

## SPOTLIGHT EVENT

*Chairs: Helen and Martin Katz*

AN EVENING WITH *Father Patrick Desbois*

### An Unlikely Advocate

**Father Patrick Desbois is a Roman Catholic priest who has devoted his life to educating the world about the Holocaust and confronting antisemitism.**

He is the founder of Yahad-In Unum ("Together In One"), a nonprofit organization dedicated to discovering genocidal practices and providing documented proof of crimes against humanity. For nearly two decades, Yahad-In Unum pioneered the application of modern forensic research to the study of genocide. Through this developed methodology, they have uncovered the location of more than 2,900 killing sites and documented more than 7,000 witness testimonies to the war crimes of the Nazi death squads.

A distinguished author, university professor, historian, forensic detective and world-renowned human-rights activist, Father Desbois fights the bigotry that fuels the

disease of genocide and bridges the divide between faiths. His ongoing work brings closure to the victims and survivors of genocide and calls for legal justice for the perpetrators.

Come join Jewish Family Service as this dynamic speaker shares his riveting story at our Spotlight Event. Your support will help JFS continue to provide services focused on older adults, mental health and wellness, and safety net assistance to the most vulnerable in our community, including more than 600 Holocaust survivors who receive help with home care, transportation, friendly visitors, geriatric care management and so much more.

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2023**

**7PM | TEMPLE ISRAEL**

**FOR REGISTRATION AND SPONSORSHIPS,  
VISIT [JFSSPOTLIGHTEVENT.ORG](https://jfsspotlightevent.org) OR CALL 248.592.2339.**

# Meet Our Spotlight Event Chairs **HELEN AND MARTIN KATZ**

**Helen Katz has been a champion of Jewish Family Service long before she joined the agency as a board member in 2014.**

The founding Director and a founding lifetime Trustee of the Jewish Women's Foundation (JWF), she was involved in awarding grants to community agencies. The JWF played a key role in helping to fund critical JFS programs such as the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA), Legal Referral Service and the now defunct Project Chessed.



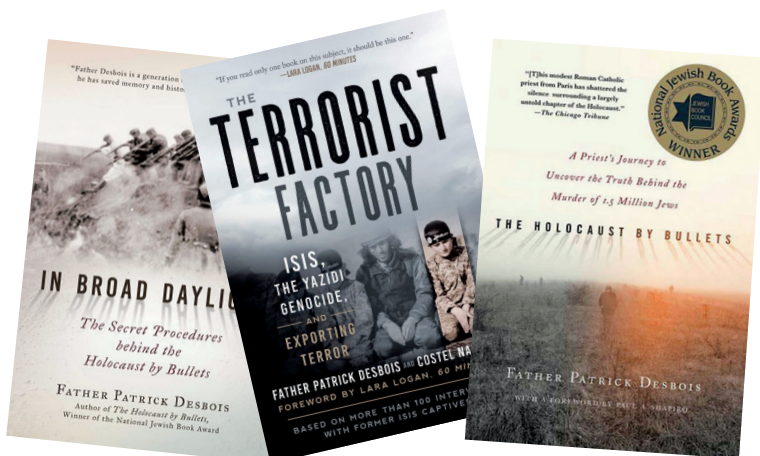
She is supporting our work with Holocaust survivors by chairing, along with her husband Marty, this year's Spotlight Event. The event will feature Father Patrick Desbois, a Roman Catholic priest who has devoted his life to educating the world about the Holocaust and confronting antisemitism.

"We are excited about the program and being able to highlight JFS's services," says Helen. "I think this year's speaker will also engage the broader community."

Helen currently serves on the Executive Committee of JFS and is a member of the Finance Committee. She has also served on and was a past chair of the Development & Marketing Committee. "I'm proud of Helen's commitment to JFS," says Marty. It's a critically important organization and Spotlight is a great opportunity to highlight the work done by the JFS staff and board."

