



Jewish Family & Children's Service

CONNECTIONS

Donor Newsletter



Overcoming COVID-19

Though we are apart, we stand strong together.

How dedicated JFCS staff, volunteers and donors like you healed lives

Fall 2020 | Volume 12 | Issue 2



Our rate of kept appointments increased 20% because of telehealth options.

JFCS Addresses Challenges of COVID-19 Head On and Continues to Serve Community

Jewish Family & Children's Service has been a lifeline for the community for more than 85 years. We're here for you. Whatever it takes.

The health and safety of JFCS clients, staff and volunteers is our highest priority. We are proud to share that through teamwork, collaboration and innovation our high-quality care to clients continues, despite the challenges presented by COVID-19.

"While we eliminated all non-essential activities at our healthcare centers and program sites, we know that some individuals do require care in-person," says Mario Lippy, director of behavioral health at JFCS' Michael R. Zent Healthcare Center. "Given this, we are complying with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) best practice recommendations at all locations. We also became one of the first local medical providers to attain the HealthyVerify certification."

HealthyVerify is Maricopa County's only medically based, scientific and professional full-service

certification company that helps organizations minimize the risk of transmitting infectious disease. HealthyVerify and its public health and infectious disease experts from the Barrow Neurological Institute are going above and beyond CDC safeguards when it comes to protecting against COVID-19.

One way JFCS has adapted is the availability of and access to telehealth to serve its clients.

"We began a pilot program to incorporate telehealth services prior to COVID-19, seeking a means to help clients keep appointments despite challenges such as transportation, work obligations or childcare issues," says Lippy. "As such, when COVID-19 hit, we were well-prepared to deploy the program on a larger scale."

According to Lippy, the secure two platforms JFCS uses are similar in nature to Zoom.

The biggest barriers to providing telehealth services thus far have been clients' access to resources as well

JFCS services are virtual.

as proper understanding of the technology. JFCS is working to overcome these barriers through donations as well as grants that allow them to provide needed items, such as tablets and access to a stable Wi-Fi or hardwire Internet connections, both to individuals and families as well as group homes, congruent care facilities and other partners. JFCS educates clients and caregivers unfamiliar with the technology so they feel comfortable.

“The need for tech-savvy volunteers has never been greater. The need for all volunteers, in fact, has never been greater,” says Lisa Blumstein, JFCS volunteer coordinator, noting that overall volunteer numbers dipped slightly at the onset of the pandemic, but have since stabilized. “Volunteers who can help clients upload and learn how to use our secure telehealth app on their devices, as well as those able to show our clients how to use our platforms, would make a tremendous impact.”

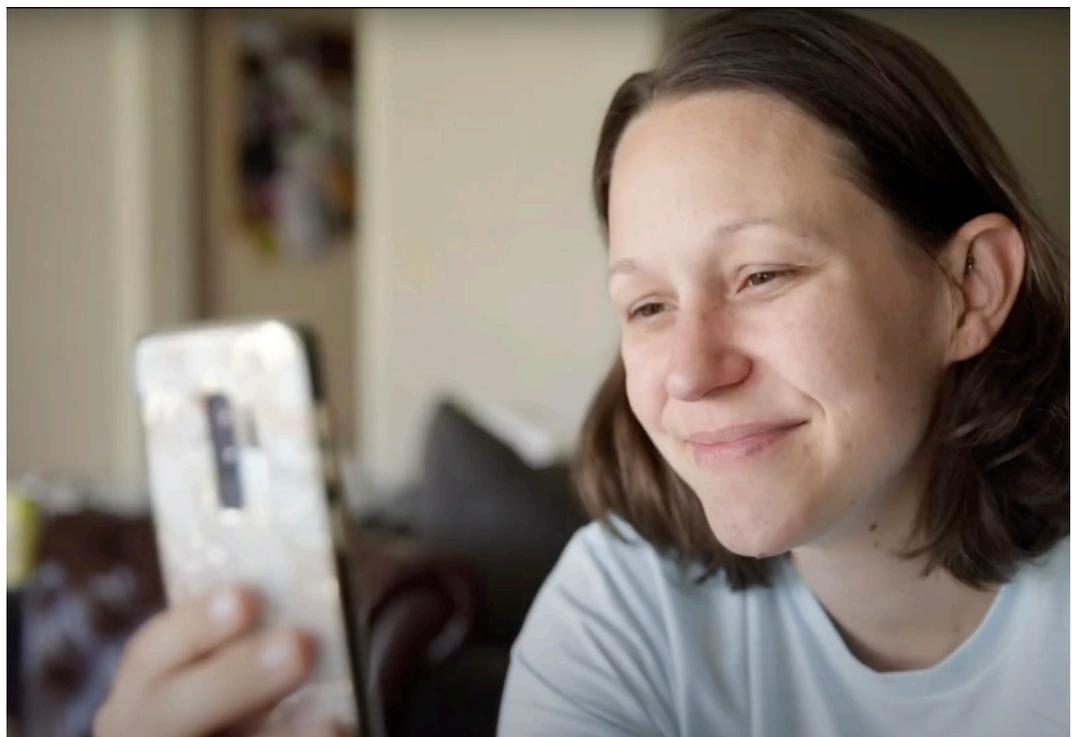
Blumstein and Lippy agree that those that have or are given access to a device with a camera and microphone – including most desktops, laptops, cell phones and tablets – as well as suitable internet connection and the basics on how to use the technology have found great value in telehealth services.

