

Agency Spotlight

Profiles of local beneficiary agencies of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's 2022 Annual Campaign.



Justin Zellinger, a JFCS Board member, and son Matan (now 8) every year help pack Thanksgiving Food Boxes the Sunday before Thanksgiving. It is one of the agency's signature efforts and events. JFCS provides 150 boxes with many meal fixings – to feed about 600 people – to low-income clients, including Holocaust survivors, older adults, people with disabilities and families struggling during a tough time.

JEWISH FAMILY & CHILD SERVICE

Service Area: Social Service: Holocaust Survivor Services, Counseling, Disability Support Services and Community Support (emergency aid)

jfcs-portland.org | 503-226-7079

2022 Allocation: \$182,290

Mission: To improve the quality of life and self-sufficiency of the Jewish and broader communities throughout the Portland metro area in accordance with Jewish values.

On May 18, 2023, “Celebrating Generations” will mark the 75 years JFCS has provided stability and hope. Through the years, JFCS has been very flexible and poised to adapt and respond to community needs.

The pandemic was a challenging time for mental well-being, perhaps especially so for children and teens. This past spring, JFCS hired child and family therapist Laura Cohen, LCSW, to meet the needs of the community's youngest members.

Another service area has evolved at the opposite end of the generational spectrum. Care needs and costs are escalating as Holocaust survivors age. The agency currently serves 60 survivors, whose average age is 85. JFCS is grateful to the Jewish Federation for its increased overall allocation, a significant portion of which supports Holocaust Survivor Services.

“JFCS is dedicated to fulfilling clients’ desire to age with dignity and in place; Federation’s support helps us carry out this mission,” says JFCS Executive Director Ruth Scott. “The majority of (survivor) clients are from the former Soviet Union; 48 percent are from Ukraine. Many people aren’t aware of these survivors’ stories and how they differ from those of survivors from central and western Europe,” she adds, noting many suffered during Germany’s eastern blitz and then behind the Iron Curtain under Stalin.

JFCS is extending its expertise with Ukrainians by collaborating with certified partner organizations to provide for new refugees arriving from Ukraine.

Jewish Federation support also enabled JFCS to hire a volunteer coordinator two years ago. JFCS’ volunteer coordinator educates the community about agency needs and how individuals can help with their gift of time. To learn more, visit jfcsportland.galaxydigital.com.

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Leslie Abrams of Yo Soy Candle will host a December fundraiser for Dignity Grows.

Help Dignity Grow with candle creations

Candlemaking is the next event in a series of *Rosh Chodesh* gatherings created to support [Dignity Grows](http://DignityGrows.org)' mission to end period poverty while offering meaningful, enjoyable experiences for participants.

Dignity Grows provides free hygiene essentials packed in a discrete reusable shoulder bag. Each Dignity Grows tote is filled with a full month's supply of hygiene products and period necessities. The Portland chapter of Dignity Grows is part of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. The JFGP Women's Philanthropy group hosts the project because it embodies the Jewish values of *tzedakah* (righteousness) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world).

“Bring Light Into Your Life” at 5 pm, Dec. 4. During the Jewish month of Kislev, the darkest time of the year, let light into your soul and help that flame grow by blending your own custom-scented, intention candle guided by Leslie Abrams, owner of Yo Soy Candle (yosoycandle.com). Attendees will also enjoy heartwarming teas and local chocolates as well as the opportunity to share their intentions and shine a light for each other. The cost is \$60 with \$25 going to Dignity Grows. In addition, 10% of this event's sales and all December online sales will be donated to Dignity Grows.

“As a Jewish American woman who can relate to what it feels like to be a woman in this day and age, I believe safety, connection, confidence and empowerment are extremely important for our existence, health and well-being,” says Abrams about her decision to donate 10% of her busiest month's online sales to Dignity Grows. “With the support of our communities and other women, I believe we can empower and lift each other up when the world feels heavy and unsafe.”

Whether you buy candles at the event or purchase them online, Yo Soy Candles make the perfect Chanukah gift and bring light to the fight against period poverty.

Proceeds from the *Rosh Chodesh* events go to purchase the personal and menstrual hygiene products needed to fill Dignity Totes. The totes are distributed by Dignity Grows partners, Transition Projects, Virginia Garcia Health Centers, Outside In, Self-Enhancement, Inc., A Safe Place and Divine Threads.

To register and to see the other *Rosh Chodesh* gatherings, visit jewishportland.org/dignity-grows-event-sign-up.