When she's not busy supporting the mission of JFS, the Bloomfield Hills resident participates on the boards of the JWF and Planned Parenthood. She and Marty often travel to England and Colorado to visit their sons, daughter-in-law and grandsons.

"I think the most satisfying part of being involved with JFS is being part of an organization that is dedicated to serving the Jewish community," says Helen.



*Learn more about our  
Spotlight speaker's critical  
work before our event!*

# Tending to Leaves...and So Much More

**The older adults served by JFS are not the only ones who are thankful for our annual Fall Fix Up event; Volunteer Services Coordinator Alyah Al-Azem is also full of appreciation.**

“We were lucky to have a beautiful day,” she says. “There was a lot of wind and rain the day before, so all the leaves had fallen. Everyone was busy from start to finish.”

But it’s more than just the good weather conditions that Al-Azem appreciates.

“Having just joined JFS in June 2022, this was my first time planning Fall Fix Up and I got so much support from the community and JFS staff, but especially from the Fall Fix Up committee.”

On November 6, hundreds of volunteers came together to rake leaves and winterize windows for 52 older adults who receive services from JFS. These household chores may seem to be a small thing. Al-Azem knows they’re not.

“Winterizing the windows helps keep heating bills down, which is critical for older adults who are on a fixed income,” she says. “And by raking their leaves, they avoid getting issued a citation for not attending to their lawn.”

The volunteers included a group of students with Racquet Up Detroit who came from Detroit to participate. “It was cool to see so many people come from such far distances, wanting to help,” Al-Azem says. “I was blown away.”

Each year, we’re reminded that Fall Fix Up is about more than just winterizing homes. “A JFS staff member was volunteering at the home of a Holocaust survivor,” Al-Azem says. “They struck up a conversation and the client realized she needed more interaction with people. The staff member referred her to our Friendly Visitor program. That might not have happened without that contact through Fall Fix Up. That’s what I love about this program.”



# Cracking the Code to Better Health

**When it comes to selecting health insurance, it can feel as if you're heading down a road without a map.**

Fortunately, the navigators at Jewish Family Service can help show you the way.

"We help people of all ages sign up for affordable healthcare coverage," says Maxim Em, Healthcare Navigator. "This may mean the Healthy Michigan Plan, which is expanded Medicaid, the Marketplace Exchange or Medicare."

Prior to these navigation services, JFS offered a program called Project Chessed which functioned like a charity HMO in the Jewish community to help uninsured individuals access healthcare during an economic recession. Then came the Affordable Care Act.

"Once the Affordable Care Act became a law, all the Project Chessed staff became Certified Healthcare Navigators and we helped our clients transition to expanded Medicaid and Marketplace coverage," says Olga Semenova, MPH, Supervisor of Healthcare Navigation. "We've continued this work because the need remains. Health insurance is difficult to understand and many of our clients are also Russian speaking, which adds an additional barrier to accessing and understanding insurance options. We're able to provide our services in English and in Russian."

In 2022, the navigators helped 769 people find the right plan for them during Open Enrollment, and throughout the year, with special enrollment situations and Medicaid. Thanks to funding through ACCESS, navigation services are free and open to anyone in the community.

"You don't have to be Jewish to use our services," says Semenova. "We are here to help everyone!"

**For more information about healthcare navigation services, contact Olga Semenova at 248.592.2662 or [navigation@jfsdetroit.org](mailto:navigation@jfsdetroit.org).**

## MEET THE STAFF

### **Olga Semenova, MPH Supervisor of Healthcare Navigation**

I've been at JFS...for twelve years.

**What I like most about my job is...**feeling like we're making a difference in the lives of those we serve. It is such a relief for people to feel "covered" and it is a pleasure to help people through the healthcare process.

**In the future, I'd like to...**grow the department and continue to add volunteers and interns to the healthcare navigation team in order to help more people in need.

**When I'm not working...**I love spending time with my family and friends, hiking, reading and traveling.



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### **Maxim Em Healthcare Navigator**

I've been at JFS...for almost two years.

