

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF AKRON

# CONNECTIONS

Newsletter for Friends of JFS Akron



## From the Director's Desk

By Buffy Ramos LSW, *Director of Older Adult Services*

**Rich Zelin**  
JFS Akron Advisory  
Committee Chair

My goal is to spread the word of what JFS can offer the community. Awareness is key to our community members feeling confident to access JFS Akron for help. JFS Akron has a great team of social workers, counselors, and caseworkers who are ready to help.

## MEET RICH ZELIN

### *New JFS Akron Advisory Committee Chair*

Recently I had the opportunity to speak with JFS Akron's new Advisory Committee Chair, Rich Zelin. Rich is a compassionate individual who is a fierce advocate for those in need and who has been involved with the agency for more than 25 years.

#### **How did you get involved with JFS?**

After working my way thru the Bethel Board for ten years and being president, I was asked to join the JFS board in 1998. After two years, I was asked to take on a leadership role on the board. I agreed because there is always a need to help older adults and I wanted to be a part of helping the Akron Jewish community.

#### **Why do you think JFS is important to the community TODAY?**

I believe JFS should be the first resource stop for older adults. We should be helping them to meet their daily physical and emotional needs. Also, we need to make the community aware of what we offer - especially to the families of the older adults. Many times, the families do not know where to turn when the challenges of care giving begin to emerge. JFS can be the resource hub for adult children who are assisting and caring for their aging parents.

#### **What impact do you see JFS making in the lives of older adults?**

I see older adults getting the help they need to safely live independently in their homes. I also see their adult children and loved ones feeling empowered to take good care of their aging parents. I also see older adults accessing great programs that they might not otherwise get to participate in, such as arts and culture and technology supports. I see Holocaust survivors being served, honored, and not forgotten.

#### **Why should others get involved with JFS?**

To help others but also to help themselves. To provide purpose and meaning. Since someday they will be older and need our services.

**JFS Akron provides individuals & families solutions to face life's challenges with confidence.**

# KEEP ON *LEARNING*



Nicki Embly  
Arts and Culture  
Coordinator

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks? We have witnessed older adults who are constantly curious and always evolving. They are engaged with the community

around them and even across the ocean thanks to technology. And they have worked hard to keep up with the ever-changing technological advances.

When we exercise and grow our brains, we know that the rest of our body benefits. At JFS, we encourage older adults' growth and social connection through free on-line programs, which are held on the ZOOM platform. Program topics range from learning Jewish practices and values to watching a great flick together in the monthly movie club. One of the most popular programs is the "See The USA" travel program, where folks are learning about the unique aspects of the US states.

These programs are educational, engaging and promote conversation and connection. They are led by Nicki Embly who designs the programs specifically with older adults in mind. One participant says she loves the programs because "They are something to look forward to and something different." Another participant says she enjoys the programs because they are a "chance to meet up with other people."

For those who are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with participating in an on-line program, JFS provides technology coaching to older adults who would like to learn how to use a computer, tablet, or smart phone as well as platforms such as ZOOM.

While it may feel daunting to learn about technology, it is something every older adult can do. Our volunteer technology coach, David, suggests starting with the fundamentals such as learning what all the primary

buttons on your computer, tablet and smart phone do and learning how to go back to the home screen. David advises "It's going to be frustrating because it is different, but it is something you have to stick with because it will be rewarding in the end."

A monthly on-line program guide can be found by visiting the JFS Akron website at [JFSAkron.org](http://JFSAkron.org). All programs are free, but participants must register to attend. For more information, call the JFS Akron at 330-867-3388. If you are interested in volunteering as a technology coach to assist our seniors, give us a call!

## OLDER ADULT ONLINE ACTIVITIES

### MAY 2025



**SEE THE USA**  
**Flatter Than A Pancake**  
Tuesday, May 6  
1-2pm VIA ZOOM

This state is the geographical center of the lower 48 United States and flatter than a pancake from IHOP! There are ten towns with a population of 10 people or less. Full of sunflowers, this state was also the setting for the "Wizard of Oz." Free to participate.

[CLICK HERE](#) to register or call 330.867.3388



**JOINT PROGRAM WITH JFS COLUMBUS**  
**Chair Yoga**  
Wednesdays, May 7, 21, 28  
2-2:45pm VIA ZOOM

Stay healthy with chair yoga! Please have a chair without wheels available during the session. There will be some standing exercises included as well. This is a joint program with Jewish Family Services of Columbus. Free to participate.

