



Annual Report February 2012

Wings of Care (Kanfei Chesed) Inc is a not for profit, tax deductible gift recipient Organization. Its mission is to care for Jewish people who have a mental illness and give support to their families. Our vision is, through our various programs, to help prevent the onset of mental illness in our community, cater to the needs of those who are suffering, and provide easier access to appropriate services through our helpline and resource guide. We hope that more people will have a greater understanding and empathy towards sufferers and that the latter will no longer feel the need to hide their afflictions for fear of stigma and discrimination.

I am happy to report that currently things are going well.

We are in the process of further highlighting the plight of those living with mental illness and in poverty with whom we have regular contact. An article written by Wings of Care was recently published in the Australian Jewish News, February 10, 2012, which helped create awareness regarding issues people grapple with when they suffer the double whammy of poverty and mental illness. A research paper is also being planned to be written on Mental Illness and Poverty in our Community reviewing the findings in a similar study from 2006.

Some of the ways in which Wings of Care addresses these issues are as follows. Adding to the food we deliver from Eshel Catering on Friday afternoons through Eda Elkas, to selected clients we now have boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables on Wednesday afternoons. This is a very popular service and reports are at hand of the benefits to clients considering the effects of prolonged medication on the body. One client reported that her GP noticed through tests the incredible improvement in her liver function since she has been eating a substantially larger amount of fruit and vegetables. This service provided by Second Bite and delivered by their volunteers, and Glo Health with organics, helps clients financially, mentally and physically as well. We are also now receiving and distributing clothes and other goods to clients and their families. We particularly appreciate the effort of Max Dziencol, Viv Parry and Ruth Figdor and others in providing us with so many varied products for us to offer those in need. Volunteer Adina Allen does an excellent job collecting and distributing our Tzadaka (Charity) boxes throughout the Caulfield, East St Kilda, Elsternwick and other areas. Plans are at hand for further distribution avenues for placement and collection of the Tzadaka boxes.

Our Community Support Program is now moving into its third year and proves to be a viable project. We are currently completing the training of the third intake of volunteers. Synagogues involved to date are: Kehillat Nitsan, Kew Hebrew Congregation, North Eastern Hebrew Congregation, Beit Aharon, Sha'arei Tefillah , Caulfield Hebrew

Congregation, Chabad House Glen Eira, Ohel Devorah, Central Synagogue and others. Volunteers from each of our training sessions are successfully visiting those in need.

Wings of Care Mental Health volunteers are still visiting their regular clientele helping the latter cope in the community.

Our Helpline continues to be a valuable service to the community. We listen to people's concerns and guide them with referrals and support. This also allows us to address those needs through our varied programs and to guide our endeavours in the future.

During Jewish festivals and commemorations we hold Shiurim (talks) and hold festivities to celebrate these occasions. Zippi Oliver OAM runs these programs.

We have festive parties on Purim and Channukah and eat in our Sukkah on Sukkot all with live music and dancing for those who want it. On Purim we have a megillah reading and festive meal and a shiur. We also make Mishloach Manot for clients to give to their friends. We are introducing talks on the various prayers that we use. Dovid Tzapp is giving talks which are very popular with the client group.

For the client group we now have a broad range of activities. We have a creative writing workshop with a professional writer-Yvonne Fein. Nitza Marom runs craft classes where items made were sent to the Canterbury Hebrew Congregation for their children in the Cheder in Christchurch who were victims of the New Zealand earthquake. Our current project with Nitza is creating gift cards which we will sell with proceeds going to selected charities. David Jacobs gives photography instruction and some of the photos that we are taking will be used for our greeting cards made with Nitza. Nick Friedland takes the group for a program called the Joy of Wellbeing with exercises in karate-type movements. Music appreciation is incorporated in his program. Sessions are stimulating to body, mind and spirit.

One of our volunteers has taken on the project of training a dog to be a therapy dog to visit Wings of Care clients. She is calling this dog a "Mitzvah Dog" because of the job he is being trained to do.

Our Community Chest has been barren over the last months but we are looking forward in anticipation to that turning around as new funding opportunities and some old are being approached currently.

Our School Children's program incorporating Be the Change Movement from Challenge Day in the United States is building momentum and dimension with the encouragement and financial support of the Gandel Foundation. We were able to get the support of the Duke of Edinburgh awards and participants may be entitled to receive an award. We continue to work with the internationally acclaimed program Challenge Day. We will be addressing issues such as bullying and cyber-bullying and empowering school children to connect in an authentic manner with their peers. This program also lends itself to other areas which we will be investigating. We are distributing the book "Be the Hero" which explains the philosophy of the Be the Change Movement. A summary of the book has also been completed and will be used to help teach the program to students, those dealing with young people and others who may be interested.

Our Judaism Manual is in the process of being prepared for printing. As previously stated this will be of tremendous use to those service providers helping Jewish patients in facilities as well as providing phone Counsellors with assistance. It will help develop a better understanding of our culture and knowledge about Jewish rituals.

I wish to thank all our presenters and those who donate their time so generously for their support and effort through-out the year. I wish to thank these people who give their time, effort and professional and non-professional support: Barie Forbes, Ariel Segal, Elfie Weiss, Dr George Halasz, Rabbi Lior Broh , pro bono accountant Moishe Adelist, and Jeffrey Appel pro bono Solicitor and his firm. Special thanks to Lili Hampel in her administrative capacity which she performs in a gracious and caring manner. Special thanks to the board including Dr Mat Gelman, Rabbi Mendel Raskin and Rabbi Ralph Genende for their continued support.

I look forward to the 2012 being our twelfth for even bigger and better things to come "BH.

We are planning a revival of our "Friends of Wings of Care" Friday night early minyan with a Kiddish and Droscha afterwards.

Lorraine GRUMD Levy

Founding President of Wings of Care (Kanfei Chesed) Inc.
Hon. Secretary Jewish Mental Health Network
Founder of Wings of Care Social Justice Forum
Coordinator Community Chest
Phone: (03) 9527 4866
www.wingsofcare.org.au; www.vicnet.net.au/~msupport