



JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES (CAPE)

CHAIRMAN AND DIRECTOR'S REPORT: 2021

Mission Statement

To develop, implement and coordinate social protection and poverty reduction solutions for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged in the Cape Town Jewish community. To provide quality social welfare services to enable them to meet life's challenges.

Our Values

- Respect for Human Dignity
- Integrity
- Service Excellence
- Community Participation

Vision

The vision of Jewish Community Services is to be recognised as the leading provider of innovative services that promote quality of life in keeping with Jewish ethics and values. Together, we can build a caring, self-sufficient community with dignity, harmony, and happiness.

Introduction

Last year was exceptionally challenging for Jewish Community Services Cape (JCS).

JCS and the Jewish community faced and overcame huge challenges, the requests for Social Services increased dramatically, which include, inter alia, material relief, food, rental, accommodation, medical care and basic essentials from existing and new clients. Moreover, family support for their particular family members have significantly diminished, which has had significant financial consequences for JCS.

In the face of increasing demands and diminishing resources, JCS has had to undertake an extensive strategic review of existing services, resources, and current needs, as well as the extent to which it could meet both material and social service requirements. The number of indigent and vulnerable members of the Jewish community requiring material relief, food, accommodation and psycho-social support continued to increase at an alarming rate.

Social Services

JCS Social Workers were involved with very intricate and sensitive matters.

The community we serve is a microcosm of the larger community and we witnessed, experienced and are exposed to virtually everything that occurs in the wider community. We are still dealing with the impact of COVID and its economic consequences. This has been evident in multiple areas - increase in assistance for accommodation, food, and financial assistance.

JCS Social Workers were managing on average 480 cases per month, made up of singles, individuals and couples.

This gives a total of approximately 1200 individuals per month requiring some form of social services intervention.

Some trends have been noted:

- Interpersonal conflict management with clients living in shared accommodation.
- Several clients struggling with severe Depression and anxiety.
- Elderly – lonely and isolated and at risk, requiring accommodation.
- Childcare matters – strengthening of relationships, awareness of unhealthy parenting patterns and facilitation of a Parenting Plan.
- Emotional support for unemployed clients and impact of financial challenges.
- Family conflict/Domestic Violence.
- Mental health issues and a committal of a client to NSH in terms of the Mental Health Act.
- Substance dependence related issues.
- Clients sourcing shelter – no accommodation.
- Suicide attempts.

The JCS Social Workers and Auxiliary Support Team can be commended for their tireless commitment and dedication in servicing and supporting all of the Clients in need under very challenging circumstances

Material Relief

Material relief continued to increase, which is evident by the number of community members JCS had to/and continues to assist financially. These clients require financial assistance towards shelter, food, grants and disbursements, medical care and basic essentials.

As a result of COVID, many of our clients were retrenched or had their employment hours reduced, which resulted in many approaching JCS for financial assistance.

Moreover, the families with whom we had partnered with in supporting their child/parent/relation were similarly affected by COVID and the economic environment, resulting in diminished financial support, which has had a significant impact on JCS and has contributed to our deficit.

Clients who were previously receiving a state disability grant were unable to renew due to lockdown. In addition, many clients who previously received their medication through the State Government Hospitals were unable to collect or receive it due to COVID, which placed further pressure on JCS to intervene and assist.

All new clients approaching JCS during and after lockdown were assessed to ensure they met the financial relief criteria. Clients were offered emergency food hampers and/or food vouchers in the interim.

299 recipients were assisted prior to COVID, in 2020, the need increased to 423 recipients requiring some form of financial assistance in 2021. The average disbursement during 2020 was R736,181 per month versus an average of R851,059 per month in 2021.

JCS continues to make every effort to engage with family members in an attempt to ensure that they honour their obligation to contribute and partner with JCS in respect of their family member. Each client is re-assessed every three months and we have engaged Pro Bona Financial Advisors who have been assisting clients with their expenditures.

Thank you to Bevan Buck, Financial Manager and his team for the efficient manner in which the Financial/Admin Department is being run and managed.

