

# Caring Hearts *and* Helping Hands

Volume 4 - No. 1

December 2025



*Dear Community Friends,*

**For 25 years JFS has provided essential programs and services to seniors, of all faiths, in our area.**

As we celebrate 25 years of helping seniors throughout the Ulster County region, we acknowledge that your generous donations throughout the years have been a crucial part in our providing essential services. **Now, due to cuts in State funding, County funding and limited funding through The Claims Conference, we are in need of your support and generous giving more than ever.** Your generosity enables us to continue providing programs and services to seniors and their families – **of all faiths** – throughout the mid-Hudson Valley.

**Our Mission is non-denominational:**  
*We provide quality and compassionate social services and educational programs to senior citizens in Ulster County and the entire region.*

Jewish Family Services of Ulster County provides essential and often life- saving services.

- **Counseling by licensed Social Workers**
- **Family-centered mental health services**
- **Bereavement Support Groups**
- **Care Giver Support Groups**
- **Alzheimer and Dementia Support.**

This population is increasing rapidly. A recent study showed that 15.6 percent of seniors in Ulster County, not in nursing homes, have Alzheimer's or dementia. The impact on them and their families can be devastating. We are helping them.

- **How to protect seniors from Financial, Emotional and Physical Exploitation.**  
We guide victims as to where to turn for help if they become victims.

- **Holocaust Survivors:** In addition to our many other activities, we offer comprehensive assistance to Holocaust survivors, some of whom are still living here full-time, and some of whom are still coming up during the Summer months. As this population ages, the help they need increases exponentially. We provide arrangements for home care, case management and care plans, home visits and psychological services, in addition to things like emergency moving expenses, eyeglass and emergency dental expenses.

But funding for these services have become greatly compromised in the current environment . With out your support these programs could be gone. We need your support now.

**Here are two ways to offer your tax-deductable donation:**

**Checks to:**

**Jewish Family Services of Ulster  
280 Wall Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Kingston, NY 12401**

**Or Online:**



<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/jfsouc>

Thank you for helping us fund our important community works.

Sincerely,

*Dena Crane*

Dena Crane  
President  
JFS Ulster Board of Directors



## Meet Our Executive Director

*Sharon Murray-Cohen, LMSW*

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*In honor of JFS Ulster's 25th Anniversary, Jonathan Dobin sat down with JFS's Executive Director, Sharon Murray-Cohen, to find out more about her perspective on the Agency, and how she came to become involved with social services work in the Hudson-Valley community.*

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**Q:** Sharon, what is your approach to your business or occupation that makes you unique?

**SMC:** I think that Jewish Family Services of Ulster County's approach to aging services is very unique. Our Home-Based Services are the only Behavioral Health Services in the area that actually meet our clients where they are - in their own homes. Our Licensed Clinical Social Workers go to the client's home and work with the senior and their family around issues of aging, care giving, and other life transitions. Our focus and top priority is to assist a senior with remaining in their own home and in their own community for as long as possible.

**Q:** What do you think about the aging process?

**SMC:** JFS views aging as a developmental process, a stage of life - **not** a disease. On a professional level, being a Licensed Social Worker, this sits very well with me; because I have always felt that an individual, whether a senior or a person with physical or mental disabilities, is best served by remaining in their home and their community- if the support necessary to maintain them at home is available. Fortunately, the state and federal government are in agreement due to the rising costs associated with nursing home care.

**Q.** I understand that you're from Ulster County and that you have had quite an extensive career in social outreach and academia. Can you elaborate a bit for me?

**SMC:** Well yes, I'm originally from Ellenville - an Ulster County native through-and-through. While I have moved around quite a bit. And though I have lived on both coasts, NYC, and Ibiza Spain, I always come back to Ulster County. I have lived in Kingston since 1988.

I've served as Executive Director of Jewish Family Services since 2006. I am a Licensed Masters Level Social Worker and have spent my professional career working in Human Services, Health Care and Academia. Over the course of the last 30 years I've been both a full-time and adjunct academic activities: an Adjunct Professor at Marist College and the Coalition Coordinator for the Center for Aging and Disability Policy's ProActive Caring Project at Mount Saint Mary College in Newburgh. I've taught Social Policy and Health Care Policy Courses on both a graduate and undergraduate level at Mount Saint Mary College, Marist, Adelphi, and Fordham. I've put attention at matching community needs to

funding sources and resources.

**Q:** *Speaking of Funding sources, I know funding for Not-for-Profits has been more sparse over the course of the last couple of years. How can someone help continue to keep JFS Ulster going forward?*

**SMC:** Yes, there have been cuts to programs that are essential for us to sustain. When one makes a contribution, it is used to advance our many specific and unique programs. There are two ways to contribute – via check, and through our online. Any amount generously donated is extremely appreciated.

