The world collapsed—and like rescue workers, JF&CS was here, there, and everywhere.”
Dear Friends,

Every new CEO expects challenges in her first year. But a world-wide pandemic was not something I ever could have imagined. This was a year of extraordinary pain and suffering. Our work at JF&CS has been to relieve that suffering, and to build resilience and well-being even during a time of crisis. The sage Hillel the Elder talked about “if not now, when?” This has been the “if not now, when?” moment for JF&CS and I feel blessed to lead the agency during this time.

I am grateful to JF&CS’s staff, donors, volunteers, and partners — who rose to the occasion and then some. As you will see in the pages that follow, we re-tooled our programs to operate safely; responded to an unprecedented number of calls for help; strengthened alliances with other organizations to amplify our impact; and added services as new needs arose. I am so proud of the creativity, the nimbleness, and the flexibility of our staff, who showed up every day to do this tough and gratifying work. They were first responders in their own right, sometimes risking their own safety to be there for our clients. They are my heroes.

And we couldn’t have done it without you. You gave generously and wrapped your arms around JF&CS in many, many ways so that we in turn could wrap our arms around our clients. I wish you and your family health and happiness in the coming year.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Gail Schulman • Chief Executive Officer

Dear Supporters,

Like all of us, I’m eager to say goodbye to a difficult year and hello to a brighter future. But through the storms, JF&CS stepped up. The past year has shown me in dozens of ways what innovation looks like, how dedication to a core mission plays out in real time, and how a highly complex organization with many moving parts can pivot on a dime. It takes talented leadership and a hard-working, dedicated staff to make that happen. JF&CS has both.

Our CEO Gail Schulman, who joined JF&CS shortly before the pandemic began, blended her years of leadership experience and her commitment to JF&CS’s values to steer us through the crisis. I am blessed to partner with Gail and the executive team, along with a talented and committed board of directors.

Recently, JF&CS has taken a hard look at where we can be even more efficient in our operations. We have reduced expenses and invested the savings back into our programs to be as impactful as possible. JF&CS takes our role as stewards of your generous donations very seriously. We thank you for making our work possible.

Sincerely,

Andrew Pearlstein • President, Board of Directors
HEROES
Work Here
JF&CS
JF&CS’s has long served as a safety net for families struggling with economic instability. The pandemic pushed more of our clients over the edge into emergency survival mode. Requests for food, cash grants, and help with accessing public benefits, like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and unemployment, soared. Many requests came from people who had never before needed help. Pre-pandemic, the average number of calls for financial assistance with life’s necessities was about 40 per month. That jumped to a peak of 100 a month during the pandemic. JF&CS responded to every request, helping hundreds of people access assistance, avoid eviction, and weather the storm.

**FAMILY TABLE**

The need for food assistance grew, and so did the logistical challenges of food packing and delivery. **Family Table**, JF&CS’s food assistance program serving people throughout eastern Massachusetts, revamped its operations to meet this demand and comply with pandemic public health protocols.

Our large cadre of volunteers grew even bigger, working in shifts to enable social distancing. Our packing and distribution operations moved outside, and grocery pickups in our three locations shifted to curbside. COVID-19 was also responsible for a sharp rise in emergency food requests, many from people who were ill or physically vulnerable. Working in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Contact Tracing Collaborative, we established an emergency grocery delivery program for low-income households impacted by COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, we delivered emergency groceries to more than 480 additional families in crisis.

**JOURNEY TO SAFETY**

The pandemic has threatened the housing security of many, including survivors of domestic violence. Through a grant of more than $140,000 from the federal Victims of Crime Act, our **Journey to Safety** (JTS) program helped more than 45 survivors avoid homelessness.

**JF&CS Program for Survivors of Domestic Violence Helps Marina Get Back on Her Feet**

With no family in this country, Marina*, the mother of three school-aged children, was barely scraping by before the pandemic. When her children’s school shut down, she could no longer work her three part-time jobs. Modest child support from her abusive ex-husband was not enough to keep up with rent and other essentials. She feared falling into deep debt and becoming homeless, despite the state’s eviction moratorium.