Secure, subsidised accommodation – Rentals and Sheltered Accommodation

Accommodation

JCS provides secure accommodation to approximately 250 indigent and vulnerable members of our community. There was an increase in demand from clients who are unable to afford accommodation, which JCS provides, either in our owned accommodation, or financial assistance is provided towards their rental. At present, this figure is escalating weekly. Each client needs to sign a Sheltered Accommodation Agreement which enables JCS to relocate clients, should the need arise within our portfolio.

JCS owns 38 apartments and we are providing accommodation to 71 clients. A further 58 rooms, flats and homes are being rented to accommodate families and individuals, bringing the total number to 191 who are being accommodated.

JCS provides 34 aged clients with JCS owned accommodation and rented rooms and homes. This is a new responsibility that should have ordinarily have been the responsibility of Highlands House, which was never budgeted and/or anticipated with concomitant significant additional costs.

JCS Co-existing adult Residential Home – Milner Road, Sea Point

Towards the end of 2021, JCS purchased another home, a 17-bedroom guest house, which enabled us to accommodate a further 16 clients. This is the first co-existing residential initiative within the Cape Town Jewish Community, whereby clients live in a safe and secure environment, sharing facilities, overcoming loneliness, and creating a home for themselves.

Formally opened in December 2020, 4 clients moved in before year-end. Over the span of the next six months, the home was fully occupied with 17 residents. The main vision for this residence is to serve as a step-up facility where clients are assisted to upskill themselves and take part in an employment programme. Each client needed to commit to the WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) programme which was put together by the client and their social worker, highlighting their personal and business goals, including their strengths and skillsets. The aim being to plot their independence from JCS. This is part of the JCS theme **“Let’s give a man a hand up and not only a handout!”**

JCS Social Workers engage with the clients regularly ensuring they are managing in their current environment.

Child Protection and Family Matters

At the end of December 2021, JCS had 46 family-related issues which included Child Protection matters involving minor children who were exposed, at risk and potentially in need of care and protection.

By the end of December 2021, there were 34 pre-statutory cases and 9 statutory cases.

Nine of the children associated with these statutory cases are in the care of Oranjia Jewish Child and Youth Centre, one child was placed in the temporary safe care of Oranjia pending finalisation and five children were in the care of their parent/parents subject to a Monitoring Order in terms of the Children’s Act 38 of 2005.

Both statutory and pre-statutory cases were given priority and intensive and extensive services were rendered to these families.

Pre-statutory and statutory cases involved 74 adults and 61 children.

JCS continues to receive a subsidy of R247 670.00 from the Department of Social Development for its Child Protection Programme.

Aged Welfare Clients

JCS Social Workers during 2021 saw a significant increase in the number of elderly people needing support and interventions. The demand reached a point where JCS had to implement a carer system and employ a full-time carer to provide much needed monitoring and support to elderly clients living alone in the community.

160 elderly persons required support from JCS, during 2021. Some of these clients resided in JCS-owned accommodation and some lived independently. Several clients living independently required daily care or domestic services. JCS has had to outsource other nursing carers and domestic services to keep track of these clients' wellbeing. We have **33** clients waiting to move into a residential home for their own safety.

The reality is that people are living longer, and their finances have been depleted. Many of them have no family members to provide them with the support they require, and this results in their being vulnerable without the support of JCS. They often live in poverty and isolation with no family to provide support.

JCS lost several elderly clients due to COVID and other illnesses.

The caseload of the elderly continues to increase sharply, these clients are over the age of 65 and still living independently in the community; many were forced into retirement, and many are also facing increasing frailty and vulnerability. They are not able to provide for their basic needs on limited or no income, with only a state pension of R1 920.00 per month.

Some elderly clients live in cluttered and unsanitary conditions and need material assistance as well as emotional support, practical assistance with household chores, shopping, and attending medical appointments, as well as regular monitoring of their safety and wellbeing. These clients do not fit the latest Highlands House criteria, as they are only admitting people who need full-time nursing care.

COVID exacerbated the loneliness of most of these clients and we needed to ensure they were safe in their environment. The greatest concern remains the welfare of the elderly requiring the continual support and services of JCS. The elderly should ordinarily be a Highlands House responsibility and obligation.

Mental Health Issues

A significant percentage of the JCS caseload consisted of people suffering mental health illness. These clients required intensive and extensive intervention and monitoring. The number of mental health cases increases yearly:

- 2019 – 190 Psychiatric cases
- 2021 – 220 Psychiatric cases

JCS dealt with 15 voluntary/involuntary admissions to hospitals due to mental health issues.

