

A Letter from JFS

By [Pam Kelner](#)

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To the Nashville Jewish Community,

The massacre in Israel and the ongoing crisis affects us directly here in Nashville. We want to help you understand how your Jewish Family Service is responding—meeting people's immediate needs with love, dignity, and care.

What is JFS?

JFS is the central social service agency for Nashville's Jewish community. We serve in normal times and in extraordinary moments. We help through personal and family crises, and collective crises, be they floods and tornadoes, economic recessions, global pandemics, or pogroms and war.

How does JFS work?

JFS is small but mighty. Our staff of six is able to carry out our work thanks to incredible support from volunteers, donors to JFS and community partners including the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee and our area synagogues.

How is JFS responding to the current crisis?

To date, JFS has been responding in three main ways:

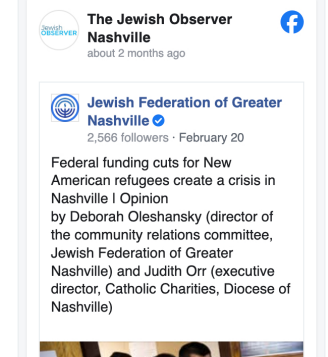
1. Direct support to Israel evacuees arriving in Nashville.
1. Mental health support for community members
1. Needs assessment for further response.

How is JFS providing direct support and loving embrace to Israeli evacuees?

On the evening of October XX, a plane with 280 Israeli evacuees landed in Nashville. With less than 24 hours notice, JFS and community partners sprung into action, organizing to serve the needs of the 60 who were temporarily in Nashville before continuing on to other cities. Our first priority—meeting all their basic needs with true Southern hospitality: Transportation, housing, food, and clothing. We secured hotels for some. Community members opened their homes to host others. Some volunteers drove them. Others donated clothes. Our community's wonderful kosher caterers cooked them delicious meals. A number of the evacuees were Orthodox Jews with specific religious needs, which Congregation Sherith Israel and Chabad Vanderbilt quickly met. The morning after their flight landed, evacuees who had arrived under extraordinarily difficult circumstances gathered, smiling, and telling us that this was the first time they had really slept in 2 weeks. We are anticipating additional evacuees and are preparing to receive them with the same love and care.

How can JFS support you through our Community Matters Programming in this moment of crisis?

- Counseling provided by professional, licensed social workers. JFS accepts insurance, Medicare, and offers a sliding scale ensuring anyone requiring mental health services can receive the care they need.
- Support groups - JFS realizes that some may prefer support groups or discussion groups rather than/in addition to individual counseling. If this describes you, please fill out this *brief* survey at this link: [Insert graphic titled: JFS here](#)
- Free half-hour conversations with our social workers for support, resources, and a safe place to process your feelings (see ad on page for more details)
- Come together as a community to create your own strand of beads that represent protection, self-care, strength, and unity as we process feelings around the war in Israel.



Wednesday, November 8 at 4 PM (see add on page XX for more details)

Call 615-356-4234 to access all the offerings listed above.

JFS will continue to assess needs and respond with additional programs and services over the coming weeks and months. Please follow our social media channels for the most up to date offerings.

Am Yisrael Chai,

Pam Kelner

Executive Director, Jewish Family Service

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