

"EACH PERSON IS PRECIOUS"

Headlights

JEP!
*Jewish Education
for Every Person*



Breaking the Chains of Isolation

JEWISH EDUCATION FOR MEETING OUR DAILY CHALLENGES

Spring-Summer, 2021 Vol. 13, no. 1



IN THIS ISSUE

- 4** Passover:
JEEP was there for the "Hidden" Jews
in Our Community!
- 6** Individuals with Different Abilities:
Raising Resilience
Creating Joy
- 7** Healing: Caring through Crisis
- 8** JEEP and Children:
Strengthening Lives over Three Generations
- 9** What's Happening at JEEP
In Tribute: Steve Brenner
- 12** Create Your Jewish Legacy
- 14** JEEP News
- 16** Seniors: A Special Bar Mitzvah
- 17** Seniors: Helping a Survivor/Kadosh Thrive
- 18** Recovery: Gathering strength to beat back addiction
with Cincinnati Jewish Recovery friends

About JEEP

Jewish Education for Every Person

OUR VISION: A Jewish community in which **every person** has access to our spiritual inheritance and can use it to reach his or her full potential.

OUR MISSION: To help local individuals with challenges or disabilities access Jewish education and connections to empower them to better overcome their life challenges.

JEEP SERVES:

Children, youth, and adults who have learning differences, individuals who are patients in hospitals, are residing in senior care facilities, have substance abuse issues or similar challenges.

Please visit us at Jewisheducate.org

Feel free to contact us about Headlights, Jewish education or any of our programs.
rabbi@jewisheducate.org
 1995 Section Rd., Golf Manor OH 45237 | 513-307-2386

JEEP is an independent 501(c)(3) organization and is not affiliated with any other local or national organization.

Jewish Spiritual Tools for Meeting Life's Challenges

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In order to respect individuals' privacy, names and details in some of the articles have been changed.

LIVING THE FREEDOM FORWARD

From Our Rabbi



Dear Friends,

"Freedom" is always a current event which we endeavor to live with throughout the year and in every holiday season.

Freedom can mean many things. There is external freedom: from missile attacks, terrorists, mass tragedies, violent mobs or a repressive regime. From the many external pressures and stressors that can weigh on us individually.

And there is internal freedom: from isolation, depression, our self-limiting or self-abusive voices of discouragement or even addiction.

Living the freedom forward means to make freedom and redemption ongoing processes throughout the year and in every area of our life. The awesome injection of the Passover and Shavuot holidays empowers us to "practice these principles in all our affairs," every day.

True, we often need G-d's help, that outstretched Arm that took the broken Jewish slaves out of an impossibly harsh and inescapable oppression. And we need the inner willingness to step into the looming Red Sea of our daily challenges, to build and strengthen our relationship with G-d and with our Higher Selves. To turn away from self-limiting fear and brokenness and re-receive the Torah and its liberating teachings every day.

Here at JEEP we specialize in helping individuals strengthen their lives through Jewish education and an awareness of their deeper inner selves. We help them to develop their own abilities to step forward to new levels of freedom and growth.

This issue of Headlights sheds a high beam on some of the work we do. We hope this will also inspire you to turn up your own high beams of goodness, kindness and generosity.

Just as we re-experienced our redemption from Egyptian slavery and receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai, we must also work to upgrade our own personal redemption process and that of those around us. Let us increase the light in our own corner of the world with an additional act of goodness and kindness which will surely speed the coming of Moshiach and a world of only good.

Rabbi Yaakov Karp
Executive director

WHY JEEP?

From Our President

- What if you were defined by your weakness instead of your strengths?
- What if you had the best day of your life and no one to share it with?
- What if you didn't have a friend to call on your worst of days?



Too often our lives get busy and we forget, or we aren't sure how to connect with each other. This year, things have been more difficult than ever for our homebound seniors, those in hospitals or nursing homes, those in the midst of their recovery and those with abilities that differ from ours.

JEEP has been there, and we recognize how social isolation negatively impacts our health, our well-being and our Jewish community. We all have had a sense of what isolation feels like due to Covid-19, however, for most of us, that isolation will only be temporary. Perhaps some of us took this opportunity to reflect on the impact that being in isolation made on our lives. For those whose life story is one of exclusion, and separation from our Jewish community, this pandemic only magnified the loneliness.

