our Mental Health and Addictions, and Counselling teams, offered consultations, workshops, and counselling to those impacted by the conflict in Israel, along with the terrible rise in antisemitism. They worked across the community to provide support to populations such as university students, participants at the Gwen Sector, staff at Brock Corydon Public School, and more.

Our targeted community programming ensures that no one is left behind. We know that not everyone will feel the need to walk through our doors, but we also know that everyone needs help – at some time or another – navigating life. Our outreach serves to help with that life navigation, and opens the door to more specialized supports, if needed. Our outreach is our JCFS profound commitment to education empowerment, and care. It is JCFS strengthening lives.

To learn more about our upcoming community programs, please follow us on social media (X, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube). Look for our posters out and about in the community!

If you would like to volunteer to support our community programming, please e-mail volunteer@jcfswinnipeg.org.



#JCFSCARES

MA'OT CHITIM
CHAG PESACH
SAMEACH
HAPPY
PASSOVER

Let your kindness bring the miracle of Passover to individuals and families. **DONATE TODAY!**

"LET ALL WHO ARE HUNGRY, COME AND EAT." (Haggadah)



204.477.7430 www.jcfswinnipeg.org/donate

JCFS PASSOVER ASSISTANCE CAMPAIGN

Ma'ot Chitim does more than provide food. It provides dignity, care, and hope. It connects individuals and families back to Jewish traditions, and strengthens lives in keeping with Jewish values.

Your contributions and support create a mitzvah. Will you join us in the Mitzvah of Ma'ot Chitim?



Executive Director's Message



The Power of Jewish Women

As we approach Passover, we continue to see the powerful impacts of JCFS's Hear our Voices lecture, where over 1,000 attendees learned about the gender-based violence perpetrated against Israeli women during the horrific Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023, and the world's silence that ensued.

Jewish Women have always played a central role in Judaism as a family's spiritual compass, archetypes of strength, courage, decisiveness, kindness, and wisdom. The Passover Exodus story, an epic cornerstone of Jewish tradition, is rich with tales of resilience, courage, decisiveness, and strength. Typically shadowed by men like Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh, several remarkable biblical women played pivotal roles in shaping this narrative, and other post-exodus narratives in the desert, thereby impacting the future of the Jewish people. The strength of these women shines, casting a profound and enduring light on the timeless struggle for freedom, redemption, resilience, and empowerment for all women and for all generations.

At the heart of the Passover story stands Miriam, the sister of Moses, whose unwavering faith and determination guided her people through the trials of slavery to the threshold of liberation. Her well provided water to the nation in the desert, a necessity to sustain life. Her presence, marked by song and dance, served as a beacon of hope in the darkest of times, inspiring others to persevere despite the odds.

The courage of Shifra and Puah, the midwives who defied Pharaoh's decree to kill Hebrew male infants, underscores the

power of moral conviction in the face of tyranny. Their bravery saved countless lives and set the stage for the exodus from Egypt.

The story of Passover also highlights the strength of ordinary women whose acts of kindness and compassion contributed to the collective struggle for freedom. From Yocheved, Moses' mother, who placed her child in a basket on the Nile, and risked everything to protect her son, these women exemplify the extraordinary power of maternal love and sacrifice.

Even some lesser-known figures, like Tziporah, Moses' wife, who took the initiative to circumcise their son to avert divine wrath, or the daughters of Zelophehad, who, in the desert, challenged patriarchal societal norms to claim their rightful inheritance, demonstrate the indomitable spirit of women throughout the Passover saga, and as pillars of the Jewish people.

In celebrating Passover, we honor not only the triumph of the Jewish people over oppression but also the enduring legacy of strength and resilience embodied by its women. Their stories serve as a timeless reminder that in the face of adversity, it is the courage and fortitude of women that lead the way toward a brighter future.

This Passover, as we gather around our tables with our families, let's take some time to remember others; those in need, those still being held hostage in Gaza, those that struggle everyday with all forms of physical or emotional imprisonment. By supporting JCFS, you can ensure that others can have the opportunity to experience that sense of the freedom that comes with Passover.

Wishing you all a happy and joyous Pesach.

