



# An Update from Yad Chessed

Summer 2020

Pandemic Support

| Volunteer Spotlight

| High Holidays



As the summer winds down and we look ahead to the fall, I am thinking about how Yad Chessed's mission is aligned with the Jewish calendar. You might already be aware that each year during the holiday of Purim, Yad Chessed distributes supermarket gift cards to those in need to fulfill the mitzvah of Matanot L'evyonim (gifts for the poor). **But Purim is just one of many occasions when Jewish tradition urges us to remember and provide for those less fortunate.**

In the Jewish calendar, the month of Elul, which begins August 22, is a gateway to the start of the New Year. It is a time to take stock of where we've been, to consider what lies ahead, and to set our intentions. It is fitting to think about what part we can each play in the coming year to help sustain our communities, especially during the current crisis. **For Yad Chessed, this includes reaffirming our commitment to reach out to neighbors, friends, and community members who are struggling so that they know Yad Chessed is here to help them get back on their feet.**

I hope that as you look ahead to the New Year, you will continue your support and deepen your partnership with Yad Chessed so that, together, we can continue to build a community where we all care for each other and look for opportunities to show kindness.

Nancy Kriegel, Executive Director

Over 950,000 people in MA currently rely on unemployment benefits

## Helping families weather the pandemic



While the COVID-19 crisis has altered our lives in many ways, one thing hasn't changed: families still need to provide for their children. Working from home has been a challenge for many, especially for those who have young children and cannot afford to take time away from work. This summer, in partnership with CJP, Yad Chessed provided subsidies to help with childcare costs so parents could work or focus on their job searches.

Since June, we have connected with more than **20** families and have been able to offer more than **\$15,000** toward accredited childcare options for eligible families in need.

In addition, thanks to the support of our community, this summer Yad Chessed distributed **\$14,250** in clothing gift cards to **74** families for children who have outgrown their clothes.

30% of renters in MA missed a payment between April and June

## Spotlight: Melanie Ullman, Volunteer



"I want to help people get through difficult times and contribute to the welfare of the Jewish community," says Melanie, a retired school librarian and administrator, who has been volunteering at Yad Chessed for 4 1/2 years. Melanie helps out at our office at least once a month and sends our clients who struggle with food insecurity their monthly, much-anticipated grocery cards to stores such as Star Market, Stop & Shop, Market Basket, Trader Joe's, The Butcherie and Zadye's Market.

"I really look forward to being at Yad Chessed and working alongside the kind and dedicated staff who do everything in their power to help people in so many ways. I am absolutely in awe, complete awe, of what their small and hard-working team is able to accomplish for those in need."

In 2020, 59% more families in Boston will experience food insecurity than in 2019

## How are we adapting our services?

As a small, nimble agency, Yad Chessed has been able to respond to the changing and increasing needs within our community. Thanks to the support of our donors, Yad Chessed leadership and our dedicated staff, we have been able to:



- Implement a **streamlined, one-page application** for certain kinds of resources to prevent bottlenecks, build trust, and deliver urgently needed assistance.
- More than **double our monthly assistance allocation** to make sure we are able to serve every eligible individual and family who reaches out to us.
- Update our eligibility guidelines to include those who were financially stable before the pandemic, but now need short-term financial support and advice as they pursue their next opportunity.

As you prepare for the High Holidays during this unusual year, when so many are experiencing heightened anxiety and challenges, we hope you will join us in helping our neighbors and community members in need.

Our mission to offer emergency financial assistance, to help for people facing food insecurity, and to offer sound, compassionate advice is more vital than ever. Your partnership deepens our shared commitment to building a community where those in need always know where to turn.

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