



Strengthening Lives through Compassionate Service

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF METRO DETROIT CONTINUED OFFERING 'ESSENTIAL AND VITAL SERVICES' TO THE COMMUNITY AMIDST THE COVID-19 CRISIS.

ARTICLE DANIELLE ALEXANDER

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JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

6555 W Maple Rd,
West Bloomfield Township
(248)-592-2313
resourcecenter@jfsdetroit.org

SINCE 1928, JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE (JFS) HAS WORKED TOWARD ACHIEVING ITS VISION FOR A COMMUNITY IN WHICH NO PERSON FACES LIFE'S CHALLENGES ALONE. In fact, even amidst the COVID-19 crisis that escalated in March, JFS in West Bloomfield continued to remain a central source of support to those in need despite the building being closed.

While remote, JFS' staff worked hard to make sure that their level of service did not

decrease. They offered complimentary phone conversations with licensed therapists for any community member feeling anxious, depressed or just in need of someone to talk to, as well as extended call-in hours through the JFS Resource Center.

"We're supporting both clients and non-clients right now as those who may have not needed our services before are now contacting us as they have new needs," JFS Chief Program Officer Yuliya Gaydayenko said in March.



Gaydayenko's fellow Chief Program Officer Dini Peterson said that when something like this happens, JFS is there to make sure its services are accessible to all people in the community, even those who never knew JFS existed. For example, local mothers could benefit from reaching out as the staff is trained to help them navigate this change.

"We have social workers who are great with young children and can talk to mothers about giving themselves grace and being patient with themselves," Peterson said. "There are so many resources out there, and our staff is able to help comb through those resources and, for those who need financial assistance, connect them with a case manager."

Peterson also mentioned that the team is making sure that women who are in homes with an abuser are getting the extra emotional support and care they need, as well as assisting with seeking out shelter in some cases.

"What we do at our core has not really changed," Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at JFS Lindsay Leder explained. "We've adapted our services, in light of the current situation, so we can continue taking care of the most vulnerable in our community. That has still stayed central in the midst of all of this."

JFS has more than 30 programs that serve thousands of people each year, including those for older adults, mental health and wellness and safety net concerns, as well as those for the Russian speaking and Orthodox communities:

- + Older Adult programs include Assistive Technology, Chronic Care Management, ElderCare Solutions of Michigan, Friendly Visitors, Geriatric Care Management, Holocaust Survivor Assistance, Home Care, Kosher Meals on Wheels, Mind University and Transportation.
- + Mental Health and Wellness programs offered are A Single Soul Suicide Prevention, Behavioral Health Navigation, Cancer Thrivers Network for Jewish Women, Community Education and Counseling.
- + Safety Net programs consist of Domestic Abuse Intervention, Family Support Services, Health Care Navigation and Legal Referral Service.
- + Russian Speaking Community services encompass both Mental Health and Translation and Interpretation.
- + Orthodox Community services include, among others, Passover Assistance, Safety Kid Training and School-Based Social Workers.

"Every day we're continuing conversations on how we can help both clients and non-clients meet their basic needs and connect them with help as everyone's lives have been turned upside down," Peterson said. "JFS doesn't only have to be here for a crisis though. We're happy to be that safety net but can certainly also be there for life changes in general."

If you're looking for help, want to contribute as a volunteer or are seeking to support JFS' work as a donor, call (248)-592-2313 or visit jfsdetroit.org.