Five clients required care in private facilities, two of whom reside in JCS accommodation and live independently, with close monitoring by nursing carers.

There was also an increase in the number of clients requiring involuntary admissions under the Mental Health Care Act due to suicidal ideation or psychotic episodes. It appears that COVID exacerbated mental illness. COVID also affected drug recovery relapses.

There has been a further increase in children requiring psycho-educational assessments, requested by schools and/or ordered through the Children's Court. These assessments are critical to the wellbeing of the child as it assists in recognising which therapies or medication might be required, which is a further cost to JCS.

The total psychiatric expenditure for the year amounted to R1,825,849.

Substance Abuse and Dependence Issues

Substance abuse and dependency had a devastating effect on individuals, families and the community. The impact being emotional, financial, physical and mental.

During 2021, several clients were admitted to treatment centres for substance abuse and most of these were financially covered by JCS for primary and secondary care. JCS admitted five clients to inpatient treatment at substance abuse rehabilitation centres, at a cost of between R4,500 and R5,500 each per month.

All substance abuse and dependence clients are supported by our Social Workers, and those identified as "at risk of relapsing" are worked with more intensively, especially through periods of grief, holidays when they may feel isolated or feel they need to celebrate, and during the COVID period which left many with high levels of depression and/or anxiety. On discharge, JCS Social workers provided preventative intervention to ensure clients had the best chance to avoid relapse.

JCS Tikvah Foodbank Programme

By the end of December 2021, we found ourselves navigating a new world which is still affected by COVID in everything we do, creating a new normal. The JCS Tikvah Foodbank saw the number of recipients grow exponentially over the course of the pandemic.

The recipients of the JCS Tikvah Foodbank are no longer the same recipients who were receiving welfare in the past, some over many generations. We now have a new type of recipient, added to the food supply. These same people never expected to ever need welfare, many of whom feel ashamed, embarrassed, and scared of what the future holds. We encouraged them to realize how blessed they are to be part of a community who will never forget about them and will be responsible for their well being as best we can.

We continue to work very productively, in JCS's recently renovated Foodbank, out of the Highlands House ground floor area on Gorge Road. Increased numbers coupled with high demand means that we have an even greater responsibility and role to play in our community.

At the beginning of this pandemic, we started distributing food parcels three times per month and this has remained in place:

- Non-perishable kosher food items once a month
- Fresh fruit, vegetables, eggs, challah and bread twice a month

JCS Tikvah Foodbank delivered **8,950 food parcels** to our recipients over the course of 2021, feeding 516 people (239 were being fed pre-covid). Food Hampers were delivered three times per month totalling 795 food deliveries a month. 20 emergency food parcels were and still are kept on standby for clients requiring emergency food parcels, which the social workers allocate.

In addition to our monthly food parcels, in celebration of all the Jewish Chaggim and High Holidays, we send specific food hampers to our recipients to celebrate each of these Chaggim.

This year, we computerized our inventory and systems, allowing us better control our inventory and minimize the possible waste of perishables. In addition, we were able to forecast the requirements of our community with greater accuracy, stock control, and cost capturing, which ensured JCS could keep track of cost to client.

JCS continues to ensure that pricing received is competitive by requiring three quotes, and donors have been forthcoming in sponsoring meals.

Meals on Wheels prepared by the staff of Highlands House, are also delivered to some individuals in conjunction with a food hamper. These are meals supplied to those who are unable to cook, as well as families requiring more food. JCS also disburses emergency food vouchers, when required.

The cost of Meals on Wheels to JCS for the year ending December 2021 amounted to R940,001 excluding VAT. This exceeded the R500,000 budget by 88% due to the 20% increase in cost per meal (R15.00 to R18.00) and a 36% increase in the number of recipients (154 in Dec 2021 versus 113 in Dec 2020).

Volunteers:

The Tikvah Foodbank relies heavily on the incredible team of volunteers who pack, sort and deliver items and manage our recipients. These volunteers spend days preparing for each delivery that goes out.

Our volunteers offer their services every single day and we on-boarded a fantastic team of new volunteers who are just as passionate and willing to assist whenever needed. Without their assistance, JCS would not be able to provide the required service delivery, and we are thankful to these incredible volunteers for their support.

