



The Support Report



A COMMUNITY OF KINDNESS POWERED BY YOU

Growing Up to Give Back

For more than 25 years, Renee Kaplan has been served by JARC. She is part of the Independent Living Services program (ILS) and has her own apartment where her staff, Shoshana Rubenstein, supports her with various tasks. For as long as she can remember, Renee has been involved in volunteering.

It all started when Renee was a child. Her parents were very involved in the community, volunteering at several different agencies. Renee was always eager to tag along and help however she could. Now as an adult, Renee embraces the importance of giving back. Her repertoire includes writing letters to veterans, creating care packages for soldiers, serving meals to homeless families, delivering food with Meals on Wheels, and so much more.



When the pandemic began, it was important to Renee that she continue to volunteer, even if just from her living room. She and Shoshana discussed possible opportunities and decided that she could make blankets to donate. Making blankets was a hobby of Renee's for many years and with a soft spot for animals, making blankets for an animal shelter was the perfect pandemic project for her. Renee made a total of 25 blankets over the course of several months and donated them to Michigan Animal Rescue League.

“Renee just has a beautiful heart,” said Shoshana. “She has contributed so much to the community and is always looking for ways to help other people.”

News of Renee's donation spread across metro Detroit and she was named *Newsradio 950 WWJ News Maker of the Week*. Her story was shared on WXYZ, in *The Oakland Press*, *Detroit Jewish News*, and *The Birmingham-Bloomfield Eagle*.



Do you have a suggestion for a volunteer project that persons served can do from home?

Contact Jessica at 248.940.2607 or jessicatierney@jarc.org.

Featured Funds

Those served and employed by JARC are so fortunate to have the community's support. With more than 200 funds designed to support different aspects of JARC, each one goes a long way in caring for persons served and staff. These two featured funds are generously supported by Jennifer and Dan Gilbert, trustees of the Gilbert Family Foundation and are some of the newest additions to JARC's Family of Funds:

Robert Feldstein Aging-in-Place Accessibility Initiative

As persons served age and their needs increase, it is essential that their homes meet their new needs. Fortunately, JARC has received a generous grant to assist.

The grant will fund renovations to JARC homes that are limited in accessibility. This includes widening hallways, adding ramps to entrances with stairs, making bathrooms more accessible, and other projects to remove limitations. The benefits of these projects are limitless in terms of improving quality of life for persons served.

JARC has signed on with an architecture firm with 30 years of experience designing and specific expertise in designing group homes. Silveri Architects, led by Marco and Cynthia Silveri, are passionate about improving accessibility in homes of people with disabilities.

JARC is thrilled to begin the renovation projects with the Keller-Walch home this year, and the other homes to follow. With the help of Silveri Architects, the homes will become not only beautiful but highly accessible and meet the needs of persons served as they age.

Robert Feldstein Workforce Support Initiative

The job of a direct care worker is not an easy one. It is physically and emotionally taxing, and they work hard to meet the needs of persons served. The Robert Feldstein Workforce Support Initiative was created to support these hard-working staff in meeting their own needs. This new program employs a social worker, who connects JARC staff with resources.

Miriam Amzalak, JARC's Employee Support Coordinator, is responsible for coordinating access to resources offered within the community, and by the city, County, and State. In many cases staff are not even aware of the offerings of a specific resource let alone familiar with how to access it.

Staff come to Miriam when they:

- Can't find affordable childcare
- Need legal assistance
- Need food assistance
- Are having trouble navigating a DHS program
- Need pregnancy support
- Have questions about securing a mortgage or finding affordable housing
- Need transportation
- Have trouble paying utilities
- Have questions about anything else!



When this position became available, Miriam was excited to apply because she was already fond of JARC. "It's an honor to work with people who dedicate their lives to supporting adults with special needs and helping them reach their goals," Miriam said. She takes great pride in being a resource to staff and helping them to access what they need so they can continue to provide outstanding care to the people JARC serves. To borrow a phrase from airline travel "please secure your own mask before assisting others." Only by making sure our staff have the "oxygen" they need in their personal lives will they be able to then help persons served.

Thank you again to Jennifer and Dan Gilbert for supporting JARC's amazing direct care staff and persons served.

If you know of a resource that might benefit JARC staff, please contact Miriam at miriamamzalak@jarc.org or 248.480.4689.

Positivity Goes a Long Way

The Gilbert Home houses four ladies and caring staff members. The home manager, Katrina Smith, has been a caregiver for almost 24 years. Caring for persons served fulfills Katrina's desire to help others and allows her to have a true impact on their lives.

"I love seeing their smiles when I help them accomplish something they never thought they could," she said.

For example, Katrina helped Brooke, a person served, learn how to make change when shopping. She bolstered Brooke's confidence by reassuring her that it's okay to take her time and even count on her fingers, if needed. Brooke is so proud of herself and happily exclaims to Katrina each time she makes change successfully.

Another staff member, Ellen Fonseca-Hilliard, not only works in the Gilbert Home but she also lives in the attached suite. While Ellen has her own entrance and living space, she enjoys checking on the ladies even when she's not officially on the clock, to see how the ladies are doing.

The relationships between JARC's direct care staff and persons served are vital to the wellbeing of persons served. When the pandemic began, and lockdowns were mandated by the State of Michigan in group homes, these relationships became even more important, as did maintaining a positive attitude.

"Bad thoughts don't help anyone," said Ellen. "There's a silver lining to everything, you just need to find it." This philosophy has served Ellen well in her own life and improved the outlook of the people she serves when the Shelter in Place order was made.

Katrina's philosophy is that life is too short to try to fast-forward; and the best way to live is one minute at a time. Katrina worked to supply plenty of activities for the ladies to keep them occupied and have a sense of fulfillment while sheltering in place.

So many of JARC's staff are beloved by persons served and their families. This year, Katrina and Ellen have been recognized with the Woll Staff Recognition Award. Nominations for this quarterly award are submitted by the families of persons served for doing a phenomenal job caring for their loved ones. Winners are selected quarterly, and awardees are given a well-deserved cash-prize. This award is generously funded by the Woll Family Fund for Staff Education, Development and Appreciation.

"Receiving the Woll Award made me smile. I work hard to make sure things run smoothly for the ladies and winning the award shows me that our work is not overlooked," said Katrina.



If you know someone looking for a career like Katrina's and Ellen's, contact Jennifer at jennifergoldstein@jarc.org or 248.940.2612

There are so many ways to support JARC!

Visit jarc.org/give to **donate** or contact Jenny Kabert at 248.940.2603 or jennykabert@jarc.org for **annual sponsorship** opportunities.

Enroll in **Kroger Community Rewards** and every time you buy groceries, JARC will benefit. Log into your Kroger portal to register.

If you have some extra time and you'd like to **volunteer** please contact Jessica Tierney at 248.940.2607 or jessicatierney@jarc.org.

Host a **Facebook** fundraiser! It's an easy and free way to share your passion for JARC's work.

Do you shop on **Amazon**? Get all the same items at smile.amazon.com and a percentage of your purchase will be donated. Just select JARC in Bloomfield Hills as your charity of choice!

Keep us in mind when you have a **tribute** to send. Our tribute cards feature the smiling faces of those who benefit from your donation — the people served by JARC. Call 248.940.2617 to send a tribute.

Thank you for your generosity.