

Federation Chaplains

March 1, 2021 - February 28, 2022

Chaplaincy

Jewish Federation proudly works with our nine professionally trained Jewish chaplains to provide spiritual care throughout our community. Federation’s chaplains are in several major medical centers, senior housing residences, and are also available as needed to individuals in their homes, over the phone, through Facebook or Zoom.

Let's Talk About Where Our Chaplains Spent their Time.

Where our Chaplains visit clients:

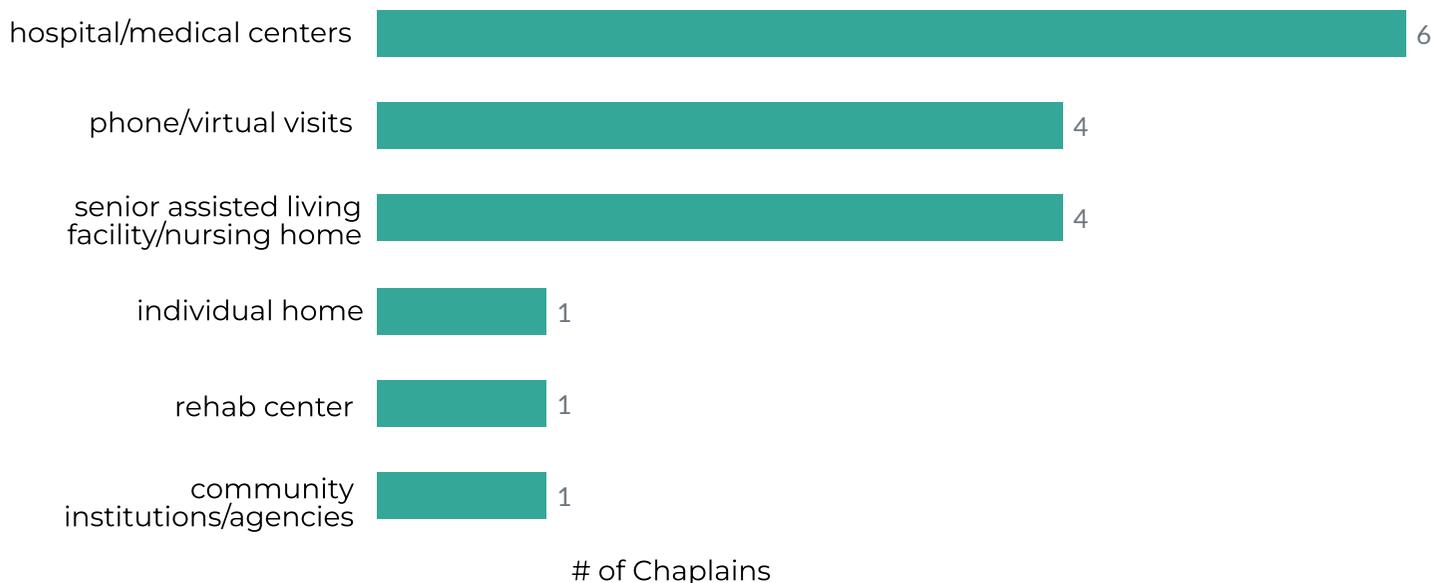
Hospital/Medical Centers:

- Morristown Medical Center
- Mountainside Medical Center
- Cooperman Barnabus Medical Center
- Trinitas Medical Center

Other:

- Aristacare at Cedar Oaks
- B'nai B'rith Housing
- HCR Manor
- Jewish Federation Plaza
- Lantern Hill
- Lester Senior Housing
- Village Apartments