“As a result of our ability to provide virtual visits, our rate of kept appointments has increased from 50% to 70%, far exceeding our expectations,” says Lippy.

Beyond the ability to circumvent the safety issues due to COVID-19 and provide a means for service for those without transportation, telehealth had an added benefit: real-time assessment and assistance.

“If a client has a specific issue happening in the home, he or she is able to turn the camera or tablet and show us immediately versus trying to explain it later in an office setting,” says Lippy. “This helps our team provide an even higher level of assistance.”

First-time or new clients should call 602.279.7655 for assistance.



Support JFCS through an Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Donation

Did you know that the Arizona Department of Revenue provides a dollar-for-dollar credit on your state income tax for making a contribution to Jewish Family & Children's Service?

It's true!

JFCS is among the non-profit organizations in Arizona that is eligible for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit. This individual tax credit is available for contributions to qualifying charitable organizations like JFCS that provide immediate basic needs to residents of Arizona who receive temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) benefits; are low-income residents of Arizona; or are individuals who have a chronic illness or physical disability.

The maximum credit allowed is \$800 for couples filing jointly and \$400 for single filers. To take advantage of this credit, make your Tax Credit gift to JFCS. When filing your taxes, you or your tax advisor should list JFCS as the qualifying charitable organization you donated to and the amount you gave, with the receipt saved as backup. It's that simple!

Amid COVID-19, JFCS needs your support more than ever. Your Arizona Charitable Tax Credit donation of \$400 or \$800 will directly support:

- Emergency dental care for children in need
- Access to technology to ensure those who require it can obtain telehealth services
- School application fees for survivors of domestic violence
- Workshops to fight and stop substance abuse as well as family violence
- One-time emergency assistance needs such as housing and utilities payments, food to support dietary restrictions, fees for birth certificates and state IDs, and other urgent and basic needs
- Bus passes for parents who need to bring themselves or children to therapy appointments
- Foster care youth participating in JFCS' Real World Job Development program
- The cost of books, registration fees, school supplies, and other necessary items to enroll in postsecondary education classes for multiple youth.

On behalf of those we serve, thank you for your support and commitment to the good work we all do in our communities. Should you have any additional questions, please consult your tax advisor.



Giving to the AZ Charitable Tax Credit

Costs You Nothing!



Virtual Backpack Drive



Pictured left: JFCS Volunteer, Ellen Kirschbaum, helps transport backpacks.

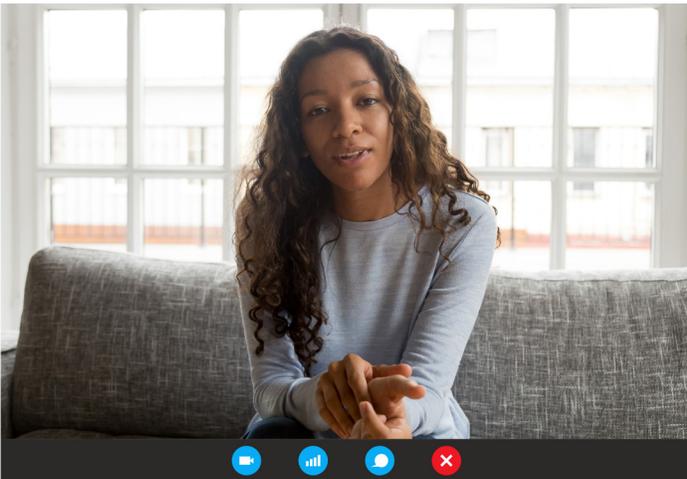
From pencils to clothing, the average family will spend \$670 this year on necessary items for school.

“That’s why each year JFCS coordinates back-to-school events and distributions for families in need. JFCS relies on the hearts and hands of volunteers, donors and partnering businesses for support,” says Lisa Blumstein, JFCS volunteer coordinator. “Among our biggest back-to-school projects each year is always our backpack drive.”

In an effort to ensure the health and safety of all involved, this year’s drive was a little different.

“Rather than drop off their donations at our office, we asked our donors to instead sponsor a filled backpack for \$50,” says Blumstein. “We raised more than \$18,000, allowing us to distribute approximately 1,720 backpacks in the community.”

