

# JCC Mid-Westchester Honors Scarsdale High School Student at Annual Fundraiser

The JCC Mid-Westchester (JCCMW) honored Scarsdale High School student Samantha Friedland, the center's "Volunteer of the Year," at its 2022 Spring fundraiser. Ms. Friedland was recognized for her commitment to the JCCMW's Sunday Funday offering for special needs children, a program she's participated in for the past six years.

Ms. Friedland began volunteering for the JCCMW's Sunday Funday as part of her Bat Mitzvah social action project but opted to continue after fulfilling her initial obligation. Since then, she's devoted near every Sunday morning, from September to June, to the program, 144 mornings in total.

"The kids who attend the Sunday Funday program really benefit from coming together and seeing the same volunteers every week," Ms. Friedland says. "Being there, it feels like you're making a difference."

Ms. Friedland has found additional ways of serving the needs of children in Westchester and beyond. In 2020, she co-created with her classmate Michael Emmerman an outdoor day camp where children could safely socialize amidst the closures resulting from the pandemic. As part of a group project at school, she also launched a program called Buddy Connect that connects teenage volunteers with special needs children based on shared interests. A graduating senior, Ms. Friedland will be attending the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University this Fall.



Samantha Friedland

"We are so proud of Samantha for all she's accomplished and her devotion to the children and families who rely on JCCMW volunteers," said Elise Dowell, CEO of JCCMW. "We look forward to celebrating her at our fundraising event."

The JCCMW fundraiser, "A Night Under the Stars" took place on Tuesday, May 17th. In addition to Ms. Friedland, the event honored Donna DiFalco, who received the organization's "Heart and Soul Award" for her 40 years of service to the JCCMW Nursery School.

## 10 Tips to Make the Most of Your Telehealth Session

BY W. ANDREW MULLANE, PH.D., DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION, INTEGRATION, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AT WESTCHESTER JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Once the Covid pandemic started in March 2020, at Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS), the largest provider of outpatient, licensed, community-based behavioral health services in Westchester county, our clinicians instantly pivoted to providing services remotely, via telehealth. Just in the past year, we have provided over 90,000 mental health services, via in-person, secure video, and phone sessions.

At a time when anxiety and depression have been on the rise, having access to mental health care via telehealth has been a lifesaver, according to many of our clients. It has allowed people to access treatment more easily, reducing their travel time, eliminating obstacles to those who have difficulty accessing transportation, and reducing treatment disruptions if, for instance, a client needs to stay home due to illness or child care responsibilities.

In order to help make the most of telehealth sessions, we offer the following 10 tips:

1. Gather all the information you might need before your appointment. This may include a list of your medications (with dosages), medical conditions, problems and symptoms you want to address, and a list of questions for the healthcare practitioner.

2. Find a private spot in your home so you feel comfortable and can talk openly to your healthcare provider.

3. Make sure you know in advance if your appointment is supposed to be by phone or video chat.

4. Be sure that you are able to accept blocked calls since your provider may need to call you from a blocked number.

5. Accept any call that comes into your phone around the time of your appointment, irrespective of whether your appointment is supposed to be by phone or video chat because it could be your provider calling you.

6. If you are going to have a video chat appointment, make sure the lighting in the room is good so your provider can see you.

7. Make sure your technology is ready and reliable. Have a secure and dependable Wi-Fi connection if your telehealth appointment is by video chat. If you are doing your telehealth visit by cell phone, make sure you have a good cellular signal.

8. Mute your phone and eliminate any other distractions so you can focus on your session with your provider.

9. Give yourself extra time in case the appointment starts late or runs over its scheduled time.

10. Take a deep breath when you begin your session. Remember that the provider you are speaking to is there to help, not judge you. Think of your time with your provider as time spent talking to a trusted friend who is there to help you.

For information about WJCS mental health services, please go to: <https://www.wjcs.com/services/mental-health/>

## Senior Law Day at Ridge Road Park

Westchester County Executive George Latimer has announced that the 22nd Annual Senior Law Day will take place on Thursday, June 16 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Ridge Road Park, 287 Ridge Road in Hartsdale. The free event will be held outside, to enjoy the fresh air.

The Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services (DSPS) will provide five educational talks on topics of interest to seniors and their families and one-on-one consultations with experienced elder law attorneys, certified financial planners, and geriatric care managers. County agencies and non-profit organizations will also be available in a separate exhibitor tent during the event. Finally, the Westchester Library System (WLS) will have a new e-van on hand dedicated to promoting digital equity among English and Spanish speakers. The WLS team will help people

with their devices and share library resources.

The program is hosted by Westchester County DSPS and the Senior Law Day Collaborative (SLDC). It is open to all County senior citizens and their families. Registration is encouraged, but walk-ins are welcome. Sign-up for the free, 15-minute, one-on-one consultations when you arrive. To register, call 813-6300. Free parking and restrooms are available.

The Workshops will focus on: Organizing Your Legal and Financial Affairs; Top Financial Concerns and Wishes; Top Housing Concerns; Trusts, Inheritance, and the Court System; Protecting Yourself. Melinda Bellus of Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, Elena Falcone, Westchester Library System, and Sarah A. Steckler of Warsaw & Burstein, LLP, co-chair the Senior Law Day Collaborative. Sponsors of this year's event are: Enea, Scan

## After Buffalo, NY: Reimagine What's Possible: No Hate in Our States



MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL, DIRECTOR, AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD: CLARKSIEGEM@AJC.ORG

In the aftermath of the horrific, racist mass-shooting attack in Buffalo, NY, we are featuring Buffalo Mayor Byron W. Brown in "AJC: No Hate in Our States".

Mayor Brown was featured in AJC's Community of Conscience segment during its Global Forum. Mayor Brown spoke about hatred, racism, antisemitism, and the power of communities joining together. This interview is edited - the full segment and information about combating hate can be found at: [www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org).

**Q:** Mayor Brown, we stand united with Buffalo after this horrific attack. Please tell us your experience with encountering hatred. What happened?

**A:** Buffalo, NY, Mayor Byron Brown: May 14th was a warm, sunny day in Buffalo. Children were riding bicycles, people were shopping in stores. I was at the first T-ball game for my great-niece and nephew. Then, I got a call from the police commissioner that there had been a shooting.

They knew that people had been killed and a suspect was in custody. I rushed to the police command post at the Tops supermarket...13 people had been shot, and 10 were deceased. It was a shock to the system.

Law enforcement pieced things together quickly and determined that the shooter traveled to Buffalo from 3-1/2 hours away to kill as many Black people as possible. This was somebody that had white supremacist ideology. They believe he had been radicalized on social media.

**Q:** What are the main lessons/takeaways that you want others to know?

**A:** Mayor Brown: There has been shock, anger, pain, grief. The community is sticking together, trying to hold each other up and heal.

I want to thank the American Jewish Committee (AJC). We received a letter of support from AJC within hours of the horrific attack, and your

support means a lot to us.

We are a strong community, a resilient community. We're known nationally and internationally as "the City of Good Neighbors". We are working together as a community to get through this very painful situation.

The lessons are that we have to be vigilant at all times. We have to be watchful. We have to pay attention. When we see hate, we have to speak out against it.

**Q:** Please comment on the importance of working with others in the fight against hate and all types of bigotry. Why is this necessary?

**A:** Mayor Brown: There are all types of forms of hatred. We know that this individual, via the manifesto they wrote, hated Black people. They hated Jewish people. They hated immigrants, and new Americans. This person was filled with hate.

The hate wasn't exclusive to anyone. Hatred toward one group of people is hatred toward all of us. We are stronger when we stand together. We can fight hate more effectively when we work together.

That's what we have to do now. We have to work together to prevent people from being radicalized in the ways of hate on social media.

**Q:** What is your message to those who fear the rising tide of hatred in the United States and want to make a difference/fight back?

**A:** Mayor Brown: We must speak up. We must speak out. There are many different ways to help. We can express our love for others in social media, in our workplaces, in our classrooms, in our homes.

We can donate to organizations that work against hatred and that try to prevent hate from taking root. There are many things that we can do.

Everyone can do something. Collectively, coming together, sharing our experiences, our backgrounds, our strategies, to eliminate hate make us more effective in working against hate in our communities.

I want to thank the American Jewish Committee [AJC] for your work and tireless advocacy against hate in all its forms. We have a shared commitment to fight against hate.

Myra Clark-Siegel is AJC Westchester/Fairfield regional director. To join AJC: [westchester@ajc.org](mailto:westchester@ajc.org).