



SHARSHERET®

The Jewish Breast & Ovarian Cancer Community



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2023 IMPACT REPORT

Free and Confidential
Emotional Support

Genetic and Mental
Health Counseling

Lifesaving
Education

Financial
Assistance

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO



Stacy Smollin Schwartz
PRESIDENT



Elana Silber
CEO

We are now emerging from a tragic and historic global pandemic during which we all suffered isolation and heart-wrenching loss. At the same time, we also experienced the incredible power of the Jewish, medical, and global communities that worked tirelessly to deliver resources to address our safety, physical health, mental health, financial stability, personal connections, and critical education.

As we move forward, you may or may not need to tap into those myriad resources. Sharsheret, however, is like no other resource. It's not "if you will need" or even "you may need" Sharsheret in your lifetime.

YOU WILL NEED SHARSHERET. These four words make this personal.

**YOU WILL NEED
SHARSHERET**

Whether you are the anxious woman turning 40 and preparing for her first mammogram, or the person who feels empowered after genetic testing, or the student who seeks out their family history, or yearns to help their mom, grandmother, aunt or older sister who has been diagnosed with cancer, or the best friend or co-worker who feels overwhelmed, or the woman who is triumphantly celebrating survivorship, or the health care or Jewish professional who wants to share lifesaving information...the list goes on and on. YOU WILL NEED SHARSHERET.

In this Impact Report, you will learn how Sharsheret can improve your life and the lives of people you love. You will be uplifted by the inspiring stories of the women and men who embrace the Jewish values of personal and communal responsibility to protect the health of others and themselves. You will meet, among others, two sisters who joined Sharsheret on campus only to need Sharsheret years later, a mom living with ovarian cancer who needed Sharsheret to find her perfect match, a father who needed Sharsheret to share his family's story, and a young woman who needed Sharsheret because cancer was just too expensive.

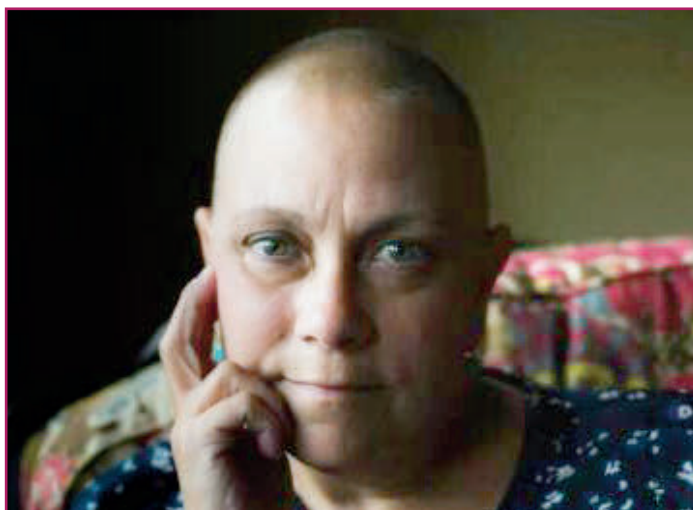
Thank YOU for your time, your dedication, and your generous support. It is because of you that Sharsheret can provide free and confidential genetic and mental health counseling, emotional support, financial assistance, and lifesaving education for thousands in the Jewish community and beyond - for your network, for your family, and most personally for YOU.

With deep gratitude,



Stacy and Elana

SUPPORT CHANGES LIVES



The Gift Of Friendship Is A Peer Supporter

Nancy Cramer, MI

I was diagnosed with stage 2B ovarian cancer in late December 2019. My prognosis was good, my spirits were high, and I managed to make it through surgery and chemotherapy with a positive attitude and a smile on my face.