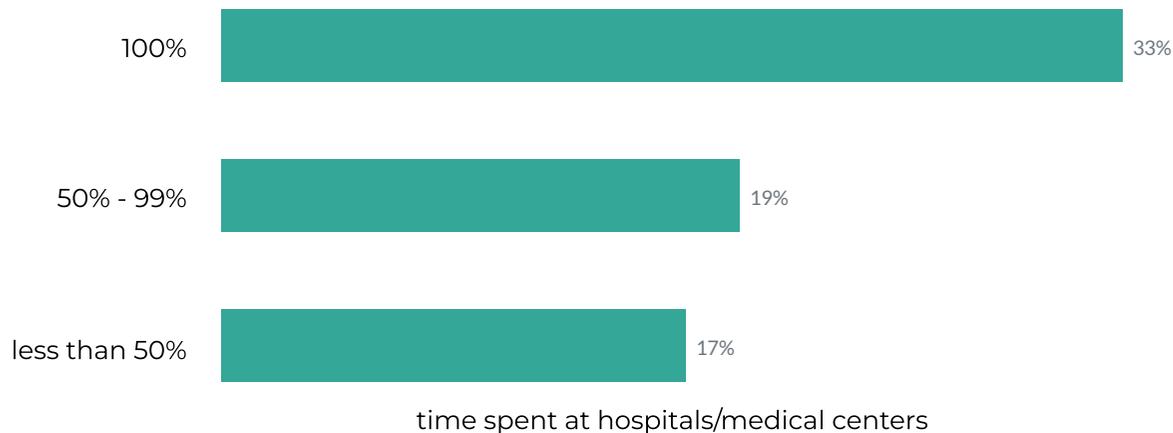
Most of our nine Chaplains spent their time at hospitals and/or medical centers each month.



Chaplaincy

Let's Talk about the Six Chaplains who Visited Clients at Hospitals and/or Medical Centers.

Six of our Chaplains spent 33% of their time at hospitals and/or medical centers each month.



Chaplains comfort clients at hospitals and/or medical centers.

Advocating for Patients

*"I participated in a hospital ethics committee meeting to determine the next steps for a Jewish patient who no longer had the mental capacity to consent to treatment and who had no family member willing to make decisions for her. At the meeting, I attempted to advocate for the patient, and I tried to get the team to **put into place measures that would increase the patient's quality of life.** I pushed other members of the ethics committee to reframe the question from the original question of "Is it ethical to recommend that this patient be placed in hospice care?" to the broader question of "**What are the steps that need to be taken to ensure that this patient's emotional, psychological, and spiritual comfort is maximized?**"-Chaplain*

