

# JFS Named Midwest Administrator for Holocaust Claims Conference

By Judy Greenwald - 12/10/2019 10:20 AM



Jewish Family Service has been named administrator of the Midwest Holocaust Claims Conference for providing compassion and support to Holocaust survivors.

*By Judy Greenwald*

*Photography courtesy of JFS*

In keeping with its dedication to provide compassionate, personalized services to the Jewish community and its vitally important role in assisting Holocaust survivors, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit (JFS) has been named Midwest Administrator for the Claims Conference.

Since 1951, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (the Claims Conference) has been providing care for Jewish Holocaust victims through negotiating with the German government for millions of dollars in payments to victims, promoting Holocaust education, doing research, and funding social services that aid communities in looking after elderly survivors.

JFS CEO Perry Ohren noted JFS has been working with the Claims Conference for over 70 years, and this partnership is crucial to the Federation's mission: helping survivors to age with dignity and respect.

"The Claims Conference's purpose is to be the worldwide centralized entity that provides services to survivors locally," said Ohren, who's served as CEO since 2011. "This happens at the local level through the provision and facilitation of services for survivors as well as helping them access resources."

*Perry Ohren*

According to Ohren, the Conference decided the way it was helping survivors who places like JFS wasn't effective, so a handful of providers across the country were region.

"Helping survivors both in Michigan and in a multi-state area is sacred work, so, agreed to partner in this endeavor," Ohren said.

"JFS Detroit is one of four hubs responsible for multi-state coverage," he continued. The designated area includes 15 states: Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Nebraska.

"We're currently working on starting services for a survivor in Petoskey and are working in Ann Arbor to qualify their communities' survivors for services. Also, services to the last-known Holocaust survivor in Iowa."

The aid JFS offers includes facilitating non-skilled homecare services such as personal care, cleaning and grocery shopping. Survivors are directed to New York-based agency for emergency financial assistance.

There's much involved in handling the duties as the Midwest Claims Conference Administrator, Ohren explained.

"Administrative responsibilities include receiving referrals from agencies and interviewing prospective clients, completing paperwork to qualify prospective survivors for services, supporting documentation, identifying, screening and training potential homecare providers, training social workers at various referring agencies, obtaining monthly funding for services, paying service providers and obtaining reimbursement from the Claims Conference," he said.

Yet Ohren and everyone at JFS understand how necessary this work is — and how important the program is to help victims of Nazi terror.

“There’s nothing more important in all we do than helping Holocaust survivors,  
“We at JFS are mindful of values such as *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam*, creating just  
make the world right and whole, and the concept of *chesed*, compassion and car  
We’re honored to provide these services because if we see each person as created  
God, we can see humanity and dignity in all people.”

**Judy Greenwald**

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