



We of the Caring Community hope that everyone in your family are doing well and staying Healthy. We are blessed to have so many volunteers who help make our Caring Community all it can be. One of the blessings that we have available to our membership is the incredible resource for help provided by WJCS and namely Shari Baum. Listed below are the many opportunities where Shari has answered the call. Should you need help it is only a phone call away. Wishing you a Happy and Healthy Covid Free Summer.

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WJCS - PARTNERS IN CARING REPORT

Shaaray Tefila 2019-2020

This year my colleagues and I worked with **33** individuals as part of the 3 free sessions allowed under our **UJA Federation of New York's Partners in Caring** grant. My contact information is included in all the bereavement notices that the Caring Community sends to members of TST who have suffered a loss. From July 1, 2019 - May 28, 2020 that number is **39** recipients. Our bereavement coordinator has also met in ongoing sessions with 4 families who have either suffered a traumatic loss or have had a difficult time coping with the grief of their loved one. This service is free for the family and provides an invaluable resource when people feel so vulnerable. The Covid-19 situation has made this all the more challenging. We are prepared to address the ongoing trauma around the issues of bereavement and mourning as we continue to cope with Covid-19.

Working together with Lisa Roberts, we continued our support group for people who are dealing with the challenges of caring for their rapidly aging parents. We have had at least **15** people in the group, with a few new people joining from the TST community and the wider Northern Westchester area. We were having a difficult time meeting during the winter months so we cancelled for January and February, hoping to resume in the Spring. Once Covid-19 hit, we were not able to resume and we will try to rebuild this group again when the time is right. After the many years that we met, we were able to support many of our group members through the challenges of caregiving and then through the death of their loved ones. The group was a model that I replicated at other synagogues after the success at TST.

This year working with Allie and Lisa, we continued to offer a group for parents who have children who are intermarried or inter-dating. "Let's Talk About It" met once this year with 7 people attending. The topics we discuss include celebrating holidays, accepting religious differences, grand parenting, wedding ceremonies and more. This group is a wonderful resource because parents who have already

navigated many of the rituals that are stressful, i.e. wedding ceremony and birth of grandchildren to name two, have shared their experience and best practices. It really has been so supportive for new members who are beginning their journey with their adult children.

We continued to offer our **Movie Monday** program during the year and Wednesday Movie Evenings in the summer up until March when the building closed. Between July 2019 and March 2020, we did have about 12 programs with a total of 64 people attending. From April through June, we are meeting on ZOOM, transitioning from a Movie and discussion to a Shared Memories, current events and general check in format. We will continue to meet virtually as long as we can not meet in person.

The flexible model of **Partners in Caring** allows me to meet with people wherever it is convenient for them.....the Temple, the diner, a private home or even on the phone. Issues around family dynamics, bereavement, dealing with issues of aging parents, coping with Alzheimer's, parenting teens in trying times, bullying, issues affecting the sandwich generation, specific care giving challenges, unemployment and underemployment struggles including financial support, divorce and chronic illness are just some of the concerns congregants are struggling with and asking for help. The challenges of the pandemic have increased the needs around most of the issues we face in normal times. With the support of UJA Federation and other income streams we are hoping that we will be able to continue and perhaps increase our services to the Jewish community.

Nine years ago the **Havorah** program (Jewish programming for individuals with disabilities and their families) that WJCS has had for more than 20 years has been put under the **Partners in Caring** umbrella. In September 2019 the **Havorah** program celebrated Rosh Hashanah at **Shaaray Tefila** where more than **50** people attended along with many volunteers. Unfortunately, we were not able to host our annual Seder due to Covid-19. All programs for Havorah had to be cancelled for the year, and we are not able to even plan for the Fall. Dates are being negotiated for the Seder, with the hope that we will be able to hold it in the Spring. The warm welcome by TST to our Havorah guests is a highlight for our program. The outpouring of spirit and volunteerism from everyone at TST is remarkable. Again, a program that is a model for our community. We remain hopeful that by the Spring we will be able to celebrate Passover in 2021.

I continue to be a resource to the **Caring Community** for referral and advice whenever needed. This has been my 18th year as the Partners in Caring coordinator. I feel very much a part of the TST community and it has never been more apparent than during this difficult few months. We are the call that people make when they need help and I am so proud to say that we have been there each time...for clergy, congregants and staff. It continues to be an honor to work with the extraordinary members, lay leadership, clergy and staff at **Shaaray Tefila**. Thank you as always for your partnership and support.