

FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY BREAKFAST CROSSES THE STATE LINE

Jewish Family Services (JFS) took the Friends of the Family Breakfast to Missouri for the first time this summer.

More than 200 friends filled Grand Street Café on August 21, 2019, for an informative hour of conversations with JFS volunteers, clients and staff hosted by KCPT's Nick Haines. Attendees enjoyed learning about JET Express and other services for older adults as well as the comprehensive care now available through Keshet KC. Many guests made donations or pledges for the Friends of the Family Annual Fund, and many also purchased Keshet KC Care Bags during the event.

The breakfast focused on JFS' ongoing support for mental health issues. Two students involved with the You Be You mental health campaign shared the importance of ensuring that resources are available to open up conversations and lessen the stigma around mental health struggles for teens.



Nick Haines spoke with students about the You Be You teen mental health campaign. Photo by Jeff Evrard Photography.

This message was driven home by a special interview with Jason Kander, former Missouri Secretary of State and a former member of the House of Representatives. Jason brought everyone into his journey with post-traumatic stress and spoke honestly about the depression he faced after serving as an Army intelligence officer in Afghanistan. His symptoms eventually forced him to drop out of the Kansas City mayoral election in 2018 and seek treatment.

"If you don't deal with trauma, it will deal with you," Jason said. "It's not a disorder, it's an injury. And like an injury, it won't get better on its own over time."

Jason highlighted the need for mental health services and admitted being in the spotlight made it hard for him to feel comfortable getting help. By discussing his experience publicly, Jason hopes to raise awareness and support so more people are able to pursue the care they need.

"I had to talk about it, and I know it's made a difference for me and for others," Jason said. "For the first time in years, I get to enjoy now. I'm no longer using the future and racing for what might be next to avoid turmoil in the present."

JFS deeply appreciates Jason sharing his story and inspiring service as he gives back to the community. He helps fellow veterans in his new position with the Veterans Community Project.

JFS continues to address stigma and mental health with integrated counseling and trauma-informed care across its programs, and specifically with You Be You in metro high schools.

Support JFS programs making a difference in our community by donating to the JFS Friends of the Family Annual Fund. Go to jfskc.org/donate and select Friends of the Family Campaign in the Designation field.



Jason Kander discussed mental health and the importance of managing trauma. Photo by Jeff Evrard Photography.



IN THIS ISSUE

- Once A Year Is Not Enough 2
- Connect. Engage. Serve. 2
- Keshet KC Forges Caring Connections 3
- Summer Food Drives Support the Pantry 4

ONCE A YEAR IS NOT ENOUGH

JFS Board Member Noah Slabotsky Shares Why He Became a Monthly Donor



Noah Slabotsky, JFS Board member

Six years ago, CEO Don Goldman asked Noah Slabotsky to join the Jewish Family Services (JFS) Board of Directors as treasurer. Although

Noah had put his accounting days behind him and declined to become treasurer, he knew JFS was an organization to which he wanted to dedicate his time and skills and agreed to join the Board.

"JFS brings so much value to different facets of our community—from assisting seniors with transportation services to helping people who don't know where their next meal is coming from. It takes a lot of resources and giving one time a year is not enough," Noah explained.

Noah recently made the decision to become a monthly donor. He cites consistent program growth and the expansion of JFS into the Brookside area in Missouri as motivating factors in his choice.

"It's important for our community to see the programs within JFS grow. Sometimes we get to witness nonprofits doing good programs, and then they go away. What JFS

does saves lives and makes a real difference. Grants are great, but they are short-term. Building up a base of monthly givers is a way JFS can operate with confidence. Knowing that these funds will arrive each month, JFS is better able to budget and plan throughout the year," Noah said.

As a young professional, Noah leads the young adult committee of the JFS Board. He enjoys organizing and emceeding the JFS Trivia Bash nights.

He and wife Rachel recently finished construction on their home in Kansas. They look forward to continue watching the difference a staple like JFS makes in the Kansas City community. Meanwhile, Noah will give his support throughout the year and lead the way at trivia nights to get more people involved.

"My favorite part [of trivia night] is getting a lot of folks together who may not know about JFS. I clear up a lot of misconceptions—

things like explaining you don't have to be Jewish to be involved in the organization," he said.

"I speak about volunteerism and I always leave the event with some new people who signed up to volunteer. I know when our monthly giving group sees the life-changing services that take place at JFS we'll go even farther," Noah concludes.

Friends who are interested in becoming JFS monthly donors can go to jfskc.org/donate and select the Recurring Gift box on the form.



Noah Slabotsky emceeds the annual JFS and Tribe KC Trivia Bash event.

CONNECT. ENGAGE. SERVE.

- **Donate** to JFS at jfskc.org/donate.
- **Become a monthly donor** at jfskc.org/donate and select the Recurring Gift box on the form.
- **Volunteer.** There are many options for helping. See the JFS website for details or contact volunteer@jfskc.org or (913) 730-1410 to start the process.
- **Engage** with JFS on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
- **Sign up** for JFS emails at jfskc.org.

KESHER KC FORGES CARING CONNECTIONS

Connection is the core of Keshet KC. It's the meaning behind the name and at the heart of what Jewish Family Services (JFS) provides through the program. And connection is what's happening as Keshet KC grows and helps neighbors in need find resources to improve their lives and build deeper relationships with JFS staff and volunteers.

More than 170 clients have been served by Keshet KC so far this year and families surveyed about their experience are universally positive, finding high value in the connections made. The comprehensive services they've received have been organized around the JFS Food Pantry since the pantry has become a primary door into JFS. The number of families served by the JFS pantry has doubled in the first two years at its Brookside location and that number is expected to quadruple by the end of 2020.