To stabilize her situation and give her peace of mind, JF&CS’s Journey to Safety (JTS) program paid six months of Marina’s rent and gave her grocery and gas gift cards. With her children back in school, JTS is helping Marina return to work.

*We have changed our client’s name to protect her confidentiality.
DURING THE PANDEMIC, JF&CS HAS PROVIDED HELP IN MANY WAYS

$750,000
emergency financial assistance provided

36,000
bags of groceries distributed

2x
the number of calls for basic services logged

300
Holocaust survivors provided with meals, care packages, and financial help

Enhancing Mental Health Support

The coronavirus pandemic has provoked its own epidemic: a sharp rise in the number of Americans suffering from mental health challenges — especially anxiety and depression. Four out of ten adults in the U.S. report symptoms of one or the other.

The past year has shown us how often our wide array of services contributes to our clients’ mental well-being. But we realized we needed to do more. In response to the deluge of requests for mental health support and an increased complexity of needs, we rolled out two new programs, Mental Health Connect and Path to Well-being, both supported by Combined Jewish Philanthropies.

MENTAL HEALTH CONNECT
Mental Health Connect is a phone referral line that helps callers with a range of needs, sometimes for themselves, sometimes for a family member. As people struggle with depression, anxiety, and other mental health challenges, JF&CS provides emotional support and helps figure out next steps. Those include accessing JF&CS services or support groups, finding a therapist, or navigating the broader social services network. Mental Health Connect has also been an invaluable tool for tracking the behavioral health needs of our community. We will use this information to inform our path forward as we develop future JF&CS services.

PATH TO WELL-BEING
Another new program is Path to Well-being, a collaboration with Combined Jewish Philanthropies and the world-renowned McLean Hospital. It’s based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), a well-established skills-based treatment which focuses on how our thoughts and actions can impact our feelings.

The program is a no-cost, self-paced virtual CBT program offered to adults experiencing anxiety or depression. It takes place over six to eight weeks and includes virtual weekly check-ins with a CBT coach from McLean, weekly symptom tracking, and four brief follow-up surveys after treatment.
Staying Open When the World Shut Down

For many of our clients who live in our group homes and supportive housing units, the pandemic was confusing and frightening. Gone were the routines that anchor them emotionally; the in-person day programs for stimulation and community building; the free flow of friends and families to and from their homes. So we quickly created a new normal, with the goal of keeping our clients safe, healthy, and happy.

At our group homes, we instituted strict cleaning and other protocols to reduce the risk of infection. We made the painful, but critical, decision to no longer permit visitors. Staffing increased by 20 percent, which enabled us to add another shift because residents were no longer active with their daytime programs and projects in the community.

Within days, staff created programming to keep residents engaged and happy: sewing classes, leisurely drives to nowhere in particular, Halloween parties during the dog days of summer, and online afternoon movies shared with friends from other group homes. Staff helped clients keep in close touch with friends and families through phone and video calls.

CHAI WORKS
Our CHAI Works day programs provide skills development, recreation, community engagement, and volunteer opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. Despite the pandemic, shutting down CHAI Works was never on the table. It’s a lifeline for our clients, giving their days structure and meaning. And for many families, it provides a much-needed respite from parenting.

Within two weeks, we began offering four hours of daily virtual programming — keeping our clients busy with trivia games, martial arts, dance classes, participatory cooking classes, and much more. In August 2020, CHAI Works returned to in-person programming. Participants came to our sites in Waltham and Canton for fun-filled days of learning, dancing, sports, art-making, and kibbitzing with friends — all with strict pandemic protocols in place. We still offered virtual programming for those who were unable to venture out — twice as much creativity even with fewer programming options available. Many clients and families expressed how much CHAI Works means to them through thank you notes and phone calls.