Al Benarroch, JCFS Executive Director

WAYS TO SUPPORT JCFS:

Support our Ma'ot Chitim Campaign. Donations can be one-time or ongoing. We accept cheque, VISA, MasterCard, or cash. You can also donate through our website (www.jcfswinnipeg.org), QR code or call 204-477-7430.

Say it with a Tribute Card! Let your friends and family know that you care about them by sending a tribute card from JCFS (Note: a minimum \$10 donation is required). To send one, call 204-477-7430, jcfs@jcfswinnipeg.org, or visit www.jcfswinnipeg.org.

Volunteer with JCFS. We are always looking for new helpers – from friendly visiting, helping at the front desk, food drives and more – we are happy to have you on board. To learn more, contact our Manager of Volunteer Services, Einat Paz (volunteer@jcfswinnipeg.org or call 204-477-7430).

Leave a legacy gift in your estate or insurance planning. To learn more about this, please contact Al Benarroch, Executive Director (abenarroch@jcfswinnipeg.org, 204-477-7430).

Drop off Kosher non-perishable food items, including cereal, tea, coffee, canned goods, and more, to our JCFS Food Pantry.

Do a social media birthday fundraiser! We are one of the charities you can choose from on Facebook!



DONATIONS OVER \$10 MADE IN THE CALENDAR YEAR WILL RECEIVE A CHARITABLE TAX RECEIPT

President's Message



As the mildest winter in memory draws to a close, I hope you are all doing well. I can assure you our Board of Directors are hard at work addressing our current challenges and planning for our future.

Our Passover Campaign, **Ma'ot Chitim**, is now underway. There are many in our community who cannot afford a Seder or kosher-for-Passover food, or struggle with food in security in general. Your contribution to the Passover Campaign helps nourish bellies and fill hearts. Please be as generous as you can be. Our community is stronger for it.

Many of us continue to feel the repercussions of the horrific terrorist attack on Israel from October 7th. A major part of the repercussions are the feelings of frustration, anger and helplessness how so much of the world continues to ignore or doubt what Hamas perpetrated on the innocent civilians of Israel. However, I do see seeds of hope that the tide of public opinion is slowly turning in our favor. Is this based on fact, or just looking for a way to reduce the "Jew hate" that is everywhere? I'm not sure. If you are looking for someone to speak with about these issues, or

anything else in your life, remember that we, at JCFS are here for you. Don't be shy to call our office and set up a time to chat with our counsellors. We also have groups running, facilitated by our skilled professionals, that are here to support.

On a more positive note, I want to let you know about a few projects the Board of Directors are working on. Our Addictions Recovery Committee continues to investigate how we can expand our addictions services. There are a number of options available to us. We want to ensure anything we do will meet the needs of our clients and our community, and is within our capabilities.

And secondly, in the coming months, the Board and staff will be creating a new Strategic Plan. Our last plan was created prior to the Covid pandemic and the war between Israel and Hamas. Since then our priorities have changed to meet the new reality. We hope to have something to announce by the start of summer.

Be well, be safe and be kind.
Am Israel Chai,

Al Shpeller, Board Chair

1300

attendees of JCFS community presentations and groups since January 2024

650^{lbs}

of food per month distributed through the JCFS Food Pantry

Our targeted community programming ensures that no one is left behind.

Winnipeg Holocaust Survivors supported through JCFS Older Adult Services

90

active clients receiving services from our Counselling program

160

of JCFS Child Welfare children remain in their homes with their families due to strenght-based supports.

80%

FROM THE DONOR CORNER OF JCFS

By Deb Stern

Calling all generous donors!

As we gear up for Passover, we wanted to take a moment to shower you with gratitude sweeter than the charoset on your Seder plate.

Your donations are like the matzah of our organization - essential, sustaining, and forever appreciated. Thanks to your kindness, we can continue making a difference in the lives of those who need it most. This year, your donations will be used to gather basic (yet pricey) items to build Passover baskets for those in our community who struggle financially or who find themselves alone or in despair this holiday season. Just like Moses led our people out of Egypt, your support leads us towards brighter futures for those in need. Your donations are more precious than bubbe's secret gefilte fish recipe - they sustain us and nourish our mission with love and kindness.