**What I like most about my job is...**making a difference in the lives of those I help and knowing that they have healthcare coverage.

**In the future, I'd like to...**educate even more people on healthcare.

**When I'm not working...**I spend a lot of time with my kids traveling, fishing and exploring new places to camp.



# VOLUNTEER PROFILE: RICHARD TEETS & ROBIN KELMENSON

**Last year, JFS helped 769 community members sign up for healthcare, something that would have been impossible were it not for the contributions of volunteers Richard Teets and Robin Kelmenson.**

Richard was already involved in advocacy work for the Affordable Care Act when he started volunteering for JFS in 2013.

“I was part of a group of congregations that did education and advocacy about the Affordable Care Act and worked to get Michigan to expand eligibility for Medicaid,” says Teets. “I decided to get trained to help people sign up for Marketplace insurance. I also joined the board of the MetroHealth Foundation which makes grants to organizations that help with healthcare for the underserved. This is how I learned that JFS needed volunteer navigators.” Richard was also the recipient of JFS’s Volunteer of the Year Award in 2014.

Robin, a retired doctor with many years of experience working for health insurance companies, brought a unique skill set when he joined the navigation team in 2019.

“In addition to helping people choose insurance coverage that was right for them, I could identify potential pitfalls in the coverage from different carriers,” says Kelmenson. “My experience using the Healthcare Marketplace to obtain coverage for my children in the past also made me aware of how complex and confusing people can find this process.”

The pair work a considerable number of hours helping community members, with most of that time being spent during the Open Enrollment period of November 1–January 15. And they both enjoy untangling the complicated enrollment process to ensure people have the coverage they need.

“I helped a woman get coverage for her teenage daughter, but she said she couldn’t afford it for herself and declined when I suggested we check on the cost,” says Kelmenson. “But later, on my own, I ran the numbers and contacted her to let her know that it would only cost \$8.30 per month to add herself to the policy. She was extremely appreciative of my efforts.”

When these two mensches aren’t volunteering with JFS, they are giving their time to other community organizations. Through the First United Methodist Church, Teets helps Syrian and Afghan refugees in addition to working on social justice issues like immigration reform, equal rights for LGBTQ+ people and gun violence. Prior to the pandemic, Kelmenson was helping out at the West Bloomfield Township Library.

“Rich and Robin are a huge help to JFS clients,” says Olga Semenova, Supervisor of Healthcare Navigation. “They helped 21% of all those JFS has assisted with navigation in 2022. They make themselves available during evening and weekend hours when JFS staff are sometimes unable to help. We really couldn’t operate this program without them.”



**Richard Teets**



**Robin Kelmenson**

**For more information about volunteer opportunities, contact Alyah Al-Azem at 313.662.5687 or [alyah@jfsdetroit.org](mailto:alyah@jfsdetroit.org).**

# Adopt a Family 2023: Back to the Mall

Thanks to the generosity of our community, more than 750 people served by JFS were able to open a gift on Hanukkah or Christmas, making their holiday that much brighter.

The holidays were also that much brighter for the hundreds of donors who this year were able to return to the mall (and Target and Old Navy and more) with personal wish lists in hand and shop for those in need. They bought books. They purchased pots and pans. They gave games and gift cards and all kinds of goodies.

"We loved watching as donors arrived at our office to drop off gifts," says Chief Development Officer Amy Newman. "We saw community members whom we had not seen in person since 2019. I was thrilled that Adopt a Family gave us the opportunity to reconnect and thank them in person."

Even those Adopt a Family recipients who didn't request winter coats or boots received the warmest of gifts in the form of beautifully wrapped boxes and the knowledge that someone was thinking of them and wishing them a wonderful holiday season. On behalf of those we serve, thank you for your thoughtfulness. You've made a bigger difference than you can ever know.

