



March 27, 2020

As we navigate our new reality created by this pandemic, I have thought about what *embracing possibility* truly signifies and how Jewish Family Services protects the most vulnerable members of our community. Why does this crisis remind us to *embrace possibility*?

In this week's Torah portion, Vayikra, meaning "and He called," G-d calls out to Moses from the Tabernacle to establish the laws for humanity. The message of Vayikra, G-d's call to us to act, implores us to *embrace possibility*. It directly connects with the mission of Jewish Family Services to provide counseling, education, and community support to help all people in need.

Just like G-d calls to Moses, now more than ever, we are called on to help those in need, especially those impacted by COVID-19. This past week, Jewish Family Services has responded with vital social services, including food, medication management, and emotional support, particularly because this outbreak and necessary "social distancing" have exacerbated anxiety, fear, and depression.

Case #1 ~ Elderly Jewish parents of an adult child living with intellectual disabilities found themselves at a loss when their son's life enrichment program of the past 10 years suddenly closed. Their son was having difficulty transitioning from a structured routine, with socialization and daily activities, and the change was disruptive for all. JFS arranges virtual sessions with mom and dad to strategize and implement a regimen so their son could be successful. The clinician provides telehealth sessions with their son, as he needs a place to talk about his frustrations and loss, and the family has had the opportunity to problem solve and talk about their feelings. They are now hopeful and feeling less isolated. **JFS embraces possibility by stepping in and bridging the gaps.**

Case #2 ~ A 20-year-old woman had been attending college in Connecticut when the campus immediately shut down. While her peers were able to return home, she is unable to make it back to her family in California and is now living in what she describes as a ghost town. With the holidays approaching, and the possibility of missing out on the family Seder, her clinician makes frequent check-in calls and they participate in virtual telehealth sessions to help her cope with the anxiety and fears associated with being far from home. **JFS embraces possibility by reminding our young community members that they are not alone.**

Case #3 ~ A father of five calls JFS seeking help for his family. He explains he finally obtained his dream job in January yet was let go two weeks ago. He explains he has run out of funds and needs financial assistance to pay his rent, as well as help obtaining healthy foods without too much sugar and toiletries. His son has diabetes and nutrition is essential for his continued good health. **JFS embraces possibility by providing this family with nonperishable food, laundry detergent and toilet paper.**

Case #4 ~ A mother, who is a single parent, with two out of three children on the autism spectrum, lost her job and our child therapist is integrating art therapy via video chat. At night when her children fall asleep, mom speaks with her clinician on the phone. We have provided grocery store gift cards and bags

of food with healthy snacks for her children. JFS has also funded partial payment on her monthly rent.
JFS embraces possibility by supporting families with household necessities and mental health tools.

Thank you so much for your support and for making sure that those who are isolated or anxious, those who are losing income or the ability to access resources because of the situation, and those whose family dynamics are strained by the current situation get the resources they desperately need.

Together, we will continue to *embrace possibility* every day, especially through these uncertain and challenging times.

Shabbat Shalom,

Pia

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