LIFE-SAVING MOMENTS

2021 Impact Report

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND COUNSELING
NON-MEDICAL FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES • CANCER AND GENETICS EDUCATION
REMEMBERING THE HONORABLE JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG A”H

The loss of Honorable Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is deeply personal for the Sharsheret community. Having shared a strong bond of friendship with her own law clerk and Sharsheret’s late founder Rochelle Shoretz A”H, Justice Ginsburg was the first member of our Honorary Advisory Board.

As a cancer survivor herself, the Justice understood that Sharsheret, the Hebrew word for “chain,” offered critical services connecting Jewish women with one another while providing both life saving education about breast cancer, ovarian cancer and cancer genetics, as well as life enhancing emotional support to improve the lives of women facing cancer.

May the memory of Justice Ginsburg be a blessing as we work to realize her charge “to make life a little better for people.”

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Friends,

It is said that twenty years represents a generation. As Sharsheret enters our 20th year, we are profoundly grateful for having had the opportunity to serve a generation of daughters, mothers, grandmothers, aunts, friends and their families. Sharsheret has changed how the Jewish community understands and responds to breast cancer, ovarian cancer and cancer genetics, improving the lives of those personally affected with telehealth clinical support and resources, and saving lives through in-person and virtual educational opportunities. And you, our dedicated network, have empowered us to advance our mission despite the challenges we are all facing during this global pandemic.

Your continued and generous support has enabled Sharsheret to lead the Jewish response to breast cancer and ovarian cancer, serving nearly 200,000 women, families, healthcare professionals, community leaders, and students, in all 50 states. As a premier organization for psychosocial support, Sharsheret continues to rise on the national platform, chairing the Federal Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women, partnering with the CDC to develop cancer survivorship programs, and participating in research studies and evaluations with major cancer centers from coast to coast.

This past year, as COVID-19 forced us to put aspects of our lives on hold, diagnoses of breast cancer and ovarian cancer continued to affect women at alarming rates. Cancer did not pause, and neither did Sharsheret.

As you read this impact report, you will understand the critical role Sharsheret plays in addressing the needs of our community, now more than ever. The stories of the women and men we have served this year will inspire you as you learn about our life-enhancing mental health counseling, financial subsidies, and life-saving educational programming. You will see signs of hope, optimism, and deep gratitude.

As the glimmer of light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel becomes brighter, we need your help.

This year, with the support of the Jewish Community Foundation of New York and the New York Jewish Week, you can help us to put a focus on our core mission: to rise on the national platform, chair the Federal Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women, partnering with the CDC to develop cancer survivorship programs, and participating in research studies and evaluations with major cancer centers from coast to coast.

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Please make a donation through the enclosed envelope, visit link.sharsheret.org/impact or scan here and help build and guide Sharsheret’s next 20 years. Ensure that Sharsheret continues to be where you are, when and how you need us. Together, we will improve lives and save lives, m’dor l’dor, from one generation to the next, creating a better tomorrow.

Very truly yours,

Stacy Smollin Schwartz
PRESIDENT

Elena Silber
CEO
SHARSHERET BY THE NUMBERS
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

640
EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS INCLUDING SHARSHERET PINK AND TEAL SHABBAT*
Made possible with support from Susan G. Komen Greater NYC

108,745
WOMEN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED

147
CAMPUSES REACHED
The Beatrice Milberg Campus Program was made possible with support from Sherry and Neil Cohen

562
GENETICS CONVERSATIONS FACILITATED WITH INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

4,490
UNIQUE PARTICIPANTS IN 51 WEBINARS

94,324
UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS

3,320
QUALITY OF LIFE KITS AND CARE PACKAGES DISTRIBUTED
The Best Face Forward® Program is made possible with support from The Bella Chachky Diamond and Sylvia Diamond Geller Fund

601
CAREGIVERS SERVED
Through The Spungen Foundation Family Focus® Program

1,155
SESSIONS WITH WOMEN LIVING WITH METASTATIC AND ADVANCED CANCER
Through The Margot Rosenberg-Kutner and Ithan Rosenberg Kinder Endowment Program

630
APPLICANTS FOR NON-MEDICAL FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES
The program was made possible with generous support from the Bella Chachky Diamond and Sylvia Diamond Geller Fund, Project Accelerate, and Best Face Forward 2.0

44,670
PARTICIPANTS IN EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS
Through The Florence and Joseph Appleman Educational Resource Series

147
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The Beatrice Milberg Campus Program was made possible with support from Sherry and Neil Cohen

GET INVOLVED FROM HOME!

Whether you work or volunteer in your community, on your campus, at a synagogue or in a Jewish or medically-focused organization, or if you’re interested in getting involved with Sharsheret and helping to raise awareness about breast and ovarian cancer and cancer genetics, please contact us! Together, we can make a difference and save lives!

