JEWISH FEDERATION OF CHICAGO

2023
Annual Report
This year, our community needed the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Chicago (JUF) more than ever.

Even as we fuel the network of longstanding programs, agencies and schools that make this community so vibrant, JUF powers Jewish Chicago's capacity to respond effectively in times of crisis—and this unique ability to meet unforeseen emergencies was critical in 2023.

For just as the COVID pandemic waned, new challenges arose, demanding JUF action. Record levels of antisemitism. A growing mental health crisis. The ongoing devastation of the war in Ukraine. Plus, rising inflation meant that at-risk people were counting on us to help pay rent, afford medications and keep the utilities on.

As donors and beneficiaries have always expected, JUF rose to the occasion, feeding the hungry while nourishing the hunger for Jewish connections. All told, our community's collective generosity fueled the allocation of $252,143,343 during the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2023. Highlights included:

- $36,671,478 through the Jewish Federation of Chicago's network of agencies to fund local human services and $21,955,405 to fund Jewish education, continuity, identity-building, outreach and advocacy programs;
- $37,904,903 through the Jewish United Fund devoted to help millions of Jews in Israel and 70 countries worldwide;
- $1,417,500 of Ukraine Relief emergency relief funding; and
- $87,625,028 allocated to global charitable efforts in partnership with our 1,000+ Donor Advised Funds and Supporting Foundations.

During this enormously challenging year, these resources enabled JUF to serve as a lifeline to 500,000 Chicagoans of all faiths and millions of Jews across the globe.

In the pages that follow, we spotlight JUF's response to three key issues: the need for heightened security amidst rising antisemitism, the ongoing crisis facing Ukrainian Jews, and pursuing innovative solutions to the mental health crisis here at home.

It is Jewish Chicago's support for JUF's Annual Campaign that powers our unique ability to swiftly deliver critical services as these and unforeseen challenges arise, even as we continue to meet the community's day-to-day needs and provide vital portals of connection to Jewish life and learning.

Simply put, JUF powers Jewish Chicago because you power JUF—and we are grateful to every donor, community partner and volunteer for your commitment and generosity.

Thank you for coming together for good.
Keeping Jewish Chicago Safe

Incidents of antisemitism in the U.S. are at record levels, a painful reality that challenges our community’s ability to participate in Jewish life free from fear.

In response to this intensified vulnerability, JUF began scaling up security operations in 2022—and in 2023, we accelerated these efforts, extending our security expertise widely throughout Jewish Chicago.

Guided by a top-flight security management team, this year JUF provided record levels of multidisciplinary services to help keep our community safe, including:

- **Security Audits**
  Assessing individual sites for potential gaps in security and identifying solutions to those gaps

- **Emergency Preparedness**
  Guiding institutions to establish or update their own individualized emergency response plans

- **Security Training**
  Sharing best practices to enable community members and leaders of communal institutions to safeguard others—and one another—in an emergency

- **Grant Application Assistance**
  Helping organizations to access added funding from government and private sources to meet their increased security needs

- **JUF Master Contracts**
  Offering access to the most cost-effective security products and services with vetted vendors, group pricing and equipment/service guarantees

- **Social Media/Dark Web Monitoring**
  Continually analyzing and reporting potential threats to security

- **Connectivity & Cooperation**
  Collaborating with the Secure Community Network (SCN), other partners and all levels of law enforcement

In 2023, JUF also conducted a community-wide survey to better understand local Jewish nonprofits’ security needs, infrastructure, vulnerabilities and resources. Eighty diverse organizations responded, providing key insight into our community’s service gaps and its security needs going forward.

In the year ahead, JUF will further accelerate delivery of wide-ranging, integrated security services to safeguard our community’s schools, synagogues, social service agencies, camps, residences and other Jewish institutions—and to ensure that every member of our community may safely participate in Jewish life.

**A Year of New Challenges**

- 150 Jewish sites received security services in 2023
- $10 million awarded in State Nonprofit Security grants to 59 Jewish institutions
- $11.5 million secured in U.S. Homeland Security grants for 71 Jewish institutions
- 80 Jewish schools, camps, synagogues and social service agencies surveyed about security needs
Enhancing Mental Health

It is now well known that the COVID pandemic triggered a nationwide mental health crisis, with record incidence of anxiety, depression and other forms of mental illness. The lingering effects of the pandemic, particularly among young people, compelled a JUF response of new levels of innovation.

In 2023, JUF invested an additional $2 million in grants for new and expanded mental health initiatives throughout the community. This additional funding built upon JUF’s earlier investment of over $3 million for mental health services at the height of the COVID pandemic.

These added resources have enabled JUF agencies to deliver mental health services in record numbers, providing more individual and group therapy, launching new prevention and intervention programs, and expanding community outreach and education initiatives.

The two-year grants awarded in 2023 allow our communal organizations to plan, innovate and build future capacity. In addition to providing direct care, a number of the programs focus on fostering resilience and empowering community members with coping tools, coaching in "psychological first aid," and respite services.