Thirteen months after treatment ended, I learned that the cancer had returned. **My positive attitude was replaced with fear; my smile dulled by anxiety.** Was this really

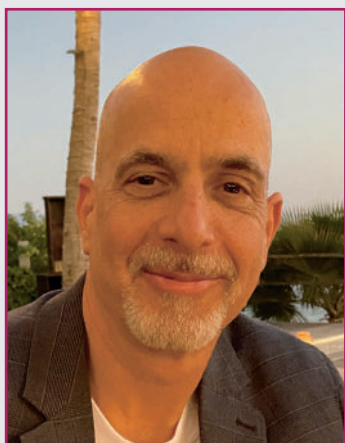
happening? How was I going to make it through this again? What I needed more than anything was to speak to another woman who had walked my path.

Talking with her was exactly what I needed to begin the process of reclaiming my positive attitude and my smile.

I reached out to Sharsheret and learned about the Peer Support Network. Soon after that first conversation, my Sharsheret social worker introduced me to Ruth Ann, who quickly became one of the most important people in my life. Aside from living with ovarian cancer, we have so much in common! Ruth Ann has been an unyielding source of strength and encouragement for me; talking with her was exactly what I needed to begin the process of reclaiming my positive attitude and my smile.

Every time we connect, I appreciate Ruth Ann's understanding, advice, encouragement, and comforting words. Our relationship has blossomed into the loveliest of friendships. We continue to talk frequently and support each other in all aspects of our lives – well beyond cancer. Though we live hundreds of miles apart, we are looking forward to meeting in person one day.

Sharsheret helped me turn things around. **They provided me not only with the support and resources I needed, but also with the gift of a true friend.**



Attention, Men!

Roni Plachta, CA

My wife was the first in my family to pursue genetic testing. She wanted to be sure she was not one of the 1 in 40 Ashkenazi Jews who carries a BRCA genetic mutation. And she isn't.

Knowing that my sister had been diagnosed with breast cancer in her 40's, my wife suggested that I test as well. **To my great surprise, I tested positive for a BRCA1 mutation** in November 2018. Just 3 months later, my sister passed away having been diagnosed with late stage ovarian cancer. I don't think she knew if she, too, carried a BRCA1 mutation. If only I had known about my BRCA status sooner, perhaps her story would have had a different outcome.



From Destruction Comes Healing

Marty Mayfield, KY

Nothing about my story is typical.

Results from my 2018 23andMe test revealed both my genetic history and also that my father who raised me was not my biological father; rather, my next door neighbor was. Imagine! And then in 2021, shortly after my father passed away, I got COVID and was diagnosed with stage 2, HER2+ breast cancer. I was an Irish/English woman, living with cancer, making sense of my genetic story whose life was about to change in ways I couldn't imagine.

I felt destroyed. I lost my health, my hair, my eyebrows, my "friends," my job, my savings, and mostly, myself. Nevertheless, I was determined to make the best of the situation and my time.

After my diagnosis, while exploring links for cancer resources, I found myself on Sharsheret.org - The Jewish Breast Cancer and Ovarian Cancer Community. I thought "oh well, that isn't me," but then I read a little further and learned that Sharsheret serves people who aren't Jewish, so I reached out. At the time, I couldn't have known how Sharsheret would help me turn everything around. The Pillow of Support provided physical and emotional comfort after my surgery, the Best Face Forward kit, which addresses the cosmetic side effects of cancer, helped me look more like myself, the Financial Wellness Toolkit and other resources informed me and guided me. **Perhaps most importantly, my social worker provided me with a listening ear and a safe space; she accepted me as I was and helped me along my path.**

During my first conversation with my social worker, I mentioned that I had talked with a Rabbi about converting to Judaism over 20 years ago. My wheels started turning. Maybe now was the perfect time for me to study and convert! I had the time. I started attending online classes and learning how to read Hebrew. I reached out to a local synagogue in Cincinnati for more resources, and

though I was invited to join services in person, I didn't feel comfortable going out - I was still in treatment and I didn't have eyebrows or much hair.

It may sound trivial, but not having eyebrows was traumatic for me. My Sharsheret social worker told me that through the BFF2.0 program, through which Sharsheret provides financial subsidies, I could undergo microblading for free! I felt like a piece of my life was returned to me.

I felt like a piece of my life was returned to me.