*"As a mother it's  
difficult to swallow your  
pride, humble yourself  
and admit life is tough  
right now. But I spoke  
up on behalf of my son  
and you delivered.  
We are so grateful."*



*"I wish you could see  
the tears of gratitude  
shed. Instead, imagine  
my daughters' eyes  
glowing as bright as  
the flames they light on  
the menorah you have  
given us."*

# New Program Brings the Senior Center to the Seniors

**Jewish Family Service is constantly striving to find new ways to address social isolation among older adults.**

The latest tool in our toolbox? Uniper.

“People started to decline during the pandemic,” says Missy Lewin, LMSW, Director of Supportive Services. “We wanted to make a difference in their lives by combatting the social isolation, and we added Uniper to our services available to older adults.”

Lewin describes Uniper as an online senior center and so much more. The platform allows members to attend classes, participate in discussion groups, watch movies, and video chat with friends and family, among other options. There’s even a HIPAA compliant telehealth option, which allows JFS care managers and therapists to work with clients remotely.

“The idea is that there are all kinds of activities available all day long,” says Lewin. “Some of the programming comes from Uniper, but JFS has been able to offer our own classes as well. We’ve

featured culinary art therapy, healthy aging classes, interactive art programs, music, and options specifically for Holocaust survivors. And we’re always looking for ways to expand our offerings.”

Uniper was developed as a user-friendly platform for older adults who may not be as comfortable with technology. Members can access it on their TV, computer or tablet. While the service is currently available only to those receiving services from JFS, there are plans to expand to include other interested community members.

“We’re getting great feedback from our clients,” says Lewin. “One in particular attributes our Let’s Talk socialization group to saving her life more than once, getting her connected to the outside world and helping her deal with recent losses. She has since moved and has new friends and activities to fill her schedule, but she continues to prioritize her Tuesdays at 2pm for the Let’s Talk group.”

**For more information on Uniper, contact Jessie Weber at 248.592.3974 or [jweber@jfsdetroit.org](mailto:jweber@jfsdetroit.org).**

## MEET THE STAFF

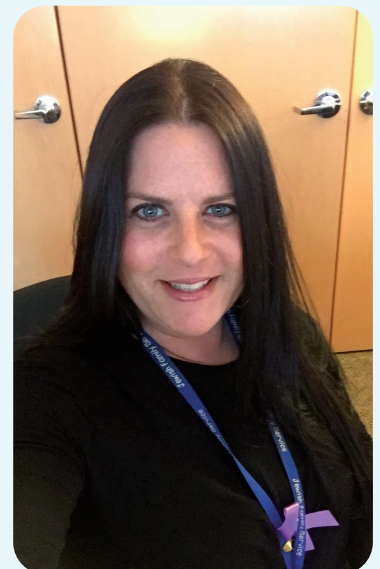
### **Missy Lewin, LMSW, Director of Supportive Services**

**I’ve been at JFS...**17.5 years.

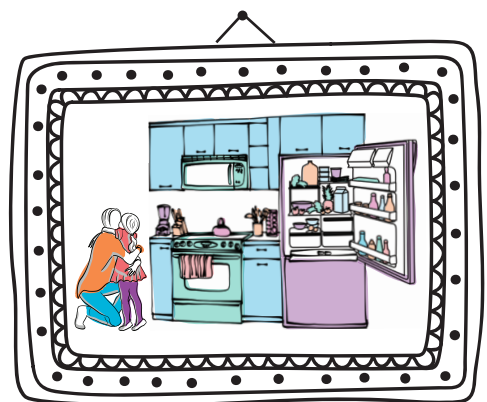
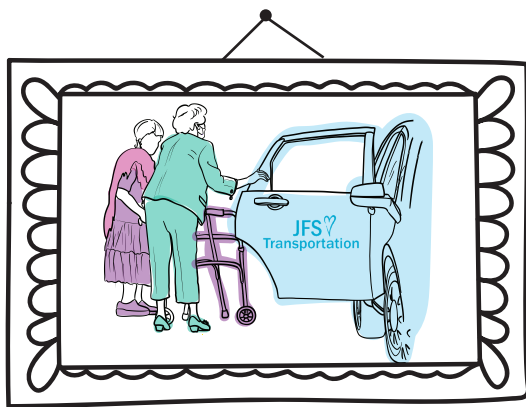
**What I like most about my job is...**being able to make a difference in the lives of older adults.