In the midst of the pandemic, our work came into even greater focus. JEEP was there; we continued to provide support through the use of telephone, Zoom, in person meetings utilizing personal protective equipment, kosher meals to those in need, along with essentials required for every holiday and celebration. JEEP continued to strengthen existing connections, along with discovering immense new needs within our Jewish community.

WHY JEEP? JEEP is here for those who have very few people if any in their lives, our work is the difference between our fellow Jew, being known, loved and thought of, or that same individual being forgotten, alone, and isolated. We need your help to continue providing these vital services.

As we reflect on our own pandemic experiences, please consider making a gift to JEEP to ensure our work within the Jewish community continues. Please feel free to peel off the envelope found in the center of this magazine or donate online at www.jewisheducate.org/donate. JEEP is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your gift is tax-deductible as permitted by law. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and wish you a healthy and happy summer.

David H. Gershuny
President

PASSOVER: JEEP WAS THERE FOR THE "HIDDEN" JEWS IN OUR COMMUNITY!

By: David H. Gershuny

"All those who are hungry let them come and eat..." Over the years how many times have we read this passage from our Haggadahs during our Seders? What does this simple phrase mean to you?

At JEEP we asked: what about our fellow Jews who don't have the ability to participate in a Seder or prepare a Passover meal. We discussed what other organizations were doing in distributing kosher-for-Passover foods; we talked about those who were confined in a hospital or nursing home environment, the individual that did not have the capacity to prepare a Seder. We realized we could not stand idly by and permit any Jew in our community to miss the opportunity of enjoying a Passover Seder. Though the days were short and the task was large, we needed to mobilize quickly!

We had to create a ready to eat Seder meal that included all of the important mitzvah foods. From our extensive experience in the community we initially came up with a guesstimate of 80 individuals in need. JEEP coordinated with local kosher caterers Rood Food (516-993-5654) and Chana Weisberg (513-678-3249) and together we designed and prepared a full Passover Seder meal, consisting of traditional favorites including gefilte fish, matzo ball soup, delicious main course with sides and dessert. What Seder would be complete without the Seder plate, we included one with all the required Seder items. We carefully packaged these dinners and included special handmade "Shmurah Matzoh", enough grape juice for "the four cups," a Haggadah, along with a user-friendly booklet full of Passover information and interesting insights.

As we began preparing these Seder meals, new requests came in, we went from 80 Seder dinners to 90, then 100, finally 127, we had to stop taking orders as Shabbat was fast approaching. The dinners and other items had to be carefully packed in individual boxes and delivered with a smile before Shabbos. Scott Miller a long time volunteer who assisted in deliveries commented "I was taken aback by the fact that there are so many Jews in need, scattered throughout the city, in way out places that JEEP somehow finds. People were very appreciative and happy to receive these Seder meals."

JEEP's Evan Birch commented: "The food and beverage director at Kenwood Senior Star was extremely happy when I came with the truck full of dinners. His eyes lit up like jewels and he started taking pictures." Evan added "One man, residing in a nursing home really touched my heart. He seemed so frail and weak. But when I walked into his room and started showing him the contents of the box, he just lit up. We started reading parts of the Haggadah together, you could see his soul sparked up." Evan found most everyone excited. "People were smiling and so grateful, wishing me Good Yom Tov and Chag Sameach. We

really brought the holiday spirit to them."

Another volunteer, Elisheva Malloy was greeted by impatient excitement when she helped with the deliveries. "At the first facility I went to, the gentleman had checked repeatedly with the desk to make sure we were coming, with great anticipation." She then went to a place that had five Jewish residents over 100!

"One woman started crying as soon as she received her Seder dinner and kept repeating how wonderful this was."

Noam Manory said. "It was a great experience to deliver the Seder dinners. Even though I didn't meet the recipients, as nursing home staff took the meals from me, I felt like I was part of the "army" sent out to help fellow Jews wherever they are." With the help of our staff and volunteers we were able; thank G-d, to overcome all the logistical challenges that invariably emerged. Shabbos was fast approaching; the sun was slipping down towards the

horizon, we were grateful to have delivered those last few Seder dinners throughout the Greater Cincinnati area.