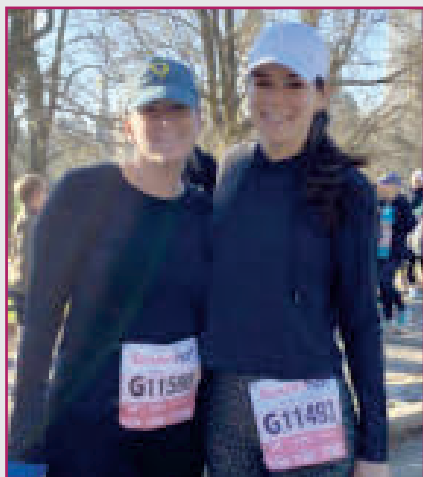
Nearing the end of treatment, I started a new job. Instead of going to medical appointments, I started working full time, going to synagogue services on Shabbat and taking more classes about principles of Judaism. I received a class assignment to do a brief presentation about a Jewish person who inspired me. **Without hesitation, I chose Rochelle Shoretz A"H**, Sharsheret's founder. I shared her story with my class, highlighting all that she had accomplished in her brief life, helping others while she was on her own cancer journey. She said she was going to "live every day." I, too, am going to live every day.

Cancer is not the worst thing that has ever happened to me; in many ways, it helped me change my life for the better.

If only I had known about my BRCA status sooner, perhaps her story would have had a different outcome.

I understood that **because I carry the BRCA1 mutation, there was a 50% chance that each of my children could also test BRCA+.** Though one of my daughters did test positive and has important decisions to make in the coming years, my wife and I are thankful that she has this information - we are confident that it will save her life.

After I found out that I carry the BRCA1 mutation, I was connected with Sharsheret. I have learned so much through Sharsheret's educational programs and through opportunities to talk with other Sharsheret callers who also carry genetic mutations. I shared my story during a Sharsheret Pink Shabbat at my synagogue, and participated in Sharsheret's nutrition counseling program. I stay current with my screening mammograms, prostate checks, and colonoscopies, and I encourage Ashkenazi Jewish men I speak with to be screened for genetic mutations. When others hear my story, when I talk about my sister and my daughters, it is clear that genetic testing saves lives. **Knowledge truly is power.**



We Found Sharsheret At AEPi, And Then It Became Personal

Alexa Podolsky Pinsky and
Emily Podolsky, NY

We first learned about Sharsheret through our sorority, Alpha Epsilon Phi. We each felt good about our philanthropic work in support of Sharsheret. At the time, it didn't register that one day our family might have a need for Sharsheret's services. Fast forward several years—our Mom was diagnosed with

All of a sudden, the support and resources that Sharsheret provides became personal.



Finding Hope And Honesty Through My Advanced Cancer Diagnosis

Angeli Fernandez, TX

On March 1, 2021, thinking I had COVID-19, I went to the ER. I had a chest x-ray followed by more tests, and I learned that I had stage 4 metastatic breast cancer.

I had no symptoms. I did not feel ill. **It didn't make sense.**

In the next few weeks, my care team grew to include my primary care physician, an oncologist, a radiologist, and a urologist. Cancer was found in my clavicle, spine, pelvis, scapula, left kidney, and right breast.

I knew I had to take measures to address my cancer; if not for myself, then for my parents. **When I shared my diagnosis with my friends and family, I felt as if I were sharing someone else's story.** I was numb. I went to my medical appointments, completed my tests, took my medications, and did everything I was told to do. All the while, I had one intrusive thought: what have I done to deserve this?

My medical team had shared information about dozens of treatment options that I could choose to pursue; living with metastatic cancer, I am in this for the long-term. I can't do it alone, and thankfully I'm not!

Upon contacting Sharsheret, I was met with an immediate and unexpected response - kindness, generosity, and a non-judgmental listening ear. **I am so very appreciative of each and every conversation with my social worker, and**

I can't do it alone,
and thankfully I'm not!

I am grateful for every gift package that I have received; priceless gifts from the hearts of others which touched my own. My parents came over to watch me open my Sharsheret box, and my joy was theirs. Simple items can become one's bounty, and "little" things can heal.

