I was recently reading the Book of Ruth in preparation for the upcoming spring harvest holiday of Shavuot, which we will celebrate beginning on the evening of May 16th. **Shavuot is a time to appreciate the physical bounty of our land and celebrate the spiritual bounty of the Torah.** The Book of Ruth offers a reminder that the Jewish people have always been steeped in an ethos of celebrating good fortune while at the same time bearing a communal responsibility to care for people in need.

In the second chapter of Ruth, we learn about the Biblical laws of **gleaning** which require all farmers to leave behind portions of their crops so those who need food can harvest it for themselves and their families. The gleaning laws provided a remarkable support network for anyone who needed help. **In our modern urban lifestyle, Yad Chessed seeks to offer a similar safety net.** In partnership with our donors and supporters we encourage and promote the resilience of our community members who are struggling.

Together we are building a community where support can be accessed without stigma or shame, help is given with joy and generosity of spirit, and where asking for and offering help are accepted as part of the fabric of Jewish communal life. We are living in challenging times with 1.6 million adults facing **food insecurity in Massachusetts**, as noted in a May 5th Boston Globe article. Because of your support, Yad Chessed clients have received supermarket and kosher-market gift cards in advance of Shavuot so that they can celebrate with a festive meal knowing, just as Ruth did in ancient times, that they are included and cared for. As we celebrate this lovely spring season and the holiday of Shavuot, I have a sense of renewed gratitude for health and science, and an ongoing deep appreciation for the kindness and generosity of our community.
What do you know about gleaning?

Shavuot Meal Delivery
North Shore area volunteers needed

Yad Chessed will be partnering with Jewber once again to deliver hundreds of Kosher Shabbat meals to clients in the Greater Boston Area! This simple gesture is a reminder to people who are feeling isolated and anxious that their community cares about them and that they are not alone in their struggle. As one recipient shared after learning they would be receiving a meal, "Everything you have ever done has boosted my faith in G-d and lets me know I am not forgotten or forsaken."

We are looking for additional volunteers for North Shore area deliveries on Thursday, May 20th between 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm. You will need access to a car on the delivery day and your delivery route should take ~90 minutes or less.

Sign up or indicate interest for future volunteer opportunities at forms.gle/Y3yLxnUknJap8fvF7. You can also spread the word by sharing the sign up link with your North Shore networks or sponsor a meal by donating here!

51% of adults facing food insecurity didn't access SNAP benefits because they were worried about the paperwork (GBFB)

Grocery gift cards are just half the story
Learn more about Yad Chessed case management

Many know that Yad Chessed distributes emergency aid and supermarket gift cards to people in need. Equally important, is the individualized support and attention which our social work team provides each of our clients.

Sound, compassionate guidance is the cornerstone of what helps our clients on their paths to success. Our social workers create individual action plans for each client, walking them through application processes, recommending next steps, facilitating conversations, providing budget counseling, and more. Our expertise in accessing benefits also means that we can maximize existing resources for people in need and use our funds more efficiently for greater impact.

- In the 13 months since the pandemic began, Yad Chessed has helped 16 individuals and families who were at risk of defaulting on their mortgages. In the past it was less common for Yad Chessed clients to be homeowners, however, a ripple effect of the pandemic is the changing demographics of those who
What do you know about gleaning?

offering ideas and suggestions about pandemic relief programs, financing options and budgeting to address underlying issues that may be hindering someone's path to long-term financial security.

- Since last March, Yad Chessed has coordinated logistics and provided funding for **18 Jewish funerals and burials**. Providing funeral support to a family is both highly sensitive and urgent, and requires collaboration with family members, Rabbis, funeral homes, cemeteries, and other local Jewish agencies like Jewish Family & Children's Service and Jewish Family Service of Metrowest. Beyond just covering part of the cost, Yad Chessed social workers help people in need navigate their options with a compassionate hand.

- Our social work team is well versed in how to help people secure enough food support, combining advice with sending supermarket gift cards depending on our clients' individual needs. As noted in the Greater Boston Food Bank survey, to get enough to eat, **most people need food support from multiple sources, and often need emotional and logistical support to access benefits**. People in need may not know about what options are available or how to apply for public food benefits like SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Yad Chessed offers the dignity of choice by sending supermarket and kosher market gift cards so people in need can shop for food just like anyone else in our community. Since September 2020, we have distributed on average **420** food gift cards a month (increased from an average of 300 per month the previous year).

42% of adults facing food insecurity don't know how to apply for food benefits (GBFB)

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**Passover Update**

"Thank you for making sure that this Passover was festive for us."

Yad Chessed's partnerships with our generous donors, CJP and JFS Metrowest helped to make sure that our clients could purchase food for Passover as well as receive a Kosher catered Seder meal. In March and early April, in advance of Passover, we **distributed approximately $40,000 in supermarket and Kosher market gift cards**. Yad Chessed recipients were so very appreciative. In the words of one of the people we help, "it is because of you that my family and I were able to celebrate. Thank you Yad Chessed for making sure that this Passover was festive for us."

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Donate today!

Do you or someone you know need help?
What do you know about gleaning?

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