“K. loved being at the program yesterday! She said it was a wonderful day. It has been very challenging having her live with me for over a year in a two-bedroom apartment while I work from home. CHAI Works staff has done a phenomenal job of providing excellent virtual and in-person programs.”

RM, A GRATEFUL MOM
We have all experienced some type of loss during the pandemic: the death of a loved one from COVID-19; the disappearance of beloved routines and even livelihoods; the absence of the touch of a grandchild. JF&CS’s goal this past year has been to give our clients the tools to steady themselves amid the upheaval.

For 20 years, we have offered bereavement groups to people who have experienced a significant loss. During the pandemic, the demand for a space to process these losses escalated — losses made unbearable when adult children couldn't be with their parents at the end. Participation in our groups quintupled.

We quickly added new groups, now on Zoom, and increased the frequency of all of our groups. These gatherings have been a lifeline, giving people a sense of community at a time of extreme isolation.
Reaching Out to Underserved Boston Communities

Underserved communities were particularly hard hit by the pandemic, and we were pleased to offer services that helped families of young children in Roxbury, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, and Dorchester. Our Lauren & Mark Rubin Visiting Moms® program recognized the need for linguistically and culturally appropriate support to our clients. We recruited and trained moms from these neighborhoods to virtually visit parents of newborns to nurture and support them. The program is based at Epiphany School’s Early Learning Center in Dorchester, which will make training and supervision more convenient for our Visiting Moms once they can gather in person again. For now, trainings occur virtually. Additionally, our early childhood mental health consultants trained and provided consultation to staff and leadership at Epiphany as well as two sites in Roxbury — Dimock Community Health Center and Horizons for Homeless Children. During the past year, we expanded our availability to staff at these community programs, including offering evening support groups focused on personal and professional challenges brought on by the pandemic.
Supporting New Parents & Families of Children with Special Needs

The pandemic has taken a toll on all families. Those with new babies and children with special needs faced unique challenges. Creativity and nimbleness were the name of the game in helping these families.

NEW PARENTS

Our support groups for expectant and new parents experienced record attendance, as the virtual format made them easier to attend. That increased accessibility coupled with a rise in pandemic-related mental health struggles were reflected in the tripling of attendance at our postpartum depression and anxiety support group. We added new groups for single parents and parents of toddlers. For mothers and fathers needing extra support and help, we offered free one-on-one consultations during the pandemic.

Adapting home visiting programs required extra creativity. For example, because visitors to our young parents were not able to model in-person interactions with new babies, they used life-size dolls during their video visits. And we kicked off a hands-on, virtual group session in creative play by pre-mailing parents Play-doh ingredients to make with their young children.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

For children with special needs, the losses of the pandemic have been felt especially profoundly, with many parents concerned that their children were in danger of losing ground.

JF&CS’s Disabilities Lifespan Solutions program went into overdrive, helping families navigate the challenge of getting their children needed services in the new world of virtual education. Our family advocates kept abreast of the ever-changing special needs landscape, consulted with families on virtual learning strategies, and went to bat for many families needing better accommodations for their children. In several cases, we helped parents secure out-of-district placements when their children were regressing at their current schools.

And on a lighter note, our recreational programs like Kids Connection Corner continued virtually and in person, thanks to the ingenuity of our staff…and a generous donation of outdoor heaters!

“In the past two years I have learned so much from my JF&CS family advocate. I started off feeling like a victim when it came to the school system. I was scared and intimidated. I questioned my children’s disabilities, and allowed the schools to convince me they were giving my kids the best education and services they needed, when in fact it has been the opposite. My family advocate taught me how to use my voice.”

JL, AN EMPOWERED MOM

23,000 diapers and lots of wipes, formula, and clothes were distributed to families
Loneliness and social isolation in older adults has long been considered a public health emergency, and the pandemic has exacerbated this. JF&CS has played a critical role in responding to the emergency. We created new programming and took our regular offerings online. We also served as state-wide convener, trainer, consultant, and support system to more than 3,000 professionals who work with older adults.