**In the future, I’d like to...**enhance the local programming on Uniper and offer more specialized classes. I’d like to add more participants from the community.

**When I’m not working...**I enjoy trying new recipes, shopping, spending time with my family and friends and providing doggie daycare for my sister’s dog.



Thank you for being a part of our  
*Friends of the Family* Campaign



When an older adult needs a ride to a doctor's appointment...when a family of five is about to have their heat turned off...when an anxious teen is in need of counseling...it will be your dollars that allow us to do this critical work. Your support of our Friends of the Family campaign ensures we can provide services to the most vulnerable, each and every day.

*Those we serve are so grateful for you and so are we.*

# Caring for the Caregiver

JFS has always ensured that the older adults in our community have what they need to safely age-in-place, whether that's transportation, home care, case management or other services we provide. We've served thousands over the years.

Knowing that behind many of those older adults is a family caregiver, we initiated our Caregiver Support Program last year to reduce family caregiver stress, avoid burnout and help the many caregivers taking care of family provide the best possible care for their loved ones.

"Multigenerational care, as well as the pandemic and social inequalities, have made caregiving an even more intensive and complex job than before," says Emily Gordon, LLMSW, Caregiver Support Program Coordinator. "The demanding physical and emotional work involved can lead to stress, poor physical health, and burnout for the caregiver, as well as inadequate care for the older adults they're helping."

This new program, supported by grants from The Jewish Fund and the Ben Teitel Philanthropic Fund, aims to identify the areas in which family caregivers need help.

"Our aim is to be a resource for family caregivers at any point of their caregiving journey, providing family consultations, resource navigation, educational workshops and trainings, long-term planning, caregiver health and wellness education, and bereavement support," says Gordon.

Despite a sharp increase in the number of family caregivers nationwide in the past few years, many don't self-identify as such, making it more difficult for them to receive the necessary support and validation. "I am always moved by how meaningful it can be to a caregiver to share their story with me and have their experience validated," says Gordon. "There's a noticeable shift in their facial expression afterwards and they always report how much of a big deal it is for them just to speak about their roles out loud to another person."

Gordon can't stress enough the importance of self-care for caregivers. "One can't pour from an empty cup," she says. "It's crucial for caregivers to take care of themselves in order to take care of another."

**For more information on the Caregiver Support Program please contact Emily Gordon at 248.970.2779 or [egordon@jfsdetroit.org](mailto:egordon@jfsdetroit.org).**

## MEET THE STAFF

### **Emily Gordon, LLMSW, Caregiver Support Program Coordinator**

**I've been at JFS...**since June 2022.

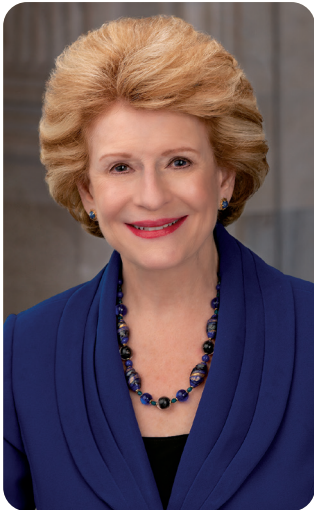
**What I like most about my job is...**knowing that even a little bit of help can have a huge impact on someone's quality of life.

**In the future, I'd like to...**see how the program evolves over time as we learn more about what family caregivers in our community need and brainstorm how we can best serve them.

**When I'm not working...**I enjoy taking my dogs on adventures, shopping for "just one more" plant to tend to or book to read, and traveling to spend quality time with family and friends.



# Senator Stabenow Supports JFS



**For many years, Jewish Family Service has focused much of our efforts toward suicide prevention.**

Now, thanks to U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, JFS has received a generous \$811,000 grant that will allow us to extend our efforts into the broader community.

