



Meira and Stephanie



THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR GALA SO MEANINGFUL!

The WJCS Gala on April 16th was a resounding success because of your deep commitment to the well-being of everyone in our community! As our Honoree Meira Fleisch so beautifully said, "In times when the world seems so bleak, we rely on our Jewish values AND our Humanitarian values to take care of each other. And that is how we get strength."

Honoree Stephanie Marquesano shared her heart, and her pain of losing her son, and reminded us all that the work we do together Saves Lives! **We can't Save Lives without you!**

Thank you to Meira and Stephanie, our Dinner Chairs Shirley Shwiel and Julian Gomez, Sponsorship Chairs Mariquita Blumberg and Dean Howell, the Gala Committee, and all of our attendees and donors for your support.

When you need some inspiration just watch our videos to view just how great an impact you have on people's lives at www.wjcs.com/get-involved/wjcs-events/gala.

Please consider providing support—Your Heart is Big...Our Need to Help is Great!



Dean, Lauren, Mariquita



Bruce and Seth



Shirley and Julian

You Build Resilience, Health, and Well-Being.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. It's because of kind, caring people like you that WJCS can provide vital, evidence-based services to people in Westchester who are struggling with mental health challenges and trauma.

Meet Tiffany, one of many people who faced what seemed like overwhelming obstacles until she came to WJCS:



I experienced sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse. In high school I dropped out. I was pregnant and thought that was going to be my life, working as a cashier, trying to take care of my baby. I was so depressed when my first daughter was younger. I would constantly think about my life, my troubles, my poverty, the abuse, and just not feeling comfortable in my own skin.

Until I started therapy at WJCS, I had no idea I had so much damage done to me. I started to understand how it affected me and why I was reacting to the world the way I was. I was having trouble in school, making friends, keeping meaningful relationships, or even just feeling the joy of being alive.

My therapist was there for me every step of the way. I'm so grateful for everything I've learned. My coping mechanisms, my sleep patterns have gotten better, and I've just overall gained this enormous confidence. I see life in a different light.

Fast forward.... Now I'm a home health aide and plan to become an RN. I love school. I take care of my body and mental health. I take time to sit down, think things over, give myself appreciation, and give myself time to feel.

There's a strength that I've gained and I think that's going to carry with me throughout the rest of my life. Without the therapy I've received, I don't know where I'd be today.

I would never have come this far.

YOU change the lives of our Westchester neighbors in remarkable ways. YOU help fortify their resilience. YOU strengthen their resolve and YOU provide that anchor of hope that things will get better.



Tiffany's experience is not unique. Countless people deal with depression, anxiety, abuse, substance use, and other difficult challenges. Your good heart ensures that children, teens, adults, and seniors, regardless of background, have access to the care and support they need. **Each person you help to overcome their struggles makes the world better for their family, for future generations, and for our society.**

YOU bring joy, connection, and confidence to adults with disabilities.

Just because someone has a disability, it doesn't mean they don't have hopes, dreams, things they love to do, good days, bad days...

Because of YOU, our adults from all backgrounds with disabilities are living the best life possible and our amazing staff support them every step of the way.

Pizza-making tips from an expert chef, a visit to Bryant Park in Manhattan, celebrating Purim, vocational counseling, a fun Supermarket Sweep activity to enhance grocery shopping and budgeting skills, a hibachi dinner, outings to ball games, and much, much more.

When you give to WJCS, you help individuals with disabilities live full lives!



Weekly social programs for WJCS Shelanu, a community of young adults 18 years and older who are on the autism spectrum, have created long-lasting friendships and lots of good times.



Beth, WJCS Chai House resident



POINT is a program that supports adults with developmental and learning disabilities living independently in apartments in White Plains.

"Thank you for another beautiful Shabbat service. We really appreciate what you are doing for the WJCS POINT participants on so many levels. The service and what you created was especially meaningful this month post October 7th."

YOU foster a strong foundation for early childhood development and literacy.