**ASSISTANCE TO THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY**

When senior communities went into lockdown, neither JF&CS nor other social service agencies were able to provide services onsite. So we improvised.

We created and delivered workshops and trainings to thousands of staff from senior housing communities, councils on aging, and other elder organizations to help them support clients struggling with the losses and traumas of the past year.

We also increased our trainings and supports focused on the risks of suicide among older adults during the pandemic. This little-discussed issue is one of critical importance during a time of isolation and soaring rates of depression.

**FOR ELDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES**

For the elders themselves and their loved ones, we created *Tuesdays with JF&CS*, a weekly online program, facilitated by JF&CS’s mental health providers, where participants sing, tell stories, and make art. These sessions turn the notion of seniors not embracing technology on its head.

Accessing and navigating aging resources is difficult under the best of circumstances. During the pandemic, our information and resource service, *CJP SeniorDirect*, answered calls from hundreds of individuals and families looking for help dealing with housing, healthcare, homecare, and other basic needs.

We ramped up our outreach to individual clients via phone, video, and snail mail, making sure they had the essentials and heard a friendly voice. In some cases, the JF&CS social worker was the most meaningful connection in a client’s life. We also engaged volunteers to send out hundreds of handmade cards and Rosh Hashanah-themed masks — creating inter-generational connections and a sense of caring and support.
Offering Continuity to People with Alzheimer’s and their Loved Ones

“Thank you for your support this spring, following the loss of both my parents. Your wise counsel, compassion, and understanding are appreciated. I am incredibly grateful for all you do in supporting those of us living with parents with dementia.”

JK, A BALANCING ACT PARTICIPANT

Our JF&CS Memory Café, serving people with dementia and their care partners, didn’t miss a beat. We successfully took the monthly in-person social gatherings, featuring guest artists, hands-on activities, and lots of connecting, online.

As an international leader in the Memory Café movement, we provided critical guidance to hundreds of Memory Cafés making this transition. Early in the pandemic, the JF&CS Memory Café Percolator Network convened two emergency idea exchanges, at which between 100 and 170 people from across the country shared ideas of how to maintain the magic of the cafes in a virtual setting. We also created a toolkit and other materials to support the transition to online.

JF&CS is the lead for the Massachusetts chapter of Dementia Friends, a world-wide dementia public awareness program. More than 600 people attended our virtual discussion in the fall of 2020 about best practices to erase disparities across linguistic and cultural communities in risk, diagnosis, research, and care.

JF&CS’s Balancing Act support and discussion group, for people whose parent or parents live with dementia, began meeting online at the beginning of the pandemic. We doubled meeting frequency, as participants struggled with issues like not being able to see their parents in residences or caring for them full-time when day programs shut down.

600 people attended Dementia Friends best practices workshop to erase disparities

82 elder-themed workshops and trainings hosted for professionals

44 specialized groups supporting mental health and well-being
Serving as a Resource for the Jewish Community

JF&CS has long been the social service partner for the Jewish community in Greater Boston. During the pandemic, we were the go-to organization for synagogues seeking help with supporting their members during a very stressful, loss-filled year. Sometimes that meant being a behind-the-scenes resource to help rabbis serve congregants in need. Other times the work was more formal and visible.

We stepped up our work helping synagogues’ caring communities, or “chesed committees,” respond to their congregants’ struggles. Once every two months, we convened the Caring Communities Resource Network. At each of the online gatherings, representatives from synagogues of diverse denominations learned from JF&CS experts and exchanged ideas about how to better care for their members’ well-being. The online format greatly extended our geographic reach, and synagogues from far-flung suburbs were able to attend.

Funding from the Ruderman Foundation, administered by Combined Jewish Philanthropies, allowed us to respond to more than 30 synagogues’ requests for workshops on specific topics. Our experts shared their knowledge with hundreds of congregants on subjects including “Fostering Wellness in the Midst of a Pandemic,” “Navigating Parenting Challenges in the Present Crisis,” and “Jewish Wisdom for Growing Older During these Challenging Times.”