[CLICK HERE](#) to register or call 330.867.3388



**L'CHAIM**  
**Klezmer Music**  
Wednesday, May 7  
1-2pm VIA ZOOM

Klezmer music is an instrumental tradition of the Ashkenazi Jews. As the music arrived in the United States, it lost some of its traditional ritual elements and adopted elements of American big band and popular music. After a decline the music began to be popularized again in the late 1970s in the so-called Klezmer Revival. Come learn more and enjoy listening to some of the tunes. Free to participate.

[CLICK HERE](#) to register or call 330.867.3388

# Botanical Garden TRIP



On February 25<sup>th</sup>, participants in JFS Akron's arts and culture program traveled to the beautiful Cleveland Botanical Garden. The day was filled with breathtaking views of the gardens alongside JFS friends and staff. Fellow plant lovers enjoyed connecting with nature and were inspired to think of the quickly approaching spring season! Transportation to the program was generously supported by the Bliman Fund for Older Adults in Akron. For more information regarding JFS Akron's arts and culture program, as well as upcoming events, or to be added to the mailing list, contact the JFS office at 330-867-3388.

## AGING WITH CONFIDENCE: JFS Resources for Older Adults

At JFS, we believe every older adult should have the opportunity to live safely, happily, and healthily in their own home. However, aging can bring challenges, from managing medications to staying safe at home. That's why JFS offers free support services to help seniors navigate these changes and continue living independently.

JFS provides free consultations for older adults, including in-home assessments. Our trained caseworkers meet with seniors and their loved ones to understand their needs. They review health history, check for safety concerns in the home, and explore social support systems. Most importantly, they listen to seniors and their families to understand their biggest concerns.

Many older adults face difficulties such as:

- Managing medications
- Ensuring a safe home environment
- Understanding and accessing benefits

JFS caseworkers help by creating a strong support system. This may involve coordinating family support, connecting seniors with community resources, or arranging for home health aides. If changes are needed to make a home safer, our team provides suggestions and solutions to help seniors maintain their independence.

Sometimes, seniors struggle to access the help they need because of financial limitations or a lack of awareness about available resources. JFS caseworkers work directly with older adults and their families to overcome these barriers.

The most common type of support we provide is education. Our team specializes in knowing the wide range of senior services available in Summit County and can guide families toward the best options for their needs. We make it easier to find and access the right support.

JFS consultations can be a one-time service or lead to ongoing check-ins through case management. No matter the level of support needed, JFS is here to help seniors live well and age with confidence. If you or a loved one are experiencing aging related concerns or feel you could use extra support, please contact us at 330-867-3388 for more information.

## Meet Our Older Adult Services Staff



**Natalie Hercules LSW**  
*Older Adult Caseworker*



**Meghan Newman LPCC**  
*Counselor*





750 White Pond Drive  
Akron, OH 4432  
330.867.3388  
jfsakron.org



## Help Stock Our Shelves

Jewish Family Service's food pantry is located in the JFS Akron office, located on the Shaw Campus for Jewish life. Clients have access to non-perishable items as well as necessities such as toilet paper, which surprisingly cannot be purchased with SNAP card benefits. Anyone in our community who is food insecure is welcome to use the pantry.

Items needed include peanut butter, boxes of cereal, oatmeal, canned fruits, vegetables, and meats (canned), canned soups, and toilet paper

or personal items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soaps. If you want to purchase items for the pantry, please consider selecting lower sodium items for our friends with dietary restrictions. Also, the flip top cans are best.

If you or someone you know would like to visit the pantry, please call the JFS office to make an appointment at 330-867-3388. If you would like to donate to the pantry, please drop items off at the JFS office. Cash and check donations to support the pantry can also be sent to the attention of Jewish Family Service of Akron, 750 White Pond Dr., Akron Ohio 44320.

### STAY TUNED IN JUNE

**JFS 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
Older Adult  
Art Exhibition**  
**June 3-20 - Shaw JCC**

**Opening Artist  
Reception**

**June 4<sup>TH</sup>  
11:00am – 1:00pm**

*Art classes are made possible  
by the Ohio Arts Council, and  
the JFS Akron Bliman Fund, with  
instruction from Akron ArtWorks.*