The Foodbank Committee works tirelessly ensuring that the JCS Tikvah Foodbank runs efficiently and effectively.

Community Development Initiatives

Residential Cottages

JCS community cottages provide accommodation for 11 people living with a chronic psychiatric condition in two separate but linked group homes. The two cottages are leased from Highlands House at a rental of R33,000.00. This community resource provides a comprehensive range of services within an infrastructure that supports, uplifts and optimises all aspects of the residents' functioning and quality of life. This includes financial relief, individual counselling and case management, group work, 24-hour crisis intervention, community projects and relevant programmes.

In this way, JCS meets each resident's emotional, spiritual, physical, psychological, occupational, and recreational needs. The two respective homes are licensed by the Department of Health as residential mental health facilities (as required by law).

We have a challenge to achieve full compliance of requirements for licensing. Electrical compliance certificates were issued in 2021, however, fire compliance certification is now required in order to obtain the outstanding health clearance certificates. Ongoing registration is conditional on meeting these requirements. A fair amount of expenditure is required to achieve compliance.

Both cottages accommodate a live in-house mother where three employees rotate shifts to avoid burnout.

During the lockdown and increased restrictive periods, residents' needs for recreation, occupation, stimulation, and purpose were curtailed. To alleviate boredom, the services of the support worker were extended to provide weekly occupational sessions with a range of activities.

All residents were fully vaccinated in 2021 and due to a focused, persistent and consistent programme of education and resident and staff engagement, no cases of COVID were recorded during the first three waves.

These group homes play a vital and invaluable role in combating stigma and upholding the dignity and worth of individuals living with mental illness.

Due to COVID, some initiatives unfortunately could not be implemented or were delayed, and the plan is to implement these in 2022.

Gorge Road Mental Health Facility

Due to Covid-19 the development began late 2021. The Gorge Road care group home opened on 1 March 2022. The group home will be a supportive, structured living environment where everyone can reach their potential.

Mission

At JCS we believe every person can live a happy, productive, and healthy life, and that every individual has the ability to learn, grow and manage their illness. We treat all residents with dignity and compassion, using every opportunity to increase their self-confidence, as they learn new and different ways to cope with the real world.

Goal

To provide a supervised, safe, warm and loving home for those members of our community living with a psychosocial illness. Research has indicated that, for people who are adequately supported and have the functional capacity, transitioning to living in a community setting is an important step to recovery.

How do community housing facilities help recovery?

- It helps reduce stigma. People living in community housing are more accepted, less lonely, and have a greater quality of life (as compared to those in specialised treatment facilities).
- Quality community housing can reduce the "revolving door" phenomenon experienced by so many people with mental illness.

Gorge Road offers stability, domesticity, support, and quality of living, living in a group home improves social relationships and overall wellness and functionality.

A panel was set up to interview all clients who applied in order to assess their social and financial situation, as well as support required.

Bargains Galore

Unemployment Upskill Program

Bargains Galore is not only a second-hand clothing and accessory store but it also provides sheltered employment to many JCS clients which allows them to earn a small income.

We are reliant on the Cape Town Jewish Community to donate clothing and household goods, with JCS providing a free collection service. Our clients are given donated items that are deemed necessary, while the balance of the goods is sold to the public.

PROGRAMS INITIATED – 2021

JCS – Employment Programme and Wellness Recovery Action Plan (Wrap) Project for Clients

Vision: Create a community that is self-reliant and not dependent on communal structures for financial support.

JCS has made a commitment to assist those clients dependent on JCS to find employment and have instilled a work employment programme. Each client who is supported by JCS and is employable will participate in the JCS WRAP programme. The objective of the plan is to help each client map and plan their future within a two-year period. JCS has collaborated with Quantum Growth, Staffwise and ORT Jet to assist in the Programme to encourage and motivate our clients.

Work shadow programmes

We appeal to businesses to give of their time, opportunity, and expertise – this is a bold new project aimed at building skills, confidence, and opportunity. Our workplace integration programme aims to open new doors for unemployed community members and build self-esteem to enable them to perform in their new skillsets ENOSH (an Israeli Organisation) guided JCS with their program on upskilling vulnerable clients.

