

Federation Focus



Spring 2020

Vol.10 Issue 3

Federation Focus is published three times a year by the Jewish Federation of Central California.
“All Jews are responsible for one another.” (Talmud:Shavuot 39a)

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Dear Friends,

y the time you read this letter, Passover and Easter will be behind us. Passover symbolizes deliverance and triumphs over a difficult time in which we feel helpless and without control, just like we are experiencing with COVID -19, the worst epidemic in modern history. Staying home, isolated from the ones that we love, unable to go to our workplace, distancing from the people and places we like to visit, are all things that are beyond our control, and for some create a feeling of hopelessness.

In response to this some people may attempt to explain why, shift blame, accuse others of playing politics and second-guessing the other side's intent, spread conspiracy theories and scare people into their way of thinking.

Meanwhile, others choose to see all that is beautiful, the kindness, the generosity, and the bravery of the day to day people, just like you, who rose to the occasion. They see the neighbors who celebrated a nine year old's special day by driving by her house with signs, wishing her a happy birthday. They see the 500 New York tenants who meet every day at 5:00 pm through their open windows to sing. They see the stranger who delivers food to the elderly, the closed restaurants that are providing free food to the first responders. They see the factories that change their products - responding to the shortage of protective clothing and life-saving equipment. They see the small business owner who spent his life savings on his employees, and I can go on and on.

As for me, I choose to believe that the darker the skies are, the brighter the stars shine. The more complex our circumstances are, the more glorified the simple things become. There is no end to people's kindness, generosity, and love. Old Jewish traditions which we learned as chil-



dren become so real and so powerful. Values such as V'ahavta L'reacha Kamocha (Love your neighbor as you love yourself) – people helping strangers; B'Tzelem Elohim (We are all made in the image of God) – first responders saving lives; Am I My Brother's Keeper? – we are taking care of your immediate family and our community at large; Samaych B'Chelko (Contentment with your lot) – being grateful for what you have; Shomer Adamah (Guardian of earth) or Tikun Olem and so much more.

Yes, in the darkest of times, these values come to life and reaffirm what we have known for thousands of years. How relevant and powerful those teachings are still today and applied by all people, not only us, which demonstrates the profound truth of our faith.

So take a moment, look around you and say thank you for all that you have, for it is not given, but a blessing; in spite of it all, tomorrow is guaranteed to be better, if you can only see and believe.

I wish you all a happy and safe reflection time!

Esti Barak, President, JFCC



I feel like this year Passover was very different

from anything we could ever have imagined in our life time. I feel like we went to sleep one night and woke up in the Twilight Zone called Covid -19. I am sure whether you were alone or communicating with family and friends through Zoom or Facetime that it was very meaningful. We are in a world where hugs and kisses are weapons and NOT visiting parents and friends becomes an act of love. Suddenly we realize that we are all vulnerable and that power, beauty and money will not keep us from getting this virus.

Most events are on hold or are on Zoom. It is a great way to connect with everyone. Yom Hashoah Services were very meaningful. Rabbi Rick has been doing a great job conducting services every Friday night on Zoom and Facetime live. One of the services featured guest soloist, Dan Nichols He was outstanding. Other congregations are reaching out to their congregants as well.

Doctors, nurses and medical staff are superheroes these days and JFS is helping to ensure they have all the Personal Protective Equipment they need. Please see article inside for more information.

While we have to be physically isolated, we don't have to be socially isolated. I have found the phone to be my best friend these days and encourage you to call a friend or neighbor and check in with them and ask them to call someone. We are in this together and we will get through this.

Our 2020 Campaign is still going but is on hold for now. When I call you these days it is to ask how you are, not what your pledge will be. We will publish our pledge list later this year and resume our campaign when we have this virus under control.

If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to call me at 432-2162.

