



Jewish Association  
for Community Living

*Community Active...Community Strong*

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# *Community Connections*

Note from our Executive Director, Denis Geary:

## ***A Cherokee Legend-The Tale of Two Wolves***

***The story is told of a young boy who was angry and upset and went to see his Native American grandfather for advice. The grandfather told him, "Like you my child, I have two wolves inside my heart. One of them is positive and filled with joy, kindness, hope and compassion. He lives in harmony and peace. The other wolf is negative and filled with fear, envy, arrogance, resentment and self-doubt. He rages, but his anger changes nothing. The two wolves fight inside me every day to see which is more powerful."***

***After listening to his grandfather attentively for several minutes, the young boy asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart grandfather?" "To which the grandfather responded, "The one I feed".***

This is a perfect allegory for today's times. Our world struggles with an invisible enemy that leaves profoundly visible scars. People are scared, anxious, sick, fearful and feeling such uncertainty about the future, their future, and the future of those they love. Yet so many, most I would suggest, rise to levels of generosity, selflessness, compassion and kindness they might not have known flowed through their bloodstream, their very core of being.

Meet Glenn, Aretha, Stacy, Vanessa, Christina, Haydee, Deidre and Nicole. These folks are our Life Skills Supervisors. This group of individuals are the spine of JCL. They keep JCL standing straight and upright at all times. Together they have dedicated 122 years of their lives to JCL; an average of 15 years each. Today, like everyone, they are confronting the biggest challenge of their professional and personal lives. Yet none of them have stepped back from this challenge. Not so much as a flinch.

Two wolves may battle for their hearts, but only one gets fed.



## Busy days at JCL

Each time Kerry Arru, Coordinator of Programs and Services shares how her programs have settled into social distance living....

“Every time I step into the doorway at Brookmoor, the ladies are smiling and excited to start their day. Last week the ladies and staff were in their pajamas and having a spa day! A previous morning, our support staff were making a breakfast good enough for a king and queen with pancakes and smoothies. It was awesome! Then there was the morning they were sweating to the oldies with Richard Simmons!

Brookmoor is just an example of what all our JCL homes have been doing since the start of staying home to stay safe. The staff and supervisors are working tirelessly to ensure our residents have a joyful and fulfilling day. That is not easy in these times or with the limits to resources...yet our residents are smiling!

Life Skills Supervisor, Nicole shares that when she goes to our Ardmore location, Marianne, Jaime and JCL staff are often playing board games. Nicole has reported that they were having so much fun one morning their neighbor called to ask that they keep the fun levels down! They have made chocolate lollipops and planted some plants as well.

Life Skills Supervisor Haydee’s programs have also kept super busy; we cannot keep up with canvas deliveries! They have made jewelry, tie-dyed shirts, painted, planted seeds, and are doing Zumba on a regular basis.

Although our staff have their own lives and families to care for in this time of peril, it is amazing and reassuring that those responsibilities have not lessened their care for our residents.

If anything, they have poured more love and care into our programs (if that’s even possible). Our staff is doing such a phenomenal job! Once again, this is all a reminder of how truly special this agency is and what an amazing cast of people we have working here! “



Mira doing her household chores.



Arsenia working on her beautiful art.

## Thankful Thursdays

The recent times have shown us how great humanity can be. We are grateful that some of those great humans work for JCL. A few weeks into social distancing, we planned a pizza parade, to say thank you to our employees. This began a new tradition for JCL, each Thursday since April 16th, JCL management has delivered special goodies to the employees on shift. We have had two board members make cookies, delivered bagels and balloons, and even had the Rita’s Italian Ice truck. Our employees are truly amazing, they have gone above and beyond during this pandemic. We look forward to a few more Thankful Thursdays!



Rita’s Italian Ice truck parade stops at Brewster.



## Remembering Katie

Sweet Katie lived with JCL for 20 years. During her much of her life at JCL, she lived in condo with her friend Naomi. Katie was known for her sweet demeanor and loving personality. Below are thoughts from Deb Devivo, DDS Case Manager/MSW; Deidre Reichenbach, JCL Life Skills Supervisor; as well as Katie's family that best describe Katie and her relationship with JCL.

"Katie's relationship with JCL began in April of 2000 when she moved to Sky View. We all had the amazing privilege of being a part of Katie's life over these past 20 years and that time with Katie is something that enriched all our lives.

Katie had a loving and caring nature. Her smile was always present! She had a love of life and was an absolute joy to be around! Her positive, funny, upbeat personality always brightened your day when you spent time with her! Katie was also very thoughtful and considerate and always took the time to ask how you were, how your family was.

Everyone who knew Katie loved her! She had so many friends who she enjoyed spending time with! Social gatherings at Katie's home were always fun events...whether it was a lively "JCL Dinner Club" night that Katie hosted, a birthday party celebration, a movie night with friends, everyone always had a great time!

This love for Katie was also shown in the amazing care and support provided by her staff throughout her time with JCL. Although the challenges in the last years caused the "rhythm" of this support to shift and change, the loving care and unwavering commitment to Katie from JCL was ever-present and something that I will always remember.

Katie was a very special person whose gentle spirit touched the lives of many people over the years. She has left a lasting memory with all of us who were honored to have known her and to have supported her and we will all miss her greatly!!" - Deborah DeVivo, DDS Case Manager

"Katie is the sweetest and most kind hearted person I've ever met. You would never see her mad, if she did then she would go in her room for a little bit and come back out like nothing happened. She was always there for me when she knew I was down, always rubbing my back and saying, "It's okay hunny". She gave the best massages, the best hugs and she always put a smile on my face. I loved dancing with her and going for walks, eating subway and turkey burgers with her, doing different hairstyles on her, painting her nails and taking thousands of pictures together. I would whisper in her ear that she was my favorite and then we would sing, "You Are My Sunshine" together. Through her struggling days, I would still sing that song to her knowing she could no longer sing with me, but I knew she was still listening. She was and still is my Sunshine." - Deidre Reichenbach, JCL Life Skills Supervisor



Katie enjoying a meal out.



Katie spending time with her friends Larry and Tammy.

“Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the loving, compassionate, extraordinary support you all surrounded Katie with from the very beginning of our with you until her final days. Katie never wanted for anything, she took pleasure in everyone’s company. She thought of you as her family and she loved all of you very much. What a gift this community has been, Katie flourished in your company.” - Anne Broadhurst & Dick Buckson, Katie’s family



Katie, as happy as ever, out at the park.

### To our supporters

2020 is proving to be a challenging year! This will be the year the brings people together or divides them even further from each other. We like to believe that all our world faces today will bring us closer together. We have already seen that with the outpouring of support from our little community at JCL.

When closures and social distancing first began in March, we were unsure how it was going to affect the lives’ of our guys or the agency as a business. Since March we have had an increase in staffing hours at various locations, hired a professional cleaning company to clean and disinfect homes and vehicles on a regular basis, ensured that each staff person has a variety of styles of masks to wear, and have made certain that our guys have all they need to fulfill their days. We could not have done all of this without your support. We have received monetary donations as well as many gifts from our Amazon Wish List.

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Deborah DeVivo	Brooksie Koopman	Alan Schuman	<i><b>THANK YOU</b> to each and every one of you who have helped us!</i>
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