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of some extremely special individuals within our community. We wish to express our deepest gratitude to Josephine Stillpass, Jeff Zipkin, Robin & Brian Goldberg, Mendel & Esther Rosenberg, and The Gershuny Family Foundation for their generous sponsorship. May they be blessed with everything good.

We want to give a special thank you to all of our volunteers and staff for going the extra mile with unmatched enthusiasm.

Next year we hope, pray and trust that we will be completely out of isolation and celebrating together in Jerusalem! In the meantime, we must never forget that there are many individuals in our community in need of so much help to celebrate the Jewish holidays. JEEP is bringing holiday joy and mitzvos, connectedness and caring, to as many of the individuals as we can reach. If you know of individuals who need our help or wish to volunteer, please contact us at rabbi@jewisheducate.org or 513-307-2386.



Evan Birch unloading 35 Passover seder/dinner boxes for Jewish residents at Kenwood Senior Star.



Eli Tomaino and Dassy Belsky preparing the seder plates.

We wish to thank these generous individuals for their kindness who have provided Passover Seder Meals to those who would have otherwise gone without.

Josephine Stillpass

Jeff Zipkin

Robin & Brian Goldberg

Mendel and Esther Rosenberg

The Gershuny Family Foundation

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INDIVIDUALS WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES

RAISING RESILIENCE

Josh* is a gentle, soft-spoken young man who first came to JEEP with one of his friends, and found a place he feels comfortable. Josh has struggled much of his short life with a complex mixture of medical and mental health issues and as a result, can be a loner. In the midst of a difficult childhood, Josh found comfort in his Judaism and wanted to find a place he felt comfortable to participate and celebrate holidays.

He cares about people but can be hard to get to know, not easy to connect with or stay connected to. Sadly, part of his mental health profile includes severe anxiety and trust issues, so it is hard for him to build and maintain trusting relationships to give him the support and validation he so craves and needs. With all that, working, income, and daily living are continuous struggles,



sometimes reaching a plateau, but then a health crisis or other issues can flare and start a precarious slide.

JEEP spends many hours patiently listening, caring and occasionally guiding. This lifeline— Josh has two important things that have each been hard to come by: a trusted friend who is also a rabbi—gives him much emotional and spiritual comfort, as he recently exclaimed. "There is no rabbi who would spend so much time just talking with me and listening with me. It means so much."

Simple time, listening, learning, and invitations seem to continue to give Josh a spark, another burst of resilience for the challenges he faces every day.

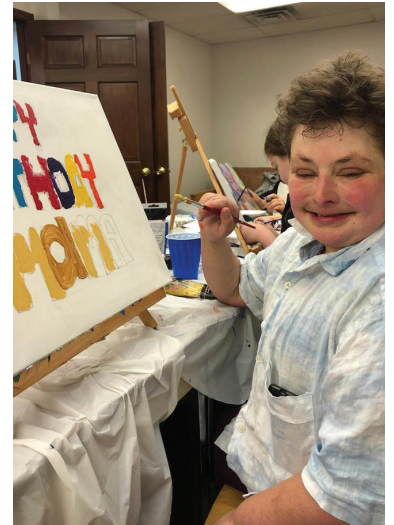
BEST WISHES

**Mark and Suzy Klein
and family**

CREATING JOY

Creative expression is therapeutic, confidence building... and fun! There's something so soothing about mixing colors and spreading paint, and finding your own special way to express yourself and tell your story.

JEEP enjoys bringing creative opportunities to all kinds of people and situations whenever possible. We meet twice weekly in Judaic-oriented craft and cooking sessions with Halom House residents, Baking hamantashcen, crafting graggers, tzedaka boxes, menorahs, apple and honey dishes are just a few of the many projects the residents have enjoyed. Pictured here Amy, Sue and Debbie are creating wooden flower plaques in honor of spring an Passover, Its always exciting to see their very unique personal styles and choices of vibrant color.



