By Dawn Berney, Executive Director

Full confession: I’ve restarted this article seven or eight times. I began in late April, before most people were vaccinated. The mask ordinance was still in effect, and few public venues were open. The focus of this issue of Connections is again one of JSS’s eight core values. This time we are focusing on the Centrality of Community in all of our work. But most of JSS’s community programs were not active when I started writing this article. How was I going to write about a value that seemed to be “on hold”?

“Community” sounds like a static thing, but it’s made up of many intersecting moving parts. And what a community needs to succeed is constantly changing. JSS promotes community by working closely with other partners and organizations. While COVID shut down in-person programs at JSS for over a year, it has allowed us to forge new partnerships, so that we could expand our impact on the larger community. For example: through a grant distributed by the Jewish Federation of Madison from the Cheryl Rosen Weston Fund, JSS helped the Literacy Network find tutors for its current students. Like all good partnerships, everyone benefits; these tutors will be prepared to help JSS clients move from refugee to citizenship status.

We also partnered with the Catholic Multicultural Center, which had received funding from the county to connect with hard-to-reach populations.

Together we helped refugees and other underserved groups find accessible opportunities to get a COVID vaccine. Our collaboration increased the vaccination rate in Dane County and helped bring about relaxed restrictions that many are enjoying now.

While the mask requirement has been lifted, the crisis is not over for many. We are still responding to so many pressing needs among our neighbors. Working to address these needs has allowed JSS to connect with other agencies that help those hit hardest. Through an informal network of churches, synagogues, not-for-profits, schools, colleges, and government agencies, people throughout the county have learned about JSS’s work.

JSS and its supporters are now an integral part of moving the county out of this crisis. It is our imperative to help our community to continue recovering from the economic and social crisis created by the pandemic, and we are grateful for the chance to work with many new partners to do so.

“We value this partnership because it prioritizes the needs and goals of adult learners and their families, building a strong community of support. We are honored to collaborate with the dedicated staff and volunteers of JSS to this end.” - Jeff Burkhart, Executive Director, Literacy Network
Connecting Across Generations

This spring, Jewish Social Services staff started a new program to combat loneliness and isolation during the pandemic. Inspired by JSS supporter, community member, and artist Kathy Mazur, we created a two-pronged program that we are calling “L’Dor v’Dor” (“From Generation to Generation”).

First, JSS staff connected a dozen people as pen pals or friendly callers. Local high school students were matched with seniors in hopes of creating long-lasting relationships.

JSS also worked with UW-Madison Hillel Foundation, where over 35 students gathered to write Passover greetings to nearly 100 area seniors on beautiful notecards that Kathy donated.

WHAT SENIORS ARE SAYING:
“...My pen pal is very good about writing me. He’s 16 and I’m 69! He is very bright and active. It’s been a pleasure getting to know him.”
“...I like talking to new people! Getting to know my phone buddy and hearing his viewpoints on things has been very satisfying.”

“Something that seems so small made a huge impact on our students and the community.” - Shelby Fosco, UW Hillel Foundation

Helping those hit hard by pandemic

Covid Barrier Relief funds distributed through JSS are helping families maintain stability and independence.

- Helped Over 50 Families
- Prevented Evictions
- Repaired Cars
- Paid Medical Bills
- Secured Temporary Housing
- Avoided Electric, Gas, Phone, and Internet Shut-Offs
- Over 90% of recipients were people of color

$60k

Special thanks to Tim & Kathy Mazur for their generous support of this fund!
To support this powerful work, call 608-442-4081 or donate online at bit.ly/Covid-JSS
How JSS Cares for Our Community

“In my almost 16 years of serving my synagogue, I have seen JSS support Jews in need of case management, as well as a constant friendly and helpful presence in their lives. Whomever I speak to, they always mention the assistance and direction of a JSS staff person or volunteer, who has reached out and made someone’s life qualitatively better.” -Rabbi Jonathan Biatch, Temple Beth El

“As a non-congregational rabbi, I am occasionally asked to officiate at funerals for unaffiliated Jews. Many times, the deceased is an elderly person who had been living in one of the senior adult residences and had no family in the area. Always, a JSS representative is there at the graveside, to ensure that the mitzvah to accompany the dead is fulfilled.” -Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice

“Over the 18 years that I have served as the rabbi at Congregation Shaarei Shamayim, I have depended on Jewish Social Services in a variety of ways. Their social workers are always available to consult with me on issues such as mental health, domestic violence, chronic illness, and aging. I often benefit from their suggestions about how I can better serve our members. I also frequently make referrals to their social work team. I am grateful that they are available to be of assistance and provide these services for our congregation and the Madison Jewish community.” -Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman, Congregation Shaarei Shamayim
THANK YOU! to Our 2020 Volunteers!


