



Jewish Family Services of silicon valley

President's Annual Meeting Speech 2017

Good evening. We are here to celebrate the many accomplishments of Jewish Family Services of Silicon Valley in the past year and look ahead to bright expectations for the future.

As Mindy mentioned in her address, there were many noteworthy touchstones for JFS since our last Annual Meeting in June 2016. I'd like to give a nod of appreciation to a few people:

- Susan Ellenberg who graciously accepted our invitation to handle the installation of Board members.
- Members of the Board of Directors retiring from their formal positions, but who will undoubtedly provide support in the future: Susan Greenberg Englander, Elaine Blais and Marty Newman
- People who recently joined the Board: Ruth Bareket, Susan Broockman and Haryl Pascal. Each of them brings a wealth of experience, knowledge, skill and determination to make sure JFS continues to fulfill its potential.

However, tonight, I'd like to focus on a group of people who help ensure our success. Where would JFS be without our volunteers? All 665 of them?

JFS of Silicon Valley has 16 paid employees who administer, develop, manage and monitor a big variety of programs to meet the needs of a large variety of people. And many of those 16 are only part-time!

Volunteers are heroes. Who helps gather, package and deliver all sorts of items for the JFS food program which assists more than 1,000 people each year? Volunteers. Throughout the year, and especially during holidays, they make a difference for single parent families, frail seniors, disabled adults and refugees.

Volunteers are valuable. Consider all the Knitzvah members who create thousands of beautiful clothing articles every year for babies, cancer patients, isolated seniors, recently arrived immigrants and other people in need for nearly 20 community-based organizations. Did you know Knitzvah created over 20,000 items in its first 10 years?

Volunteers are essential. More than 30 attorneys in Silicon Valley donate their expertise, experience and time to help a multitude of refugees apply for permanent legal status and American citizenship after they've run the multi-year gauntlet of extreme vetting just to be accepted into the US.

Volunteers are a life-line. During the last year, JFS volunteers brought a smile, a willing ear and a soft shoulder, as well as food and other necessities to 226 Holocaust survivors living in our immediate area. Some of these volunteers are part of the Friendly Visitor program which makes a difference for everyone involved. My wife and I can attest to that.

Volunteers care. Volunteers are people, just like you and me, who want to make the world a better place one person at a time. Whether through the popular Embrace-A-Family program every November and December, the Backpack Drive in the summer or other year-round safety net services -- volunteers say the word "WE" in a world of "ME".

As we approach the 40th anniversary of JFS in Silicon Valley, there are few more worthy achievements than that of volunteer. We never say no. If you want to help, we'll find a way. We are honored to have you and everyone else in this room who make a difference in the lives of the people we serve.

Rich Namm
President