The impact of WJCS Parent-Child programs has been life changing. I became connected when I was a first-time mom and needed to give my children a chance to socialize with other children and equip me to foster a love of learning. We learned about the WJCS Summer Hartley Park program, then found out about the WJCS Parent Child Center, and then the WJCS ParentChild+ Home Visiting program.



The Parent-Child programs helped guide us with the fundamentals of social emotional readiness for preschool and how to interact with other children and grownups. It empowered me as a mom, to support my child at home, at school, and be the best advocate I can be. The programs provide resources, connections, and mentoring to families who may be new to the country, limited in language, and limited financially.

The programs have given parents an opportunity to become more confident in themselves.

They're encouraging the strengths of the families. *I bump into former parent participants all the time and they tell me how well their children are doing in high school and college.*

The impact trickles out into the community because it helps people become the best versions of themselves.

~Ariana is now an Early Learning Specialist and Peer Support Specialist in the WJCS ParentChild+ Program



WJCS celebrated The Week of the Young Child/El Dia de los Niños, April 6-12, with a host of special story hours and musical events at libraries throughout Westchester. We were honored to host author Marisa Boan, who captivated us with her delightful book about artist Mondrian. Assemblyman Steve Otis joined us to add magic to the day!

YOU empower seniors.

You and WJCS help seniors age safely in their homes and community, whenever possible.



"My husband and I are in our 80s and have lived in Yonkers for over 60 years. Our plan has always been to 'age in place.' This past year, I found myself living alone after my husband sustained an injury which has resulted in a long stay in a rehabilitation center. I have not felt safe driving for a number of years, and I found myself in need of transportation to be able to visit my husband. My daughter helped me connect with the WJCS Yonkers NNORC. Alexis and Mary of Yonkers NNORC were lovely, and ably assisted me in applying for Westchester Paratransit Services, so that I could access low-cost door-to-door transportation. Their help proved invaluable in securing the transportation services which enable me to maintain my independence and regularly visit with my husband. We've been married for 69 years. Spending as much time as we can together is so very important to us both."

*~Gina, Member of our
WJCS NNORC Program in Yonkers*

PLANT ROOTS FOR YOUR FUTURE THIS SPRING!



This spring, WJCS is planting deep roots to nurture and expand our mission. **Now, you can plant your own with a free will-writing tool available on WJCS.com.** It's a simple way to find security for yourself and your loved ones, while growing your legacy and continuing your impact on Westchester in transforming lives for the better. Have questions about legacy planning? Contact Mary T. Rahe, Director of Development, at mrahe@wjcs.com. **Thank you for being part of our passionate and determined group of supporters.**

YOU help our Westchester neighbors in tough times.

Thanks to your support, the WJCS Jewish Programs and Health & Healing Support Services continue to fan out across the county to comfort adults, youth, and seniors as we all try to make sense of what is going on in the world.

These past six months have been incredibly difficult for so many in the Jewish community, as well as people of all backgrounds. The horrific attack against Israel, the significant antisemitism, and the decrease of civil discourse have touched us all. For those with family in Israel, children on college campuses, children and adults looking for explanations or having conflicting views, and our Holocaust Survivors, it has been especially challenging.

Thanks to your steadfast compassion, you continue to ensure that WJCS is here for the most unimaginable moments in the Jewish community and Health and Healing throughout Westchester County...when tragedy occurs here in our own backyard, we provide the emotional and trauma-informed support to help individuals and families through the grieving process to the process of healing.