Debbie Spear  Michael Spoerl  Richard Steeves  Rabbi Andrea Steinberger  Merle Sternberg  Lois Stoler  Julie Swedarsky  Michael Tollefson  Madeline Uraneck  Nancy Vue  Amy Walsh  Lynn Williamson  Janis Wrich  Jim Youngerman  Nan Youngerman

Local Youth Groups:
B’nei Brith Youth Organization  Congregation Shaarei Shamayim  MaTTY of Temple Beth El  MOUSY of Beth Israel Center

We try our best, but if we missed your name or you see any inaccuracies, we apologize. Please contact our volunteer coordinator, Paul Borowsky at Paul@jssmadison.org or 608-442-4083 with corrections.

Celebrating Shabbat together at Capital Lakes. We gathered in person in June for the first time in over a year!
We have just completed our weekly 30 minutes of online yoga breathing and movement. We are all on Zoom in our own rectangles – like the quiz show Hollywood Squares. We are maintaining our connections to each other, and making new connections too, despite the pandemic. We look forward to being together again in person! See this page for upcoming events.

Chair Yoga teacher Betsy Haimson announces, “Time for our personal and group hugs!”

During such a challenging time, staff receive as much as we give from our work at JSS, and we give thanks to all of you for allowing us the privilege of being part of your lives.

Lechayim Lunchtime Plus Returns This October!

WHAT: Great food, friends, conversation, and interesting programs, IN PERSON!
WHERE: Beth Israel Center, 1406 Mound Street, Madison
WHEN: Most (but not all) Mondays, October 2021 through mid-May 2022. Dates below.
TIME: Chair Yoga at 11:30 am. Lunch at 12:00 pm. Program at 1:00 pm
TO RSVP: Order a meal by 3:00 pm the preceding Wednesday: 608-442-4083 or paul@jssmadison.org. Please let us know at that time if you want a vegetarian meal.
COST: If you are 60 years old or better, a donation of $4.00 is suggested (but please pay what is comfortable for your budget). For those younger than 60, meals are $9.07.
PROGRAMS: If you cannot attend the meal, join us for the FREE program at 1:00 pm (no RSVP needed).
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, reservations, transportation, or cancellations, contact Paul Borowsky at 608-442-4083 or Paul@jssmadison.org.

JSS’s Annual Summer Barbecue Returns!

WHEN: Monday, August 30, 11:30 am-1:00 pm
WHERE: Goodman Jewish Community Campus 7762 County Hwy. PD, Verona, WI
TO RSVP: Mail a note with your name, phone number, preference for vegetarian or meat entree(s), and a check for $9 per meal made out to Jewish Social Services, by August 20. JSS, 6434 Enterprise Lane, Madison, WI 53719.
QUESTIONS: Call or email Paul to ask questions, RSVP, or arrange a ride or a fee reduction. 608-442-4083 or Paul@jssmadison.org

Many thanks to UW-Madison Hillel Adamah Catering for making and delivering our delicious kosher meals!

LECHAYIM DATES:
• October 2021: 4, 11, 18, 25
• November 2021: 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
• December 2021: 6, 13, 20, 27
• January 2022: 3, 10, 24, 31 (no Lechayim on MLK Jr. Day)
• February 2022: 7, 14, 21, 28
• March 2022: 7, 14, 21, 28
• April 2022: 4, 11, 25 (no Lechayim during Passover)
• May 2022: 2, 9 (May 9 is the last Lechayim until fall 2022)
Racial Healing Work at JSS
By Rachael Wortzel, MSW, Program Assistant

In April, JSS staff participated in the 10th and final meeting of our monthly staff book club, based on The Racial Healing Handbook by Dr. Anneliese Singh. This book was selected because the author provides written exercises as well as knowledge and concepts related to racism and the process of healing from and standing up against racism. Staff spent time reflecting on their own experiences, sharing them with the group and discussing how to collectively engage in racial healing at JSS. Regardless of where each of us started in this journey of racial healing, everyone gained insight and skills from the book club. If you’d like to learn more about The Racial Healing Handbook, please call the publisher at 800-748-6273 or visit www.newharbinger.com.

Refugee Resettlements Starting Up Again!
By Becca Schwartz, JSS Refugee Resettlement Director

There has been a lot happening in Refugee Resettlement in the last several months! At the end of April, we resettled our first family in over seven months. Within five weeks we had three more families arrive – a total of 19 people. Currently, several individuals or families are arriving each month. We are so pleased to be able to welcome refugees to our community again. Needless to say, we have been extremely busy!

Our biggest challenge by far is locating safe, affordable housing for arriving families. Without appropriate housing, we simply cannot resettle families here. We will have to turn down potential arrivals. If you own properties, know someone who does, or would like to help us search, please reach out to me at Becca@jssmadison.org or 608-442-4086.

We are also in need of volunteers for our move-in teams. Move-in volunteers drive a small truck and carry furniture and household items into apartments. Volunteers also set the apartments up so they are ready for arriving families. (Open Doors for Refugees collects most of these items, but we are always in need of certain things. See our current list at bit.ly/RR-JSS.)

We always need occasional drivers to drive families to appointments. If interested, email OpenDoorsVolunteers@gmail.com to learn more.

Our mentorship program Aljirani, also needs people to serve as weekly mentors for current refugee clients. Mentors help clients feel welcome and learn about Madison and life in the U.S., and also help clients meet their personal goals as they create new lives here. Contact Sam at sam@jssmadison.org to learn more.

Financial support to pay for housing is always welcome. JSS pays for deposits and the first few months of rent until families get settled and find work. Call Jim at 608-442-4081, or direct your internet browser to bit.ly/JSS-RIS.

We are so thankful for our partnership with Open Doors for Refugees and the ongoing dedication of many dedicated JSS staff, volunteers, and donors. We may be resettling up to 130 more people in the next 16 months, and we would not be able to help these families restart their lives without your help and support.
Tribute Donations
MARCH–MAY 2021

In Celebration of the Kindness and Sweetness of Hashem
Benjamin and Sarah Arm

In Honor of Dawn Berney
Aaron Albert

In Honor of the Birth of Monica & Dan Lyon’s Granddaughter
Niles and Linda Berman

In Honor of Merilyn Kupferberg
Rita Applebaum

In Honor of Francie Smith Saposnik
Chaplain Guta Cvetkovic and Paula Harris

In Honor of Arthur & Jeanne Waldman
Kim Waldman

In Memory of Susan Axelrod
Niles and Linda Berman

In Memory of Larry Birkner
Barbara Spierer, Paula Winnig
James and Nancy Youngerman

In Memory of Shirley Botwinick
Laura Thomas

In Memory of Dr. Ivy Dreisin Edelman
Niles and Linda Berman
Ardell Borodach
Marc and Sheila Cohen
Frederick Edelman
Jim Giesen
James Mackman
Gregory and Barbara Sheehy
Leon and Barbara Swernin
Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen

In Memory of Isadore and Jeanette Elbaum, for Father’s Day
David and Sherry Klinkner

In Memory of Debbie Giesfeldt
Anonymous
Mary Arnold
Melissa Bjerke-Markgraf
Don and Pam Carter
The Chaiken Family
John Denninger
Adam Eisenberg
Larry and Miri Garaway
Mark and Mary Giesfeldt
Patricia Giesfeldt
Marina Haan
Vicki and Robert Marx
Barbara Mays
Marie Musiela
David and Susan Offer
Pam Offerman
Christopher Stark
Anna Trull
Mona Yurk

In Memory of Ronald Giles
Beth Giles-Klinkner and Jeff Klinkner

In Memory of Alice Joseph Hanau
Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen
Helen Hanau

In Memory of Judith Smith Leland
Lynne Ballesta

In Memory of Phillip Levy
Blake Griffin
Eve Segal
Barbara Spierer
William and Elizabeth Tovell
David Walsh

In Memory of Harrison Clark Lauhon
Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen
Thomas and Margie Krauskopf
Daniel and Bettine Lipman
James Mackman
Barbara Spierer

In Memory of Gordon Roth
Leon and Barbara Swernin

In Memory of Muriel Rotter
Ina and Theodore Smolker

In Memory of Mr. Robert Schwartz
Steven Schwartz

In Memory of David Patrick Shanahan
Livia Asher
Lynne Ballesta
Louise Goldstein and Bruce Thomadsen
Alex and Svetlana Govorukha
James Mackman
James and Nancy Youngerman

In Memory of Gladys and Ben Sherman
Lois Stoler

In Memory of Jeanne Silverberg
Betsy Abramson and David Seligman
Mary Bartzon
Michael and Debra Bergen
Niles and Linda Berman
Charles Cohen and Christine Schindler

JSS Needs YOU! Volunteer Opportunities are Expanding

By Paul Borowsky, Volunteer Engagement & Events Program Manager

As COVID restrictions ease, our need for volunteers is growing. We need:
✓ Friendly visitors, shopping partners, and other regular helpers
✓ Assistance at Shabbat and holiday gatherings
✓ Drivers for client appointments*

*JSS has a van that can be used to transport larger refugee families. If you are comfortable driving our van (or have a larger vehicle) we are always in need of occasional drivers.

We understand that volunteers and clients have varying degrees of comfort regarding in-person interactions. We will work together to keep everyone comfortable and safe.

For more information about volunteering or programs, please contact me at Paul@jssmadison.org or 608-442-4083.

JSS 2020-2021
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The famous Rabbi Hillel said, “Do not separate yourself from the community” (Pirke Avot, 2:4). Judaism is a communal religion both in practice and in law. Prayer, celebration, mourning, and learning happen in community. Jewish law directs us to care for everyone, especially the neediest among us. JSS enables us to live out the principle of caring for everyone by serving vulnerable populations. This care takes many different forms, and occurs at all points in the lifecycle.

The chaplaincy program serves many clients and their families at the end of life. In addition to spiritual and emotional needs, some families have financial needs at the time of death. Therefore, JSS is working with three local partners, the Jewish Burial Association of Madison, Cress Funeral Service, and StoneMor Inc. (owner of Sunset Memory Gardens where Beit Olamim, the Jewish cemetery, is located) to create a Jewish Community-Supported Burial Program. This program will serve Jewish families who do not meet the stringent criteria for state burial assistance, but cannot afford the cost of a basic Jewish funeral and burial. If someone you know is in need of this assistance, please contact me at Rabbi@jssmadison.org or 608-424-4033.