

## JFS WORKS WITH JACKSON COUNTY CARES TO ADVOCATE FOR SENIORS

Revenues raised by the Senior Services Levy will fund agencies that help older adults remain in their homes and age with dignity.

In partnership with Shepherd's Center Central, the Healthcare Foundation of Greater Kansas City and other community leaders, Jewish Family Services is working to improve the health, mobility and quality of life for seniors in Jackson County.

If passed on a future ballot, funding for Jackson County Cares for Seniors will come from a property tax of five cents per \$100 assessed valuation upon all taxable property. Revenue raised will support programs, services and organizations in Jackson County that serve residents 60 years of age and over.

*"We've seen firsthand the benefits of supportive and coordinated services. Unfortunately, in Jackson County, services lag, and are largely fragmented."*

*—Don Goldman, Executive Director & CEO,  
Jewish Family Services*

According to recent studies, older adults in Jackson County have a higher than average prevalence of falls, Alzheimer's, arthritis, depression and stroke. The need for increased support for seniors is clear. The older population of the U.S. is expected to nearly double to 72 million by the year 2030. As our county's population ages, one of the greatest concerns is the growing economic insecurity experienced by seniors living on a fixed income. There are 55 Missouri counties already using the tax levy to create funds for programs that address these issues proactively, and it's working.

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## HOLISTIC CARE PUTS SHARON BACK ON TRACK

Sharon came through the doors of JFS on a promise she made years earlier when



Sharon benefits from the holistic net of services she receives from JFS.

she worked as a caretaker in a senior living facility. One of her charges implored Sharon to seek support from JFS if she ever found herself in need.

As the primary caregiver to her

young granddaughter and adult handicapped son, Sharon was struggling to maintain employment and her own health.

She initially sought mental health support from JFS, but as she worked with her case manager, it became clear that one of Sharon's major stressors was debt and lack of financial security. As a result, her case manager enrolled her in a course offering financial management education and providing resources for getting out of debt.

As Sharon and her case manager's relationship developed, home visits became a regular routine.

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JFS and the other organizations involved in bringing the initiative to the ballot in early 2019, hope Jackson County will be the next addition to the map of counties supporting seniors with solutions for better transportation, nutrition, health and wellness, community engagement and safety and confidence at home.

*"Clay and Platte Counties have successfully distributed tax revenues to support thousands of older adults with community-based services and preventative measures."*

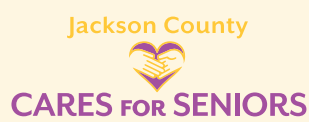
*—Richard Odiam, Chief Program Officer, Jewish Family Services*

The advantages of a Senior Services Levy extend beyond the obvious benefits to the seniors who receive them and into the communities they call home. Levies of this sort have proven to decrease the taxpayer burden of long-term care and seniors who remain in-home continue to contribute property and sales tax to the county.

*"This initiative aims to help older adults "age in place" and thrive in their own homes and communities. The coming months will be spent educating voters about this important fund prior to it being on the ballot."*

*—Don Goldman, Executive Director & CEO, Jewish Family Services*

For more information on Jackson County Cares, please contact Richard Odiam, Chief Program Officer, Jewish Family Services, [Rodiam@jfskc.org](mailto:Rodiam@jfskc.org) or 913-327-4686.



To volunteer with this ballot initiative please contact the Jackson County Cares campaign at 816-585-3587, [info@powerfulperformancesolutions.com](mailto:info@powerfulperformancesolutions.com).

*"Holistic Care" continued from previous page*

During one visit, the case manager noticed Sharon's weight had decreased rapidly. Upon further inspection, she found the kitchen barren of food, prompting her to inquire about food insecurity. Sharon and her case manager discovered that among the many services Sharon was receiving from JFS, a crucial one was missing—the Food Pantry.

Sharon now receives regularly scheduled food deliveries to support her and her granddaughter during the last week of the month after her SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), or food stamps have run out.

Without the net of services from JFS and the generosity of compassionate friends like you, Sharon swears up and down that she would have "slipped through the cracks, continuing a fast free fall in financial and emotional ruin—possibly winding up a (suicide) statistic."

*Sharon swears up and down that she would have "slipped through the cracks, continuing a fast free fall..."*

Stories like Sharon's aren't uncommon for those in need in the Kansas City community. But because she had support from JFS, her life has improved.

We had the privilege of listening to Sharon tell her story at the Friends of the Family event this spring. It was one of the most powerful, first-hand experiences of JFS's holistic approach many of us have ever heard.

While providing access to the Food Pantry is helpful, it does not provide a long-term solution. More often than not, in order to break the cycle of poverty, multiple supports are required, such as financial management, mental health services, and case management coordination. With this holistic approach, JFS provides people with the tools to ensure self-sufficiency so they can lead healthy, successful lives.