L'hitraot,

Phyllis Farrow, Executive Director

Spring Donations

Car Donation

Anonymous

General Donation

Anonymous

Linda Diaz

Good health & speedy recovery of Mike Kaufher

Stan and Fran Ziegler

Condolences on the passing of Mark Levy

Stan and Fran Ziegler

Jewish Family Services

Mazel Tov to Lee and Jeri Horwitz on the engagement of their daughter Shelly

Doug and Jeri Buchman Weil

Good health & speedy recovery of Marianne Weil

Jeri, Doug, Kevin, David and Sahar Weil

In memory of David Benninga, brother of Jack Benninga

Stan and Fran Ziegler

In memory of MOM

Efrat Mazin & family

In memory of Ted & Mike Horlick

Judy Horlick

Good health of E. Felix

Stan and Fran Ziegler

Good health of Mehry Cadry

Bob and Nooshin Julian

Good health of Stan & Fran Ziegler

Jack & Suzanne Benninga





Shalom. I hope that everyone had a nice Passover holiday. May the re-telling of our story of liberation bring comfort and perspective to you and yours in these unusual and uncertain times.

Due to the coronavirus, we have changed our office hours to Mondays and Thursdays 10-2. We are checking our phone messages daily. We continue to call and check on our clients, as well as others in our community. Our exercise classes are on hold for now, but we hope you stay active at home.

Here are some important things we are doing to support the community

* We are thankful that we are able to give out \$50 food cards to those in need.

* We delivered Passover bags to 18 of our clients containing a box of matzah, a jar of Manischewitz matzah meal soup and dried apricots.

* We are helping to find materials and seamstresses to assist with the sewing of face masks. Please contact me at 559-432-0529 if you want to help with this.

Jewish Family Services, in response to requests to the Federation, has allocated funds to support the following programs:

*** GuardsUp! – Fresno Madera Medical Society - \$2,000**

to create the much needed protective face guards for front-line healthcare workers in Central Valley hospitals. . Some local businesses and many volunteers are part of this program.

*** DIY PPE for health care workers during COVID - \$500**

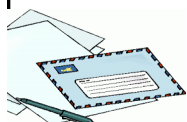
for materials to make cotton face masks, surgical grade masks, face shields, scrub caps, and disposable gowns. 100% volunteer run, many are from the Jewish and Indian communities.



We thank the first responders and the front-line healthcare workers and their families! They are doing their part, so let us make sure that we do ours.

Stay safe. Be healthy.

Jeri Horwitz
Community Outreach Coordinator



We Get Messages

Dear Jewish Federation:

I am writing to thank you for your generous scholarship. I was very happy and appreciative to learn that I was selected as a recipient.

I am a Classical Studies major. I plan on continuing my education after graduating from Fresno State. I wish to complete my master's and my Doctorate. I am currently a junior, and plan to graduate in the spring of 2020. Thanks to you, I am one step closer to that goal.

In awarding me the scholarship you have lightened my financial burden. With your funding, I am financially able to travel to London for a Latin Camp and to Rome to further my studies in Classics. Your generosity has also enabled me to give back to others, allowing me to attend a service trip this summer to South Africa.

CSFU Student

Phone Call

Thank you so very much for the Save Mart food cards for me and my family. It was just the financial help that was needed at the time. Just wanted to let you know that we are more financially stable, and how appreciative we are to have received your kind help when it was needed. Hopefully some day we can pay it forward.

Grateful client

Text Message

Jeri, Toda Raba for the cute little bag with matzo ball soup and dried fruit. A million thanks for the Save Mart gift card. Please know I am very grateful and take none of this for granted. My son is also grateful and appreciates your kindness. Adonai will bless you; I hope to one day soon help others. All that you did including taking time to talk with me...Please know it meant the world to me and my son.

A very grateful client



From the Editor

If there is one thing we can all agree on, it is that this Passover was different from all others. Isolation and physical distancing kept us apart from family and friends who would usually join us for the holiday. Murray and I had a Zoom get together with nieces, nephews and cousins from New York, Massachusetts and even Israel whom we hadn't seen for awhile. It was nice, even though a little awkward. But virtual meetings just aren't the same as in-person hugs.