For complete details about Sharsheret programs, or to get involved throughout the year, please visit our website’s event page. For photos and stories from these programs, or to experience these fundraisers and events, please visit our Facebook or Instagram.
Coping With Ovarian Cancer And COVID-19
Kimberly Tronic, CA

I’ve often thought that cancer and anxiety are synonymous. And when you add pandemic to the equation…well…stress and daily melodowns come to mind. I finished chemo for ovarian cancer but still wrestle with fear and control issues. Therapy and self-reflection helped, and I finally started feeling stable, dare I say happy?

Then COVID-19 barged into our lives. As an extreme introvert who lives alone, I quickly sank into a pit of sadness. I stopped writing and working out. I cried every day. It seemed like the years of therapy became unglued in a matter of weeks.

Pre-pandemic, during chemo, even though my world was chaotic, the rest of the world felt normal. I had the luxury of support, community, and seeing people face-to-face. I could escape to the gym. Go shopping. Grab a coffee. Now, life feels surreal with no sense of normalcy to grasp onto. But, when I get an email or a phone call from Sharsheret, it puts a huge smile on my face to know they are there to support me.

Knowing you’re not alone makes all the difference. My Sharsheret social worker reminds me that at least we’re all in this together and my parents raised me to believe in the power of community.

Knowing you’re not alone makes all the difference. My Sharsheret social worker reminds me that at least we’re all in this together. My parents raised me to believe in the power of community; so even as I struggled with my own worries and sense of isolation, I became a Link, a peer supporter, so I can help other people with theirs. I was so excited to share my story with many of my peers on Sharsheret’s Ovarian Cancer Update webinar. Seeing all the faces on the zoom was reassuring, and reminded me that none of us are alone; we’re all in this together.

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Leaning On Sharsheret So That My Mother Can Lean On Me
Rob B., NY

Life was already hard; the pandemic made sure of that. In addition to losing my job, I was displaced from my home, my friends, and from most things in life that brought me joy. But I had my family. More specifically, I had my mother. A pillar of support, security, and reassurance. And, of course…love. If it meant I had to lean on her a little more than usual, so be it. And then…a sucker punch.

That biopsy her radiologist recommended turned out to be not just a precaution. It was cancer. Stage 1 Triple Negative Invasive Ductal Carcinoma.

I didn’t know what any of that meant. Why would I? This happens to other families. Not ours. One thing was certain - it was my mother’s time to lean. But, how could I be her pillar of support, security, and reassurance when I was struggling to find my own footing? And then… I found Sharsheret.

During my first call, I was fearful that expressing concerns that didn’t have to do with my mother’s care and treatment would be seen as selfish and unloving. Immediately, my Sharsheret social worker understood me and validated my own needs. Being a compassionate caregiver does not preclude taking care of yourself. In some ways, it demands it.

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Turning Adversity Into Opportunity
Kim Korenvaes Stein, TX

My husband Jaryd and I spent the last four years creating our family. I was so excited to return to life without being pregnant after having three children under the age of 4. I was at the very end of my maternity leave and had gone for a mammogram on a Thursday, knowing that I was to return to work on Monday. In just a few days, my world turned upside down as I was unexpectedly diagnosed with triple positive breast cancer.

I had no history of breast cancer in my family and I was not a carrier of any genetic mutation that increased my risk. I was immediately connected to a doctor who specialized in Pregnancy Associated Breast Cancer (PABC); I had never heard of such a thing.

Right before my chemo started, a friend referred me to Sharsheret, and I received a package that included a beautiful pillow to help prop up my arms after my scheduled mastectomy, toys and crafts for my children and parenting resources. My grandmother came to visit and together with my mom we attended a highly informative Sharsheret genetics panel discussion. We left feeling more empowered to get involved, and I knew I needed to share my story through Sharsheret to help other women.

Once I started to feel more like myself, I started planning an educational outreach event for young professionals in Dallas. The night was a huge success with close to 200 women and men participating on Zoom. I am so grateful to be a member of Sharsheret’s Young Professional Committee (YPC) Board, and for having a forum through which to help other women.

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I was very lucky, as my husband and mother-in-law are both doctors, so I had the A-Team getting me through cancer. Once I got through treatment I realized that becoming involved with Sharsheret was the best way to pay it forward. Women can turn to me for advice on family planning (freezing embryos and fertility concerns), breast cancer screenings, or on juggling breast cancer while parenting three young kids. I hope to continue supporting Sharsheret as Sharsheret continues to support me.
Sharsheret does not endorse or promote any specific medication, treatment, product, or service.

Having just learned about my own DNA, I wondered if Sharsheret could help me cope with the emotional side in my doctor’s waiting room and it talked about Jewish women and breast cancer. I saw Sharsheret’s brochure and I didn’t know where to turn.

I knew that I would have a double mastectomy and prophylactic oophorectomy. And then, I just lost it. I felt alone, personally affect me. organization, but at that time Sharsheret’s work didn’t exceed my goal! With these funds, Sharsheret continues to provide emotional support to cancer patients and their families and educate thousands through virtual programs; Sharsheret even offered interactive experiences, including paint nights and healthy living cooking demos connecting women and families across the country. Sharsheret ensures that women like my mom receive support when they need it most.