The Board of Directors and I thank you  
most sincerely,

*Sharon Murray-Cohen*

Executive Director, JFS Ulster

### Two ways to Donate:

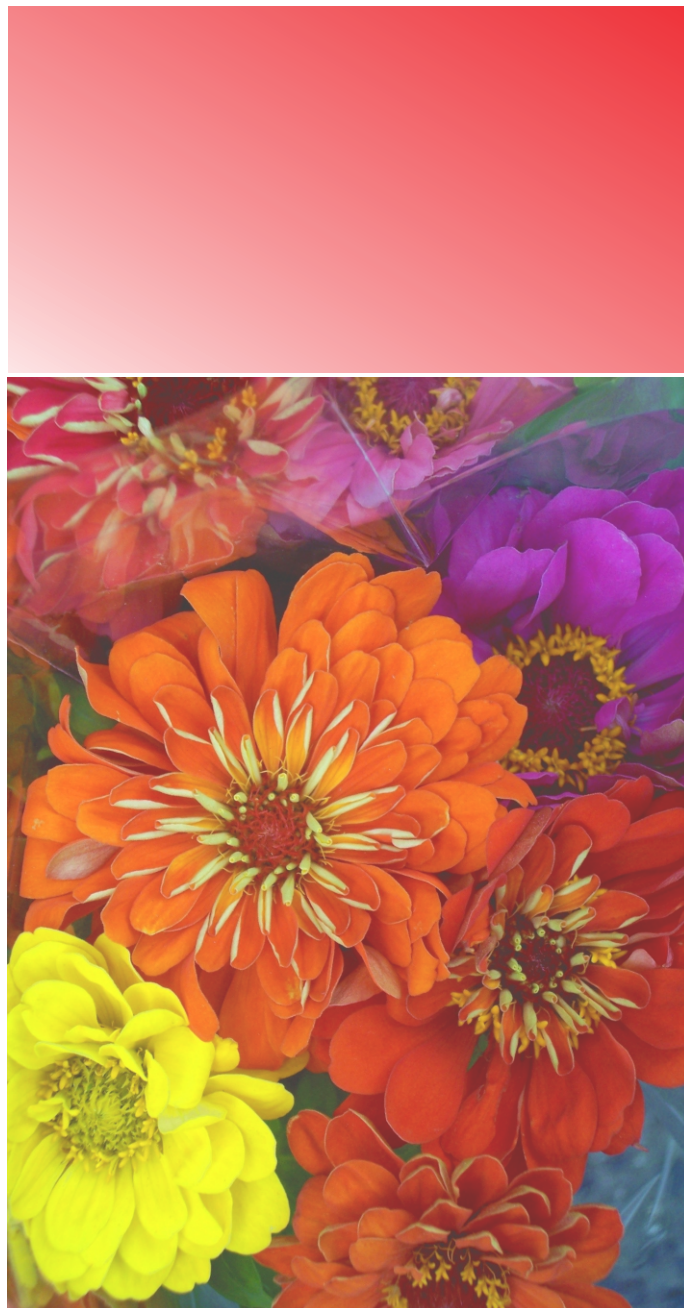
Checks to:

Jewish Family Services of Ulster  
280 Wall Street, 2nd Floor  
Kingston, NY 12401

Or Online:



<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/jfsouc>



## The Timeless Wisdom of Giving: Maimonides' Eight Levels of Charity

*Compiled by Steven Silverman  
Financial Officer JFS Ulster*

As part of my Jewish education, one teaching about the significance of charity has always stayed with me. This enduring lesson comes from Maimonides, a revered Rabbinical Sage from Cordova, Spain, who carefully articulated eight levels of charity in his writings. His purpose was clear: to remove any arrogance from giving so the giver remains humble—and to protect the dignity of the recipient so they are not shamed or humiliated while receiving help.

But first, some background ...

### Maimonides Moses ben Maimon בן-מימון משה

Commonly known as, and also referred to by the acronym “Rambam” (רמב"ם, for Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maimon, “Our Rabbi Moses son of Maimon”), was a medieval Sephardic Jewish philosopher who became one of the most prolific and influential Torah scholars of the Middle Ages. In his time, he was also a great astronomer and physician. Born in Cordoba, Spain on Passover Eve, 1135 or 1138 (depending on sources), he worked as a rabbi, physician, and philosopher in Morocco and Egypt. He died in Egypt on December 12, 1204, whence his body was taken to the lower Galilee and buried in Tiberias.

During his lifetime, most Jews greeted Maimonides' writings on Jewish law and ethics with acclaim and gratitude, even as far away as Iraq and Yemen. Yet, while Maimonides rose to become the revered head of the Jewish community in Egypt, his writings also had vociferous critics, particularly in Spain.



Nonetheless, he was acknowledged after his death as among the foremost rabbinical teachers and philosophers in Jewish history, and thought. His fourteen-volume Mishneh Torah still carries significant authority as a codification of Talmudic law. He is sometimes known as “ha Nesher ha Gadol” (the great eagle) in recognition of his outstanding status as a great man of the Oral Torah.

Thanks to Chabad.org, I'm offering Maimonides' framework – a profound insight into the ethics of giving, which can inspire anyone, regardless of faith, to examine how they support others with respect and kindness.

### The Eight Levels of Charity

Based on Maimonides' teachings as explained by Chabad Lubavitch and other Jewish learning sources, these levels are arranged from the highest to the lowest form of giving:

#### 1. Empowering Self-Sufficiency

The greatest level, above which there is no greater, form of charity is to support a fellow Jew by endowing him with something before they fall into poverty—by giving a gift or loan, or entering into a partnership with him, or

finding/helping them secure employment for him, in order to strengthen his hand so that he will not need to be dependent upon others . . . This strengthens the recipient so they no longer need to depend on others. In my experience, this principle expands beyond just helping fellow Jews; *it encourages us to uplift all human beings in a meaningful way.*

## **2. Anonymous Giving Without the Recipient Knowing the Donor**

Giving without either the giver or recipient knowing each other preserves dignity completely. It is like the anonymous charity funds of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, where both sides benefited in secrecy. Today, trusted organizations that distribute funds confidentially, such as Jewish Family Services in Ulster County, exemplify this noble form of giving.

## **3. Giving Knowing the Recipient, but Keeping Donor Unknown**

This level involves identifying those in need but delivering help discreetly so recipients never feel obliged or embarrassed. Historically, sages would secretly leave coins in doorways for the poor, preserving their pride.

## **4. Giving When the Recipient Knows the Donor, but the Donor Does Not Know the Recipient**

Here, the giver provides aid in a way that the recipient recognizes who is helping, but the donor doesn't know who will ultimately benefit - often by leaving money in one's clothing and letting the needy take what they need, without direct contact.

## **5. Giving Directly to the Recipient Before Being Asked**

Proactively offering help to those in need, without waiting for a request, reflects a sensitive and caring spirit.

## **6. Giving After Being Asked**

This is charitable but less ideal, reflecting help only once the recipient reaches out.

## **7. Giving Less Than One Should, but Cheerfully**

Even when the gift is modest, giving with a smile and a positive spirit elevates the act.

