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Drive for Dreidels Was a Huge Success!



JF&CS' Drive for Dreidels is an annual fundraising initiative that enables the families we serve to enjoy the holiday season with toys and gift cards. Building on the generosity and kindness within our community, our 2023 initiative was expanded so that we could bring the miracle of Chanukah to Israeli families who found themselves away from their homes and the people they love.

The last couple of months leading up to Drive for Dreidels were incredibly busy and inspiring as we saw the community rally together to ensure every single client could celebrate Chanukah in a meaningful way.

Hundreds of toys were donated through local daycares, partner organizations, and several individual donors. Our offices were overflowing with gifts!

Thanks to your support, we were able to host our first-ever Chanukah shop. Clients were invited to pick out Chanukah gifts for their children. Throughout 2023, we were able to provide increased dignity in many ways, and we are so proud to give clients the ability to personally select gifts for their family members. We also had gift bags and other wrapping options, as well as winter essentials, Hanukkahs and candles for clients to take home with them.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Drive for Dreidels initiative. It is because of your generosity that we could be the light for so many in our community this past Chanukah.

Support for Israeli Families

Since October 7, JF&CS has seen a surge in the number of individuals and families requiring emotional and financial support, including Israeli families who now find themselves in Toronto.

We partnered with JIAS and JVS to offer our Israeli Community Emergency Support program three days a week at our Lebovic Campus. This initiative helped meet the immediate needs of Israeli respite seekers, including providing drop-in services such as counselling, referrals

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to employment or immigration support, and access to winter clothes and essentials via donated goods and gift cards.

As Chanukah neared, a party was planned for Israeli families at the Schwartz/Reisman Centre. The event was made possible through the collaboration of Centre Camp's Hebrew Program, our Woman Abuse team, and several of our Hebrew-speaking staff.

Greta Reiss, JF&CS' Manager of Domestic Violence Services, shared about the Chanukah party, "this was an amazing, amazing event. People were smiling and left with arms full, feeling less isolated and feeling the support of Jewish Family and Child Service and the local community."

We would like to thank York Region for granting us funding from the York Region's Community Investment Fund for 2023 Community Needs and our many donors for helping us provide this necessary relief and support.

We Had the Best Time at Our Resource Family Chanukah Party



The holiday season provides us with a unique opportunity to celebrate life, and that was especially true last month when we hosted our annual Chanukah party for our Resource families.

The event is always full of joy as we come together to celebrate at the end of another year. This year, we had a fantastic turnout, including several children receiving JF&CS support, their Resource family members, along with JF&CS staff and three of our Board Members who brought their own children to laugh and play.

We had fun painting pictures of dreidels and dancing to the lively music of a dynamic electric fiddler who played both traditional Jewish music and other catchy tunes. Attendees ate latkes, sufganiyot, and a delicious dinner. Our Resource team did an incredible job putting together the event, and our Resource families were grateful to have this opportunity to celebrate and honour our Jewish traditions and heritage!

GivingTuesday 2023 Recap



The last Tuesday of November marks GivingTuesday, a day to give back. Each year, JF&CS offers community members various ways to make a difference; this year we raised money to purchase gift cards for our clients.

We have noticed how important gift cards are to our clients. Based on feedback, we have found that offering our clients the flexibility to purchase what they need (food, winter clothing, etc.) provides them with a sense of dignity, stability and independence.

Thanks to your support, our 2023 GivingTuesday campaign raised **\$43,500** – enough for over 400 gift cards! These cards are impacting Survivors, families and isolated individuals. To hear how receiving gift cards makes an impact, please watch [Sonia's video](#).

Nuts About the Nutcracker



Philanthropy comes in many forms. In addition to monetary donations, community members often donate gifts-in-kind to JF&CS. We are grateful to receive items such as winter or camp essential items, kosher, non-perishable food items to stock our food cupboards, and most recently, tickets to The Nutcracker ballet.

Attending shows and sporting events is a wonderful way for JF&CS clients to feel a part of the broader community. Cultural experiences are also enriching

and uplifting for clients who may often feel isolated. Two clients who received tickets to The Nutcracker in December 2023 shared:

"Creative and cultural events lift my spirits and fill me with lifeforce energy. I feel whole, present and content. Life would be nothing without the arts, and it is imperative to keep supporting artists and the arts. My sincere appreciation to Jewish Family and Child Service for your contribution and support."

"Growing up, my mother took me to see the Nutcracker many times. It was and still is a magical experience. It was a dream come true for me to get this incredible opportunity to take my children to see the ballet. It is something that I would not be able to afford without your help."

To learn more about the many ways you can help make a difference in the lives of our clients, please contact our Donation line at: 416-638-7800, ext. 6999.

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