

# FRIENDS OF THE FAMILY LUNCHEON INSPIRES, INTRODUCES KESHER KC

From tears of gratitude to belly laughs that filled the entire room, the Jewish Family Services Friends of the Family Luncheon was an emotional and eye-opening hour.

Over 250 friends of JFS gathered at the Jewish Community Campus on April 17, 2019 to share a meal and learn firsthand about the impact JFS programs are making in our Kansas City communities.

A conversational format led by KCPT's Nick Haines included perspectives from JFS clients, staff and volunteers. Attendees learned about the Family Empowerment Program, Tech Connect for Older Adults and JET Express.

JFS's commitment to be collaborative, innovative and person centered was woven throughout the entire luncheon. These guiding principles certainly provided the foundation for one of the organization's newest programs, Keshet KC. Keshet is the Hebrew word for connection. Keshet KC's goal is to more effectively connect our neighbors in need with the comprehensive and ongoing range of services JFS provides no matter the door through which they may enter the agency.

Maggie Haghirian, JFS Food and Shelter Program Director, says Keshet KC allows JFS to be more proactive and get to the underlying causes of the issues their clients face.

"We started the pilot program in November of 2018," Maggie says. "So now when anyone comes into the food pantry they meet with a social worker during their initial visit who talks to them about what's going on. This allows us to assess their needs from the very beginning and it ensures follow-up visits are more successful."

"Often if people are coming to the food pantry, they're also having income or budgeting issues. Maybe they have problems with housing, employment or transportation," she continues. "The Keshet KC model allows us to build a rapport with the people we serve and make sure they understand the entire range of services available to them at JFS right from the start."

Maggie says JFS hopes to expand Keshet KC to include other agency partners who can provide services such as clothing assistance, domestic violence resources and dental care.

"Our goal isn't to duplicate services and reinvent the wheel," she explains. "The whole point is for people to leave with a plan. We're empowering them with the information and connections they need to make a change in their lives."



*Robert Simmons had the room enthralled with stories of how Moshit Snir, aka, "the little short lady," helped him with a job loss and unexpected retirement. "JFS helped me map out a strategy to make ends meet," Robert shared.*



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## "...JFS SHOULD BE AT THE TOP OF YOUR LIST."

A loyal monthly donor explains why she chooses to support JFS

Cathy Boyer-Shesol makes a caring gift to Jewish Family Services (JFS) every month. She knows quite a lot about the nonprofit industry and gave careful consideration to aligning her support with a nonprofit she says demonstrates exemplary, high quality governance, management and leadership.

Growing up in a very small, rural farm community in Illinois, she went to Western Illinois University to obtain a degree in recreation and park administration. Since then, her entire career has been spent in the nonprofit sector.

She began as a program director, then ascended to executive director of two different agencies and served on several boards. Cathy and her husband, Ron, moved to Kansas City so he could pursue a broadcast journalist position at Channel 4.

After serving the Kansas City community in volunteer roles while raising her daughter, Jill, she returned to work at Jewish Heritage

Foundation, her mother passed away and Cathy had the desire to do something in her honor.

"JET Express (JFS older adult transportation program) was a relatively new program at the time. When I heard about it, I felt this was an activity my mother would have engaged in. I drove for a few years and as drivers often do, I developed strong friendships with my riders. One of my regular riders has become homebound for the past several years and I go to visit her on Sunday afternoons when I'm in town. JFS was the catalyst for this longstanding friendship—not only with her, but with her family members," Cathy said.

Cathy has a unique perspective on JFS. In her position with Jewish Heritage Foundation and her volunteer work driving seniors, she grew very familiar with JFS' overall operation. Then, through a class during her master's program Cathy got to do an

automated option to give back to JFS makes complete sense.

Cathy is certain without JFS' commitment to seniors, Kansas City would be missing an important presence serving older adults, their caregivers and their families.

"It is important to support organizations and programs that serve older adults. If you are looking



JET Express volunteer Cathy Boyer-Shesol and her husband Ron.

For Cathy, it is truly a mix of heart, meaningful programs for the community, and sound business practices that make monthly giving a clear choice for her.

Foundation from 2005-2012. At the age of 58, Cathy went to UMKC to earn her Master's in Public Administration. She currently works as a project manager at Mid-America Regional Council.

Right around the time Cathy went to work at Jewish Heritage

in-depth analysis of JFS as part of her coursework.

For Cathy, it is truly a mix of heart, meaningful programs for the community, and sound business practices that make monthly giving a clear choice for her. With her busy work life, the convenience of an

to help, JFS should be at the top of your list. Visit the website to get a feel for the organization and attend programs that interest you. I'm confident you'll feel as Ron and I do that you are making a sound investment," Cathy concluded.

