Jewish Family Services is unlike any other agency you’ll find in Central Ohio – or maybe anywhere. Our staff and board reflect the beautiful diversity of the community and the individuals we serve. We are Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish; Black, Brown, and White; straight and gay. We come from 16 different countries and speak two dozen different languages and dialects. All are bound together by the values on which Jewish Family Services was founded, values that compel us to help people – all kinds of people – who are facing life’s challenges.

Since 1908, Jewish Family Services has been advancing a mission to help individuals and families achieve economic self-sufficiency and emotional stability. In 2023, as always, our work evolved to meet community needs. We expanded services for refugees, offering a continuum from initial resettlement and first jobs to career pathways. We helped older adults navigate loss, isolation, and an increasingly digital world. We empowered family stability through financial counseling, connections to community resources, job training, and employment.

We are proud of the impact Jewish Family Services has had over more than a century of serving this community. Our work builds bridges and breaks down barriers. Alongside our partners from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, and with the support of our dedicated volunteers and loyal donors, Jewish Family Services continues building on a rich legacy of supporting the people of Central Ohio.

Thank you for helping us go from strength to strength – for these past 115 years and into the future.
We Turned $2M into $28.5M

In 1 year, this will generate

WAGES EARNED $28.5M
TAX REVENUE $7M
FROM WORKFORCE PROGRAM INVESTMENTS OF $2M

5,241 Households Served
1,467 Families Stabilized
509 Volunteers Contributed
3,352 Hours of Service

693 Older Adults Navigated the Challenges of Aging
Including 181 Survivors of Nazi Persecution

630 People Secured Jobs
Earning average wages of $21.71/hour
Sydney faced a tough time juggling school with a difficult job search. She confided in her father, who introduced her to a church friend, Jewish Family Services Career Counselor Sherry. Sherry tells all who'll listen that Jewish Family Services is where to go when you're facing life's challenges. Sherry quickly began helping Sydney identify her strengths and transferable skills. With Sherry’s guidance, Sydney began to regain her equilibrium as she updated her resume, identified job opportunities, and practiced interviewing. Before long, Sydney landed a job and moved into her own apartment. Our support didn’t stop there. Sherry connected Sydney with community resources to secure household needs, professional clothing, and a computer. Our holistic approach helped Sydney launch the next phase in her life’s journey.

“I was in a dark place, not being able to provide for myself... Now, after Jewish Family Services and getting a job and getting all the resources, I have never been happier.”

The Rachael Ray Foundation Pathways to Careers in Animal Health is a dynamic collaboration between Columbus Humane, the Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio, and Jewish Family Services. This initiative tackles the industry’s shortage of skilled veterinary assistants and the need for greater diversity in the field.

When Da’jah first learned of this program, she saw an opportunity to turn her dream of becoming a veterinarian into reality. She was impressed by the program’s robust job readiness training and case management from Jewish Family Services combined with hands-on clinical skills training provided by Columbus Humane. Da’jah made the bold decision to leave her existing job and immersed herself in Pathways. Upon graduation, Columbus Humane hired her as a vet tech assistant. Da’jah’s success in Pathways confirmed her desire to pursue a degree in veterinary medicine.

“Pathways has led me to know that I will be the best veterinarian that I can be.”
STRENGTH IN CONNECTING

Working remotely, Sophia found her daily interactions limited. She missed connecting with people of different ages and interests, especially after the death of her beloved grandmother Helen. Sophia joined our Friendly Visitor Program, which pairs volunteers with seniors for social companionship, hoping it might ease her loneliness and help someone else. Sophia was matched with Rose. At 96, Rose was sharp as a tack, but her limited mobility made it difficult to go out or feel involved in the community.

Rose and Sophia's first meeting led to a heartwarming revelation. Sophia strongly resembles her grandmother, Helen, who was a dear friend of Rose. Rose immediately made the connection. The two felt their pairing was bashert, or meant to be. Sophia says spending time with Rose “activates a whole different part of my life and [...] reminds me of my culture and where I came from.” And Sophia helps Rose feel more connected to things that matter to her. When Sophia learned that Rose hadn’t seen her Chicago-based brother in years, she arranged a tearful Zoom reunion for the two. Sophia and Rose's ongoing connection brings friendship and joy to both.

FINANCIAL STRENGTH

Afia learned about Jewish Family Services during a presentation at her church about the free financial counseling it offers through the City of Columbus' Financial Empowerment Center. She was referred to financial counselor Marcia, who helped her create a budget tracker to understand her spending habits. They talked through Afia's priorities and identified concrete financial goals. With Marcia's help, Afia reduced unnecessary expenses, established a habit of saving money, increased her credit score by 100 points and achieved her personal goal of self-publishing a children’s book, THE JOURNEY OF AMA KETEWA. She is now working toward saving $20,000 and sharing her book with children, parents, and educators.

"I want to thank Jewish Family Services so much for the support that they've given me...I would recommend them to anybody who's really serious about getting their finances in order.

"My life has changed significantly since I started volunteering with JFS. I've noticed that I'm more outgoing in general and that I have a smile on my face more."
Kabuya and his wife and two children had a good life in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where he worked as an accountant. That ended when the militia began rounding up local men. Kabuya had to run for his life and was forced to leave his family behind.

It took two weeks to reach the refugee camp in Uganda, where Kubuya’s family was eventually able to join him. They had very little food, no roads, and no running water. Kabuya spent time teaching others English and leading efforts to acquire a generator to supply electricity. Kubuya became General Secretary of the Camp and was elected as a refugee representative to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. After 10 years in the camp, Kabuya finally received word that his family had been accepted for resettlement in the U.S. They arrived in Columbus in 2015.

Kabuya’s compassion and leadership are strengths he now brings to his role as a refugee resettlement case manager at Jewish Family Services. Kubuya’s days are spent welcoming newly arriving refugees who were also forced from their homelands, helping them rebuild their lives in a new country.

Vatthana contacted us after losing her job in a corporate restructuring. She was immediately impressed by our comprehensive resources and community of jobseekers. With encouragement from her Career Counselor Malka, Vatthana learned how to navigate a modern job search and expanded her network, utilizing our group workshops and 1:1 supports. Malka also made a strategic connection for Vatthana to program alum and Huntington Bank employee Michael, who shared her background in risk management. Michael became Vatthana’s mentor and, when the ideal opportunity became available at the bank, Michael recommended her. She landed the job and has excelled in the position. Our supportive network not only bolstered Vatthana’s confidence during an extended job search, but also directly led to her successful career transition.

“I do this work because I am passionate about helping refugees, people who are going through what I went through. I would ask people to keep supporting Jewish Family Services. On the ground we see a very big difference.”

“The inspiration and the encouragement that Malka offers is something really different that you can’t find anywhere else.”

STRENGTH OF OUR ROOTS

A STRONG NETWORK
Audited financials and a detailed breakdown of revenue sources are available by written request. Please contact Amy Gettys at agettys@jfscolumbus.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR MAJOR DONORS

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