The two of us, just as many of you, had an abbreviated seder. We each chose some favorite passages and read them aloud and sang a short version of Dayenu. One of our traditions is to rescue a legitimate shankbone from the freezer, where it resides from Passover to Passover. Each year I roast it a little bit more so now it is an authentic dark brown. I made enough charoses to tide us over for a few days and prepared chicken soup with matzo balls, a pot roast with potatoes and carrots, and a delicious apple matzo kugel. A nice tablecloth, cloth napkins and some roses from our garden helped to make it festive and special.

We try to keep busy, taking walks, cooking recipes that require more effort than I usually make, reading, watching

episodes of "Unorthodox" after our grandson patiently got us into the world of streaming, playing a daily gin rummy tournament, keeping up with friends via phone and e-mail, doing cleaning projects. We are news junkies but we make an effort not to watch CNN all day. Although we want to hear all the news, too much repetition of the bad statistics is depressing and reminds us of our relative helplessness.

Our daughter is doing our grocery shopping, although when we venture out for doctors' appointments, with our masks on we may hurriedly rush in and out of a store for necessities, including chocolate and other treats which are definitely on our "must have" list. She is also conducting tai chi classes for neighbors and friends on the quiet street outside her house. It is very heartening to see them, the requisite six feet apart, move slowly and carefully as they exercise and know they share a common goal of keeping healthy and active. *And I hope all of us do the same.*

Francine M. Farber



*When will it end?
Will we be okay?
How can we get back to normal?*

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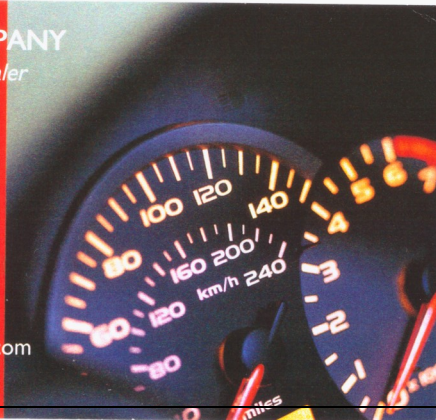
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LETTER FROM ISRAEL by Vic Rosenthal

Comments?
K2vco.vic@gmail.com

We just returned from a shopping expedition. Current regulations call for us to stay within 100 meters of our home, except to buy essentials like food and medication, and in any event not to travel outside our town. That's easy, since we don't have a car and public transportation has been shut down. We walked about 1 km to the supermarket and pharmacy in the mall – they are the only stores there that are open. Masks are now required, but only about half of the people we saw in the street were wearing them.

Bnai Brak under quarantine

Like us, Israel is dealing with the crisis somewhat less than perfectly. Rules are in place which forbid gatherings of ten or more people. *Ten or more* – that means no minyanim at synagogues. It took a while for the Haredi (“ultra-Orthodox”) sector to internalize the rules, especially at Pesach. That fact, plus the crowding and poverty in the city of Bnai Brak and the Haredi neighborhoods of Jerusalem, made them especially hard hit. As many as 40% of the residents of Bnai Brak are estimated to have been infected with the coronavirus, and the city itself has been placed under quarantine. In Jerusalem, some 75% of the known cases have been from the Haredi communities.

International flights halted

Israel cut off international flights early, except for returning Israelis. That was smart. But then some of those returnees were allowed to go home from the airport in taxis, instead of being placed in a quarantine facility. That was less smart. The Defense Ministry and even the Mosad have been procuring drugs, med-

ical equipment, and protective gear worldwide. That was smart.

Of course, it would have been better to have been prepared. Israel has only about 3 hospital beds per 1000 population, fewer than most other developed countries. Emergency rooms are regularly overloaded, even when there are no epidemics. There are insufficient doctors and nurses, because Israeli medical schools are greatly underfunded. That is not smart at all.

