


2020  
2021



Jewish Family and Child Service  
of Greater Toronto

Annual Report

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER and PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**Talyah Breslin**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Sharon List**  
President,  
Board of Directors

Over the past century and a half, Jewish Family and Child Service has evolved into the extraordinary agency it is today. JF&CS has provided a safety net for an ever growing community with an expanding array of needs. Throughout the history of the agency, staff and members of the board have shared the responsibility of continuously identifying the community's evolving needs and creating programs to ensure those needs are met. With this year's Annual Report, we share a detailed account of the unique challenges presented during COVID-19, as well as JF&CS' response to these extraordinary challenges.

This past year, the world faced a crisis that had an unprecedented impact on people's lives. While the physical implications of COVID-19 have received significant media coverage, the pandemic within the pandemic is the impact that the lockdown and stay-at-home orders have had on people's mental health and well-being. Some of the effects felt by our community have been increased levels of stress, depression, anxiety, grief and loss, alcohol and substance abuse, social isolation and stigma. Many have experienced sudden income loss, housing instability, limited employment opportunities, family violence and intergenerational trauma. For JF&CS' clients, the majority of whom were already vulnerable and at-risk, these effects have been exacerbated. At every turn, JF&CS, working alongside its many community partners, has sought to mitigate these challenges by continuously offering essential, life-sustaining support to those in need.

A community of particular concern has been that of our Holocaust survivors; memories of trauma associated with loneliness, hunger and persecution have been triggered by lockdown orders and the need to isolate. Staff have witnessed a heightened sense of anxiety in this population, which is understandable given the unfortunate reality that 25% of Survivors in our community live below the poverty line. Pinchas Gutter, a Holocaust

survivor himself and Chair of the *Committee for Holocaust Survivors in Need*, eloquently stated that Survivors "should not need to ask or beg for money or help. We should be able to offer it to them. It is our duty to enable human beings, especially Holocaust survivors, to live their final days with absolute dignity." That is exactly what JF&CS has been doing before and during the pandemic.

JF&CS has developed a number of new initiatives in response to the changing needs of our community. Thanks to the generous support of our donors and funders, we have seen the expansion and growth of our services. This has enabled the agency to provide essential financial and clinical support to a growing number of individuals and families who have faced new challenges and hardships due to the pandemic. We developed innovative ways of supporting those facing poverty and isolation; we delivered healthy meals, distributed winter clothing bundles, gift baskets, and packages for religious holidays. We offered virtual counselling sessions and frequent phone check-ins. We pioneered new virtual support groups such as, *Losing a Loved One During COVID-19*, aimed at providing assistance and strength to those coping with the loss of a loved one during the pandemic, and *Beyond the Chuppah: Marriage Prep*, aimed at assisting couples with marriage preparation. In addition to this, we transformed our *One Family Two Homes* groups in such a way that enabled us to continue to offer virtual support to all family members undergoing separation and divorce.

Over the last year, it became increasingly clear that our new Strategic Plan, conceived shortly before the pandemic, no longer reflected our reality. With this in mind, a multi-stakeholder group was convened to review and update the plan. The primary purpose of the group was to ensure the plan's relevance in supporting existing (albeit exacerbated) and emerging community needs.

The group thoroughly reviewed each aspect of the agency's vision, mission, values, strategic directions and operational initiatives and critically examined areas where the plan fell short in considering the full impact of the pandemic. A revised plan was then developed and scenario-tested to ensure its relevance, regardless of external fluctuations. It is our intent to use this plan to guide the agency during a robust period of recovery. We will maintain our service excellence by ensuring that the services we provide are agile, responsive, and innovative as well as client-centred, while building upon evidence-informed best practices. We will develop strategies, priorities and partnerships to address the needs of the vulnerable, diverse and marginalized populations in the communities we serve.

Throughout the course of this past year with COVID-19 raging in full force, we have seen widespread acts of targeted violence and discrimination, including an alarming increase in acts of antisemitism. We have worked closely with CIJA (Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs), in reaching out to the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and our partner agencies to support them in their efforts to counter antisemitism by recognizing it and ensuring that anti-Jewish hate is recognized as a form of discrimination to be included in anti-oppressive training and curriculum. We will be offering sector training sessions to develop skills in recognizing antisemitism, as well as strategies to proactively address it and support Jewish staff and communities across the province.