## HOLISTIC SERVICES AT WORK



**FAMILIES RECEIVED ASSISTANCE**

in the food pantry—all pantry clients are assessed for other needs



**FAMILIES RECEIVED EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**



**OLDER ADULTS** received help from a **social worker**



**233,913**

**POUNDS OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED**

# YOU BE YOU

## Mental Health Wellness Campaign Reaches Nearly 13,000 KC Students

The statistics are staggering. Each day in the United States there's an average of 5,240 suicide attempts by young people from seventh to twelfth grade. Jewish Family Services is making positive steps to change that narrative with You Be You, a teen mental health campaign.

Launched in the 2017-2018 school year, You Be You works to diminish negative thoughts and encourages teens to open up and reach out to others for the help and support they need. During this pilot year, the program reached more than 12,500 students in 13 Kansas City area middle and high schools.

Students were involved in every aspect of the effort with each participating school putting its own twist on the You Be You campaign.

The campaign included posters, stickers, installations and t-shirts designed by local advertising firm Bernstein-Rein, which has been a pro-bono partner since 2013. The success of the program depends on ownership by students, teachers and administrators. Students were involved in every aspect of the effort, with each participating school putting its own twist on the You Be You campaign. While some created videos highlighting the themes of the campaign, others created their own artwork to convey positive messages.

"The You Be You campaign has made me observe my fellow classmates and their actions/behavior. It has also made me aware, like my fellow classmates, of the impact of how people treat each other. Sometimes awareness is all someone needs to make a large impact," said University Academy student Tessa Blythe.

After the success of the first program year, an additional 10 educational institutions will adopt the You Be You campaign for the upcoming 2018-2019 school year.

Expansion into new schools is made possible by the generous funding and partnership of the Speak Up Foundation.

For more information about the You Be You campaign, check out the website at [youbeyou.us](http://youbeyou.us) or contact [youbeyou@jfskc.org](mailto:youbeyou@jfskc.org).



There are  
**5,240 SUICIDE ATTEMPTS**  
by young people from  
seventh to twelfth grade  
each day in the United States.



**YOU BE YOU** reached  
**MORE THAN 12,500**  
in **13 KC schools** in its  
pilot run during the  
2017-2018 school year



**10 MORE SCHOOLS**  
will **adopt the campaign**  
in the 2018-2019 school year



## JET™ EXPRESS CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Through support from our dedicated friends and volunteers, JET Express has provided over 27,000 rides to older adults in the 10 years of the program. This volunteer driver program helps adults 60+ remain active and independent by accessing safe and reliable transportation with the help of community volunteers.

Two of our JET Express volunteer drivers, Mary Farnin and Joyce Zeldin, have been volunteering since the beginning of the program.

"I have found JET Express to be one of my most fulfilling volunteer experiences. There is such great need in the community—I feel like I am making a difference. I am inspired by the people I drive and their stories," says Mary, who has been driving Zelda, a JET Express rider since the beginning. "We have become close friends. I call her my adopted mom. Her positive attitude and energy is an inspiration to me."

Joyce, who travels frequently and often is out of town, explains, "JET Express is the perfect way for me to volunteer as it is on one's own schedule as time permits. I also love JET Express as it provides personal contact with people you are assisting. I have met so many wonderful folks who are so appreciative of what we provide for them!"

Over the past decade, the program has grown significantly to meet the increased need for transportation. Approximately 434 rides were requested last month, which was the largest amount in JET Express'

history. The need has never been greater. JET Express is looking for continued support from the community and new volunteers.

Volunteering for JET Express is easy and convenient; volunteers select their own rides on a user-friendly online system. There are



JET rider Zelda, pictured with driver Mary Farnin. Not pictured is Joyce Zeldin.

both round-trip and one way rides around the city so there is a ride that fits anyone's schedule.

Can you help an older adult maintain independence by providing them with a ride to the doctor, the grocery store, out with a friend or even their own volunteer opportunity? Whether it's once a month or once a week, every ride makes a huge difference for an older adult.

*For more information or to sign up to be a volunteer driver through JET Express, contact the JFS Volunteer Team at 913-730-1410 or [volunteer@jfskc.org](mailto:volunteer@jfskc.org).*



## THE FAMILY STABILITY INITIATIVE

### Keeping students in school and families in their homes.

JFS recently became the third site in the KC metro area to partner with the United Way and The Siemer Institute for Family Stability to support families on the brink of homelessness so their children can remain in the same school, giving them the best chance of academic success. The program creates long-lasting change by addressing and resolving the issues that push families to the brink of homelessness and financial instability.

A dedicated JFS Social Worker will begin working with children and families in the Shawnee Mission School District this fall.

JFS joins 30 other providers across the country who partner with schools to support students by helping their families avoid homelessness and move toward more stable housing and employment.

With more than one million school children becoming homeless every year, the trauma and interruptions they experience often lead to problems in school. Partners like JFS work with schools to identify at-risk students and families, then provide financial assistance, budget coaching and job training for heads of households.

We expect to serve 35-40 families identified by the district in the first year of the initiative.

*Learn more about the Family Stability Initiative at [familystability.org](http://familystability.org).*



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