CORONAVIRUS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Yad Chessed offers help during pandemic

WALTHAM – Serving as the new executive director of Yad Chessed during a pandemic is challenging. However, Nancy Kriegel is finding it extremely rewarding to be leading the Jewish social services agency at a time when its mission is more vital than ever. Yad Chessed, “hand of loving kindness,” serves those struggling with financial hardship and food insecurity.

“The last several months have definitely been stressful,” notes Kriegel, “however, our community is coming through with such generosity and the outpouring of support has been so inspiring and moving to me.”

The agency is serving a critical role during the Covid-19 crisis.

Yad Chessed is solely focused on providing direct support in three ways: emergency financial assistance, grocery gift cards, and guidance about available resources and benefits. In addition to helping those affected by the pandemic, the agency continues to help many who were struggling before the Covid-19 crisis.

“Our typical client is us,” explains Deborah Freed, associate executive director and one of the lead social workers at Yad Chessed. “Someone like you and me, and they have multiple challenges that hit all at once, like an illness on top of a job loss or a broken-down car. If we get a call, we have to be here for them.”

“Greater Boston is fortunate to have several organizations that collaborate to serve those in need,” says Kriegel. “CJP as Greater Boston’s Jewish federation, plays a key role in ensuring the vulnerable among us are taken care of. Its ongoing support of Yad Chessed and our partner agencies, as well as the CJP Coronavirus Fund and the CJP Warmline, enable us to carry out our mission.”

In addition to Yad Chessed’s partnership with CJP, the collaboration with its sister social services agencies is essential in meeting the wide range of needs in our community. According to Freed, Yad Chessed’s close relationships with Jewish Family & Children’s Service (JF&CS), Jewish Family Service of Metrowest (JFS), Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) and others, ensure maximum support for each person.

“Yad Chessed recently split the cost for a funeral with another agency,” Freed notes. “We also shared the cost for a client’s move, so she could live in a more affordable apartment.”

With unemployment skyrocketing, and many businesses struggling to stay afloat, Yad Chessed is dedicating its leadership to initiating a new initiative for those who may be in need of support for the first time.

The initiative seeks to help those who are experiencing economic distress and lost income due to the Covid-19 crisis. Specifically, people who were financially stable before, and may have some assets or savings, but now need help in the short-term. With support from CJP and CJP Coronavirus Emergency Fund and Yad Chessed donors, the agency will work to provide immediate financial assistance as well as advice about available resources.

“By lending a hand now, Yad Chessed hopes to mitigate anxiety, emotional distress and avoid downward spirals toward food insecurity and deeper financial hardship,” Kriegel says.

While the future remains uncertain and we are likely experiencing what will be long-term struggles for many,” she adds, “our clients and community can be sure of one thing: Yad Chessed is dedicated to being part of what will be a complex solution to help those who have lost jobs and who face food and financial insecurity.”

If you or someone you know need help, contact Yad Chessed at intake@yadchessed.org or (781) 487-2693. For more information, visit yadchessed.org.

By Sheryl Hirsch

Special to The Advocate

PHOTO: CNADEZHDA1906/CANVAS

Nancy Kriegel

The Jewish Advocate

15 School Street, Boston, MA 02108 • Tel: 617-367-9100 • www.TheJewishAdvocate.com

Published weekly on Friday by The Jewish Advocate

To subscribe online go to www.TheJewishAdvocate.com or call 617-367-9100 x120.

The Jewish Advocate, The Jewish Times, The Boston Jewish Times, and The Jewish News of Western Massachusetts are trademarks registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Periodicals Postage is paid at Boston, Massachusetts.

ISSN 1077-2995 (USPS-275-020).