Thank you for Supporting JF&CS Generously

As the pandemic disrupted the lives and economic stability of so many community members, our donors and volunteers reached out to us with a simple question: “how can we help?”

They helped by opening their wallets and by volunteering in unprecedented numbers. Our Caring During Crisis campaign raised more than $1.1 million, and that financial boost was invaluable.

It allowed us to help more people than ever before — many reaching out to us for the first time. It enabled us to transform our in-person programs into virtual ones, to keep staff and clients safe and healthy, and to add new services to respond to new needs.

The financial support came in all sizes and from every corner of our community — from youngsters who donated their allowance money to individuals who care deeply about their neighbors to foundations who recognized the importance of our work. We are so grateful to all of our donors for their generosity during what is arguably the most challenging period in our long history. A special thanks to Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston for its tremendous support and partnership.
FINANCIAL REPORT

JF&CS FY2020 Revenue: $26.1M

- Grants & Contracts: 42%
- Service Fees: 25%
- Contributions: 21%
- Combined Jewish Philanthropies: 9%
- Investments and Other: 3%

JF&CS FY2020 Expenses: $26.1M

- Personnel: 66%
- Contracted Services: 9%
- Client Assistance: 8%
- Occupancy: 4%
- Other Operating Expenses: 13%

It is with deep gratitude that we recognize our good friends in the community who have contributed $500 or more to Jewish Family & Children’s Service between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2020, our Fiscal Year 2020. These contributions, along with those from all of our supporters, provide critical funds that enable our agency to provide the greatest breadth of social services under one roof throughout New England and to be a source of support to the thousands of people we serve each year.

$100,000+
- Combined Jewish Philanthropies
- Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany
- H.A.L.O. (Help a Little One) Foundation
- Kaplan-England Fund
- The Klarman Family Foundation
- The Morningstar Family Foundation
- Tauber Family Foundation
- Candice & Howard Wolk

$50,000 to $99,999
- Foundation for MetroWest
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  - Nancy Kaplan Belsky & Dr. Mark Belsky
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- Three Squares New England

$25,000 to $49,999
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- Susan & Dr. James Snider

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Leonard Atkins*
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Patricia Berenson & Jeffrey Carp
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Sylvia & Frederick Fogel
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Arthur & Lesley Kesselman
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Krokidas & Bluestein LLP
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Beth & Eric Schlager
Judith P. & Larry S. Schlager
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Jackie & Alan Weinstein
The Weinstein Family Foundation
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Ellen Westheimer
Susan & Dr. Richard Wilk
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$2,500 to $4,999
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Robin & Philippe Amouyal
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Assisting Hands Home Care
David A. Bamel
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Jean Birnberg
Allison & Josh Blank
Margot & Kurt Bloch
Amy & Ben Bloomstone
The Bostonian Group
c/o Marsh & McLennan Agency
Boston Resiliency Fund
Chesnut Hill Square
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Patricia McWeeny
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Elizabeth & Adam Stavisky
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Temple Beth Shalom
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Lisa & Neil Wallock
Eleanor Wallen
Lisa Kempler & Bruce Weinstock
Arthur Winn
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Sheryl & William Adler
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Jane & Mark Alpert
Beth & Marc Andler
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Evon M. Beckman & Elana M. Bern-Beckman
Joan & Steven Belkin
Kay & Peter Berson
Kenneth & Gail Bernstein
Sara & Michael Bernstein
Bruce & Sandra Beutel
Michelle & Darren Black
Jessica Daniels & Paul Blackborow
Anne Berlin Blackman & Richard Blackman
Dianne & Michael A. Blau
The Blue Card
Phyllis & Alan Bolotin
Jennifer & Jonathan Bornstein
Rita & Henry Braun
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Amy & Marshall S. Brinn
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Cabot’s Ice Cream and Restaurant
Cail Family Foundation
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Century Bank
Rachel & Laurence Chaetz
Chase Family Foundation
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