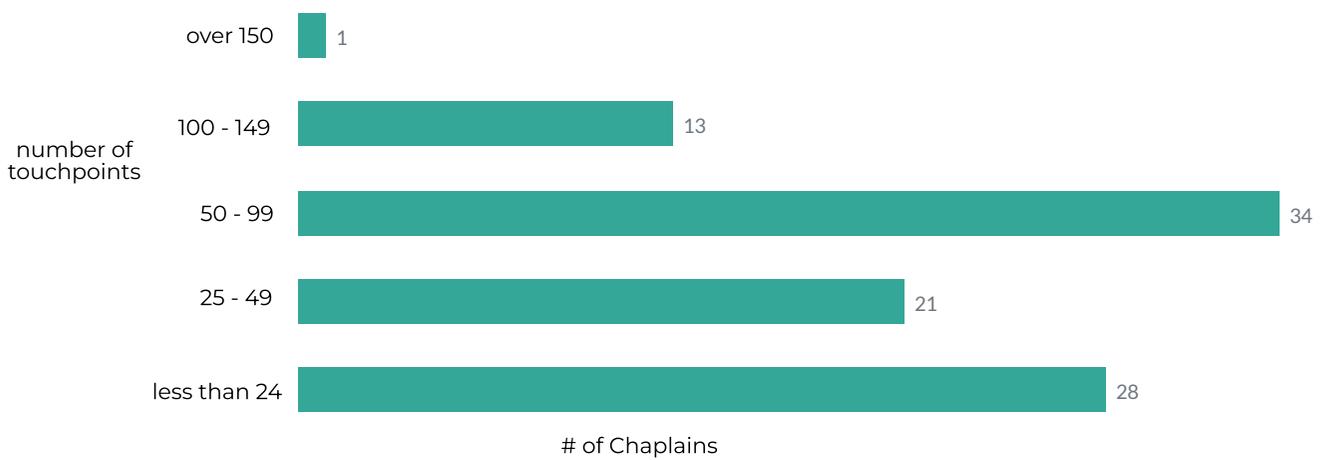
Offering a Jewish Connection

*"I visited a patient who had ignored symptoms for several weeks and was coping with **anxiety** over a possible cancer diagnosis. We explored how the patient cared for themselves. Since the visit was on a Friday, we **discussed Shabbat** being "meshivat nefesh, recovering the soul, and explored with the patient the possible ways to care for themselves and "observe Shabbat". I brought the patient a **Shabbat box to help with self care which was very emotional for the patient.**"-Chaplain*

Chaplaincy

Let's Talk About Our Chaplains' Clients.

Our Chaplains had over **3,500** touchpoints with clients, family members and institutional staff during the year.



Clients were grateful when our Chaplains made unscheduled visits. Only **26%** of the Chaplain's clients requested to see one.

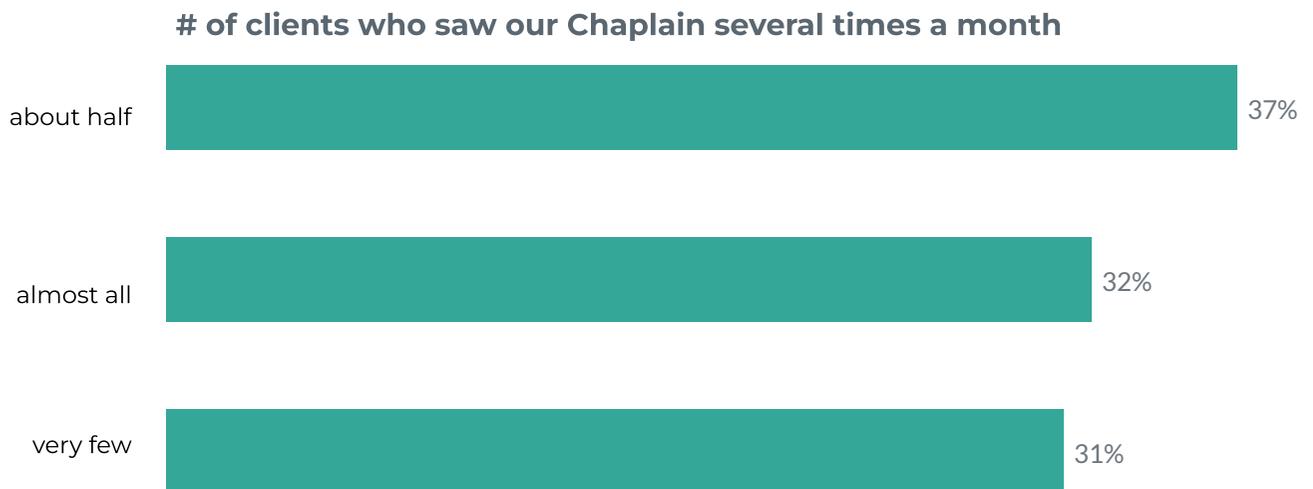
Many clients are initially resistant to a Chaplain visiting because of preconceived notions of Chaplains or discomfort in raising difficult issues.

Our Chaplains will never pursue a client who isn't interested in seeing one.

Chaplaincy

Let's Talk About Our Chaplains' Clients.

About half of the clients saw our Chaplain several times a month.*



* The numbers are based on visiting a client more than once in a single month. It doesn't include clients who are visited several times in a year.

Visiting clients several times a month builds trust.