## **8. Giving Unwillingly or Begrudgingly**

While better than withholding aid altogether, this lowest form of charity lacks true generosity and warmth.

### **Charity with Dignity and Compassion**

These levels serve as a guide to give thoughtfully - encouraging humility in the giver and respect for the recipient's dignity. They remind us that charity is not just about the amount given, but how it is given: with discretion, compassion, and a desire to empower rather than to embarrass.

For me, these teachings offer a meaningful perspective whenever I see someone in need. Even if I cannot give money directly, I try to provide a pathway toward support, such as sharing contact with organizations like Jewish Family Services of Ulster County, which connect people to the resources they require.

### **A Universal Call to Action**

Disagreements may arise in many areas of life, but when it comes to meeting basic human needs - food, clothing, shelter - we share a common responsibility to ensure everyone's dignity is upheld. Maimonides' hierarchy of charity speaks to that universal truth: giving wisely is about more than generosity; it is about community, respect, and humanity.

Now, more than ever, during these difficult funding times, JFS Ulster relies on the charitable gifts you offer. Please consider giving to JFS so that they can continue their invaluable community work: providing compassionate in-home social work, behavioral health services, caregiving and bereavement support, housing, dementia support and other essential services **to seniors and their families of all faiths.**

**Two ways to Donate:**

**Checks to:**

**Jewish Family Services of Ulster**  
**280 Wall Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**  
**Kingston, NY 12401**

**Or Online:**



<https://secure.qgiv.com/for/jfsouc>

Thank you for your generous support,

Sincerely,

*Steven*

Steven Silverman

Financial Officer of JFS Ulster



**Serving the Mid-Hudson Valley's  
Elder-Communities of All Faiths**

- *Home-Based Therapeutic Services and Advocacy*
- *Support Groups for Caregivers*
- *Bereavement Support Groups*
- *Relief for Caregivers (REST Program)*
- *Compassionate Phone Calls*
- *Grocery Shopping Assistance*
- *Holocaust Survivor Advocacy*



**JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF ULSTER COUNTY**

280 WALL STREET, 2<sup>ND</sup> FL. ♦ KINGSTON, NY 12401  
PHONE: (845) 338-2980 ♦ FAX: (845) 331-4875  
JFS.ULSTER@GMAIL.COM ♦ WWW.JFSULSTER.ORG

*A Tradition of Caring  
A Commitment to Service*



An Interview with JFS Founding Member,

*Toby Krawitz*

*On September 9<sup>th</sup> I had the honor of meeting Toby Krawitz – to learn a bit about how she came to found and develop JFS Ulster. The following is an abridged form of our interview.*

*- Jonathan Dobin*

## Origins and Inspirations

**JD:** *JFS Ulster has become vital in supporting elders in the Mid-Hudson Valley. What inspired you to found the organization?*

**TK:** Well, I'm a social worker — what can I say? It's what I do. Social workers get things done — they meet clients where they are to provide support; sometimes inventing new ways to help.

I didn't start as a social worker; after marrying in 1957 and raising three kids, I went back to school at 45, earning a bachelor's in psychology and gerontology, then a master's in social work by my early 50s.

**JD:** *How did that lead to founding JFS?*

**TK:** I landed the job of Director of Aging Services at Jewish Family Services of Tampa

and later had a private practice in Florida. When I moved here in 1994, I found that there were no clinical or in-home services for elders.

Coincidentally, the Director of JFS Tampa, was appointed Director of Northeast Jewish Family Services in Albany, NY. While talking with leaders in Dutchess County, I discovered that they couldn't fully help callers from Ulster. This saddened me. Working at Family Services of Poughkeepsie, encouraged by my mentor Dr. Weiss, I explored starting a local Jewish Family Services chapter in 1998.

## Building JFS Ulster

**JD:** *How did funding come about?*

**TK:** United Way wasn't funding new groups then, but then I had the good fortune to meet Sara (Skit) Rabbino, a media and promotions professional. She subsequently became our outside fundraiser; while I managed internal work. Together, we presented to Federation's board in late 1999.

They approved funding and gave us office space and resources.

**JD:** *When did JFS officially begin?*

**TK:** January 2000, at the Green Street office. We started recruiting volunteers and ran a training program covering companionship, boundary-setting, observing aging issues, and matters relating to respecting limits - to protect both volunteers and seniors.

## Growth, Challenges, and Philosophy

**JD:** *How did the program evolve?*

**TK:** I reached out to students from the University of Albany - to train in-home social work: recognizing that aging brings crises families don't always know how to handle. We applied for a license so that JFS could get Medicare reimbursement for professional home visits.

**JD:** *When did JFS become fully independent?*

TK: In 2005, we applied to State and Federal governments to become a separate 501(c)(3) corporation. Jewish Family Services' national office offered ongoing financial and moral support for a period of time.

Teaching and service have always been my passion. Supporting our community is a privilege.

**JD:** *Thank you for sharing your inspiring story.*

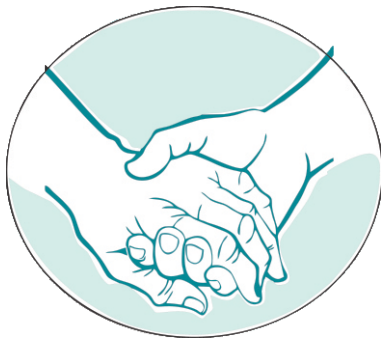
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Photo © by Margery Schab

**JFS Ulster:  
Serving  
the Mid-Hudson Valley's  
Seniors - of All Faiths**





# *Groups and Respite*

with Judith Bromley

## **Social Club at the Hub**

Helping Dementia-Friendly Caregivers and Community throughout Ulster County

**The Social Club at the Hub** is a pilot program designed as an element of the plan to foster dementia-friendly communities throughout Ulster County. We begin with a free lecture series on dementia for the host community. The lecture series engages the community on many levels as it encourages a review of local resources for seniors coupled with a willingness to develop programs that are needed.