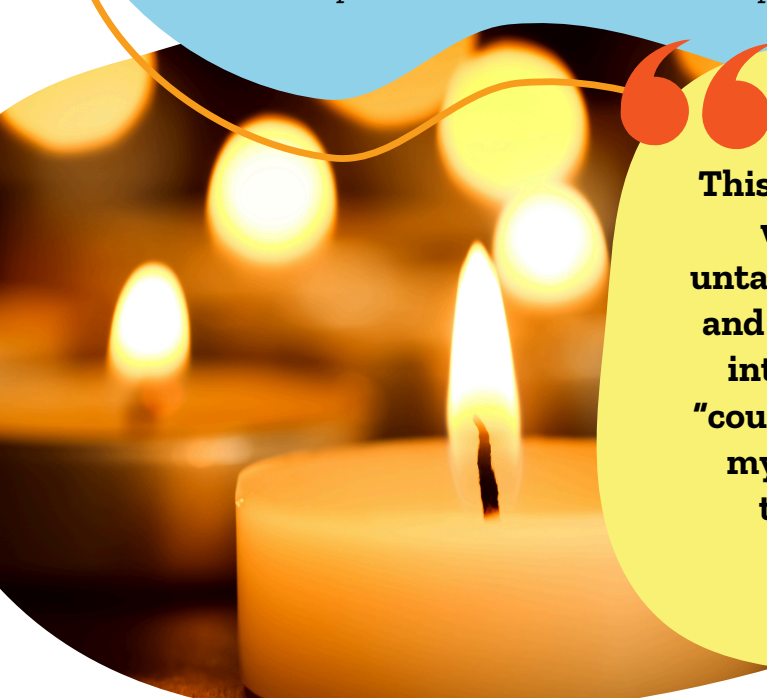
"Kudos to WJCS for offering a Bereavement support group to the community. Dealing with grief is a need which is often not addressed. Thank you for taking the lead in supporting individuals during this painful stage in their lives and facilitating the development of their resilience as they face this challenge."

~Participant in a WJCS Bereavement Support Group



This morning I realized how much I enjoyed being with our group. Our discussions, problem-untangling, heart-felt tears filled me with laughter and solace. I am working on setting and living my intentions; one is to spend some time each day "counting my blessings," and another is to express my gratitude to those who have blessed me. So thank you all from the bottom of my heart!

~WJCS Pathways to Care client



Pathways to Care has expanded to the Rivertowns!

WJCS Pathways to Care supports the pressing needs of individuals of all backgrounds with chronic illness and those of their family caregivers, through clinical support and education regarding the chronic illness itself, and best practices in managing community-based palliative care related to the chronic illness. We have been providing palliative care support for those diagnosed critical, chronic, and life-limiting illness for over fifteen years in central and eastern parts of Westchester County.

This expansion to the Rivertown communities will further WJCS's overall goal to work throughout the county with people of all backgrounds to better cope with emotional, environmental, physical, interpersonal, and social challenges. A special thanks to Phelps Community Healthcare Foundation for funding this expansion.

If you or someone you know needs support, please contact Sarah Lieberman, LMSW, at 914-761-0000 x2141; slieberman@wjcs.com.

How to help WJCS and help yourself.

- ♥ **Donate stocks.** Many WJCS supporters donate appreciated stocks to support our mission, while also legally avoiding capital gains taxes.
- ♥ **Give from your IRA.** A tax-free IRA gift is a powerful way to support our work while reducing your future tax burden and meeting your required minimum distribution for 2024.

GET INVOLVED!

Our **Back-to-School Backpack Drive** provides hundreds of children in Westchester's under-resourced communities with new backpacks and school supplies so they can have a good start to the new year. **Sign up to volunteer for our Backpack Drive! Contact Mary T. Rahe at mrahe@wjcs.com.**

To explore our WJCS Volunteer Opportunities, go to wjcs.com/get-involved/volunteer.

You have made sure we have the ability to help when people need us the most. We are grateful to you!





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5 TIPS FOR READING TO CHILDREN AND PREVENTING SUMMER SLUMP



1. Follow your child's lead. Read at their pace, using your voice to bring the characters to life. Sing and use movement to spark your child's interest.
2. Talk about what you see in the pictures and what is happening in the story. Wonder out loud: "I wonder why the boy is frowning?" "I wonder what will happen next?"
3. Find things in the book that resonate with your child's experience.
4. Don't worry about finishing the book. Having positive associations with reading is more important than finishing the book in one sitting. You can always come back to it!
5. Read the book again and again and again! Children love routines and repetition because it helps build mastery. Eventually they can fill in the blanks or tell you the story themselves!