But, the story does not end there. Before COVID hit, I had signed up to run the 2020 Chicago Marathon as a member of Team Sharsheret – it would have been my 11th marathon. Even though the marathon was canceled, I continued to raise money for Sharsheret and even exceeded my goal! With these funds, Sharsheret continues to provide emotional support to cancer patients and their families and educate thousands through virtual programs; Sharsheret even offered interactive experiences, including paint nights and healthy living cooking demos connecting women and families across the country. Sharsheret ensures that women like my mom receive support when they need it most.

My mom’s peer supporter and Sharsheret social worker were able to support her in ways our family could not. Now my mom is healthy and cancer free.

From AEPhi Sister To Caregiver To Team Sharsheret Athlete

Becca Weiner Malina, IL

I first learned about Sharsheret when I joined the Mu Chapter of Alpha Epsilon Phi Sorority (AEPhi) at University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. Sharsheret was one of AEPhi’s national philanthropies so I was familiar with the organization, but at that time Sharsheret’s work didn’t personally affect me.

Fast forward to when my mom was diagnosed with breast cancer after a routine mammogram. It came as a shock to all of us, but I immediately knew exactly where she should turn for support and comfort. I was able to be a resource for my mom because I referred her to Sharsheret. She called and was connected to a social worker right away who provided resources to educate her and help keep her comfortable given the side effects of her treatment, among them a healthy cookbook and a binder to organize her records. Perhaps most importantly, Sharsheret connected her with a Jewish peer supporter who had a similar diagnosis.

My Jewish Roots And BRCA2 Genetic Mutation Saved My Life

Hazel Donnelly, PA

Knowing my Jewish ancestry saved my life.

I happened to take an at-home genetic test and found out that in addition to being approximately 52% African American, I had Ashkenazi Jewish DNA. Several months later, when I was diagnosed with breast cancer the knowledge I had about my ancestry motivated me to pursue further testing with my doctor. At that point, I learned that I was BRCA2+. I knew that I would have a double mastectomy and prophylactic oophorectomy. And then, I just lost it. I felt alone, and I didn’t know where to turn.

I saw Sharsheret’s brochure in my doctor’s waiting room and it talked about Jewish women and breast cancer. Having just learned about my own DNA, I wondered if Sharsheret could help me cope with the emotional side effects... As soon as I reached out, I knew I had found what I needed.

My Sharsheret social worker and I talk at least once a month. I call to tell her about the great things that are happening in my life, and I call her when I’m afraid because I have a scheduled test or screening. My story is unique, and I am part of a strong community. I am an African-American woman with Ashkenazi Jewish DNA, but even without the Jewish DNA, I know that Sharsheret would have opened their arms to me. I feel supported, understood, and empowered.

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The Art Of Living With Stage 4 Metastatic Breast Cancer

Rebecca Clounie, WI

I am a mother, a friend, a daughter, a sister, a partner and now a patient. This is my story...

On November 26, 2019, I was diagnosed with Stage 2 Invasive Ductal Cancer (IDC Breast Cancer). By December 5th I got the worst possible upgrade to Stage 4 Metastatic Breast Cancer. Grief hit me hard and I spent many nights mourning my life before my diagnosis. I realized, though, that I had a choice to make. I had been knocked down - I could either stay down or try to get back up. I chose to break out my metaphorical paintbrushes and fill my life with color and joy. I wish I could say it was an easy shift, but oftentimes, it wasn’t. I couldn’t control my cancer, or how my body reacted to the chemo, but I could choose happiness over despair.

I have the power to make most days great and I am committed to doing just that! I have found that the power of positivity works. I give myself projects to do that I know I will stick with successfully like journaling, meditation, and gardening. I refuse to set myself up for failure. My advice to those newly diagnosed is this: Give yourself time to grieve, but don’t let it consume you. You are stronger than your diagnosis. Surround yourself with people and resources like Sharsheret that help you live your best life. Sharsheret webinars on stress management and resiliency, artistic paint nights, book clubs and more have provided me with connections to other women facing the same issues that I am. The Sharsheret private Facebook group has introduced me to a resilient community of women living with metastatic breast and advanced ovarian cancer, and they are helping me on my cancer journey.

Find your community here. Sharsheret is here for you. I am here for you... You don’t have to do this alone.
We are deeply grateful to the Rochelle's Dream and Jewel Circle families who annually make significant contributions enabling thousands locally and across the country to benefit from one-on-one support, financial subsidies, and community-wide education and training programs.

Thank you to our generous sponsors for their commitment to the women and families of Sharsheret, ensuring their ever-changing needs are met with the highest quality programs and resources.

For more information about Rochelle's Dream, the annual Jewel Circle, or naming a Sharsheret program, please contact Director of Development Galit Reichlin at greichlin@sharsheret.org

To learn more about becoming a sponsor, please contact Senior Development Associate Dina Miskin Goldberg at dgoldberg@sharsheret.org
WE ARE WHERE YOU ARE

This impact report is sponsored by

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