The Social Club at the Hub is sponsored by Jewish Family Services' REST Program and is hosted by the Office for Aging.

**Tuesdays: 10 am to 3 pm**

**at the HUB in Kingston**

**(Adjacent to the Office for Aging: 1091 Development Ct, Kingston, NY 12401)**

**We are also looking for additional sites to host social clubs once a week**

The Club provides 5 hours of respite for caregivers by engaging their care partners in meaningful socialization, including:

***chair exercises, music, the arts and a variety of cognitively stimulating games.***

**Lunch is provided.**

Social club members need to be in mild-to-moderate cognitive decline but still be able to self-toilet to participate.

**We are looking for active, engaged seniors in the community who want to volunteer in a flexible environment to join our member support team.**

**We are also looking for additional sites to host social clubs once a week.**



### **Do you have:**

- *Any ideas to share?*
- *Any time to give in a flexible schedule - suited to your needs?*
- *Any caregiver concerns that you need some guidance for?*

*Kindly contact the program coordinator:*

Judith Bromley MS,RN

(845) 559-5656

[judithbromley417@gmail.com](mailto:judithbromley417@gmail.com)

**So, Visit Us to Become Inspired!**

# Support Groups

Each group will be conducted by Telephone or Zoom.  
The Group Leader will provide you with the number or the link  
once you have signed up for a meeting.

## Caregiver Support Groups



### Zoom Conference

Every 1st and 3rd Monday each month  
9:30 - 11 a.m.

Every 2nd and 4th Monday each month  
12:30 PM - 2:00 pm

### Telephone conference

1st Thursday each month  
2 PM

## Bereavement Support Groups



### Telephone Conference

Every 1st & 3rd Monday each Month  
4:30 PM

### Zoom Conference

Every 2nd & 4th Thursday each Month  
1:00 PM

### Contact:

JFS Ulster

(845) 338-2980

[JFS.Ulster@gmail.com](mailto:JFS.Ulster@gmail.com)



**If you notice any of these signs in yourself or someone else. Take action.**

*Note: This list is for information only and not a substitute for a consultation with a qualified medical professional.*

## 1. MEMORY LOSS THAT DISRUPTS DAILY LIFE

*Example: Forgetting recently learned information.*

## 2. CHALLENGES IN PLANNING OR SOLVING PROBLEMS

*Example: Having trouble keeping track of monthly bills.*

## 3. DIFFICULTY COMPLETING FAMILIAR TASKS

*Example: Difficulty organizing a grocery list.*

## 4. CONFUSION WITH TIME OR PLACE

*Example: Losing track of dates, seasons and the passage of time.*

## 5. TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING VISUAL IMAGES and SPACIAL RELATIONSHIPS

*Example: Problems judging distance, which may cause trouble with driving*

## 6. NEW PROBLEMS WITH TIME OR PLACE

*Example: Calling everyday objects by the wrong name.*

## 7. MISPLACING THINGS AND LOSING THE ABILITY TO RETRACE STEPS

*Example: Leaving keys in unusual places and having no idea how they got there.*

## 8. DECREASED OR POOR JUDGMENT

*Example: Making bad decisions when dealing with money.*

## 9. WITHDRAWAL FROM WORK OR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

*Example: Losing interest in a favorite hobby.*

## 10. CHANGES IN MOOD OR PERSONALITY

*Example: Becoming easily upset when out of one's comfort zone.*

## WHAT'S NEXT?

If you're concerned that you or someone you know is displaying any of these signs, take action:

**Talk to someone you trust.** It can be helpful to confide in a friend or family member. For tips on how to have a conversation, visit [alz.org/memoryconcerns](https://www.alz.org/memoryconcerns).

### See a doctor.

Get a full medical evaluation to determine if it's Alzheimer's or something else. Early diagnosis gives you a chance to plan for the future, access support services and explore treatment options. To learn more about the diagnostic process, visit [alz.org/evaluatememory](https://www.alz.org/evaluatememory).

### Get support and information.

Call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline ([800 272-3900](tel:800-272-3900)) or visit [alz.org/10signs](https://www.alz.org/10signs).



**YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER:**

**ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION HUDSON VALLEY**

2649 South Rd Ste 101,  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601  
(800) 272-3900 [www.alz.org/hudsonvalley](https://www.alz.org/hudsonvalley)

# CONCERNED ABOUT THE MISTREATMENT OF AN OLDER ADULT?

## Elder Abuse Helpline for Concerned Persons



Support and assistance for family,  
friends, neighbors in the lives of  
mistreated older adults



Concerned Persons live anywhere in  
the world



The mistreated older adult they care  
about lives in New York State



# 844-746-6905

In an emergency call 911



# 1 in 10

older adults are mistreated  
in the U.S.



# 73M

adults have had personal  
knowledge of a victim



# 44M

became involved in helping



**Free • Confidential**  
**No Judgment • No Expectation**



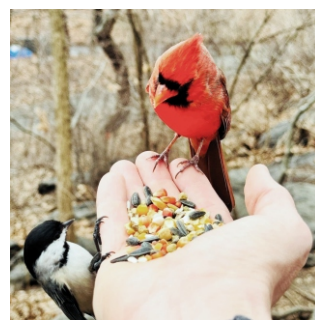
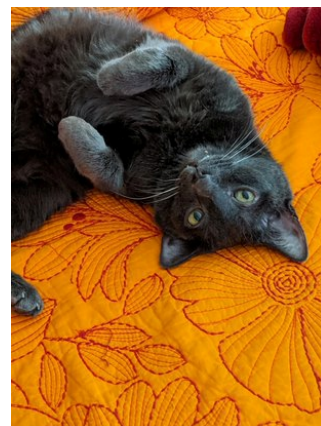
The Elder Abuse Helpline for Concerned Persons is made possible with a grant to the New York City Elder Abuse Center, Weill Cornell Medicine, from the New York State Office of Victim Services. Funded by New York State Office for Victim Services, Grant No. 2018-VA-GX-0047, Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. This material does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the funder.