Rosie painting at JEEP

Rosemary Lawrence-Slater, affectionately known as Rosie, is an exuberant young woman, who had several painting sessions at JEEP. She loves color and is very expressive. "Rosie was so excited and can't wait to come back!" a friend relayed. We can't wait either.



Debbie (right) and Amy (below)



HEALING: CARING THROUGH CRISIS

JEEP has come to know Neal, a young man, for several years. Neal had come from a traditional home and had a deep love for Judaism. As a somewhat rebellious teen, he felt judged and estranged by his family and synagogue. Though he wandered far from Jewish life, there was a hunger and yearning that never could be filled. After falling into drug addiction he spent years on the edge of physical and mental survival.



Finally stabilizing into sobriety, Neal met another Jew in recovery, who insisted Neal come to a JEEP Shabbat dinner. With great trepidation, he tagged along. Neal was captivated by the warm community, Shabbat atmosphere and acceptance. He started coming with some regularity.

Then a new challenge hit—a serious illness. Neal managed for a few years, having ups and downs, trying various treatments. This fall, the illness seemed to be getting the upper hand. With his natural desire for independence coupled with the pandemic, Neal managed alone as best as he could.

Our rabbis stayed in touch with Neal, and realized things weren't going so well. They started making regular visits, helping iron out medication and appointment issues, and offering companionship, as Neal has no local family. They helped Neal transfer to a hospital and, unfortunately, a hospice when his condition became such that this seemed the only choice.

This has been instrumental, not only for Neal's spiritual and emotional health, but in helping him with eating, hydration, improving communication with the medical team, connecting with friends, mobility; the myriad little details that make the difference between relative comfort and severe distress. May G-d bless him with a quick and complete recovery.

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JEEP AND CHILDREN:

STRENGTHENING LIVES OVER THREE GENERATIONS

By: Rabbi Yaakov Karp

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to meet Rob, an intelligent and usually friendly man. Rob struggled with mental illness, which made him unpredictable and sometimes ill tempered. He often got into flare-ups with his neighbors and most people came to avoid him.

I tried to focus on the jewel beneath the temper and illness and to build a friendship. I initially visited Rob during the holidays and shared the different mitzvos: blowing the shofar for him on Rosh Hashana, helping him shake lulav and esrog for Sukkos, lighting a menorah for Chanukah, giving him special handmade shmurah matzah to eat on Passover, and so forth. We continued meeting and began to learn the Alef-Beis (Hebrew alphabet). As Rob's health declined he became incapacitated and required skilled nursing care. He was subsequently moved into a nearby nursing home. On one of my visits I had the occasion to meet his daughter Elana when she came to visit and help her dad.

I came to understand that Elana lives in a different part of the country. She is a caring mom and daughter but hardened by a roller-coaster life, scraping by to make ends meet. Elana is a traveling salesperson and spends a majority of her time on the road. As much as her dress and demeanor seem more like hard talking road warrior than Jewish momma; she tries her best to be both. Elana brought her son Alan with his charming rural drawl to spend time with his grandpa on one of their visits. Alan is a happy, bouncy, engaging child who learned from his mom to be a proud Jew even though he and Elana are the only Jews in their entire rural hometown and their knowledge of Judaism is quite limited.



Elana was going through a tough period, in the middle of a custody battle with Alan's father; they pulled into Cincinnati one snowy winter evening without adequate clothing for Alan or adequate food for the two of them. I was able to arrange warm clothing, a hot homemade dinner and a Kroger gift card. The next day, when Elana and Alan were rested, well-fed and settled into their temporary quarters, my wife Miriam organized Jewish arts and crafts along with a fun Jewish learning session for them. This was a unique opportunity for Alan, for this was the first time Alan was exposed to any type of Jewish education.

Elana had mentioned that Alan loved to paint. Miriam, an accomplished art teacher, painted together with Alan and Elana. The bonding through arts and crafts was beautiful to see. Alan made an elaborately decorated Tzedaka (charity) box, and Miriam gave him a bag of pennies to fill it with. We shared a couple of Jewish stories and I introduced Alan to the Aleph-

beis. He loved learning the first few letters and was amazed that each letter has meaning. Alan showed us the Jewish star he wears day and night and sang the Shema Yisrael, which he now recites every night with his mom.