In recent months, we have been heartbroken by the discovery of over a thousand unmarked children's graves at former residential schools across Canada. JF&CS fully acknowledges the tragic history and current systematic discrimination faced by Indigenous people. We share the collective devastation for these children, and many other children, who did not return home, as well as for their families and communities who will forever be seeking closure.

As a Children's Aid Society that serves the Jewish community in Toronto and York Region, we are committed to working with our fellow agencies to address the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call

to Action. We stand in solidarity with all Indigenous people and apologize as we reflect on the involvement of child welfare in the residential school system and the senseless removal of Indigenous children from their homes across Canada.

At JF&CS, we condemn injustice, discrimination and hate of any kind and reaffirm our commitment to challenge hate, regardless of who initiates it and to whom it is directed. The staff, leadership, and Board of Directors of JF&CS stand as allies with those who want peace and safety for all and are steadfast in our inherent value of *Tikkun Olam*, Repairing the World.

JF&CS staff have worked tirelessly to adapt to the reality of supporting our community during its time of greatest need and challenge. You have brought hope, opportunity, joy and dignity into the lives of countless people. You are our ultimate strength and inspiration. Throughout the pandemic, you have managed the ever-changing and ambiguous landscape of stay-at-home orders and various stages of provincial lockdowns. You met the needs of vulnerable individuals, children, youth and families without hesitation, despite facing so much uncertainty in your own lives. You have our profound respect and admiration for all you have done and all that you continue to do.

Our success has truly been a team effort. Our back-office staff, those who work in administration, development and communications, finance, IT and HR, ensured a seamless transition to remote working environments. Without your creativity and innovation, and your tireless energy, our programming could not have continued and succeeded to the extent it did. We recognize your committed efforts and offer our sincere gratitude for your steadfast dedication.

Along with our talented staff, JF&CS is fortunate to have caring and compassionate volunteers who give their time generously to support our clients, agency programs, community institutions and community projects and events. Throughout the pandemic, our volunteers and foster parents have participated in and led virtual visits, meetings, events and appointments to help support our community and our staff. As we

continue to meet unique challenges, our committed Board members have always been available whenever called upon. Their inspiring acts of kindness, generosity and commitment to our community have played a pivotal role in the standard of care we have been able to provide, in spite of the challenges incurred by COVID-19. It is their help that allows us to help those in our community who need it most. It is with full hearts and admiration and that we recognize the time and efforts they dedicate to the success of JF&CS.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to our generous donors and funders who have enabled us to expand our services during a time when our community needed us most. In the face of a global pandemic the generosity of JF&CS donors exceeded all expectations. Our funders remained steadfast in their financial commitments to the agency, providing stability during this unstable time. Their unwavering support allowed us to continue to respond to the fluctuating needs of our community by providing counselling, financial planning, assistance with housing and food insecurity, direct emergency financial assistance, Jewish Holiday support, Jewish camp subsidies, and more. We want to thank United Way of Greater Toronto, the Ontario Government and the Claims Conference for their continued support of our agency during these challenging times. A special note of gratitude is extended to UJA Federation of Greater Toronto who launched an *Emergency Campaign for Community Resilience*, and in so doing, were able to increase their funding to JF&CS. This increase in funding ensured our ability to meet the needs of people who became newly vulnerable, as well as people whose vulnerability was exacerbated as a result of the pandemic.

What is most evident to us is that the mental health impacts and increased poverty rates resulting from this worldwide crisis will continue to be felt in the months and years to come, and certainly well after the imminent threat of COVID-19 has passed. We are so very grateful to be a part of a community that values taking care of one another in the highest regard and it is with your continuous support that we will be able to do this for another century and a half - *Kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*.



**Shirley Granovsky**

# It takes a village to raise a child but sometimes, it takes just one child to raise the bar in that village.

Shirley Granovsky's unique approach to giving is a testament to what one person's vision and foresight can do: giving with empathy and with the foresight of longevity. Shirley's greatest gift is the seed she has entrusted Jewish Family and Child Service to plant and the future she saw growing from this seed.