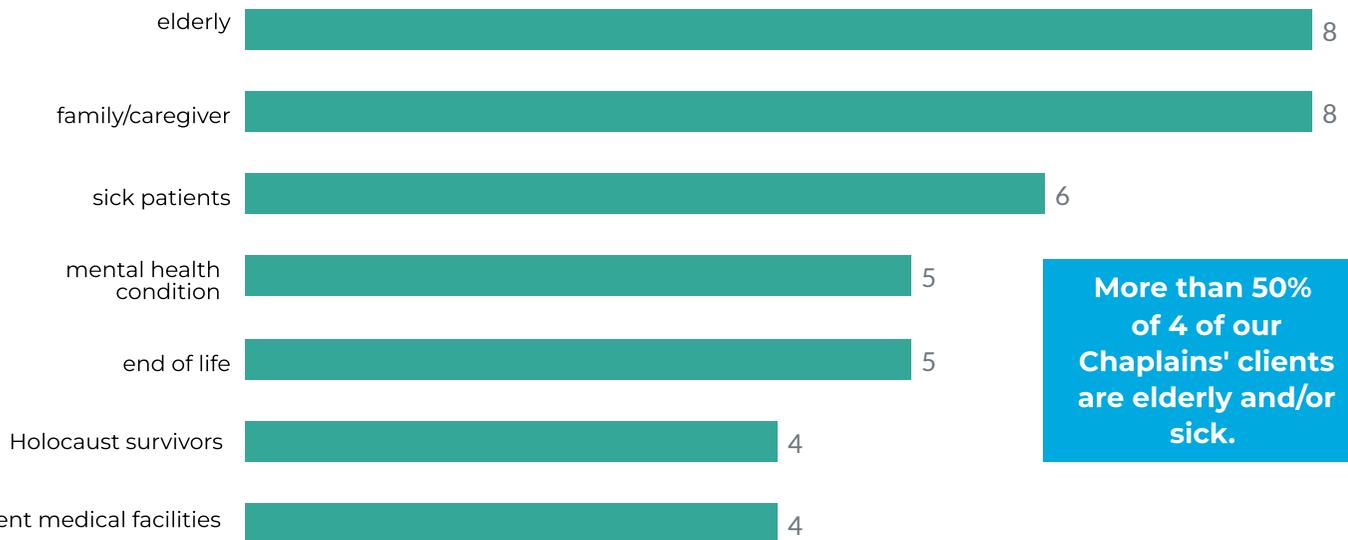
*"There was a resident, whom I am close with, who was told that he needs major surgery on his heart. He was very apprehensive of the surgery due to his advanced age of 95. His doctors recommended that he should go ahead with surgery. After much discussion and addressing all his fear and concerns, he realized that he should go ahead with the surgery. He went through the surgery successfully. He is now recuperating at a local rehab center. **He thanked me for helping with this important decision.**"-Chaplain*

*"Thank you so much for continuing to call me. **It makes me feel that someone cares, that I am not forgotten.**"-client*

Chaplaincy

Let's Talk About Our Chaplains' Clients.

Most of our Chaplains' clients are elderly and family/caregivers.



More than 50%
of 4 of our
Chaplains' clients
are elderly and/or
sick.

How our Chaplains comforts a client who is elderly or family member.

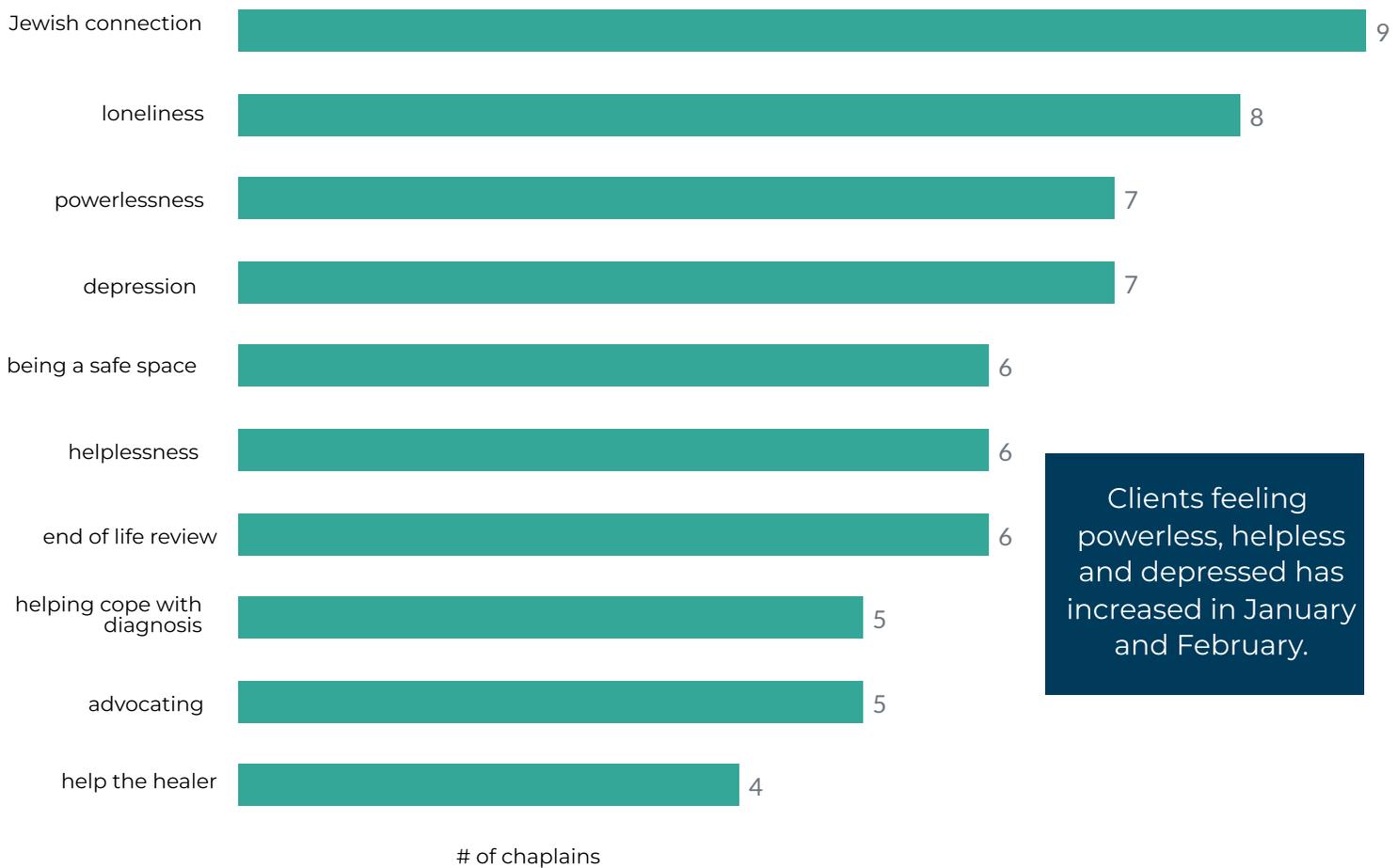
*"A patient coded on the second floor. I went upstairs to respond to the code. No family members were there so I stood off to the side as they stabilized the patient. During the post-code debrief, the patient coded again and two of the patient's daughters came upstairs. I introduced myself and stood silently beside them to provide emotional support. When the patient was stabilized, I took the daughters to a conference room to wait while the medical staff transferred the patient to the ICU. I got them drinks and offered prayers. I went back downstairs and heard a code called again. Again I went upstairs as I **stood with the patient's two daughters, her son, and her grandson while the medical team tried to once again stabilize the patient.** I stayed with them in the conference room as the doctor asked them to make a decision as to what they wanted to do if the patient coded again and as they together as a family made the difficult decision to make the patient DNR. I **then recited Viddui (end of life prayer) on behalf of the patient and offered prayers that the family should find strength and comfort in the future.**"-Chaplaincy*

*"Clients at B'nai B'rith Housing shared with me that **I am the only one that they have to talk to,** since they no longer have a social worker assigned"-Chaplain*

Chaplaincy

Let's Talk About Our Chaplains Clients' Needs.

Most of our Chaplains address clients who need Jewish connection and/or loneliness.



Clients feeling powerless, helpless and depressed has increased in January and February.

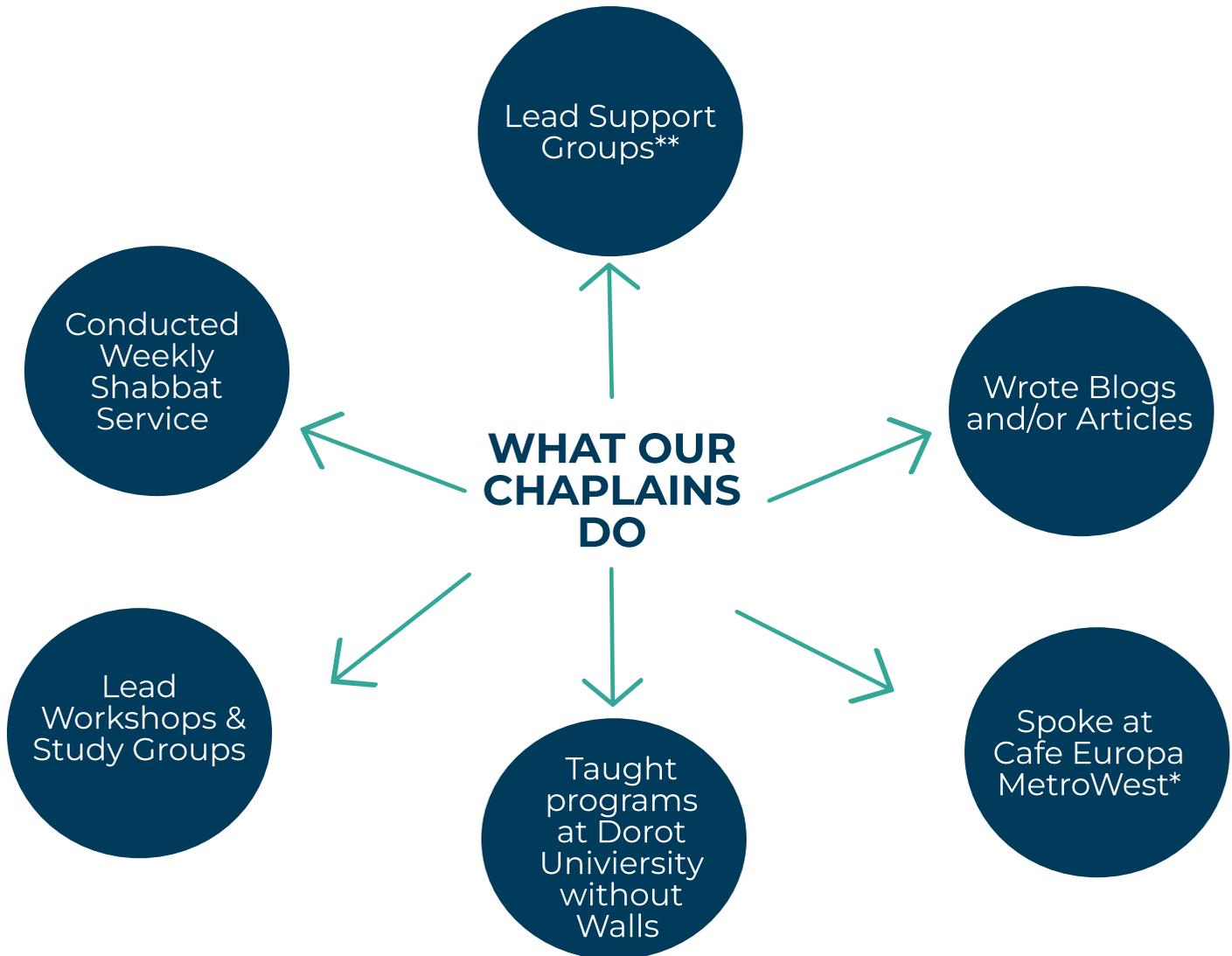
How our Chaplains comfort the lonely.

"The residents at the independent living facility are feeling very isolated because of Covid. I have been keeping in touch with them by phone visits. They have received many fliers and reminders to call me if they need to talk but they are reluctant to do so. I was told that a resident was having a difficult time. I called her and we talked for half an hour. She was very lonely and depressed because of the lack of interaction with family and peers. She said that my phone call made a big difference and that she was feeling hopeful after we spoke."
-Chaplain

Chaplaincy

Let's Talk About What Else Our Chaplains Did.

Our Chaplains did so much more than visiting clients.



*"During one of my classes, one the residents told me how the weekly classes gives her a **sense a purpose and gives her a lift for the entire week**. She prepares for each class and is very active during the class." -Chaplain*

*"In one of my classes, after the tragedy in Meron on Lag B'omer, we were able to discuss in depth, how could G-d let such a tragedy happen. It brought out questions and honest emotions, that the group had. We **really connected as a group**." -Chaplain*

* **Cafe Europa:** a JFS Central socialization program for Holocaust survivors that includes speakers and social activities.

****Support Groups:** held for Holocaust survivors (1st and 2nd generations), institutional staff and caregivers.

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Our Chaplains go above and beyond!

"The month of September began with the damaging floods of the remains of **Hurricane Ida. I reached out to most of my clients** who are living in their own homes, or in apartments that might have been damaged. It was gratifying that clients who had seen pictures on the news of my hard hit town asked me how I was doing." -Chaplain

"I delivered 25 **Chanukah gift packs** (chocolate coins, dreidel, decorated candle and Federation postcard) during in person visits and mailed 5 to those I can't visit." -Chaplain

"It was the day after Thanksgiving and there was no kitchen staff because of the holiday. The challah, grape juice, cups, etc., for Kabbalat Shabbat had not been provided as usual. **The residents and I had to work together to find the maintenance man and have him open the kitchen.** We searched for and put together everything we needed. **It turned into a fun project, in which several people got involved.** When the resident who pours the grape juice set up the cups, they turned out to be little 2 ounce condiment cups, not drinking cups. A comedy of errors, but we got it done."-Chaplain

"When the **son of a patient who had just died** was too upset to call his aunt to let her know that her baby sister had died, **I made the phone call for him.**"
-Chaplain

"One of the residents lost a relative and was **feeling very alone and isolated.** She is not a religious person. I was able to **encourage that person to sit Shiva explaining the therapeutic** and spiritual benefits it would bring to her. I was able arrange with the facility for her to be able to sit outside the facility so people would be able to visit her. **She was so appreciative to me and expressed that the experience helped her connect with others and not feel that she was alone.**"-Chaplain

"Sadly, a **colleague of mine passed away** recently; a fellow chaplain and friend for many years. In tribute to him **I authored an article parlaying his advice** on offering consolation to those in pastoral care who are involved in end of life situations, which was certainly beneficial to both those giving and receiving such a service." -Chaplain

Chaplaincy

Who are our Chaplains?

- ★ Rabbi David Blum
- ★ Rabbi Alisa Danon
- ★ Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein
- ★ Rabbi Daniel Geretz
- ★ Rabbanit Jennifer Kotzker Geretz
- ★ Rabbi David Glicksman
- ★ Chaplain Ilisia Kissner
- ★ Chaplain Debby Pfeiffer
- ★ Rabbi Henoah Polansky

Rabbi David Blum (email: commack3@aol.com)

- Certified Chaplain via the National Association of Jewish Chaplains
- Bachelor of Arts Degree from Yeshiva University
- Masters Degree in Public Administration from Kean University
- Rabbinical Ordination from R.I.E.T.S., the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University

Rabbi Alisa Danon (email: alisa.danonkaplan@gmail.com)

- Jewish Chaplain at Mountainside Medical Center in Montclair
- Did Clinical Pastoral Education at Sinai Hospital (Baltimore, MD) and Palisade Medical Center (North Bergen, NJ)
- BA from The College of William and Mary
- MHL from the University of Judaism
- MA and ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary
- Studied at the Beit Midrash L'limudei ha-Yahadut and Drisha Institute for Jewish Education

Chaplaincy

Who are our Chaplains?