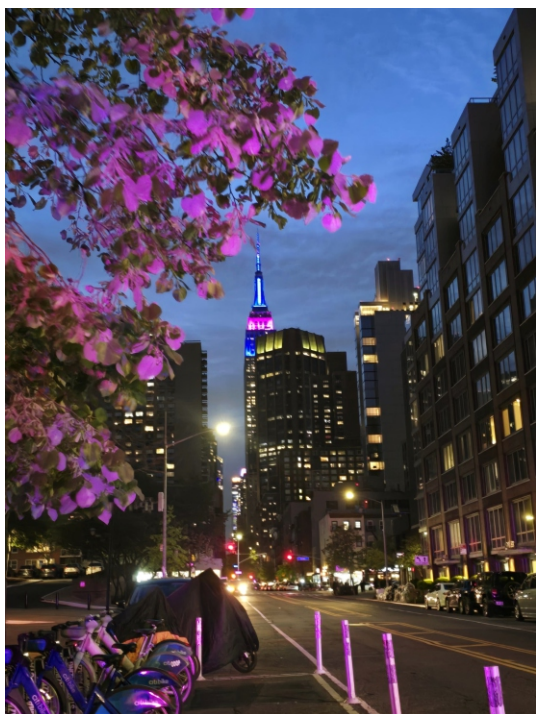
Elder Abuse Helpline for Concerned Persons | 844-746-6905 | [www.nyceac.org](http://www.nyceac.org)

# A Writer's Discerning Eye

photographs by New York-Based Writer

*Jill Rachel Jacobs*





**Jill Rachel Jacobs**

**Ms. Jacobs is a New York-based writer whose publishing credits include:**

The New York Times, Reuters, The New York Post, The Independent, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe, The Los Angeles Times, The San Francisco Chronicle, Newsday, The Chicago Sun Times, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Huffington Post, Thrive Global, Organic Style, The Chicago Tribune, NPR's Marketplace and Morning Edition.

Additionally, Ms. Jacobs studied at the Berklee School of Music and is an accomplished musician and singer.

Jill can be contacted at: [Jillian3335@gmail.com](mailto:Jillian3335@gmail.com)



# Job Opportunity

## Wanted for Per Diem Independent Contract Work

- **Licensed Clinical Social Workers**
- **Licensed Mental Health Counselors**
- **Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists**

## Home-Based Family Support Program

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### Summary

JFS provides in-home social work services for older adults, of all faiths, in the community who could not otherwise access more traditional office-based mental health services.

- In-home supportive counseling and psychotherapy
- Assessment and referral
- Educational/support groups for caregivers and those grieving (currently online due to pandemic)

### Job Responsibilities

- Make regular (weekly or bi-weekly) home visits to a minimum of 4-5 clients (elders and/or caregivers) participating in Home Based Family Support Program
- Conduct assessments of the clients' level of functioning and need for community services or interventions, which includes use of assessment surveys
- Provide information and referral about community resources and programs that will meet needs of clients or enhance quality of life
- Follow Task-Centered model of intervention utilizing goal setting, intervention strategies and evaluation
- Be available to meet with agency/program director for regularly scheduled supervision · Complete required paperwork in a timely manner.

Due to COVID-19, this position is currently operating on a hybrid schedule of in person and remote work.

### Qualifications

- Current License through NY State Department of Education in good standing
- Graduate degree from an accredited College or University
- Malpractice Insurance
- Computer Literacy

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**\$45 per client session**  
**Regular hours/Per Diem**

**Contact :**  
**(845) 338-2980**

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Jewish Family Services of Ulster is an equal opportunity employer

We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.



# Aging with Grace

by Rabbi Mendel Kalmenson

*Once there was a man who filmed his vacation. He went flying down the river in his boat with his video camera to his eye, making a moving picture of the moving river upon which his sleek boat moved swiftly toward the end of his vacation. He showed his vacation to his camera, which pictured it, preserving it forever: the river, the trees, the sky, the light, the bow of his rushing boat behind which he stood with his camera preserving his vacation even as he was having it so that after he had had it he would still have it. It would be there. With a flick of a switch, there it would be. But he would not be in it. He would never be in it."*

—Wendell Berry <sup>1</sup>

## Seizing the Moment

V'Avraham v'Sara zekeinim ba'im bayamim. "Now, Abraham and Sarah were old, well on in years."<sup>2</sup>

If Abraham and Sarah were old, isn't it obvious that they were well on in years?<sup>3</sup>

They were always totally "there"

But the Hebrew word *ba'im* literally means "entering." And the literal translation of *bayamim* is "in the days."

Hence the literal translation of the verse is: "And Abraham and Sarah were old, *they entered in the days...*"

They entered each day as one would enter his home, fully and without reserve. They connected with each moment and held it close. They embraced time and allowed themselves to be embraced by it.

They were always totally "there," whenever and

wherever they were.

Thus, the first half of the verse refers to the *amount* of years, very many of them, that Abraham and Sarah lived. The second half informs us of *the manner* in which those years were lived.

They were no stranger to hardship; they were often its host—but they never sought escape. They didn't hide when faced with difficulties; they dealt, as best as they could.

Ignoring a moment's call, they believed, is ignoring its caller.

They truly lived life in the here and now.

## Wrinkle Free

Chassidim are wont to say that age isn't told by your ID card.

Ever noticed that two people could be the same age, perhaps born on the same day, even led similar lives—yet one of them is wrinkle-free, while the other one looks ancient?

The former never let things get to him; the latter rarely did not.

The former built impregnable walls around him, afraid to fight a war; the latter's face is filled with furrows, his battle scars.

The former has an intricate defense system, mechanisms to ward off pain; the latter decided to never build one, viewing such a system – not the pain – as the enemy.

To him any form of blocking out life equals death.

Painkillers – literal or figurative – also numb joy. Because the impenetrable walls built for security don't distinguish between hate and love. They do their job indiscriminately, keeping out friend and

foe alike.