In *'Growing Up Jewish: Canadians Tell Their Own Stories'* Shirley recounts her life in a multi-generational home where "there was just one bathroom and hot water only on Friday."(pg.3) Bedding was made from repurposed sugar sacks, and tissue paper was used from the individually wrapped crate oranges. Life was simple but safe.

Safety is not something to be taken for granted. The last two years have demonstrated that we live in precarious times where too many in our community are far closer to poverty than wealth. The ordinary and mundane we take as certainties can become perilously uncertain overnight.

Shirley remembers the struggles her family faced and when she was in a position to give back to her community, one of her philanthropic priorities became helping those living in poverty. Shirley believes that people need to be treated as individuals rather than just the sum of their circumstances. In other words, take a holistic approach to poverty: recognize individual strengths and assist the person in their current hardship while encouraging and planting seeds for financial empowerment. Shirley's foresight has allowed for a seismic shift in the way poverty reduction is now approached.

Shirley, a supporter of JF&CS for over twenty years, initiated this change with her one million dollar donation in 2013. This generous gift helped JF&CS reinvent how we addressed poverty in our community.

Shirley's substantial seed money has grown many offshoots. It began as a project working with one dozen lone-parent families. Social workers recognized that each family was different, and began to understand that they needed to be able to provide their clients with tailored and strength-based services. There is no "one size fits all" solution to poverty. What was once simply a way of providing financial support so that individuals and families could make ends meet, became a realm of holistic supports built around the individuals and the systemic barriers they faced including: physical, developmental, medical, and mental health and/or addiction challenges.

Much of the success of poverty reduction can be attributed to the Financial Empowerment and Problem Solving (FEPS) and Housing Workers. The FEPS Worker is a dedicated resource supporting vulnerable clients with short and long term financial planning, with a focus on tax return completion and government entitlement refunds. The FEPS

Worker has improved clients' access to external funding sources and maximizes their eligibility, so that each dollar can stretch further than before. The FEPS Worker has helped save our clients over two million dollars in the past three years.

The Housing Worker provides increased knowledge and advocacy for clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This worker assists and connects eligible clients to subsidized and affordable housing, and is a seamless liaison with external housing supports, thereby increasing positive outcomes for clients. The Housing Worker has helped over 200 clients in the past three years.

Shirley humanized poverty by giving it a face and name and no longer just a label. Shirley is a visionary thinker and has redefined the art of generosity with the understanding of the impact that philanthropy can have on future growth in our community. We are immensely grateful for Shirley's financial generosity and her foresight and understanding that the strength of our community lays in its continuity.

"Without support from JF&CS, I don't know where I'd be, and honestly I'm scared to think about it. I have two teenagers, a one bedroom apartment and a minimum-wage job - and I am just managing to get by. The Poverty Reduction program is helping my kids succeed by purchasing us a laptop, a desk, proper mattresses, a room divider and bedding. The little things aren't little things when you're struggling. JF&CS is helping me improve my skills and assets so I can get better employment and secure a better future for my family and the sky looks bright for the first time in years. I am so thankful."

- JF&CS client

# THE WAYS YOU GAVE

## Gifts-in-Kind

We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of donors who have supported JF&CS through gifts-in-kind, including simcha baskets, toiletries, personal protective equipment and summer activities.

## Tributes & Memorials

We gratefully acknowledge the individuals and families who have considered JF&CS during their times of joy and sadness.

## EchoAge

We gratefully acknowledge the children and families who have chosen JF&CS as the beneficiary of their mitzvahs and celebrations.



**1868**  
*Society*  
Donor Loyalty Program

We gratefully acknowledge members of the 1868 Society, devoted donors who contributed to JF&CS for five or more consecutive years. **1868 Society members are marked with a purple triangle. ▲**

**Monthly Mitzvah Makers**  
Monthly Giving Program

We gratefully acknowledge Monthly Mitzvah Makers, donors who committed to supporting JF&CS on a monthly basis throughout our 2019/20 fiscal year. **Monthly Mitzvah Makers are marked with a green triangle. ▲**

Our sincere appreciation to the many JF&CS donors who wish to remain anonymous, and to those who support our work but whose names do not appear in this Annual Report. The donor list reflects donations made between April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 and every effort has been made to ensure proper recognition of each donor (\$180+). We apologize for any errors/omissions.

