



Dear Treasured Volunteer,

Happy New Year! We hope you enjoyed special holiday time with family and friends. Thank you from deep in our hearts for volunteering for JFS in our recent Embrace-A-Family program and JFS Thanksgiving/Hanukkah programs. You have made a huge difference to the clients we serve. Even now we are still receiving gifts, distributing them, tallying our results, and putting away our supplies for next year. And all the while we're able to reflect on how much of a positive difference this work makes.

We were overwhelmed with the incredible generosity of our community. This year we were blessed and our program grew yet again. We had new organizations participating, donating and volunteering with so much enthusiasm and generosity. A higher number of gifts were received and the amount of dreidel wishes fulfilled was higher than any previous year.

All this generosity created more effort from our hardworking volunteers and each of you stepped up to the challenge.

As a result of your efforts, needy families were thrilled to receive warm blankets, heaters, bedding to weather the colder winter months. Isolated seniors were grateful and appreciative not just for their gifts but also to be remembered this time of the year.

Our dedicated KNITZVAH volunteers went above and beyond with their handmade items that went to our beloved seniors, needy clients and refugee families. One Russian senior said that she delivered handmade KNITZVAH scarves and shawls to her homebound neighbors who were deeply grateful and she received a beautiful shawl which warms her soul as well as her old bones. But that's not all. KNITZVAH organized a Giving Thursday event where heaps of warm bed sized blankets were created and these blankets are now warming our latest Refugee homes. We and our clients are so very appreciative of all you do.

In one case, members of our staff visited a recently resettled family in a barren apartment. Inside, the kids were bored with nothing to do. When our staff left the house was fully set up with adequate bedding and multiple household items and the air was buzzing with the happy sounds of children playing, coloring, tinkering with new toys, and figuring out the rules of their new board games. One of our gracious board members later delivered THREE bikes to this same family, who couldn't begin to express how grateful – and welcomed – they felt. Because of your efforts there is now a very happy and independent 17 year old cycling to school on his new bicycle, freeing up his parents to get to work!

One appreciative mother shared how her 15 year old son was thrilled to get his new bedding. He immediately put the new comforter on his bed, so happy to wrap himself up in the warmth it provided, on so many levels.

Some of you helped us plan EAF 2017; others prepared the dreidel boards; others maintained the dreidel boards at our various locations; some collected gifts and dreidel boards and gifts from the many locations (near and far); some volunteered at the front desk and graciously accepted donor

gifts; many checked in gifts and beautifully wrapped them; many KNITZVAH members made beautiful shawls, scarves and warm blankets; some helped us pack our Thanksgiving/Hanukkah food packages; some held special pre-Thanksgiving/Hanukkah celebrations in the community; some picked up and delivered bikes and many delivered gifts and food packages to seniors.

Please take the time to feel good as you start this new year in knowing that your volunteer efforts made a big difference in the lives of the refugees, families, and seniors in need. You with your energy, creativity and huge capacity to give of yourselves, helped bring smiles and restore hope.

Happy New Year! Happy 2018!

Lori Cinnamon and Sheila Monheit