Painkillers – literal or figurative – also numb joy. Wrinkles are often a sign of hardship and grief, but they also tell the story of laughter and joy. Time to rethink Botox?

### Keeping Young

*V'Avraham zaken ba bayamim.* "Now, Abraham was old, well on years..."<sup>4</sup>

This verse is stated a full forty-one years after the first verse describing Abraham's (and Sarah's) age.<sup>5</sup> Why the need for a second report?<sup>6</sup> Isn't obvious that, unless you're Benjamin Button, someone old and well on in years only gets older and weller on-in-years as time passes?

Were this verse to refer to the quantity of years Abraham had lived, the question would stand. But it does not; it refers, again, to the quality of Abraham's life.

It is within the nature of man to grow less excitable the more he ages. For excitement and novelty are closely related. Since very little is new to him – he's seen it all – things, good or bad, rarely affect him. His mode of existence, views, and reactions are pretty much set in stone.

But Abraham was different.

He never grew old in that sense. He might have aged in years but not in spirit. He was as open to learning and change like a youngster on his first day of school.

This is the Torah's point in stating the same verse twice.

Forty-one years had passed between them, years filled with suffering and joy. Yet, Abraham was still young at heart.

In those four decades, the entire region of Sodom had been destroyed. Sarah had been abducted by Abimelech and released.

After a lifetime of barrenness, Sarah bore him a son!

He had been brought to drive Hagar and Ishmael

out of his home. There was the dispute over his property with Abimelech. Then the truce. He opened an inn in the meantime. Then embarked on a groundbreaking campaign to promote monotheism.

He was reunited with his penitent son, Ishmael. He was tested by G-d many times over, culminating with the traumatic Binding of Isaac. Most recently, his life companion and rock, his beloved Sarah, had died.

So many challenges, so many milestones, so much change...

So many challenges, so many milestones, so much change... Yet, Abraham still hadn't grown old. Older in years perhaps, but not old in character.

He had every right, by now, to stop "entering" his days; but he considered that right to be wrong. He had every excuse in the world to retire from vigorous living; But to retire would mean to expire.

Until his last day he would never stop taking messages from life.

He wore his flowing white beard and matching head of hair as one would a badge of honor. The crinkles around his eyes that hinted of countless smiles, he considered beauty marks.

### What's in It for Me?

Sometimes we're so busy making a living that we forget to live. Sometimes we're so busy *doing* that we forget about *being*.

Sometimes we're so busy dodging life's curveballs that we forget to swing at its strikes.

Time passed does not mean time lived. Time managed does not mean time well spent.

Always remain open—in mind, spirit, heart, and soul, for learning never ends.<sup>7</sup>

Every day has its song. Every hour its call. Every second offers something unique and fleeting.

Every moment is heaven knocking at your door.

To be sure, the hurts of life are sometimes excruciating, and rightfully call for a needed respite, but the keys to the gates erected must always be retained, otherwise one's castle can become one's prison.<sup>8</sup>

## Footnotes

1. *From Entries*, by Wendell Berry. New York: Pantheon, 1994.

2. [Genesis 18:11](#).

3. See Midrash Rabbah, [Genesis 49:16](#) for alternative answers. See the Rebbe's talk, upon which this essay is based, for a lengthy discussion regarding those answers.

4. [Genesis 24:1](#).

5. See *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 35 pg. 89 footnote 3 for the calculation.

6. See *Kli Yakar* and *Nachmanides* for alternative answers. See the Rebbe's talk for more discussion of Nachmanides' answer.

7. Many have puzzled about the paradoxical term ascribed to a Torah scholar, "talmid chacham," which literally translates as "student-sage." Is he a student or is he a sage? I'd like to suggest, possibly the obvious, that the point here, influenced by Judaism's take on scholarship, is that a true scholar must always remain open to study, never ceasing to be a student. The two are synonymous, one and the same. The moment one concludes his studies and views himself as an established sage, he loses that very title.

8. Based on a talk by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, *Likkutei Sichot* vol. 35 pg. 89ff.

© Rabbi Mendel Kalmenson



**Rabbi Mendel Kalmenson**  
**is the Rabbi of Beit Baruch and executive**  
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**children.**

*Mendel is the author of several popular Jewish-themed books including [Seeds of Wisdom](#), [A Time to Heal and Positivity Bias](#), which is now available as a course of study from the Jewish Learning Institute. His forthcoming book, [People of the Word](#), was published in 2022. Mendel is also the associate editor of the Chumash Project, a monumental initiative encompassing the entire body of Jewish teaching, giving the English reader unprecedented access to its wisdom and guidance.*

*Mendel has written hundreds of articles on Jewish thought, and his essays have been published in the [Jewish News](#), the [Jewish Chronicle](#), [Times of Israel](#), the [Jewish Press](#), [Mishpacha Magazine](#) and the [LA Jewish Journal](#). He is a former editor at [Chabad.org](#), one of the first and largest Jewish educational websites. His writings have been translated into Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.*

*Mendel's work has brought him to over fifty countries, engaging with the international community and supporting Jewish life across the globe. Through his [People of Interest](#) series, Mendel has hosted conversations with over 150 notable personalities and academics including Harvard Professor Stephen Pinker, Dr. Edith Eger, and former chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau.*

## Sharon's Country Kitchen

with  
Sharon Murray-Cohen



## Hearty, Mini, Country-Styled Chicken Pot Pies

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- ½ cup (4oz) unsalted butter, divided
- 1 cup chopped yellow onion
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 2 teaspoon salt divided
- 1 cup frozen carrots and peas, thawed.
- 1 garlic clove chopped
- ¼ cup all purpose flour, plus more for work surface
- 1 ½ cups Chicken Broth
- ½ cup milk
- 2 ½ cups chopped cooked chicken (from 1 rotisserie chicken)
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon curry powder
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 (14.1 oz) refrigerated pie crust



### DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Heat oil and 6 tbs. of butter in large skillet over medium high heat.
2. Add onion, celery, curry powder and 1 teaspoon salt, cook - stirring often, until vegetables are softened, about 10 min. Add peas and carrots and garlic; cook, stirring constantly, for 1min.
3. Add flour, cook, stirring constantly for about 2 minutes.
4. Slowly add milk and broth, whisking to remove lumps. Bring to simmer over medium heat; simmer, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 5 minutes. Stir in Chicken, pepper and 1 teaspoon of salt until combined. Remove from heat.
5. Whisk together 1 egg and 1 tbsp butter in a small bowl, set aside.
6. Pour chicken mixture into 4 (eight ounce) ramekins.
7. Lightly dust work surface with flour. Roll out pie crust to an 11 inch round .
8. Cut 4 dough rounds large enough to fit over ramekins (approximately 5 inches in diameter)
9. Lightly brush top edges of ramekins with egg wash. Place dough over chicken mixture, pressing to seal over ramekin edges. Brush dough with remaining egg wash. Cut a few slits on top of each crust with a paring knife.
10. Bake until crusts are golden brown and pies are bubbly, 25-30 minutes.
11. Remove from oven, let cool for 5 minutes. Top each pie with a pat of butter and serve immediately.

**Quick tip:** Don't have ramekins? No problem. Cook an additional 10 to 15 minutes if making it in a traditional 9-inch pie pan or a 10-inch iron skillet.



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*- Nicholas Bona. former JFS Intern*



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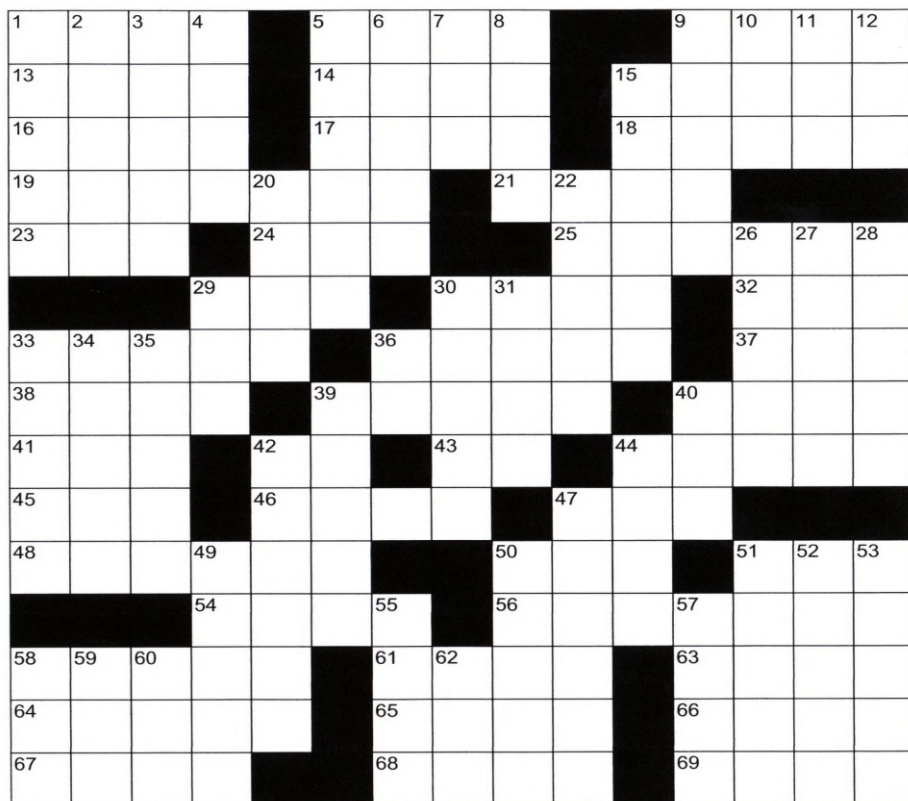


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# Food For Thought

Some Puzzles for Fun.  
Just Print and Get Goin'!

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS



### DOWN

- 1 Eyeglasses
- 2 Religious offering
- 3 Red headed orphan
- 4 Stack of paper
- 5 For each one
- 6 Frozen pizza brand
- 7 What a nurse gives
- 8 Time period
- 9 Present
- 10 Colony insect
- 11 "To the right!"
- 12 Be incorrect
- 15 O.T. prophet
- 20 Central church part
- 22 Recruit
- 26 Snout
- 27 Monastery superior
- 28 Hammer's partner
- 29 Santa's helper
- 30 Pieces of stiff paper used to send greetings
- 31 Spoken
- 33 View
- 34 Anonym
- 35 Metal objects that make pleasant sounds when hit

- 36 Copper (abbr.)
- 39 Chasm
- 40 Murmur
- 42 Fountain
- 44 Supper
- 47 Groups of notes
- 49 Baseball player Hank \_\_\_\_
- 50 Leading
- 51 Water retention
- 52 Tintseled cloth
- 53 French city
- 55 Meshes
- 57 False god graven image
- 58 Stitch
- 59 To be
- 60 Undergarment
- 62 Date

### ACROSS

- 1 Heavenly body visible from earth as point of light
- 5 Lawyer (abbr.)
- 9 Measuring instrument
- 13 Evergreen tree
- 14 Earth has a N. and S. one
- 15 Eating house
- 16 Volcano

- 17 Ancient Indian
- 18 Behind
- 19 Hollow brick structure for passing smoke from a fire into the open air
- 21 Lease
- 23 Visit
- 24 American Cancer Society (abbr.)
- 25 "Pathfinder" maker
- 29 New Year's \_\_\_\_\_
- 30 Kernel
- 32 BB association
- 33 Type of fur
- 36 Christmas hymn
- 37 Kimono sash
- 38 Musical treble \_\_\_\_
- 39 Relating to the ear
- 40 Chilly
- 41 Grease
- 42 1000 megabytes
- 43 Deciliter
- 44 Applesauce brand
- 45 Chum
- 46 Potato sprouts
- 47 Executive
- 48 Writings

- 50 Expression of surprise
- 51 Wing
- 54 Association (abbr.)
- 56 Day on which ordinary business activity is suspended
- 58 Sword
- 61 Vessel
- 63 Demonstration
- 64 Inaccuracy
- 65 Frog
- 66 Sign
- 67 Deprive
- 68 Turfs
- 69 Lassie



Go to next page for more! ...