Marketing

JCS continues to highlight the plight of the indigent and vulnerable members of the Cape Town Jewish Community.

Social Media Marketing platforms proved to be very effective with an incredible following.

Some of our social media activity included:

1. Showcasing the new JCS co-existing residence in Milner Road Sea Point – First Adult Jewish Community Home for JCS clients.
2. Collaboration and Awareness Programs with Communal Organisations.
3. Mitzvah Mensch – Highlighting the youth giving of their time to the JCS Tikvah Foodbank.
4. Chaggim Appeals – JCS Tikvah Foodbank continual appeals for donations - ensuring clients have meals for Pesach and Rosh Hashannah.
5. EOLI – 180 Hero Campaign.
6. Meal donations in honour of Eric Samson's birthday.
7. Donor Meetings held to showcase the residences.
8. Video created on all Initiatives and flighted on social media.
9. Marketing campaign to raise funds towards the new Gorge Road development.
10. Donor Appeals in lieu of gifts.

11. "People in our Community are Hungry" fundraising for the JCS Tikvah Foodbank.
12. Mailchimp updating the Community of the need for food and shelter.

2021 Internal Developments/Strategies and awareness programmes

- Restructured Admin Department.
- New Foodbank Co-ordinator appointed – Gina Winkler.
- JCS assisted with the implementation of a Mental Health Volunteer Program in conjunction with SAJBD, EOLI and CSO.
- CJSA and JCS continue to ensure the safety and security in the community and ensuring no duplication of services.
- Safe House rented.
- JCS assisted CTJERS on an administrative level.
- POPIA Act Compliance.
- UJC Panel Presentation – "A streetcar named Corona" presented with Lance Katz and Steven Nathan.
- Social media, presentations and partnering with other community organisations to assist in our awareness campaigns.
- It was critical that a short- and long-term strategic plan be put in place, and policies and procedures are re-aligned. There is a new mode of working and we needed to ensure that the JCS Team was prepared for the changes as we continued to serve and support our community efficiently and effectively.

2022 INITIATIVES

New initiatives are planned for 2022 which are in line with JCS's vision and mission to ensure we effectively address the unemployment, co-existing residence, material relief, psychiatric and care of the elderly:

1. Volunteer based "Family Programmes – Big Brother – Big Sister".
2. JCS Warm Homes for the Aged - Elderly Person Group Residential Homes (an immediate requirement).
3. Opening of the – "**Gorge Road Mental Health Group Home**" – Clients assessed and approved via a Panel/ Programs implemented/ Staff selected.
4. Staff Succession Plan implemented.
5. Strategy for sustainability.
6. Infographics published regularly to aid communication and understanding.
7. 'Fundation Telethon' – fundraising campaign.
8. Internships for unemployed clients to assist in upskilling them.
9. Maintaining contact with new and existing donors.
10. Consistently educating the Cape Town Jewish community with awareness campaigns on relevant topics.
11. Family contributions, bequests and trusts – new avenues need to be constantly explored.
12. International funding opportunities – sourcing new funders and organisations.
13. Social media, presentations and partnering with other community organisations to assist in our awareness campaigns.

- 14. Showcasing the Foodbank and new residential homes.
- 15. Continual Foodbank appeals – with our dynamic JCS Foodbank Committee.
- 16. Sourcing a Youth Home for Young Adults.

Funding will continue to be a challenge and JCS will need to find alternatives in order to secure the additional and existing support required for the JCS Tikvah Foodbank, Shelter and funding of operational costs. Without our donors and volunteers, we would never be able to assist, support and service the indigent and vulnerable members of our Community.

What defines JCS can be described by what Mahatma Gandhi said: “that the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others” and that is what we do every single day, is to serve and look after those who cannot look after themselves.

Our vision for Jewish Community Services has always been to create a caring and compassionate community in which the aged are venerated, the hungry are fed, the poor are clothed and the oppressed are made free.

Nelson Mandela said “overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life”.

Without donations we could never perform the work that we do, nor support the vulnerable and destitute Jewish members of our Community.

It is through donations that enables us to continue to do the work that we do to ensure that JCS continues to be a dependable and stable anchor in the lives of those individuals and families in need who depend on us and who are entitled to live with dignity and self-respect.

Paul Berman
CHAIRMAN



Hazel Levin
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR