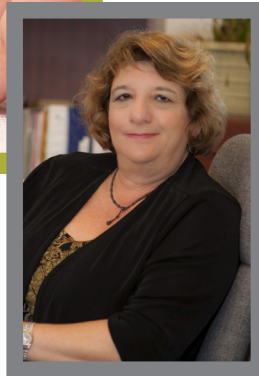


scene | from the desk of...



Rose Chapman

LCSW, President/CEO Jewish Family & Children's
Service of Sarasota-Manatee, Inc.



Helping Others This Holiday Season

This holiday season, many of us will gather with family and friends to celebrate the fortunes and opportunities that have come our way. Beginning with the carving of our Thanksgiving turkey, families will join together in rituals and traditions of their culture and religion. Jews will light the eight candles of the Menorah recounting the miracle of Chanukah, the Festival of Lights. Christians will attend Christmas Eve Mass commemorating the birth of Jesus. African-Americans will reaffirm community with the lighting of seven symbolic candles for Kwanzaa. Each of these festivals and holidays embrace the family and provide a spiritual connection that strengthens our entire community.

But what do the most vulnerable people in our community have to celebrate this holiday season? The isolated, homebound widower who recently lost his wife? The single mother who works two jobs to support her children? The family who is on the brink of homelessness due to unemployment? The child who comes to school hungry? The wife who is overwhelmed by her caregiving responsibilities? These are not invisible members of our community...they are neighbors who have hopes and dreams, but little to celebrate. And they turn to JFCS for help, during the holidays and throughout the year.

JFCS was founded in 1985 by a compassionate group of volunteers and professionals who recognized the importance of providing a full range of social services to our community. Guided by the Jewish tradition of Tikkun Olam, repairing the world, JFCS provides comprehensive counseling and social services to all people in our community who face life's challenges. JFCS

believes that the key to serving the community is inclusiveness, respect and empowering people to make positive life changes. Our motto...When You Can't Do It Alone defines the helping hand that JFCS offers to everyone seeking support.

Celebrating 25 years of providing hope and healing, JFCS does not do it alone! We are indeed fortunate to live in a generous community that rallies and responds to the needs of others. JFCS has an active corps of more than 300 volunteers that serve as Mentors, Tutors and Friendly Visitors providing support and encouragement to at-risk youth and isolated seniors. Donations from business partners and individuals provide important funding to support agency programs. And local foundations, government funders, Jewish Federation and all three United Ways annually allocate significant grant funding to ensure that JFCS can offer counseling and safety net programs to community residents.

As you prepare to celebrate the holidays with loved ones, take a moment to count your blessings. And then ask yourself, what can I do to help others? I invite you to join the friends of JFCS who donate canned goods to our food pantry, purchase Chanukah and Christmas gifts for needy children, visit an older adult in a nursing home or become a volunteer. Together, we can help all members of our community realize their hopes and dreams. 🌟