I was surprised and quite moved, realizing how a Jewish soul can glow in the most remote places, even in the middle of rural farm country. Through Zoom and other resources available, I hope to continue to help Alan and his mom strengthen their Jewish education and connections as Alan grows into his tween, teen and adult years.

Every one of this unusual multigenerational family has life challenges, and each member, Rob, Elana and Alan, has a gutsy connection with their Jewish core that gives them strength, joy and meaning. I am so honored through JEEP to flame the fire of that inner Jewish spark and continue supporting them. Today this family is facing a new challenge, with Elana's father in declining health and while I wish for all the best we know and understand the eventual outcome (may he live to 120). Elana has asked how she will be able to take care of her father's final needs, how will she be able to pay for a Jewish burial. As in the past JEEP has been there to assist in the burial of our fellow Jews. Today we continue working on raising funds to secure a Jewish burial for Rob, along with the other Jews in our community without resources.



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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT JEEP

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Monday-Friday 5:55-6:25 AM: Early start Chassidic insights

Sunday 10:AM Jewish law and Chassidic philosophy

Sunday 7:45-8:30 PM How to serve G-d with our mind, heart and action

Monday 7-8:00 PM Chassidic studies and Beginner's Chumash

Tuesday 7:00-8:00 PM Torah basics for every person

Wednesday 1:00 PM Torah portion of the week

Wednesday 7:00-8:00 PM Open Jewish Recovery Meeting

Thursday 7:00-8:00 PM Women's Parsha class

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IN TRIBUTE:

Steve Brenner

The JEEP family is saddened to learn of the passing of a devoted friend of JEEP, Mr. Steve Brenner. Steve was a hard-working businessman, owning real estate interests and Affordable 24/7. His ads have graced the back cover of Headlights for over ten years. Steve was a straight shooter, warm, philanthropic, and proud of his Jewish heritage. JEEP has been blessed to have him as a loyal friend and supporter. He is survived by his son Ben. May his memory be for a blessing.



Why we Raise Money

These uncertain times underscore and highlight that investing in Family and Community continues to be the very best way forward. Supporting JEEP during this season will continue to grow our organization for years to come.

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Thank you to the generous supporters in our Legacy Circle. Because of you, JEEP can continue our important work, now and into the future.

With your help we are providing life altering assistance to those in need. Keep in mind, our work is the difference between our fellow Jew being known, loved and thought of, or that same individual being forgotten, alone, and isolated.

Your gift or pledge, no matter the size, makes this happen!

The Legacy Circle



We salute and thank our dedicated partners for supporting JEEP through the Create Your Jewish Legacy program:

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Brad and Susan F. Glazer
Len and Marilyn Horwitz
Josephine Stillpass
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Malachi and Adina Gruenhagen

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JEEP NEWS: JEEP CELEBRATES THE MITZVOT OF PURIM WITH OUR COMMUNITY

By: David H. Gershuny

Purim is a holiday of intense joy that we all can use on any given year, but especially this year. Its celebration includes giving gifts of food to mark the unity and joy of the Jews when they were miraculously saved from Haman's genocidal plans. Whether it was not being able to congregate due to Covid-19 restrictions to hear the Megillah, having access to a hamantashen or even a simple Purim dinner, none of this seemed possible for many within our community. How were we going to celebrate this joyous holiday and fulfill these beautiful mitzvot (commandments) of Purim?

JEEP began by creating a safe environment for those who wished to fulfill the mitzvah of hearing the Megillah. Participants were sitting in their cars, listening to a young energetic Rabbinical student reading the Megillah from a safe distance and booing Haman! This turned out to be a truly memorable experience for those in attendance.

With Covid-19 restrictions in place we were not yet permitted to visit many senior facilities. That did not stop JEEP. We created mishloach manot (Purim food gift) bags which we delivered to the activities directors of each facility and they in turn delivered them to each Jewish resident. Our beautifully prepared packages included a couple of hamantashen, fruit, and a juice along with two coins. The coins enabled the recipients to give charity as required on this joyous holiday. We also included an insightful brochure explaining everything about Purim in a simple, entertaining, and well-illustrated style.