Seven of the eight funded programs include at least one component that invests in the mental health of young people, many of whom are suffering the effects of spending formative years in an isolating, stressful pandemic.

Mental Health is ranked #1 among Jewish Chicagoans’ personal health concerns. 47,000 people received mental health services from JUF agencies. 25% of children attending JCC day camps received mental health services at camp. 10% more Jewish communal professionals received mental health training than the year prior. $5 million in additional mental health investment made by JUF in past five years.

JUF funding will enhance our community’s mental health in the year ahead with:

- **Added social workers** at all 10 JCC Chicago Apachi Day Camp locations.
- **Mental health training** for teachers and parents of preschoolers, provided by JCFS Chicago in partnership with the JUF Early Childhood Collaborative.
- **Training in socio-emotional learning** for Jewish day school teachers and in collaborative problem solving for parents and grandparents, provided by ATT Resources for Educational Achievement Collaboration and Health (REACH).
- **A new clinician working on-site** at those local Jewish day schools that lack social workers, provided by The Ark in partnership with REACH.
- **A new JCFS Chicago Center for Trauma and Resilience** to help prevent people impacted by trauma from developing more significant mental health issues—while creating clinical capacity to care for those who do—and providing resilience training and psychological first aid.
- **Expanded respite services** for caregivers of children with disabilities at Libenu.
- **Additional short-term group therapy** and telehealth support groups at CJE SeniorLife, plus the creation of an online Mental Health Toolkit, along with measures to build future capacity.
- **Multi-faceted program expansion** at Mishkan Chicago including added capacity at Maggie’s Place, its mental health/wellness center; cohorts to support expectant and new parents; and aides to assist children with mental health/behavioral needs.

JUF will continue to invest in, help destigmatize, and elevate conversations about mental health services in the year ahead.

Two of JUF’s newly funded mental health programs serve day school students and their families. All told, JUF provided $14 million in funding to the local Jewish day school system in 2023.
Celebrating a Miraculous Milestone

This year, JUF brought Jewish Chicago together to honor a historic milestone: the 75th anniversary of the independence of the modern State of Israel.

The festivities began on the eve of Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israel Independence Day), when a variety of downtown buildings hued their outdoor lights to “Turn the Loop Blue,” followed by a ceremony raising the Israeli flag proudly over Daley Plaza the next afternoon. Youn adults marked the occasion at JUF’s annual YLD Blue and White Bar Night, a birthday bash with Israeli-themed snacks, drinks and music.

The celebration culminated in an epic, first-of-its-kind drone show over the Chicago skyline in June. Five hundred drones lit up the night over Lake Michigan and told the story of our Jewish homeland in an unforgettable display. The 15-minute show, which was also livestreamed, featured songs by Rick Recht.

Thousands across our community watched in wonder and celebrated this momentous occasion.

Delivering Help in a Humanitarian Crisis

It has now been more than 18 months since Russia invaded Ukraine, sparking a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. The Ukrainian people have endured without waverling—and so has JUF’s support for Ukraine’s Jewish community.

From the war’s onset to the present day, JUF has served as their lifeline.

When Russia invaded, we provided round-the-clock relief to people caught in the crossfire, and evacuated tens of thousands from danger zones to neighboring countries. This year, JUF continued to sustain those who remain in Ukraine—along with tens of thousands of refugees across Europe—with food, medicine and other vital services.

Throughout 2023, we continued to help expedite aliyah for tens of thousands to immigrate to Israel from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. People from these countries are still arriving in our Jewish homeland at record rates, and JUF is helping them to begin anew with housing, Hebrew classes, trauma counseling and other essential aid.

We also have been providing thousands of Ukrainian refugees who arrived here in Chicago this year with medical care, trauma therapy, employment assistance, ESL classes and other critical assistance.

JUF is committed to being there for our fellow Jews in times of crisis, and in the year to come, we will be there for Ukrainian Jews—whether they are in Ukraine, in Israel or here in Chicago—come what may.

$9.5 million marshaled to help the Jews of Ukraine
5.4 million pounds of humanitarian aid delivered to Ukrainians under fire
65,000 Jews helped to immigrate to Israel from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia
20,000 refugees in Illinois sustained with medical care, ESL and other key services
24 partner agencies at work on the ground in Ukraine, neighboring countries, Israel and Illinois

Overseas, tens of thousands of refugees who fled to neighboring countries—plus those who have immigrated to Israel—were supported with food, shelter, counseling and other key services.

In 2023, local refugees from Ukraine received top-flight healthcare through JUF partner Mount Sinai Hospital. (Photo credit: Jeff Warner)

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JUF/Federation amplifies our collective strength to make the world a better place—for everyone.

Community powered, we consider the totality of local and global Jewish needs and how to address them. From generation to generation, we help people connect to Jewish life and values, fueling a dynamic, enduring community that comes together for good.