Becoming a monthly donor is easy. Visit [jfskc.org](http://jfskc.org) to sign up online.



## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FIND THEIR TRIBE WITH TRIBEKC

JFS is proud to be a founding partner of TribeKC, an organization inspiring and guiding young professionals to embrace what they love about Kansas City and Jewish life. Whether it be Shabbat dinner, rock climbing, happy hour or volunteering together, TribeKC has many ways to be a part of the community.

TribeKC has engaged more than 100 young people (approximately 25-35 years old) so far in 2019. The group has formed the cohort for the Dr. Harry and Alice Statland Young Leadership Institute, a program developed to train future Jewish leaders. They also took part in Good Deeds Day, a national day in Israel

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for doing something good, by assembling Keshet KC Care Bags for JFS. In the fall, TribeKC and the the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City are

traveling to Berlin with Germany Close Up to explore contemporary German society, its politics and efforts to deal with the past while experiencing current expressions of Jewish life.

Visit [TribeKC.org](http://TribeKC.org) to learn more or get involved.

## JFS INTRODUCES EMERGENCY FOOD BAGS

JFS volunteers have been hard at work packaging Keshet KC Care Bags. These bags are an extension of the food pantry program and a great way to assist community members facing food insecurity. Keshet KC Care Bags allow staff to meet immediate food needs for walk-in clients who seek help without an appointment. JFS can then begin a relationship while attempting to assess the person's situation and connect them to a full range of services. Volunteers pack each bag with common foods that are easy to eat and enjoy including a fruit, a vegetable and a protein. A guide to community resources for hot meals and shelter is also included in the bags.

To help put bags together, or to get information on collecting items to donate for the bags, contact [volunteer@jfskc.org](mailto:volunteer@jfskc.org) or (913) 730-1410.



## YOU BE YOU BRINGS STUDENTS TOGETHER AND PLANS FOR GROWTH

The first Teen Leadership Summit brought together students who have implemented the You Be You mental health campaign. Hosted by Bernstein-Rein Advertising on March 28, the Summit gave students an opportunity to meet and share ideas as they plan future You Be You programming in their schools.

You Be You launched in the 2017-2018 school year and promotes positive mental health in teens by offering them resources and activities centered upon accepting themselves and others as they are. The program places emphasis on progress rather than perfection. It also encourages teens to reach out to others for help

and support when they need it. The campaign started with 10 Kansas City area middle and high schools and is now in 23 locations, impacting over 20,000 students since its launch.

“The connections we make here

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are incredibly important. I've learned such great ideas on how to implement this in my school and really have a big launch of You Be You at Olathe North," said Irene Gatimi, a student attendee.

At the Summit, students participated in creative thinking exercises and a guided meditation led by a therapist. Teachers were on hand as well to support their students and the implementation of You Be You programming.

"I like that our students are getting a way to create and interact with students from other schools and gaining recommendations to bring this program to fruition at our school," said Greg Mathews, a teacher at Lee's Summit West High School.

The Summit marked a successful first two years for You Be You and there are plans to expand the program's reach. Many of the schools involved currently are in Kansas City suburbs, but the program wants to have a bigger presence within the heart of the city.

"We are focusing our attention on underserved schools and communities in Jackson County for

"This program is leading the way in our school to show diversity is so much more than race. It celebrates culture and differences. Culture is so broad and tough to wrap your arms around. This program has given me courage to celebrate my culture and who I am," said Janhvi Parsai, a student at the Summit. "I know I have support through You Be You."



year three," said Sarah Link Ferguson, Mental Health Coalition Coordinator. "This expansion allows us to integrate counseling, parent education and accompanying mental health services utilizing grants from the Jackson County Children's Services Fund."

All involved in You Be You are excited for growth as its impact is felt by students engaged with the campaign.

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

## HUNGER DOESN'T TAKE A SUMMER BREAK

Summer can be a difficult time for kids who depend on meals at school. As this season approaches, you can help children and their families in our community by donating kid-friendly food to meet the rising needs that JFS will see during summer break.



Canned fruits and vegetables



Peanut Butter



Macaroni and cheese (Easy Mac)



Protein and granola bars



Paper plates



Pet food for cats and dogs



Clorox wipes



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Host a food drive at your place of employment or summer camp to meet the rising needs during the summer. Contact [fooddrive@jfskc.org](mailto:fooddrive@jfskc.org) to organize your drive today.