In some instances, we were able to meet with individuals and exchange mishloach manot. "Why did we exchange these packages?" you may ask. We did this to comply with the general mitzvah of Purim joy. When we offer to exchange our mishloach

manot we enable that person to also give mishloach manot, fulfilling the joyful mitzvah of sharing with another person!

JEEP did not stop with just providing mishloach manot. We made sure that individuals or families that were not in a position to make a fitting feast for Purim (or perhaps didn't know about the mitzvah and joy of such a Purim feast) would be able to enjoy one. A generous donor partnered with JEEP to underwrite these dinners.

We heard back from some of the grateful recipients: Melissa: "I was surprised that you schlepped so far out to bring me the mishloach manot along with a Purim dinner." Another family recently lost their home to flooding. The father, Irv, a senior, challenged by dementia, shook our representative's hand with a surprisingly strong grip. He positively lit up, exclaiming with joy, "the Rabbi is a wonderful person, he never forgets about us!" Another recipient, Jan, was surprised and grateful. She had hardly left her small apartment for an entire year and only cooked minimally for herself. "This year, the Purim dinner was a real special surprise for me."

Personally, when you hear me say, "Why JEEP?" this is JEEP in action. JEEP is there for the "hidden" Jews among us!



Evan Birch placing Purim item(s) into bag

*Wishing you happiness, peace,
prosperity and a healthy,
meaningful summer!*

Rabbi Yaakov Karp
Executive Director

John Stillpass
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JEEP celebrates a special Bar Mitzvah

A special man named Sammy Green, like many, had a nominal Jewish education and went about his life. He was always a proud Jew, but it was more in the background. In his later years, something changed. Sammy's soul stirred, and he wanted to reconnect on a deeper, more personal level to his roots and tradition.

Sammy asked his cousin David to get him a mezuzah to wear close to his heart and print out a transliteration of the Shema, so he could start to recite it.

Sometimes, when we're ready, G-d seems to send the right connection, the right messenger to take us to the next step.

Rabbi Fuss was visiting Jewish residents at a senior facility among the many that JEEP visits. He met Sammy and the two formed a friendship.. Sammy shared his desire to connect more. He decided, it's never too late, and he'd like to become Bar Mitzvah. No elaborate kiddush or theme party, but Rabbi Fuss helped Sammy do the beautiful mitzvah of donning tefillin, which is started at the Bar Mitzvah, of any age.

This mitzvah has the particular quality of strengthening the connection of the mind and heart with G-d, exactly what Sammy was seeking. He was thrilled and moved to reach this meaningful milestone and have this important Jewish experience.

A few short months later, Sammy passed away. JEEP is grateful to have had the opportunity to know this fine man and be involved in this most special Bar Mitzvah.



**IN THIS SEASON TO CELEBRATE
FREEDOM, WE SUPPORT JEEP IN
ITS QUEST FOR FREEDOM FROM
ADDICTION AND ISOLATION.**

NANCY, RON, & SCOTT

Happy Summer

from the Rothenberg family

Helping a Survivor/ Kadosh* Thrive

*Every survivor did so much more than merely survive. They are kadosh, have a special holiness, having suffered the worst trials because of their Jewishness.

One of JEEP's early drives was seeking out and connecting with seniors in various facilities, who were often so isolated from Jewish celebrations and community. We offered simple friendship, a fellow Jew's presence, whenever appropriate-- a prayer, holiday foods, a meaningful and nostalgic Jewish song that can stimulate memory, sharing precious memories of childhood seders and bubblies, and more. Over the years of visits, sweet and enduring relationships have been built that have often impacted the families as well.

Rabbi Fuss has been seeing an older gentleman, Hirschel,* at a senior facility for several years. A Holocaust survivor and widower, he is alone in Cincinnati. Hirsch's son passed away several years ago, and his daughter lives out of state. Rabbi Fuss has gotten to



know the family, as he also visited Hirsch's son Steve when he was ill and in a nursing home. When Steve passed away, the family asked Rabbi Fuss to lead the funeral.

This year, during Corona, the family once again knew where to turn for help. Hirsch was hospitalized with heart issues, so before his daughter could get to Ohio, she called Rabbi Fuss and asked him to check on Hirsch.