This Congressionally Directed Spending grant (what was once referred to as an “earmark”) comes as the result of many people working over the course of two years to get JFS’s project onto the desk of someone who could advocate for the agency and this critical issue.

“Suicide prevention must be a community-wide effort to be successful,” says Dini Peterson, Chief Program Officer, Family and Community Services. “Debbie Stabenow has always been an advocate for mental health, so our proposal aligned with her focus.”

The funding will support the agency’s recent partnership with Black Family Development, Inc. (BFDI) and both agencies’ efforts in suicide prevention. Both JFS and BFDI will hire two suicide prevention coordinators who will collaborate with partners to train staff, volunteers and other interested parties to help create a suicide safer community. In addition to offering trainings such as safeTALK and ASIST, both agencies will be working with other organizations to help them become more suicide aware.

“Whether it’s a synagogue, church, school or nonprofit, we’ll work within each organization,

looking at policies, procedures, trainings and more, to make sure they can identify and reduce suicide risk,” says Peterson. “The idea is to bring the number of suicides within our community down as close to zero as we can get it.”

The funding, which comes from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), has also allowed both JFS and BFDI to each hire two therapists, to ensure that those who call for help are able to receive counseling.

“We are so appreciative of Debbie Stabenow,” says Peterson. “Our project became her project. It’s only due to her advocacy that we’re now able to do this work on a broader scale. She really was our champion.”

## **Attend one of our upcoming suicide prevention training sessions**

### **safeTALK**

**Friday, April 14**

**9:30am-1:30pm**

Jewish Family Service, West Bloomfield

Register at [jlive.app/events/3681](https://jlive.app/events/3681)

### **ASIST**

**Monday, May 15 and Tuesday, May 16**

**9am-5pm**

Jewish Family Service, West Bloomfield

Register at [jlive.app/events/3724](https://jlive.app/events/3724)

### **safeTALK**

**Friday, June 9**

**9:30am-1:30pm**

Jewish Family Service, West Bloomfield

Register at [jlive.app/events/3682](https://jlive.app/events/3682)

**If you would like to learn more about JFS’s suicide prevention efforts or sign up for a training, contact Mayim Meyers at 248.592.2694 or [mmeyers@jfsdetroit.org](mailto:mmeyers@jfsdetroit.org).**



# Stop searching for the perfect Mother's Day gift.

Why comb through websites trying to find a gift for the special women in your life when you could give a more meaningful gift with a card from *The Joy Project*?

*Participation is simple.*

Send a beautiful card with a personal message and make a difference in our community. Your donation will help provide critical services to the **3,000** women and children served by *Jewish Family Service* each year. These services include counseling, transportation, basic needs assistance, domestic abuse intervention and more.

*Send a card and impact the lives of thousands.*

**jfsjoyproject.org**

**248.970.2655** ♥ **joyproject@jfsdetroit.org**

**\*\*Past donors will receive their re-order forms in mid-March.\*\***



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### **OLDER ADULTS**

Assistive and Social Technology  
Caregiver Support Program  
ElderCare Solutions of Michigan  
Friendly Visitors  
Geriatric Care Management  
HandyMensch  
Health Coaching  
Holocaust Survivor Assistance  
Home Care  
Kosher Meals on Wheels  
Mind University  
Transportation

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

A Single Soul Suicide Prevention  
Community Education  
Counseling  
Jewish Addiction Resource Alliance  
We Need To Talk  
Youth and School-Based Services

### **SAFETY NET**

Domestic Abuse Intervention  
Family Support Services  
Healthcare Navigation  
Legal Referral Service

### **ORTHODOX COMMUNITY\***

Lev Detroit Resource Line  
Passover Assistance  
Safety Kid  
School-Based Services  
Uniform Assistance  
Welcome Baskets

### **RUSSIAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY\***

Translation and Interpretation

\*Members of these communities have access to all JFS resources as well as these specialized services.