So, as you prepare for Passover with your family and friends, know that you are part of our JCFS **mishpacha** (that's family in Hebrew). Your support truly helps us spread love and matzah balls (metaphorically speaking) throughout our Winnipeg community.

Wishing you a Passover filled with joy, laughter, and lots of delicious food - because let's be real, isn't that what holidays are all about? Thank you for being the true heroes of our story.

Chag Sameach!



UPCOMING EVENTS



Scan to Register



Scan to Register



Scan to Register



There is always something exciting at JCFS that will help and to connect you with our vibrant community. You can also call 204-477-7430 to register for our programs.

SE-DEER-LEBRITY NIGHT

IF YOU HAD A CHANCE TO HAVE A **CELEBRITY** AT YOUR PASSOVER **SEDER**...

Who would that be?

Einat Paz – Manager – Volunteer Services

Of course **Golda Meir**! Golda Meir's life story is one of resilience, determination, and leadership. She played a crucial role in the founding of the State of Israel and served as its Prime Minister during a challenging period. Her dedication to the Zionist cause and her unwavering commitment to the Jewish people can serve as an inspiration for Passover discussions about overcoming adversity and fighting for freedom.

David Coodin – Youth Mental Health Clinician

If I could have one celebrity at my Seder table it would be **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** One of the main themes of Passover is freedom, and there are not many people who represent the fight for freedom more than Dr. King. At my family's Seder, we use a Haggadah made by my father, which he modifies or adds to almost every year. Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech is in our family Haggadah, and it is read at every Seder. Having Dr. King read his speech and to be able to ask him the innumerable questions that I would have for him would be incredible.

Iael Besendorf – Team Lead – Settlement Services

I will have at my Passover seder **Noa Tishby**. A Jewish smart human being, great advocate of Israel, Zionism and Jewish people. She inspires me and it looks like she has a beautiful personality to share a Passover table, sing together and share great stories.



Adeena Lungen Social Worker – Older Adult Services & Holocaust Survivors

Moses, of course! He was actually around during the Exodus from Egypt and would have a lot of good "anecdotes" about that time!

Brooke Zelcer – Rosh Chodesh Facilitator

I'd love to have **Larry David** at a my Passover seder because I could definitely count on him making me laugh.

Keith Elfenbein – Case Aid

I would like **Allan Arkin**. He kind of reminds me of my Zaida and would lead such a great Seder.

Heather Mandell Kraut – Social Worker

That's an easy one for me – **Adam Sandler** would be my choice! Can you imagine? I would be laughing so hard all night long. He's a good singer too and there are so many songs in the Haggadah. Plus I can just picture him leading us through the story of the exodus from Egypt... maybe he would even have several costume changes when it came to reciting the 10 plagues?

Rabi Allan Finkel – Spiritual Care Specialist

Bugs Bunny. The archetype of a Bronx Jew, Bugs is tough and lives/thrive in a hostile world, and would have a lot to share about resilience. And there is a school of thought that Bugs may be part of the queer community (remember the occasional wedding dresses?) If there is an extra seat at the table, we could invite Mel Blanc or at least his voice to join us.



THE POWER TIKKUN OLAM

Submitted by Sharon Chisvin

JCFS Helps Eritrean Family Reunite

The Abrhet family's journey, and the work the Jewish community has done in partnership to bring them here.

When Zersenay Gezay greeted his eleven-year-old daughter, Eyorsalem, at the Winnipeg airport on Friday, February 23, it was the first time he was seeing her in person, ever. Zersenay was forced to flee Eritrea—a northeast African country with lifetime conscription and an abominable human rights record—when his wife was expecting Eyorsalem, their seventh child. Like many of the thousands who flee Eritrea every month, Zersenay ended up in Israel, where he lived and worked as an asylum seeker for more than a decade. During this time, Zersenay's wife and daughters also fled Eritrea, living as refugees first in Ethiopia and then in Uganda, as they awaited a reunion with their husband and father.

A year ago, Zersenay arrived in Canada thanks to a unique refugee sponsorship partnership between JCFS and the Crossed Hands Refugee



Committee of St. Mathew's Anglican Church, that I had the privilege to facilitate. The arrival of Zersenay's youngest daughter, three of her sisters, and their mother this past February was also a result of that refugee sponsorship.