Growing Community

Connections are being strengthened with other community organizations as well as clients. Keshet KC was designed to expand agency partnerships in the region to provide clients with whatever resources they may need. The first quarterly Community Connections Fair was held in June with the American Heart Association, First Federal Bank of Kansas City, Harvesters, JFS Counseling, JFS Employment, JFS Older Adult Services, KCP&L and United Behavioral Healthcare. By enabling clients to meet with a variety of organizations and programs at one time, JFS hopes to better serve those clients with multiple and intertwined needs.

"We were thrilled that 50 clients attended this event, and that they were able to learn about all these resources at once," said Maggie

Haghirian, JFS Keshet KC Program Director.

An Easy Way to Help

Keshet KC Care Bags are also an important and growing aspect of the program. As an extension of the food pantry, the bags provide emergency food assistance to walk-in clients. The bags are also available for purchase so community members can give them away as they see a need. This is a wonderful way to easily connect people with help.

"I purchased two Keshet KC Care Bags. I wanted to take them home and talk with my wife and son about the bags and teach my son to give one to someone in need. He's been learning about food pantries in school and his class has been holding a food drive. On my way to pick up my kids, I had the opportunity to give away one of the bags. The recipient was very thankful. It was pretty amazing how quickly I was able to interact with and

Keshet KC



Connections to food and a more secure future

help somebody," shared Derek Gale, JFS supporter and Jewish Federation staff member.

Keshet KC is making a positive difference in our community and JFS is thankful for everyone who gives of their time and resources to make this possible, especially to the Community Legacy Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City. The seed funders of the Care Bags are J-LEAD, a fund of the Jewish Community Foundation, and Jenny and John Isenberg.

Order Keshet KC Care Bags and give them away as you encounter those in need. Purchase bags as [jfskc.org/carebags](https://www.jfskc.org/carebags).



Whitney Davison, Moshit Snir and Becky Lee greet new Keshet KC clients.

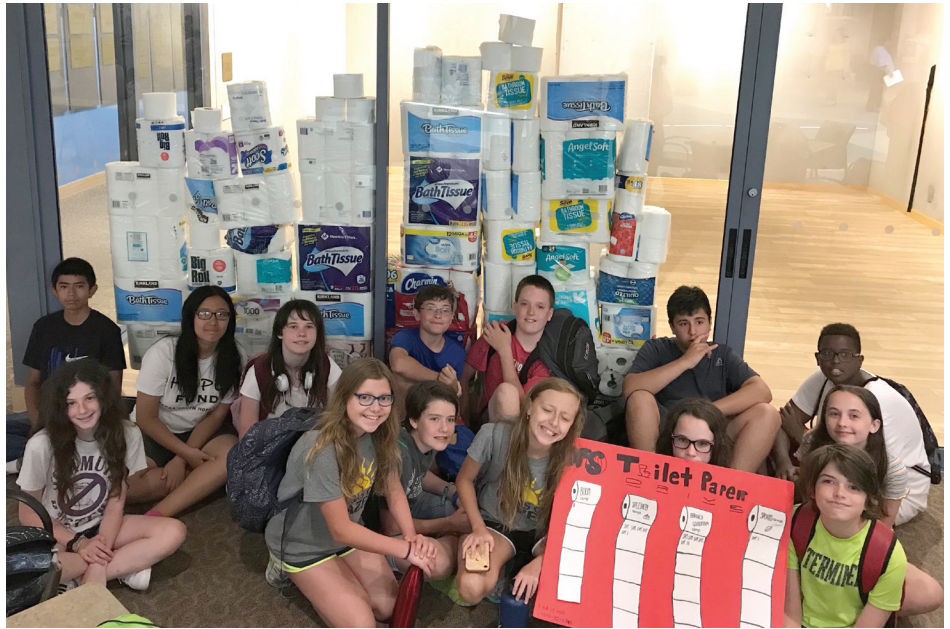
SUMMER FOOD DRIVES SUPPORT THE PANTRY

Thank you to everyone who held food drives this summer to benefit the Jewish Family Services (JFS) Food Pantry. Polsinelli Law Firm hosted a lemonade stand and collected 225 pounds of food and more than \$500 in donations. An additional 1,200 pounds of food and \$1,000 were collected with the help of fantastic partners including:

- MarksNelson
- Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City, Ben-Gurion Society
- Ma'asim Tovim, J Camp
- The J Pool Party
- KC SuperStar
- Bridging Hunger Bridge Tournament

Ma'asim Tovim campers at J Camp also collected toilet paper so the Food Pantry can assist people of all backgrounds with food and personal hygiene products.

Learn more about hosting a food drive at jfskc.org/host-food-drive.



Ma'asim Tovim campers at J Camp joined our drive to wipe out the need for toilet paper this summer.



Ed and Elyn Rose loved seeing all of the food donations come in at the KC SuperStar Semifinals.



Polsinelli Law Firm made sure JFS could stock the pantry this summer thanks to their food drive and lemonade stand.

DONATIONS NEEDED TO HELP DURING HIGH HOLIDAYS

JFS wants to make sure we can provide local families in need with food for the High Holidays. There are two convenient ways you can help right now:

- **Sponsor a Rosh Hashanah Meal** - \$25 buys a Rosh Hashanah meal for one family and ensures they're able to enjoy a sweet New Year. Donate online at jfskc.org/donate (select Holiday Projects in the Designation field).
- **High Holiday Food Drive** - Give groceries to share with neighbors in need. Your generous gifts go directly to the shelves in our Kansas and Missouri food pantries. Donations can be brought to participating synagogues, JFS at The J, or JFS Brookside.