MORE . . .

# Food for Thought?

## ICE CREAM FLAVORS

Word Search - Easy Level

V	A	N	I	L	L	A	H	A	Z	E	L	N	U	T	L
N	T	B	L	A	C	K	B	E	R	R	Y	G	N	N	Z
K	Y	M	X	C	H	E	E	S	E	C	A	K	E	G	F
K	R	O	C	K	Y	R	O	A	D	B	N	D	R	K	X
K	J	M	I	N	T	D	F	Q	N	R	P	R	U	M	Q
M	O	C	H	A	N	E	A	P	O	L	I	T	A	N	G
C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	P	R	A	L	I	N	E
G	G	F	U	D	G	E	R	M	W	C	R	E	A	M	J
L	G	J	R	C	O	N	E	I	C	E	C	R	E	A	M
F	R	A	S	P	B	E	R	R	Y	K	Q	K	T	R	D
K	C	P	E	A	N	U	T	B	U	T	T	E	R	R	R
K	Q	S	T	R	A	W	B	E	R	R	Y	T	Z	Z	X
T	B	A	N	A	N	A	H	L	C	O	F	F	E	E	Z
T	B	R	O	W	N	I	E	S	N	I	C	K	E	R	S
X	D	P	E	C	A	N	P	I	S	T	A	C	H	I	O
Q	P	C	O	O	K	I	E	D	O	U	G	H	P	P	K

Answers  
On Next Page ...



BANANA  
BLACKBERRY  
BROWNIE  
CHEESECAKE  
CHOCOLATE  
COFFEE  
CONE  
COOKIE DOUGH  
CREAM

FUDGE  
HAZELNUT  
ICE CREAM  
MINT  
MOCHA  
NEAPOLITAN  
PEANUT BUTTER  
PECAN  
PISTACHIO

PRALINE  
RASPBERRY  
ROCKY ROAD  
RUM  
SNICKERS  
STRAWBERRY  
VANILLA

# The Answers!

1	S	2	T	3	A	4	R		5	A	6	T	7	T	8	Y		9	G	10	A	11	G	12	E
13	P	I	N	E					14	P	O	L	E					15	D	I	N	E	R		
16	E	T	N	A					17	I	N	C	A					18	A	F	T	E	R		
19	C	H	I	M		20	N	E	Y					21	R	E	N	T							
23	S	E	E			24	A	C	S					25	N	I	S		26	S	A	N			
				29	E	V	E			30	C	O	R	E				32	N	B	A				
33	S	A	B	L	E				36	C	A	R	O	L				37	O	B	I				
38	C	L	E	F				39	A	U	R	A	L			40	C	O	O	L					
41	O	I	L			42	G	B		43	D	L			44	M	O	T	T	S					
45	P	A	L			46	E	Y	E	S			47	C	E	O									
48	E	S	S		49	A	Y	S					50	A	H	A		51	E	L	L				
				54	A	S	S		55	N			56	H	O	L		57	I	D	A	Y			
58	S	A	B	R	E				61	E	W	E	R				63	D	E	M	O				
64	E	R	R	O	R				65	T	O	A	D				66	O	M	E	N				
67	W	E	A	N					68	S	O	D	S				69	L	A	S	S				

## HAPPY HOLIDAYS Puzzle Answers



## ICE CREAM FLAVORS Puzzle Answers

V A N I L L A H A Z E L N U T L  
 N T B L A C K B E R R Y G N N Z  
 K Y M X C H E E S E C A K E G F  
 K R O C K Y R O A D B N D R K X  
 K J M I N T D F Q N R P R U M Q  
 M O C H A N E A P O L I T A N G  
 C H O C O L A T E P R A L I N E  
 G G F U D G E R M W C R E A M J  
 L G J R C O N E I C E C R E A M  
 F R A S P B E R R Y K Q K T R D  
 K C P E A N U T B U T T E R R R  
 K Q S T R A W B E R R Y T Z Z X  
 T B A N A N A H L C O F F E E Z  
 T B R O W N I E S N I C K E R S  
 X D P E C A N P I S T A C H I O  
 Q P C O O K I E D O U G H P P K



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(845) 331-4875 (Fax)

[jfs.ulster@gmail.com](mailto:jfs.ulster@gmail.com)

[JfsUlster.org](http://JfsUlster.org)

**911** - Universal Emergency Phone Number

**988** - National Suicide Prevention Hotline

**211** - Essential Community Services

National Domestic Violence Hotline

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ULSTER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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<https://ulstercountyny.gov/sheriff/>

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<https://www.ucjf.org>

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# Happy Hanukkah!!

## 5786

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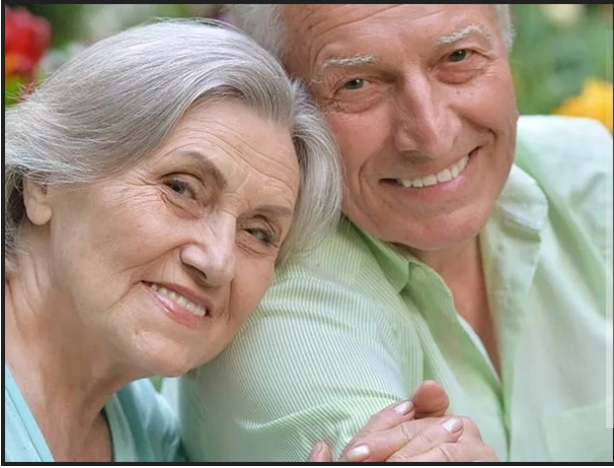
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- The Board and Staff of JFS of Ulster County

Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year



Jonathan Dobin  
2015



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