Since 2016, JCFS has partnered with Crossed Hands to help bring eleven refugees from Eritrea, via Israel, to Winnipeg. Crossed Hands, under the auspices of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, has taken the lead on each of these sponsorships, while JCFS has co-signed each application and held in trust the funds that I helped raise for these sponsorships.

As we gather at our Passover seders this spring and recall our Jewish history as slaves and refugees, it is incumbent upon us to recognize that slavery still exists in many parts of the world and more than 100 million refugees worldwide do not have a place to call home. Sponsoring refugees to Canada is not an onerous task, and I'd be happy to share what I've learned about the process with anyone interested in learning more.

NAVIGATING PASSOVER: Addictions & the Seder Table

Submitted by Rabbi Allan Finkel

Addiction at the Passover table can manifest in various ways, affecting both the individual and those around them. The pressure to partake in traditional customs, including the four cups of wine, can be overwhelming for individuals in recovery. Additionally, the emotional intensity of family gatherings and the reminiscence of past experiences may trigger cravings and exacerbate feelings of anxiety or isolation. Addiction can extend beyond substance abuse to behaviors such as overeating or compulsive eating, which are prevalent during holiday feasts.

Here are some strategies to support sobriety and well-being during this holiday:

Communicate: Openly discuss your concerns and intentions with trusted family members or friends before the gathering.

Plan Alternative Beverages: Prepare non-alcoholic options such as sparkling water, fruit juices, or herbal teas to have readily available during the meal.

Set Boundaries: Establish clear boundaries regarding alcohol consumption and communicate them assertively if necessary.

Focus on Rituals and Meaning: Engage in the symbolic rituals of the Passover Seder, focusing on the deeper meaning of the holiday rather than solely on the culinary aspects.

Seek Support: Connect with individuals who understand your struggles or attending support group meetings that can offer encouragement and guidance during challenging times.

Practice Self-Care: Prioritize self-care practices such as mindfulness, meditation, or engage in activities that promote relaxation and emotional well-being.

Have an Exit Plan: Know when to gracefully excuse yourself from the gathering and seek a supportive environment. This can prevent relapse and prioritize your recovery journey.

With the support of loved ones and a proactive approach, Passover can be a time of spiritual growth, connection, and renewal for individuals in recovery.

I am deeply grateful for the counselling support I have been receiving from JCFS for the past few months, since the events of October 7 and the war began. As a new mother and a newcomer to Winnipeg, these heartbreaking events have added a layer of grief and anxiety on top of a somewhat isolated and challenging situation. Having that ongoing support free of charge has had a huge positive impact on my mental health and well-being - I have been feeling more hopeful, energetic and healed since the beginning of the sessions.

INSPIRING TESTIMONIALS SHARED BY OUR CLIENTS VALIDATE JCFS MISSION

STRENGTHENING LIVES IN KEEPING WITH JEWISH VALUES
OUR MANDATE, OUR PROMISE



*I share my deep gratitude and thanks to the entire team at the JCFS who made this program happen, but most of all, to Brooke, my incredible counsellor. She is so kind, empathetic, intelligent and resourceful, and she has truly been a gift, a **Bracha**, for me and my family. I will never forget this amazing support that has been offered in such a challenging time, and I will always be grateful to JCFS and Brooke for helping me and our community to cope and start a healing process.*

Anonymous

Society is always changing...

JCFS is a constant and remains rooted in our Jewish values.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT JCFS

HEAR OUR VOICES

JCFS Jewish
Woman
of Light

SURVIVING
TO
THRIVING
A Guide to Self Health

KNEAD² LOVE EMPOWERING
WOMEN &
GIRLS

HAMSAS FOR HOPE



HAPPY
Gadlani's
Day

CRAFTING
CONNECTIONS
INCOME TAX TIME!



The Modern Jewish
WOMAN
WHO IS SHE?

ROSH
CHODESH
WOMEN'S GROUP

NAVIGATING
INTER
FAITH
RELATIONSHIPS

WARM WELCOMES, FOND FAREWELLS AND TERRIFIC TRANSFERS



Yvonne Janzen joins our Older Adult Services Team as a Social Worker. Yvonne comes to us with an extensive background in disability services. She is already known for her enthusiasm, friendly nature, and willingness to go above and beyond. Thank you for being here, Yvonne!



