



An Update from Yad Chessed

June 2020

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An adjunct professor, an in-home day-care provider, a college student, and an acupuncturist: what do these people have in common? Each is experiencing financial distress and has sought help from Yad Chessed during the last month. As we move to a “new normal,” many of us will continue to struggle before we once again find our footing. For some this will take months. For others it will be years.

While the future remains uncertain, 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.

We will work hard to collaborate with our community’s social service agencies in order to help our clients integrate and maximize local, state and federal resources. With the help of our generous donors and partners, we will continue to extend our hand to help people. We are all so very fortunate to live in a community that places a priority on *chessed* – loving kindness!

Nancy Kriegel, Executive Director

By some estimates, 69% of Americans have less than \$1,000 saved.

Lost Income? What’s Next?



With Massachusetts unemployment skyrocketing since March, many of us are struggling to figure out next steps. It will take several months for some businesses to get back on track, which means additional layoffs may be in store.

Yad Chessed is committed to helping people who were financially stable but now, due to the COVID-19 crisis, need short-term support. We will seek to provide emergency financial assistance and guidance to help them as they find a path forward.

We know that these are complex situations requiring multidimensional financial and employment advice, and we will do what we can to help those in need connect with the numerous government and non-government organizations offering assistance and guidance. With your support, we can reach people now to help mitigate anxiety and emotional distress and **work to avoid a downward spiral toward food insecurity and deeper financial hardship**. For some, reaching out for support will be difficult. Please help us spread the word. **There is no shame in asking for help. That’s what we are here for.**

Contact us at intake@yadchessed.org or (781) 487-2693.

MA unemployment rates rose to 15% in April with over 860,000 claims.

Yad Chessed's Critical Role Recognized

On May 18th, Yad Chessed was honored to be awarded a grant from The Boston Foundation (TBF), one of the nation's oldest and largest community foundations. The grant from TBF's Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund is intended to support Yad Chessed's operations and will provide **vital financial support as we work to address the increased needs in our community due to the COVID-19 crisis.**

We are also incredibly grateful for our partnership with Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP) and for the additional grant from the CJP Coronavirus Emergency Fund. This latest grant was made possible by the generosity of Candice and Howard Wolk, who are passionately supporting a range of social service agencies working to meet the urgent needs of individuals and families affected by the pandemic.

12% of all Jews in Greater Boston identify as poor or "just getting by."

Spotlight: Sue Barron, Director of Client Services



Sue Barron, LICSW

Our four social workers serve at the core of Yad Chessed and make it possible for us to carry out our mission. Sue Barron, LICSW, has been with the agency for seven years, and she and the rest of the team have been extremely busy helping those in need during the COVID-19 crisis. Sue is glad to do something tangible to help. "It's rewarding to distribute gift cards for food and to help our clients pay their bills for essentials, like medicine and utilities." Although there is much anxiety and stress in our community, Sue notes that **"as a small and nimble agency, Yad Chessed is able to be flexible and provide aid quickly, and for that, our clients are extremely appreciative."**

Families receive additional food support for Shavuot

The scholar Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks explains that Shavuot, the spring harvest holiday commemorating the giving of the Torah, embodies the Jewish value of chessed, loving kindness. Jews read the Book of Ruth on Shavuot where loneliness and isolation are healed by acts of loving-kindness.

Sacks points out that chessed has a redemptive quality with the capacity to transform tragedy into celebration and despair into hope. With this in mind, **we were pleased to be able to send out \$20,000 in grocery store and kosher market gift cards** so that Yad Chessed clients could have "a little extra" support to celebrate Shavuot.

Opportunities to learn more about economic distress in our community

Interested in learning more about Yad Chessed and how we partner with other social services agencies? We are available to join your synagogue, organization or group for webinars, Zoom meetings or Shabbat services to **discuss food insecurity, economic distress and how we can help.** We can also share our perspectives about the challenges ahead and how we can collaborate to address them. To discuss setting up customized programming, please email nancy@yadchessed.org or call (781) 487-2693. We look forward to partnering with you!