



750 White Pond Drive
Akron, OH 4432
330.867.3388
jfsakron.org

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE OF AKRON

CONNECTIONS

Newsletter for Friends of JFS Akron



A division of JFSA Cleveland



From the Director's Desk

By Buffy Ramos LSW, Director of Older Adult Services

In 1990, the United Nations set October 1st as the "International Day of Older People." While I love that, I often wonder—how can we celebrate older adults more often and better support everyone's aging journey?

As we enjoy the beauty of Ohio's fall, I keep asking myself: What more can we do for seniors? One answer is interconnectedness. We've all heard the phrase, "It takes a village" to raise a child. I believe the same is true for older adults—it takes a village for all of us to age well.

Neighbors can check on those living alone. Arts and sports groups can invite older adults to join their activities. Teachers and social workers can design programs that bring generations together. When we connect across ages, we create dignity, health, and quality of life for seniors.

Here at JFS, we value our community partners who make this possible. In this issue, you'll read about Palumbo and Sweet, an elder care legal firm that recently educated our seniors with important information they might not have known otherwise. Partnerships like this strengthen our network and help pave the way for older adults to age with confidence and support.

Save the Date JFS HANUKAH PARTY

Thursday, December 18
10am
Shultz Campus for Jewish Life



A Summer Cruise on the Historic Portage Princess

The Portage Princess has been a familiar sight on Portage Lakes for decades. Originally launched by John Roessner in 1980, the large pontoon boat became known as the only vessel on the lakes able to carry up to 50 passengers at a time. In 2013, Dusty's Landing purchased the boat, continuing the tradition of offering tours for groups who want to experience the lakes without the challenge of owning, renting, or navigating their own boat. Today, the Portage Princess remains a favorite way to explore the waterways, history, and scenery of the area.

On August 6, twenty older adults—including JFS clients, Holocaust Survivors, Arts & Culture participants, and staff—enjoyed a two-hour cruise aboard this historic boat. With Captain Al at the helm, the group toured Turkeyfoot Lake while learning about the Portage Lakes, which were originally developed as feeder reservoirs for the Ohio and Erie Canal through the construction of dikes and dams.

Guests relaxed under clear blue skies, waved to passing boaters, and enjoyed a Kosher box lunch from Efrat's Catering. Valerie Becker summed up the afternoon simply: she "loved it!" The Portage Princess cruise has become a beloved annual tradition, and participants are already looking forward to next summer's voyage.



John Vollmer, Marvin Rosenthal, Tina Siniawksi, Jane Jasper, Vicki Goldman, Jadyn Williamson



Larisa Malevannaya, Jeff Cunningham, Lois Reaven



JFS Akron is a division of
Jewish Family Service
Association of Cleveland. JFSA
CLEVELAND



More Music & Holiday Celebration—Thanks to Jewish Akron

This July, JFS was honored to receive generous grant support from Jewish Akron, strengthening our shared commitment to serving older adults in the community.

With this funding along with funding from Ohio Arts Council, JFS will expand Music and Melodies, a therapeutic program led by licensed music therapist Rachel Osherow. Held at our office on White Pond Drive, the program fosters relaxation, self-expression, and connection. As one participant shared, “I love coming to the music class each month... I feel relaxed and happier when I leave.”

Jewish Akron’s support also makes it possible for JFS to host joyful community holiday celebrations on the Schultz Campus for Jewish Life—including a Hanukkah party this December and a Purim celebration in March 2026. These intergenerational gatherings will bring food, fun, and meaningful connection.

Together, JFS and Jewish Akron continue to create opportunities for older adults and families to celebrate, connect, and thrive.

From Worry to Peace of Mind *Because No One Should Age Alone.*

When Darlene’s family began noticing her increasing memory problems, they grew worried. At 80 years old, Darlene was still living alone in her Akron home, but she was finding it harder to manage daily chores, stay socially connected, and walk safely around the house. Her family knew she wanted to remain independent, yet they were concerned about her well-being and reached out to Jewish Family Service of Akron for guidance.

