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Thank You for Making Drive for Dreidels a Success!



DRIVE for DREIDELS
Community Chanukah Toy Drive

Thanks to your incredible support, **we raised over \$24,000** and received hundreds of donated gifts through our 2024 *Drive for Dreidels* initiative – our largest-ever Chanukah toy drive.

We were inspired by the many community donors, organizations and schools who chose to support us this year, and are especially grateful to JF&CS's Resource Development Committee for helping make the 2024 initiative one of our biggest yet. "We are THRILLED with this turnout and owe it all to this dream team," shared Lindsay Detsky, a

JF&CS board member and lead for the gift campaign.

JF&CS Social Worker Melissa Oerback shared that parents and children were "positively overwhelmed and so thankful, with one parent becoming quite teary-eyed seeing everything." Another parent said: 'I am beyond words to describe my gratitude. What I was able to get for my kids was truly shocking, and it will literally make their holidays. I was struggling badly to buy gifts for them. I was shocked to see what was available when I walked in; what an incredible mitzvah!'"

In the 1990s, Bonnie Lawrence Shear and her sons Bobby and Josh Cooper wanted to find a way to bring brightness to Jewish children celebrating Chanukah. With the help of JF&CS, the *Drive for Dreidels* initiative was founded. Drive for Dreidels continues today and is an initiative by the community, for the community. We couldn't make it possible without your support!

Chanukah Celebrations at JF&CS

December was filled with Chanukah spirit as we celebrated across the agency. From the Foster Parent and Caregiver Resource Family Chanukah Party to the celebration at the JDD, we made sure vulnerable children and families in our community had the opportunity to observe the holiday in a meaningful way.

The JDD students learned about the story of Chanukah and how to light the menorah with Rabbi Mordechai Chemel, highlighting themes of Jewish pride and resilience. Students engaged in a lively discussion about the challenges of cultural assimilation, connecting the

In-Person Appointment Resources

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Did You Know?

'Resource Families' refer to our fostering, kinship and adoption families who care for our children and youth in care.

Join the Monthly Mitzvah Makers!

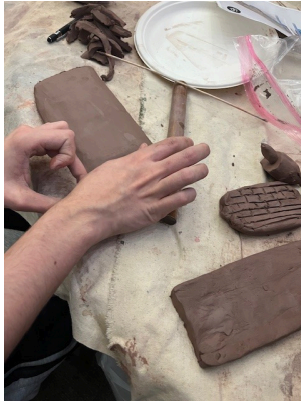
JF&CS' monthly giving program.
[Click here](#) for more information.

Leave a Legacy

[Click here](#) to learn about planned giving through the Gordon S. Wolfe Legacy Society at JF&CS.

We Can Help You

[Learn](#) about our programs and services.



experiences of Jews during Chanukah to modern-day struggles of maintaining identity. Rabbi Chemel highlighted themes of Jewish pride and resilience, including the experiences of non-Jewish students. The students then enjoyed latkes, a Dreidel Spinoff Contest, sufganiyot and Chanukah gelt!

Over at the Lipa Green Centre, our Resource Caregivers, including foster and kinship families, came together for a lunchtime Chanukah party, where they made Chanukiahs from clay. After a Kosher lunch, Rabbi Chemel led a fun trivia game about local, Chanukah and Jewish history. Children and youth in care returned home with loot bags, and toys of their

choosing.

Thank you to everyone who joined us at these celebrations and, again to all of our Drive for Dreidels donors, for helping us spread the warmth and magic of the holiday season.

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Produce Boxes for Clients



With the rising cost of groceries, food insecurity is a growing concern. Many vulnerable community members find themselves having to choose between paying bills and purchasing nutritious food for themselves and their families.

GivingTuesday 2024 Campaign

This year on GivingTuesday, more than 170 community members supported the initiative, alongside a generous matching donor, Saand Inc. Together, **we surpassed our goal, raising \$117,677!**

Clients who receive these deliveries include individuals, families and Holocaust survivors who are experiencing immediate financial crisis. Thanks to your support, JF&CS can continue to provide uninterrupted produce deliveries to our clients throughout 2025 and expand our reach by helping even more clients.

Fruit Cart Helps Clients Celebrate Chanukah

Fourteen additional produce boxes were donated by The Fruit Cart to provide Holocaust and Hospice clients with a special Chanukah gift. These individuals and families received fresh fruits and vegetables directly to their doors to help them enjoy the holidays.

"It has been awesome to work with and to be able to support JF&CS," shares Avi, Co-Founder of The Fruit Cart Ltd. "We truly believe that everyone should be able to enjoy fresh produce, and the nutritional benefits that come with it. Eating healthy increases people's physical and mental health, as well as their overall wellness. The Fruit Cart has been extremely impressed with JF&CS's ability to positively strengthen and support individuals and families in our community, and we look forward to continuing to work with JF&CS to be able to provide fresh, nutritional, and premium food to folks that need it most."

Though GivingTuesday has come and gone for another year, you can still contribute! [Click here](#) to donate today.

Levelling the Playing Field Through Cheerleading



JF&CS helps give children and youth in our community the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities to which they wouldn't otherwise have access. The Levelling the Playing Field fund enables us to help provide computers and software, sports equipment, fitness memberships, lessons, clothing for special events such as graduation, and more.



Leia is a recipient of this type of support. Her mother shares, "she has had a very rough time, not feeling like she belongs anywhere and is often excluded because she's different. She saw a movie about cheerleading and said she really wanted to do 'that'. After a lot of research, we found an inclusive studio that prides itself on participant diversity, and it has become a safe place for Leia. She is part of a team where she can be an 11-year-old girl, the same as the others. They make competition posters and pins and have

sticker wars with their teammates. But it's so much more - it is a place where she works hard to achieve a goal and has good role models who tell her that she can do it and work with her to make it a reality."

This support helps these young people avoid the isolation that often comes with poverty. "None of this reality would be possible without the generous funding from JF&CS," she continues. "Leia is one of 4 siblings, and despite working full-time, the cost was a huge barrier. The money we received removed the barrier for Leia and she gets to "fly" (that's Leia's role on the team - she's a flyer)."

You can help us level the playing field for children and youth like Leia by [donating here](#).

Upcoming Groups and Workshops



At JF&CS, we offer many groups and workshops throughout the year that explore a variety of topics from life skills, parenting, grief and bereavement, separation and divorce and more. Our aim is to help individuals and families address challenges in daily life, find positive solutions and alternate pathways to success.

Some of JF&CS's upcoming groups and workshops include:

- 1 Family 2 Homes
- Roots, Ruach and Resilience
- Because YOU and YOUTH Matter
- Jewish Rainbow Alliance

We strive for inclusivity in all our programs, serving community members of any income, family structure, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation, level of observance, race, ethnicity, cultural identity and place of origin.

To learn about our available groups and workshops, please [click here](#).