I offer my deepest thanks to the Sharsheret community for their help, hope, and honesty. They have introduced me to a world of selflessness. My hope is that one day I will be able to create a legacy of my own that I can share with others as Sharsheret has so graciously shared with me.

breast cancer. All of a sudden, the support and resources that Sharsheret provides became personal.



We were inspired by our Mom's strength and determination as she went through and recovered from a double mastectomy and reconstruction. She is truly the strongest person we know, and she proved her strength by running the Jacksonville Marathon shortly after! We were inspired to follow suit, and this year, we are both running the NYC Marathon with – who else? Team Sharsheret! **Training for the marathon has been one of the most intensive and rewarding experiences of our lives**, but we are so thankful to have this opportunity and can't wait to tear it up on November 6th!

We dedicate our NYC Marathon runs to our mom and are so grateful to be part of Team Sharsheret!

Shining A Light on Lynch Syndrome

Marcy Wintrub, MA

In 2009, I was sure my BRCA test would be positive. I was an Ashkenazi Jew. I had been diagnosed with ovarian and uterine cancer. I'd grown up hearing about great aunts with unspeakable diseases. But BRCA wasn't my "issue." It took years before I knew what was.

In 2021, after another bout of cancer, further testing provided the answer: an MSH6 mutation causing Lynch Syndrome (LS). Though mainly associated with colorectal cancer, LS also increases risk for cancers of the uterus, ovary, pancreas, stomach, urinary tract, and more.

I was stunned. I'd never heard of LS. I'd never imagined that my reproductive system cancers were linked to my father's brain cancer. And **I couldn't fathom how my seemingly textbook case was not diagnosed in 2009; instead, it was found only after a third cancer, many years later.**

Finally, as I talked with the genetic counselor, I got answers to questions I'd had since first being diagnosed.

The same mutation was soon found in other family members. Follow-up screenings caught early-stage kidney cancer in one relative and pre-cancerous growths in another (quite young) one. These lifesaving screenings only happened because of our LS diagnosis. We are the lucky ones. In the US, roughly 1 in 300 people are thought to have LS, and most have no idea.



I'm so glad I found Sharsheret's website – finally, as I talked with the genetic counselor, I got answers to questions I'd had since first being diagnosed. I was also given an opportunity to share my story. I hope my experience motivates others with unusual patterns of cancer in their families to reach out to Sharsheret and pursue genetic testing - especially those who, like me, were narrowly tested in the past.

I think we're lucky to be alive during a time when many pathogenic mutations can be easily identified and proactively addressed. Let's do it!

OUR VOICES



LESLYE FLORES, FL

I love my wig so much...I can't thank Sharsheret enough for helping me afford a human hair wig. I feel like I have my own hair again!



MAIA, TX

In this journey of ups and downs, Sharsheret truly listened and helped me feel like a person, not just a medical diagnosis.



KATIE, IL

I was referred to Sharsheret after having been diagnosed with breast cancer in April 2020. My Sharsheret social worker became a much needed friend and resource. I felt truly supported as she checked in on me, lent an ear, or traded a funny message to brighten my day. **A cancer diagnosis can be so lonely and scary, and I am forever grateful for the support and hope that Sharsheret provided.**



MARIA, GA

I recently finished chemo, and the doctor still discussed the chance of recurrence. I have so much going on, if it was not for Sharsheret I feel like I would have given up.



PEPPER SEGAL, NC

I am so grateful to have found Sharsheret through my sons' Jewish day school. I reached out to Sharsheret not knowing exactly what to expect, and was blown away by all the tailored support I received in return. From the survivorship kit they sent me with healthy living resources, to a caregiver packet to help guide my husband and parents, to the box of toys to keep my 3- and 1-year old boys busy while I was going through treatment, Sharsheret has supported me at every stage. Last week marked my one year cancer anniversary. My doctor said I can breathe more easily at the two-year mark, but because of Sharsheret, I can start to exhale a bit now.



MELISSA, AZ

My 6-year old son was so excited to receive his Busy Box filled with customized toys and gifts you chose for him. I am so grateful for these helpful parenting resources for both myself and my son; you're helping us get through this.