# Endowments

We acknowledge with gratitude the following endowments that have been established in support of Jewish Family and Child Service. Some are presently making a difference; others will make a difference in years to come:

Aaron Brotman Memorial Fund  
 Estate of Alisa Abrahams  
 Alfie Magerman Memorial Camp Fund  
 Abraham z"l & Marcy Fish Fund  
 Banack Family Chanukah Fund  
 The Barbara Pinchuk  
 Unsung Heroes Legacy Fund  
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 Simone Sandler Memorial Fund  
 Stan Lerner Memorial Fund  
 The Steven Somborac Scholarship Fund  
 Talia, Jonah & Yael Benmor Fund  
 Wattenberg Auslander Memorial Fund  
 William Solomon Scholarship Fund



## Gordon S. Wolfe Legacy Society

We acknowledge with gratitude the following individuals who have committed to leaving a legacy gift in support of Jewish Family and Child Service. By leaving a legacy gift, they are making a forever-impact on our community.

Joan and Bernie Aaron  
 Irene Borins Ash, z"l  
 Richard L. Cummings  
 A. Davidson  
 Robert S. Fish, z"l and Maxine Fish  
 Allan Jack Freeman z"l  
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 Estate of Albert Greenberg  
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 Roslyn and Murray Herst  
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 Shirley Lillian Kofman, z"l  
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 Jack and Judy Winberg  
 Linda Wolfe  
 Lorne Wolfson and Lorie Shekter-Wolfson  
 Family Endowment Fund  
 Morris Zucker, z"l

# GENEROUS DONORS

▲ 1868 Society

▲ Monthly Mitzvah Makers

## \$1,000,000+

Anonymous (x1)

## \$500,000

The Azrieli Foundation ▲

## \$50,000 - \$499,999

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The Goldberg Family Foundation

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Manager, Compliance and Privacy  
Manager, Child Protection  
Manager, Intake & Counselling  
Manager, Family Services  
Manager, Information Systems  
Manager, Family Services  
Manager, Family Services  
Associate Manager, IT Operations

# SUMMARIZED OPERATING FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended March 31, 2021

Revenues	2021		2020	
Ontario Ministry of Children Community and Social Services, and Ministry of Health	\$ 10,434,043	45%	\$ 10,701,567	46%
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto	\$ 5,641,665	24%	\$ 5,092,307	22%
United Way	\$ 1,738,222	8%	\$ 1,765,947	8%
Direct Donations	\$ 3,888,159	17%	\$ 3,800,267	16%
Claims Conference	\$ 510,593	2%	\$ 459,430	2%
The Regional Municipality of York	\$ 272,434	1%	\$ 380,584	2%
Fees from clients	\$ 202,788	1%	\$ 264,546	1%
Other income	\$ 505,632	2%	\$ 583,779	3%
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 23,193,536</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 23,048,427</b>	<b>100%</b>

Expenses	2021		2020	
Salaries and employee benefits	\$ 14,177,620	61%	\$ 13,687,213	59%
Direct financial assistance to clients	\$ 2,416,567	10%	\$ 2,410,438	10%
Direct costs for the care of children	\$ 1,954,812	8%	\$ 1,756,197	8%
Program support	\$ 2,263,809	10%	\$ 2,688,193	12%
Other clients' assistance and beneficiaries	\$ 1,910,690	8%	\$ 1,651,717	7%
Other programs	\$ 399,393	2%	\$ 594,832	3%
Amortization of capital assets	\$ 249,581	1%	\$ 265,207	1%
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 23,372,472</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$ 23,053,797</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Deficiency) (\$ 178,936) -0.77% (\$ 5,370) -0.02%  
*excess of revenues over expenses for the year*

## Funded by:



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Audited Financial Statements including a report by RSM Canada LLP are available at the office of JF&CS.

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# JF&CS

**JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILD  
SERVICE OF GREATER TORONTO**

Jewish Family and Child Service of Greater Toronto  
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