"I have a relationship with the hospital, so they found a way for me to visit within the parameters of their Covid restrictions. I suited up and stood at Hirschel's door. He was lying in bed looking quite wan and weak, but as soon as he saw me he perked up. 'How are your wife and children? What are the kids up to?,' he asked."

"After we spoke a bit, he seemed thirsty, and said he wanted water. Since I was only allowed to stand at the door, I asked if he knew how to press the call button, and it turns out he couldn't



reach it. I got the nurse to bring water and help him with the button. It might seem like a small thing, but when you're weak and alone and thirsty, it can be giant. I'm so glad I was there to help bridge that gap."

"I spoke to the nurses, and told them that Hirschel was a Holocaust survivor. For many, it was the first such person they'd ever met, a bit of history coming alive. I emphasized what a hard life he'd had, all he'd been through, and they were moved and inspired to give him extra care and attention. I got his daughter on the phone, they were able to speak for the first time in weeks, and they both were very grateful."

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RECOVERY: GATHERING STRENGTH TO BEAT BACK ADDICTION WITH CINCINNATI JEWISH RECOVERY FRIENDS

Rachel* is a mom, a loving Jewish mother. Of an addict.

Living in a large Jewish community in the west, she has been through years of hell. There were years of wanting to see her daughter's struggles as a temporary and normal adolescent malaise. Rachel has waded through good advice, bad advice denial, blame, shaming, ostracizing, strain on her marriage and family, and the normal mom's urge to rescue her young adult daughter.

The stresses of the pandemic only added fuel to the fire, as her daughter S spiraled out of control. Rachel knew she needed to not just care for S., but to do so well and keep her own head above water, she needed a safe place to share, vent, bounce off ideas, and be understood and supported. She had finally come to understand that she could only change herself, and worked to pull back from codependent and enabling behaviors; so hard when a mother's urge to rescue is shouting just the opposite.

Rachel connected with some co-dependent support groups, but also sought that Jewish camaraderie. A friend told her about Cincinnati Jewish Recovery's weekly recovery meeting. The meeting had switched format to Zoom during the pandemic. So the food and personal gathering are on the shelf for now, but to every cloud there is a silver lining. This warm community now has no geographic limit. Friends from many states have met and bonded.

Rachel joined the group and quickly formed friendships. An articulate woman, she shared her struggle to maintain firm boundaries, even while she saw S. struggling, her heart

breaking.

The open honest discussion, the safe place to share with friends who've walked similar paths of addiction or codependency, with Jewish warmth and insight, all fortified her. Rabbi Karp offers lead-in questions, stories, challenges and ideas, based on the parsha or holiday, and the floor is open, with sharing current or past struggles and victories, and hard-earned insight, born of the grit of the recovery path and the open honest humility that working the 12 steps develops.

One week, Rachel agonized over what to do about her daughter, who she and her husband had made the heart rendering decision to force to leave the home while she was using and refusing treatment. She

shared, fighting back tears, "She's outside right now, banging on the door." She literally had to sit on her hands, stay on the call, minute by minute, fighting the urge to give in and rescue her baby. By the end of the call she felt heard, hugged (as much as you can be virtually) and fortified by the caring, prayers, blessing of her new friends, to try her best to stay the course and "turn it over to G-d."

Just one week later, Rachel sounded like a different woman, hope and energy in her voice. She excitedly informed the group that with their support, she had finally stayed strong, held firm and not enabled S. by acceding to her demands and pleas. Pushed to dig into her own inner resources, S. made a big move. She told her mom, "I've decided to go to a Jewish inpatient addiction center for detox and stay for their long-term rehab." Rachel and her husband had suggested this numerous times, but now it was S's decision. And that makes all the difference.



The group showered Rachel with Mazel Tovs and shared their hopes for S's continued and smooth as possible road to recovery. Cincinnati Jewish Recovery is grateful to have provided the platform for these special people to meet and for the synergy of their support that helped make these hopefully life-saving changes possible.

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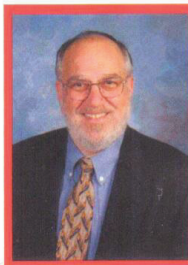
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