SHARSHERET IN YOUR COMMUNITY

GET INVOLVED VIRTUALLY OR IN PERSON!



To get involved or to bring a program to your community, please contact Outreach Program and Technology Manager Sarah Eagle at seagle@sharsheret.org

SHARSHERET WELCOMES COMMUNITIES



BENEFITS

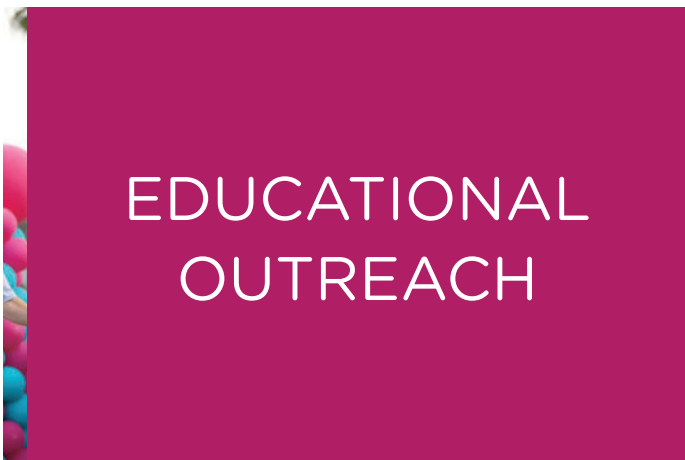
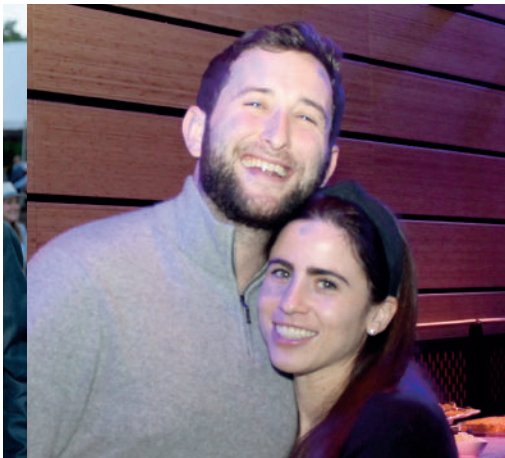


BACK TOGETHER COAST TO COAST



please visit our Facebook or Instagram.





ANNUAL JEWEL CIRCLE



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We are deeply grateful to the Rochelle's Dream and Jewel Circle families who annually make significant contributions.

For more information about Rochelle's Dream, the Jewel Circle and the Legacy Circle, please contact CEO **Elana Silber** at esilber@sharsheret.org

SHARSHERET JEWEL SPOTLIGHT

With an eye towards advancing women's Torah leadership in the Orthodox community and the increasing incidence of breast cancer and ovarian cancer in the Jewish community, Ann and Jeremy Pava partnered with Sharsheret to develop and facilitate a certificate program to educate and empower Orthodox female Torah leaders. A generous grant from Micah Philanthropies funds the creation and teaching of unique, customized curricula and training programs for *Yoatzot Halacha* (Female Jewish legal authorities), Jewish communal professionals, Rebbetzins, *Mikvah* (ritual bath) attendants and others in communities across North America and in Israel. These women are trained to knowledgeably and empathetically advise and guide those consulting with them, and champion responses to cancer in their communities.



Ann and Jeremy Pava

LASTING LEGACIES AT SHARSHERET

LEGACY CIRCLE BENEFACTORS

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Linda March A"H, an attorney who specialized in real estate law, lived in New York City's Upper West Side before relocating to Surfside, Florida, and tragically passing in the Champlain Towers collapse. March was a supporter of Jewish causes, and after her sister died from cancer, she began supporting cancer research. Linda's Sharsheret Legacy Circle gift will help strengthen the chain of support and ensure that every Jewish woman and family can benefit from Sharsheret, today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.