JFS Akron staff quickly became partners in helping the family navigate this difficult transition. A licensed social worker visited Darlene’s home, completing an older adult assessment and talking with both Darlene and her family about their concerns and hopes. Together, they developed a plan that included extra support while the family worked on moving Darlene closer to them.

JFS helped coordinate a home health aide to assist with chores and connected Darlene with *The Extra Daughter* for companionship. Biweekly home visits from the social worker gave the family peace of mind, while also ensuring that Darlene had a trusted advocate listening to her preferences. Since Darlene no longer drove, she began using JFS’s Silver J Ticket program for free rides to medical appointments. Supported by the Albert L. and Janet S. Schultz Foundation, this service provided not only safe, reliable transportation but also warm, friendly interactions with volunteer drivers—something Darlene came to treasure.

With these services in place, Darlene was able to stay safely in her home until her move could be arranged. Her story shows how JFS Akron supports both older adults and their families—through assessments, home care, transportation, and ongoing guidance—helping seniors remain safe, connected, and supported through life’s changes.

If you or someone you know is in need of JFS’s services, call (330) 867-3388.



Allan Sweet

Jaclyn Palumbo

Palumbo & Sweet: Advocates for Aging Ohioans

Attorneys Allan Sweet and Jaclyn Palumbo focus on helping older Ohioans understand their rights in estate planning and Medicaid. A key step is creating powers of attorney for health care and finances. These documents ensure trusted individuals can step in when someone can’t manage daily matters—from paying bills to making medical decisions.

When long-term care is needed, Allan and Jaclyn advise clients on protecting assets, often helping preserve a lifetime’s savings. Many are surprised to learn Medicaid rules don’t require applicants to spend all their assets on care. Instead, funds can be used for

a spouse’s needs, given as gifts to family, or saved for expenses like a private room. These options are rarely explained by Medicaid offices or nursing homes.

Allan and Jaclyn value sharing this knowledge, giving families peace of mind and choices they might not otherwise know exist. They offer free consultations to discuss how they can help. **To connect, call (330) 849-5020 or visit palumboandsweet.com.**

TOGETHER AGAINST HUNGER



(left) Kim Garra and Buffy Ramos sort through boxes of cereal.

Community Unites to Stock JFS Food Pantry

In April, just before Passover, JFS organized a community-wide food drive in partnership with the JCC, Mandel Early Childhood Center, The Lippman School, Jewish Akron, and local synagogues. Together, we collected more than 500 pounds of food for the JFS Pantry on the Schultz Campus. A highlight came when Early Childhood Education Director Kim Garra arrived at JFS with nearly 200 boxes of cereal generously donated by children and families from the Early Childhood Center.

These donations go a long way in fighting food insecurity at a time when grocery prices continue to rise and many families struggle to make ends meet. With anticipated cuts to programs like SNAP, the need for community support is greater than ever. We invite you to support the JFS Food Pantry year-round. Items

most needed include mac and cheese cups, tuna, peanut butter, oatmeal, pasta and sauce, and healthy cereals, as well as personal care essentials such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo, and warm socks for the winter. Every contribution helps neighbors in need.

Call the JFS office to coordinate your drop off time: (330) 867-3388.

When Neighbors Can’t Reach the Pantry, JFS Reaches Them

JFS is partnering with the Akron-Canton Food Bank to deliver boxes of shelf-stable food to Jewish Akron community members who are homebound due to disability or lack of transportation. JFS will assess eligibility and the Akron-Canton Food Bank will coordinate deliveries directly to clients’ homes.

Each box includes staple items that can be combined with other foods to make meals. While selections and dietary needs cannot be customized, recipients are encouraged to share any items they cannot use.

If you know someone who may benefit, please call the JFS office at (330) 867-3388. Current clients should contact their JFS case manager to ask about registration.



AKRON-CANTON REGIONAL

FOOD BANK