



COMMUNITY Matters

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Spiritual Healing: An Approach to Grief and Recovery

By Don Minkoff, LCSW



In 1969, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross in her book On Death and Dying introduced a model to understand the process which people deal with grief and tragedy. Using her model known as the Five Stages of Grief, denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, Kubler-

Ross described how people deal with tragic personal loss, such as death or divorce. The major criticism of her model was that it doesn't describe a process for a person to reach the stage of acceptance, nor after reaching that stage her model provides no guidance for people who will be living with change due to the loss.

Counseling offered by Jewish Family Service or other forms of support can provide guidance as one goes through a process of recovery. When in counseling or in a support group for loss, grief, illness and life issues, questions often emerge about why things happen. These questions connect with spiritual issues which are an integral part of many traditions not just Judaism but of all religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism and are an adjunctive process to the support found through counseling.

Jewish spiritual care through tradition and texts recognizes the connection of spiritual, community and family support as

fundamental in a person's process of recovery from loss. The Jewish customs of mourning provide a guide for the individual to grieve, recognizing the role of family and community, as one moves from mourning to the normalcy of daily life. Also, Jewish practice recognizes the need to continue to remember those who have died even after we have returned to a normal life.

This practice reflects an appreciation that both the body and the soul need healing when one is sick. Personal meditation provides an opportunity to reflect and connect with our physical and spiritual self. Prayers recited for someone who is ill, asks for healing of the body and the soul. Visiting the sick, allows the one who is isolated due to illness or to the physical inability to go out, to feel connected when the feeling of belonging can be most needed.

Holidays and life cycle rituals also provide opportunities to explore one's recovery through religious or spiritual practice. Rabbi Amy Eilberg, during a speech entitled Cycle of Jewish Time and Healing stated, "In the darkest of times and in the most joyful, the holidays serve as a rich reservoir of healing themes, stories, images and practices, which can buoy our spirits, fill us with joy, invite us to reflect on the great spiritual questions of life." Rabbi Eilberg identifies the Passover Seder, which "is essentially a healing service, moving us symbolically from suffering to release conveying a healing message about growing to accept the bitter and the sweet as part of the seamless tapestry of our lives."

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Scranton Prep Supports Mae S. Gelb Food Pantry

Scranton Preparatory School's commitment to service and community was on full display through a meaningful collaboration as part of the Great Ignatian Challenge, the student-led food drive that unites schools nationwide in addressing food insecurity.

This year, Scranton Prep partnered with ShopRite to purchase a pallet's worth of kosher food items for the Jewish Family Service (JFS) Food Pantry, ensuring access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food for individuals and families throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania.

This impactful effort was made possible through the generosity of Minora Krowiak Munley Batyko Attorneys at Law, whose financial support fully funded the pallet of food. Their commitment to strengthening the community helped transform the spirit of the Great Ignatian Challenge into direct, tangible assistance for neighbors facing hunger.

The initiative was coordinated in conjunction with Katie Gallagher, MS, RD, LD, ShopRite Dietitian, who assisted in selecting nutritious kosher food items. Scranton Prep students worked closely with community partners to make the project a success.

Through partnerships like these—bringing together students, donors, and community organizations—the Great Ignatian Challenge continues to demonstrate the power of collaboration, generosity, and service in action.



Geisinger Medical Students Join JFS Music & Memory Program

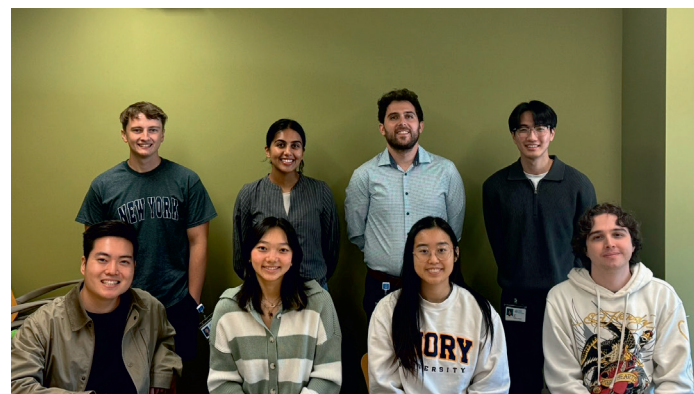
Jewish Family Service recently welcomed a new group of Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine students to our Music & Memory program. The students are continuing a partnership that began in 2021, bringing the healing power of personalized music to the older adults we serve.

Music & Memory is led by JFS Older Adult Services Coordinator Lorrie Loughney, NCG, MPA, whose leadership and commitment have helped the program grow and thrive. Through this initiative, students work closely with JFS to enhance quality of life, spark memories, and create meaningful connections for participants.

We are grateful for the students' continued involvement and dedication, and we look forward to another successful year of collaboration.

Pictured in the photo:

Back Left to Right: Blake B., Riya Y., Isaac W., Daniel P.
Front Left to Right: Yoyo K., Nicole W., Sharon M., Connor H.



JFS Welcomes Social Worker Mendy Kreiman

Mendy Kreiman, LSW, is a licensed social worker who provides compassionate, client-centered care at Jewish Family Service. He earned his Master's Degree in Social Work from Daemen University in May 2025 and brings more than nine years of experience as a healthcare chaplain and three years as a prison chaplain, offering spiritual and emotional support in challenging settings. During his internship with Jewish Family Service of the Desert, he provided case management and mental health counseling, blending clinical training with a trauma-informed, holistic approach. Recently relocated from California to Pennsylvania, Mendy is committed to fostering resilience and emotional well-being in the individuals and families he serves.



Spiritual (con't from cover)

Themes of each Jewish holiday provide distinct messages about life and the struggles of recovery. We at Jewish Family Service provide services to assist individuals in their recovery from many of life issues. We also recognize that spiritual healing is an aid in an individual's recovery. When needed the staff of Jewish Family Service will assist an individual in accessing resources that fits an individual's particular spiritual need as they work through their path of recovery. No matter what your spiritual beliefs are, give Jewish Family Service a call at (570) 344-1186.

JFS 2025-26 Board Leadership



Left to Right: Rhonda Fallk, Gary Beckhorn, Elliot Schoenberg, David Hollander, Rabbi Daniel A. Bubnis, Dr. Dan Ginsberg, and Sheila Nudelman Abdo.

Jewish Family Service of Northeastern Pennsylvania (JFS) is pleased to welcome David Hollander, Adam Shprintzen, and Lynne Fragin as newly elected members of its Board of Directors. Their election took place at JFS's 110th Annual Meeting on August 7, marking an important step in strengthening the agency's leadership for the year ahead.

The newly elected directors join a dedicated group of returning board members whose continued service provides experience, continuity, and guidance for JFS. Returning Directors include Gary Beckhorn, Rhonda Fallk, Dovid Yehudah Fink, Michael Mardo, and Dr. Nancy Willis.

JFS is also grateful for the leadership of its 2025-2026 Officers: Dr. Daniel Ginsberg, President; Nancy Johnson, First Vice President; Elliot Schoenberg, Second Vice President; Louis Nivert, Treasurer; and Dale Miller, Secretary. Together, the officers and board work collaboratively to support JFS's mission and ensure the organization remains responsive to the needs of the community.



Jewish Family Service
OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

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Jewish Family Service of Northeastern Pennsylvania is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, Member of the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies and is an affiliated organization of the United Way of Lackawanna, Wayne and Pike Counties and the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Barbara and Mel Sapsowitz and to the continuation of their caring work within our community.

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