Virus hits assisted living

As of today (April 14), we have had almost 11,868 confirmed cases, 117 deaths, and 2000 have recovered. That's a death rate of slightly less than 1%, which is not bad. Unfortunately, about one-third of those deaths were of people living in assisted living residences.

Although the disease is known to be much more dangerous to older people and those with medical problems, this is still far out of proportion. It is a terrible debacle, for which official heads should roll. What happened was that when some residents were infected, probably by staff members or visitors who were asymptomatic carriers of the disease, much of staff – afraid of infection and with protective gear unavailable – simply fled.

Evacuations made too late

The authorities planned to test all the residents and staff, and evacuate the ones who were positive to hospitals or other facilities. But – for reasons that I don't understand – insufficient tests were performed, and when they were, it took as long as a week for results to be returned. That was often too late. Government ministries – Health, Welfare – have passed the buck on

the question of who is ultimately responsible for these people. There is no doubt that the vacuum at the top of our political system, due to the inability to form a government after three elections has a lot to do with that. While most Israelis will agree that we need an emergency government, the leaders of the Likud and the Blue and White parties have been arguing about who should control the Justice Ministry. I'm sure many people believe that one or the other side is primarily responsible for the failure to reach an agreement, but I blame them both – and meanwhile, people are dying that could perhaps have been saved by firm action from the top. And of course, dealing with the economic consequences of the struggle, which could be as damaging as the disease itself, will require a strong, stable government.

Palestinian Authority is trained

I would like to add something about our neighbors, the Palestinians. You will undoubtedly hear from the usual suspects that Israel is leaving them to fend for themselves, or even deliberately spreading the virus. In fact, Israel is providing equipment and training to the Palestinian Authority, and even Hamas-controlled Gaza, whose leaders constantly remind us that they want us dead. With our help, both the PA and Hamas have been managing relatively well, and have not (at least not yet) suffered comparatively many casualties from the epidemic.

I know that America is being severely challenged now. I wish all of my friends in Fresno and everywhere else good health; and may this terrible disease disappear soon and not return!

Jewish Day School to open

This past year has been an enormous journey and learning experience. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we were unable to open the doors to our little school. However, I am very excited to announce that we will now be opening in a fully renovated classroom on the Wesley United Methodist Church campus at 1343 East Barstow in Fresno,

Our goal is to be moved in and ready for enrollment this summer, with school starting in August for the 2020-2021 school year. We will be offering a year round program, with half day and full day care available and flexible weekly schedules to meet your individual needs. We already have a waitlist, so if you or someone you know is interested in becoming a part of the FJDS family, please let us know as soon as you can.

You can go to our website www.fresnojewishdayschool.org and check out our Facebook page for updates. To contact us directly, email us at director@fresnojewishdayschool.org or call us (559)447-1984.

JFCC 2020 Allocations

Israel/Overseas

Jewish Federation North America	\$20,000
Magen David Adom	1,000
Israel Independence Day	6,000
Krembo Wings	1,990
Total Israel/Overseas	28,990

Local

JFS	20,000
Interest free loans	3,000
TBI/Yom Hashoah	1,000
JCRC	6,000
Camperships	1,500
New Cemetery	5,000
TBI/ Cemetery	8,000
Manchester School Holocaust Program	2,000
Jewish Studies Program (restricted fund)	5,000
Jewish Women's Theatre (restricted fund)	3,500

TOTAL
\$ 84,990

Chassidus Corner

Hallel is an amazing prayer that is sung by all of us during special times such as Pesach and Shavuot. It was sung by those who worked in the Beit Hammikdash during sacrificial services. There are wonderful melodies associated with these sacred verses, that vary between communities. Of the many messages given to us, one concept is:

"The Stone which the builders Scorned has become the Chief Cornerstone."

Clearly, the message is that we must love and value every Jew, especially a Jew you may have discarded, who may be the 'cornerstone' to complete the final redemption. So how do we put this into action?