Rabbi Stephanie Dickstein (email: rabbidickstein@gmail.com)

- Offers spiritual care, Jewish communal connection and individual support through visits to older adults living at home or in senior residences, including devoting special time to Holocaust Survivors.
- Offers consultation and support to their caregivers and loved ones
- Previously served as a congregational rabbi, Assistant Dean of the JTS Rabbinical School, in-patient chaplain and Hillel professional
- Ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary
- MS in Social Work
- MA in Jewish Communal Service

Rabbanit Jennifer Kotzker Geretz (email: jengeretz@gmail.com)

- Chaplain at Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston.
- A co-founder of East Brunswick's Yeshivat Netivot Montessori
- Received rabbinic ordination from Yeshivat Maharat in June of 2020. Graduation from Brandeis University in 1990

Rabbi Daniel Geretz (email: danny@geretz.org)

- Federation chaplain at Morristown Medical Center two days each week
- Clinical supervisor-in-training at RWJUH Hamilton outside of Trenton
- Founding rabbi of Maayan, a partnership minyan in West Orange
- Awarded semikha by YCT Rabbinical School
- Board certified as a clinical chaplain and pastoral counselor by the CPSP (College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy)

Chaplaincy

Who are our Chaplains?

Rabbi David Glicksman (email: d.glicksman@yahoo.com)

- Specializes in personal visits to the elderly in their homes or in senior residences
- Served as rabbi and later as Director of Pastoral Services at the Central New Jersey Jewish Home for the Aged in Somerset
- Previously a Spiritual leader of Congregation Etz Ahaim, of Congregation Beth Israel Abraham and Voliner, in Kansas City, MO
- BA in rabbinic ordination (Semicha)
- MS in Jewish Education from Yeshiva University
- Certified as a Clinical Fellow in Hospice and Palliative Care

Chaplain Ilisia Kissner (email: ilisia.kissner@gmail.com)

- Provides religious services and pastoral care at Village Apartments in South Orange, one of the facilities of the Jewish Community Housing Corporation
- Served the Greater Metrowest Jewish community as an educator for over 25 years, both as a teacher and principal in synagogue schools
- After working as a hospice chaplain for two years, she became the Jewish Chaplain at Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital in Morris Plains and continues to serve in that capacity
- B
- MA from New York University and Principal's Certification from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America
- Completed four units of Clinical Pastoral Education at Overlook Hospital in 2011
- Member of the Neshama Association of Jewish Chaplains and became a Board-Certified Chaplain in 2016

Chaplaincy

Who are our Chaplains?

Chaplain Debby Pfeiffer (email: debby.pfeiffer@gmail.com)

- Works in all areas of MMC as part of the medical team, attending to the emotional, spiritual, and ritual needs of Jewish patients and their families
- Board-certified chaplain serving at Morristown Medical Center (MMC)
- Previously a speech pathologist for 16 years prior to her pastoral training at Hackensack University Medical Center and Palisades Medical Center

Rabbi Henoah Polansky (email: henpol77@optonline.net)

- Chaplain at two residences of the Jewish Community Housing Corporation, Lester Senior Housing in Whippany and Federation Plaza in West Orange
- Previously Director of Pastoral Care at Shorefront Jewish Geriatric Center in Brooklyn
- Has a vast amount of experience working with the elderly
- Ordained at the Mirrer Yeshiva Rabbinical College and has a degree in Pastoral Counseling from the Postgraduate School for Mental Health and four units of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)