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Congratulations to Murray Leiter and Susan Silverman



We are pleased to share that two of our Chaplaincy Service volunteers, Susan Silverman and Murray Leiter, were recently honoured as recipients of the Ontario Volunteer Service Award. The awards, distributed annually but put on hold last year due to COVID, are given out by the Ontario Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

Susan and Murray have been [Chaplaincy volunteers](#) for over five years. Before the pandemic they volunteered at four different institutions between them on a weekly basis. In addition to providing friendly visits, they also facilitated Passover Seders, Chanukah programs and Rosh Hashanah programs for residents and patients. During COVID-19, they have been chatting with lonely and isolated residents of long term care homes by phone and video conferencing on a weekly basis.

Susan and Murray are very generous with their time and have made a huge difference in the lives of Jewish patients and residents who are currently alone. *"We are grateful to be able to perform the mitzvah of visiting Jewish patients in hospital and rehab facilities. Thank you JF&CS Chaplaincy for this opportunity!"*

We return their praise back at them and thank Susan and Murray for all of their passion, dedication, and work they have done for JF&CS. Congratulations to both of you on your well-deserved awards!

A Virtual Purim Party to Remember!



While we couldn't gather to hear the sound of gragors spinning or enjoy making Hamantaschen with loved ones this year, JF&CS staff were still determined to hold the best virtual Purim party imaginable. On February 24th, 2021, our children in care and supporting foster homes participated in our first ever Zoom Purim party. But it wasn't just

your basic Zoom call—it was so much more! All of the children received kits delivered to

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their homes in advance of the event and dressed in their best Purim outfits for a virtual costume parade.

Other activities during the party included mask decorating, Hamentashen decorating and Purim Bingo. Children competed to win prizes through games and challenges. Finally, everyone worked together over Zoom to assemble Mishloach Manot and Tzedakah boxes to celebrate the holiday together. The children had a wonderful time and it was a lovely and intimate way for our Resource Families to honour the spirit of Purim as a group. We thank everyone who participated and can't wait to see all of the wild costumes in person as soon as possible!

JF&CS Social Worker Joins Therapist Gar'in

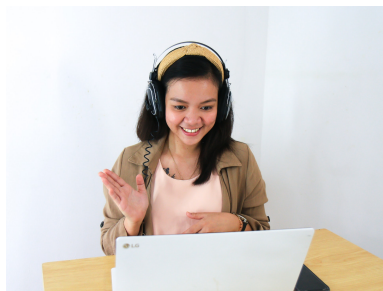


Trauma is an experience that can impact anyone regardless of where you live or who you are. That's why partnering with other social work professionals from around the world and sharing best practices for helping children and youth experiencing trauma is so important. Recently, one of our social workers, Jennifer Gottesman, had the chance to do just that.

Jennifer participated in a 6-week long course that brought together therapists from Israel and Canada to share ideas and discuss ways to help children who have been exposed to traumatic events. The UJA-funded program's goal is to strengthen our communities through mutual networking, development and a shared mission. The Program is the first Gar'in (or group of like minded people) specifically for therapists, and was in partnership with the Metiv Center and the Educational Psychological Service in Jerusalem. The Program fostered connections and opened up a dialogue about the different ways that both country's social workers operate.

Social workers congregated on Zoom and participated in training that taught them how to utilize [Metiv's PANDA Program](#) for treating childhood trauma. We are so excited and honoured that Jennifer was able to participate and represent JF&CS in this way. We can't wait to see how this partnership continues to grow and benefit our workers and clients!

The Pearl Project and Just-Us League Virtual Events



[The Pearl Project](#), for young adults who have aged out of the foster care system and Just-Us League, for former youth in care as well as our older youth in care(18+), have gone virtual! These groups provide assistance for those who may no longer qualify for the traditional support systems that are provided to children. As so much of the group is about connecting with participants and creating a community that they can lean on for support, the COVID-19 pandemic has been

especially hard for the group members.

To combat the isolation that the participants are facing, the groups have started to have a monthly virtual get-together. Like all good Jewish events, food is at the centre of the virtual hang-out. Thanks to our generous donors, all participants are emailed an Uber

Eats gift card so that they can all eat together, something that occurred often prior to the pandemic. The response has been very positive with over 10 young adults participating just last month.

As one youth wrote in the participant's chat prior to the event last month, "Who is stoked for dinner tonight? I'm so excited for take-out. In pandemic life the little things make a big difference." The comment got several "likes" from other group members who showed support and indicated that they agreed. These virtual get-togethers allow for the groups to continue engaging in positive social interactions and discussions as well as provide an opportunity for participants to seek support while dealing with the pandemic. The group's leaders have been so thrilled with the attendance and they plan to continue to meet virtually until they can once again meet in person.

Pampered Pillowcases



Sorority sisters from the Toronto chapter of the Delta Pi were looking to host an event that would benefit their community in a meaningful way. They decided that they wanted to focus their efforts on helping women, specifically single mothers and abuse victims. By organizing a Pampered Pillowcase fundraiser, they created something tangible that would make a direct impact on someone's day. [The](#)

[Pampered Pillowcase](#) is an organization created in 2014 which brings pillowcases full of spirit and confidence-raising items to women in need across the city. The donated pillowcases were filled with essential items ranging from slippers, hair ties, hand sanitizer, toothbrushes and more. They also included items meant to bring joy such as playing cards and nail polish which will help lift spirits during this hard time.

As they were not able to gather due to COVID-19, the Delta Pi Sisters obtained different items needed to construct the pillowcases and came together on Zoom and packed the pillowcases together, even including personalized letters for each pillowcase recipient. Once finished, the pillowcases were collected and brought to JF&CS to be distributed to clients.

The Delta Pi sorority sisters were able to pack and donate 24 pillowcases stuffed with goodies that will be donated to clients. We are so thankful and touched that they thought of us and know that these pillowcases will bring smiles to the faces of all of the recipients. Thank you Delta Pi and thank you Pampered Pillowcases!

We Are Pleased to Announce...

The Board of Directors of Jewish Family and Child Service of Greater Toronto is pleased to announce the appointment of Talyah Breslin as our new Chief Executive Officer as of March 31, 2021. Talyah has worked with the Agency since 2003 when she joined JF&CS as a Child Protection Worker. She has since taken on a number of different roles which allowed her to learn all of the ins and outs of the Agency and to understand deeply the individuals and families that the Agency serves. As the current Director of Child



Welfare, Talyah leads her team with great success and we are sure that she will bring that same passion and dedication to her new role. To read the full statement, please [click here](#).

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