The recent panic and fear we all experienced caused by a virus, destroyed homes, businesses and lives. Our Rebbe told us that the cure for a disease is given first, but we have to search diligently for this. To do this we had to rethink our methodologies. As we looked around, our family values in Yiddishkeit resurfaced. Old family conflicts were replaced by harmony. From this tragedy, we can learn that the power of simcha enlivens the human immune system in a way without side effects.

So now you have the power to change the world for the good! By greeting a person with a smile, you can cause a viral response of health and happiness beyond anything we have seen...this is the true meaning of the phrase "going viral"!

May we all be blessed to merit the coming of Moshiach now, bim hay yovenu Amen.

- David ben Hirsch HaCohen



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Congregation Beit Shalom is also sheltering in place in order to avoid illness and maintain good health. We hope that this plague passes over the homes of our community quickly. In the meantime, we have been gathering virtually on Zoom for Shabbat and Pesach. We will continue to Zoom for Shabbat candle lighting on Fridays at 6pm. I am available for private or group yahrzeit memorials as well as Hebrew lessons — all on Zoom. Please feel free to contact me via text or phone with any question or for our Zoom meeting number.

The great Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav teaches:

Kol ha-olam kulo, gesher tzar m'od, v'ha-ijkar lo l'faheid k'lal

“The whole world is a narrow bridge, and the essential thing is not to fear at all.” The song is for times of danger, conflict, or natural disaster

We look forward to gathering in person at the Shul for Shabbat services, Israeli dancing, and Hebrew classes in the near future.

We are still collecting and accepting buttons for our long term project, to build a Holocaust Memorial in Visalia. The California Holocaust Education & Resource Center is in need of your personal interest and help. Thank you for all your help that has already been given and gratefully received.

Facebook Page:

Californiaholocausteducation&resourcecenter

Shalom, Cynthia Fischer

Our Spring plans have gone the way of COVID-19. We were to have had a Passover Seder, a Cake Auction and end of Sunday School barbeque/picnic. Maybe we will have an end of Summer Cake Auction/barbeque!

Our Student Rabbi Ariel led us in a virtual Seder on Zoom. Those who attended brought their Seder table to their computer and participated as best they could. Nothing like an in person community Seder for people to enjoy each others company!

One of our former student rabbis, who has since graduated and is now a full Rabbi in Santa Barbara, stopped in Visalia on his way to Sacramento in early March and led a Friday night service. What a wonderful treat that was for us!

Even though our synagogue has been closed, our phone is always available and all messages will be answered. Anyone wanting to learn more about Judaism, please do not hesitate to call us for information.

Marsha Brooks-Smith



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Our Mission

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Central California is to build and strengthen the Jewish community locally, overseas and in Israel, by

- ◆ *Raising funds and allocating them to identified Jewish community needs and priorities at home and abroad*
- ◆ *Providing education and cultural programs to promote community awareness of the Federation and its mission*
- ◆ *Listening to a broad spectrum of opinions from throughout the community to assure all Jewish voices are heard*
- ◆ *Evaluating efforts to ensure that Federation human and fiscal resources are used most effectively.*

For your convenience we accept Visa/Master Card for your pledges and donations. We appreciate your adjusting your gift to accommodate our 4% bank charge. Thank you.

Federation Offers Youth Scholarships

The Jewish Federation of Central California provides subsidies for Jewish youth to travel to and attend recognized Jewish camps and other programs in U.S. And Israel. Applications or requests must be received 30 days prior to need. For information call the Federation at **432-2162**.

Jewish Federations of North America protects and enhances the well-being of Jews and Jewish communities in North America, Israel and around the world. We strive to realize our core values of *chesed* (caring and compassion), *Torah* (Jewish Learning), *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) and *tzedakah* (social justice). As the focus of the federations, JFNA acts upon these values through philanthropy, strategic initiatives, and collective leadership—in partnership with local communities, national and international agencies.

NEXT DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES

AND CALENDAR LISTING

August 15 2020

Federation Focus

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"When a person's good deeds exceed his wisdom, his wisdom will be enduring."

- Rabbi Hanina Dendosa -

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