Willow Dekker joins our Older Adult Services Team as a Social Worker. Willow is enthusiastic about inclusion, living her social work values, and utilizing technology in programming. She is proud to be part of the JCFS Team and looks forward to meeting with her clients. Welcome, Willow!



Mat Kaay joins our Mental Health and Addictions Team as the Addictions Counsellor. Mat has worked in a variety of locations, including Toronto, and is excited to help with enhancing our addictions services. We are lucky that you chose JCFS, Mat!



Rabbi Allan Finkel joins the Mental Health and Addictions Team as the Spiritual Care Specialist. A lifelong Winnipegger, Rabbi Allan is always embedding Jewish content into services, and ensures that spiritual needs are met. Kol Hakavod, Rabbi Allan!



Sonja Iserloh, joins the Child Welfare Team as a Child Protection Worker. Sonja previously worked in our Older Adult Services Team providing vital supports to our Holocaust survivors. She is noted for her creativity and diligence. While her clients and team in OAS were sad to see her go, her new Team is delighted to have her!



David Azuelos, is our new Child Welfare Supervisor and oversees the Child Welfare Team. David has been employed with JCFS for more than 8 years, during which time he has advocated to staff and clients, helped to guide co-workers, and embedded best practices into his work. He brings strong leadership skills and a community-minded philosophy to the role. Yasher Koach, David!



Brooke Zelcer is one of our workers tasked to deliver group and individual programs for women and those struggling with the impacts of the war in Israel. A graduate of Gray Academy, Brooke is a skilled clinician who has a specialized interest in holistic healing modalities. Be sure to give Brooke a warm welcome!



Daniel Gall joins the Child Welfare & Mental Health Addictions teams. Daniel is kind and thoughtful, and brings his heart to everyday he does. Welcome Daniel!

CHILD WELFARE NEWS

In 2023, JCFS helped our Jewish foster children maintain and grow their Jewish identity. Through supporting youth in their pursuit of Jewish leadership at international BBYO conventions, assisting youth in attending Chabad Shabbatons, and through helping Jewish children attend Jewish educational institutions and summer camps, JCFS did a lot to help Jewish foster children connect with their roots.

JCFS thanks our Jewish and broader community partners for helping strengthen Jewish identity!



JEWISH CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE
Strengthening Lives in Keeping with Jewish Values

JCFS is located on Treaty 1 territory, the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene People, and the homeland of the Métis Peoples.

We support calls by Indigenous peoples and Canadians alike for the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERING

GRATEFUL FOR BELIEVING IN OUR WORK!



Join our JCFS Team!
VOLUNTEER
WITH US
Community for Community

204.477.7430



volunteer@jcfswinipeg.org



JEWISH CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICE
Strengthening Lives in Keeping with Jewish Values

"Trust yourself. Create the kind of self that you will be happy to live with all your life. Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement." – Golda Meir

WE CARE

Community for Community

FOLLOW JCFS:



To follow JCFS Happenings, please visit us on Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn. We can be found @JCFSWinnipeg. You can also search our hashtag: #jcfscares. By following us, you'll get a sneak peek at our upcoming projects, events, and initiatives.



SHERUT STAFF:

Supervision: Al Benarroch & Alexis Wenzowski | Assistance: Mara Pellettieri | Copy and Editing: Al Benarroch, Alexis Wenzowski, Debra Stern & Adriana Vegh-Levy | Graphic Design: Adriana Vegh-Levy | Printing: Unigraphics

Partner Agency of the
Jewish Federation
OF WINNIPEG



Manitoba



United Way
Winnipeg



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



Claims Conference ועידת התביעות
The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany



JEWISH FOUNDATION
OF MANITOBA

THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION



General Child
and Family Services
Authority

THE ASPER FOUNDATION



LE CENTRE CUMMINGS
CENTRE



Winnipeg Regional
Health Authority
Caring for Health

Office régional de la
santé de Winnipeg
À l'écoute de notre santé

And the support of people like you! Community for Community. Thank you!