



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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ALPERT JFS HOSTS "VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE" FOR LOCAL RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITIES WHO PARTICIPATED IN EXCLUSIVE "COPING WITH OUR NEW REALITY" PRESENTATIONS

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – March 23, 2021 – Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS) has provided 86 sessions of "Coping With Our New Reality: Social Distancing Without Isolation" and "Coping With Our New Reality: Parents Edition" presentations to 153 participants via Zoom in the past 42 weeks on Monday evenings at 6:00 and 8:00 p.m., respectively. The programs, established proactively in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, teach coping skills and offer a framework to help make sense of a challenging time.

Among the additional beneficiaries of the discussion/support group within the past year: exclusive presentations for Alpert JFS volunteers, employees and lay leadership of non-profit organizations or companies, synagogues/Jewish groups, and residential communities opting for their own niche sessions. To date, more than 1,300 people have attended a "Coping" presentation!

Residents of 14 assorted gated and non-gated communities, including all-age and 55+ communities, as well as six synagogues or Jewish groups were invited to attend a Virtual Open House in response to their shared desire to learn more about Alpert JFS.

More than 75 households tuned into the Zoom presentation. Alpert JFS CEO Marc Hopin welcomed the group, and provided a brief "virtual" tour of the office at Alpert JFS in West Palm Beach, including its Kosher Food Pantry (which currently has a satellite location in Boynton Beach at Temple Shaarei Shalom). Alpert JFS Clinical Director Elaine Rotenberg, Ph. D., and staff members from the agency's four primary divisions – Behavioral Health, Long Term Care, Residential, and Information & Referral – spoke to participants about their respective programs and services.

"Everyone who attends a program like our Virtual Open House, takes advantage of the opportunities offered for assistance, volunteers with us, or provides a meaningful gift is part of our extended family," said Hopin. "They are always welcome in our home, and we will always have a seat for them – and their friends and neighbors -- at any number of our 'tables'!"

"We have 29 programs to assist thousands of people of all ages from Boynton Beach to Indian River County," said Dr. Rotenberg. "We are a safety net for the community, ready with open hearts and open hands to provide help and hope."

Alpert JFS Behavioral Health Program Administrator/Licensed Psychologist Dr. Kiner, who co-facilitates the Monday evening "Coping" presentations with Dr. Rotenberg, Director of Community Outreach/Mental Health First Aid, Director of Community Outreach/Mental Health First Aid Cindy Wides, and Director of Addiction Outreach Carolyn Yasuna presented Alpert JFS outreach and awareness efforts, highlighting the priority of minimizing the stigma related to substance use abuse and mental illness.

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Alpert JFS Long Term Care Director Jennifer Escobar, joined by teammates Programs Director of Enhanced Companions Doni Greenblatt, and AmeriCorps Program Director/Geriatric Case Manager Kathryn Kowalczyk, detailed the six programs within her department that provide support and advocate for individuals and families. The goal of all programs and services is to maintain independence and dignity.

An overview of the agency's Group Homes and Apartment Program, part of the Melvin J. & Claire Levine Jewish Residential & Family Service, was provided by Residential Services Director Wes Skerven. Judith & Jack Rosenberg Mentoring 4 Kids Program Director Jennifer DiSilvestro summarized the joy both mentors and mentees experience from the unconditional friendships forged between the same-gender role models and the 6-14-year-old children with whom they are matched. Director of Volunteer Leadership Belinda Lasky shared the myriad volunteer opportunities that are available within the agency, many of which play to individuals' strengths and interests.

All requests for assistance start with a phone call to the Alpert JFS Chai Line information, intake, and referral department. Chai Line Director Olivia Tartakow shared that approximately 4,000 inquiries for assistance are received annually, with 10,000 individuals directed to the resources available both within the agency and outside, in the community. Chief Development Officer Kelley Whiter, J.D., highlighted the pivotal role that philanthropy plays in furthering the mission and work of the agency, enabling Alpert JFS to provide critical services to those most in need in the community.

The immediate feedback was positive and heartfelt, with participants stating, "The last hour has been fantastic; thank you I learned a lot more than I knew before, and now know where to put my financial support," "It's wonderful to know what's available for friends and family," and "It's so nice to know that there are so many people of goodwill in the community to make a difference."

Established in 1974, Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS) is a nationally accredited service provider for children, adults, seniors, and Holocaust survivors. The non-profit, non-sectarian organization is a trusted leader, with a team of nearly 200 highly skilled professionals delivering high-quality care to community members. Alpert JFS works to ensure the well-being of children and families, independence of older adults, and quality of life for individuals with disabilities. For more information, visit www.AlpertJFS.org/ or phone 561-684-1991.

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