Linda March A"H



Heidi Weisel A"H

In August 2020, fashion designer Heidi Weisel A"H partnered with Standard Textile to launch the Heidi Robe Project with Sharsheret. The mission of the project is to gift our Sharsheret callers a luxurious robe

designed by Heidi in memory of her mother Rachel. The robe was aptly named the "Rachel Robe."

Living with cancer herself, Heidi developed a close kinship and deep empathy for the women of Sharsheret, understanding their emotional vulnerability especially on the difficult days of therapy. She therefore sought to warm their hearts and lift their spirits and indeed she did as so many women were so delighted by Heidi's kindness.

Sadly, in January 2021, Heidi passed away following her own battle with cancer. Her loving family launched the Heidi Weisel Fund at Sharsheret to honor her legacy. Heidi's vision was prescient, as just over 2 years later, more than 500 women across the U.S. who are facing cancer have received a "Rachel Robe."

With deep appreciation, we remember Heidi's passion and dedication to this program. Her attention to detail and warmth and kindness shone through as she worked tirelessly to develop this special gift which has brought comfort and love to so many women. To support the Heidi Weisel Fund, or to create your own legacy at Sharsheret, contact Jennifer Aranoff at jaranoff@sharsheret.org.

SPONSORS

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.



To learn more about becoming a sponsor, please contact
 Director of Strategic Partnerships Dina Muskin Goldberg at dgoldberg@sharsheret.org

SHARSHERET BY THE NUMBERS



25,000

GENETIC AND MENTAL
HEALTH CONVERSATIONS



4,872

MILES MADE
MEANINGFUL
THROUGH TEAM
SHARSHERET

61,431

PARTICIPANTS
IN VIRTUAL AND
IN-PERSON
PROGRAMMING



24,383

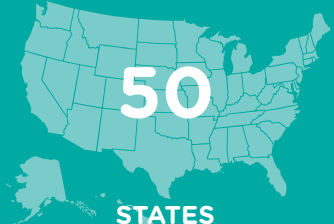
ENROLLED IN THE PEER
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\$600,000

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This program was made possible with generous
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SUPPORT IN ALL



STATES



41,062

STUDENTS REACHED
ON CAMPUS

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



5,347

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AND CARE PACKAGES
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1,489

SESSIONS WITH
WOMEN LIVING
WITH ADVANCED
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Embrace™ Program



250,000

WOMEN, MEN, FAMILIES, AND
COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED

The LINK Program® is funded with lead support from the
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Gilead

183

SHARSHERET
JEWEL CIRCLE
MEMBERS



THIS YEAR SHARSHERET...



LAUNCHED YAD: THE YOUNG ADULT CARING CORNER AT SHARSHERET

This program has been dedicated by
Joy and Michael Goldsmith and Family

PREMIERED EXCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL FILM *MY SECOND BACKPACK*

Made possible with generous support
from Sherry Helfand Wiener



WAS INVITED 3 TIMES
TO THE WHITE HOUSE
AS A LEADER IN THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY
AND CANCER
COMMUNITY

ANNUAL BUDGET



\$6,800,000

2023 ANNUAL BUDGET



83¢

OF EVERY
DOLLAR GOES TO
PROGRAMMING

INCOME

Individuals

Events

Government Grants

Corporations and Foundations

35%

25%

5%

35%



SHARSHERET

10 East 40th Street, 28th Floor
New York, NY 10016

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
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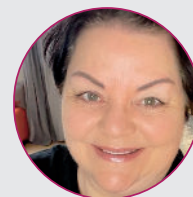
Sharsheret, Hebrew for chain, is a national non-profit organization that improves the lives of Jewish women and families living with or at increased genetic risk for **breast cancer** or **ovarian cancer** through personalized support and saves lives through educational outreach.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR SHARSHERET CALLERS

Sharsheret distributes over **\$600,000** in financial subsidies for low-income cancer patients.



Scan here to learn more



“ I had no idea that filling out that first application for a financial subsidy would lead me to the gift that is Sharsheret! I found myself in excellent hands; my needs were met with great respect and without judgment.

Madelyn, CA ”

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SHARSHERET.ORG
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