Domestic Violence Services: Shelter Without Walls



Supporting and empowering survivors of domestic violence is of paramount importance amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have never operated within a traditional brick and mortar setting, instead working in the field and telephonically since our inception,” says Mimi Kaplan, director of JFCS domestic violence program Shelter Without Walls, which addresses the unmet needs of Maricopa County survivors of domestic violence and their children. “As such, we were able to quickly adjust at the onset of the pandemic.”

Currently, Shelter Without Walls continues to offer in-person service when required as well as both telephonic and telehealth options. Its four support groups have moved to a virtual setting.

“Since the onset of the pandemic, we’ve been acutely aware of abusers’ use of COVID to gaslight survivors,” says Kaplan. “The abuser might tell the survivor that he/she won’t be able to survive financially without him/her. Or the abuser might complain he/she is risking exposure at work just to pay child support, in an effort to manipulate the survivor back into the home.”

Isolation-related anxiety amongst survivors is also being reported by Shelter Without Walls advocates.

“When still living with their abusers, victims were systematically isolated,” says Kaplan. “The shelter in place and stay at home orders were major triggers, with many survivors experiencing symptoms of PTSD.”

In addition to addressing these issues, JFCS staff have attended virtual court appearances with clients and helped guide them through the process of obtaining orders of protection online. They’ve also coached those still living with their abuser on safety and exit planning.

Just 3 Things Food Pantry

Pictured left: *Just 3 Things Food Pantry donations fill up JFCS boardroom.*

Seeking a way to make a difference while social distancing? Why not get involved in Just 3 Things?

“This program started as a means to provide food for youth transitioning out of the foster care system in the JFCS Real World Job Development Center,” says Lisa Blumstein, JFCS volunteer coordinator.

Just 3 Things has since expanded collection of non-perishable food to meet the needs of clients at the each of the JFCS healthcare centers as well as for those clients in JFCS’ Shelter Without Walls and Transition to Adulthood programs.

“The program asks for you to donate ‘just three things.’ This small act of kindness will collectively assure our clients won’t go hungry,” says Blumstein.

Items in the highest demand are: rice, powdered milk, canned meat, vegetables and beans, cooking oil, fruit cups, cereal, granola bars, personal hygiene products, dish soap, toilet paper, detergent and disinfectant wipes.



Creative Aging Classes Now Virtual

In an effort to continue engaging clients taking part in JFCS’ Creative Aging classes, two popular programs – Voice Lessons and Storytelling – are now available virtually.

“Both classes are offered over Zoom. And for those unfamiliar with using the platform, there is support to get started,” says JFCS Senior Concierge and Creative Aging Coordinator Janet Arnold Rees.

According to Rees, Creative Aging was launched by JFCS in 2017 as part of a national movement to support seniors.

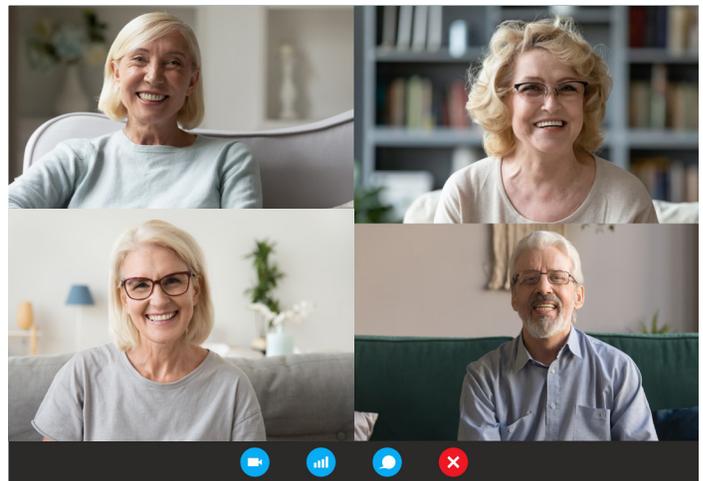
“Studies show that people live longer and have a higher quality of life if they are active participants in the

arts,” says Rees. “To that end, we’ve offered everything from belly dancing and theatre to older adults in our community through JFCS’ Creative Aging.”

The voice lessons and storytelling lent themselves especially well to a virtual setting.

“During the voice lessons, you are given both individual time with the instructor, theatre veteran Dan Kurek, as well as collaborative time in a small group,” says Rees. “Similarly done in a small group, award-winning storyteller Kim Porter’s program features creative writing exercises, games and coaching.”

Rees adds that the JFCS Memory Café, for those with cognitive issues and their care partners, has also successfully been moved to Zoom, as has Kibbitz & Kultur, an interactive arts program for Holocaust survivors.





Brighter Tomorrow Luncheon

A VIRTUAL EVENT

Friday, January 29, 2021



For information and registration, visit:

www.jfcsaz.org/btl

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4747 North 7th Street, Suite 100, Phoenix, AZ 85014 • 602.279.7655 • www.jfcsaz.org



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