



# SHARSHERET

The Jewish Breast & Ovarian Cancer Community

2020 IMPACT REPORT

SHARSHERET  
CHANGES LIVES

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PHOTOGRAPHY CREDIT: Emily Chan Photography

**BREAST CANCER AT 28 CAN BE A LONELY EXPERIENCE.**

Through Sharsheret, I received the support that I needed, and the connection that I had been missing. Through the work of this incredible organization, the weight of my diagnosis and treatment had been lifted.

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SUPPORT • EDUCATION • FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES

# MESSAGE FROM

## OUR PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Knowledge is power; Sharsheret empowers YOU to take action. When it comes to breast and ovarian cancer, reliable information about new research, medical advancements, state of the art technology, accessible genetic testing, up-to-the-minute online information, and culturally relevant support enable you to take necessary steps to improve and save lives. Through this Impact Report you will experience first-hand the life changing power of taking action through the inspiring stories shared by Amy, Mollie, Alyson, Michael, Kia, and Laura.

Sharsheret has established regional offices in states with the largest Jewish populations across the US, launched new partnerships with major medical centers from LA to DC to NY, facilitates educational programs on college campuses, in community centers, and online, and collaborates with the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With our multi-faceted structure and new strategic plan, Sharsheret will expand the scope and breadth of our services



*Jonathan Blinken*  
Jonathan Blinken  
PRESIDENT



*Elana Silber*  
Elana Silber  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

to serve even more women, families, and the Jewish community at-large, when they need us most.

All Sharsheret does is made possible because of you - our passionate volunteers, strong supporters, esteemed Board members, and devoted staff. We truly appreciate your time and dedication. We are deeply grateful to members of our Jewel Circle who strengthen Sharsheret's chain.

We invite YOU to take action with Sharsheret today. Call us to explore how you can protect your health, raise awareness about breast and ovarian cancer and cancer genetics, support others, and share your experience and expertise as we grow. Together we will secure a better tomorrow for you, your family, your community, and beyond.

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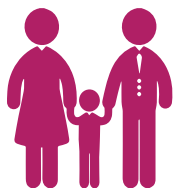
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# SHARSHERET BY THE NUMBERS



**99,249**

WOMEN, FAMILIES, AND  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS SERVED\*

\*The LINK Program\* is funded with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



**436**

GENETICS  
CONVERSATIONS  
FACILITATED



**91,633**

UNIQUE WEBSITE  
VISITORS



**676**

SESSIONS WITH WOMEN  
LIVING WITH METASTATIC  
(STAGE IV) CANCER

Through The Margot Rosenberg Pulitzer and Sheri Rosenberg Kanter Embrace™ Program



**372**

CAREGIVERS  
SERVED

Through The Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation Family Focus™ Program



**8,593**

PARTICIPANTS IN TEAL/PINK  
SHABBAT® PROGRAMS



**4,087**

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



**28,182**

STUDENTS REACHED  
ON CAMPUS

Dedicated by Sherry and Neil Cohen



**195**

APPLICANTS FOR  
NON-MEDICAL FINANCIAL  
SUBSIDIES

This 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 Lead Donors

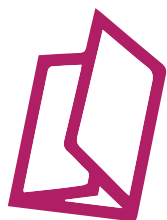
**1,034**

PARTICIPANTS IN ONLINE  
WEBINARS AND TRAININGS:

- HEALTHY LIVING
- NEW RESEARCH
- CANCER GENETICS



Supported by the Siegmund and Edith Blumenthal Memorial Fund



**171,690**

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
DISTRIBUTED

Through the Florence and Joseph Appleman Educational Booklet Series



**703**

HOSPITAL/MEDICAL  
PROFESSIONALS TRAINED



**545**

LIVE EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH  
PROGRAMS FACILITATED

# MY SHARSHERET JOURNEY

## BUILDING OUR JEWISH, MULTICULTURAL FAMILY: A Breast Cancer Survivor Story

By: Amy Tadelis

One of my favorite memories of when my twin daughters, Sophie and Rachel, were three was when they got into trouble with their nursery teacher for telling friends that they hadn't come from their mother's womb, but rather their aunt's. Sophie and Rachel weren't just a pair of imaginative toddlers telling tall tales. Theirs is an extraordinary life, as is the multicultural Jewish family that my husband, Jamie, and I made with their two other siblings, Levi and Ruby.

This story begins when I was diagnosed with breast cancer 18 years ago, before Sharsheret was founded. I was 28, happily married, and living my best life until I heard those fateful words - you have breast cancer. I was lucky to have the constant and unwavering support of my family and friends, but, still, breast cancer at 28 can be a lonely experience. **As I was in treatment, I read an article about another young mom who had been recently diagnosed and was launching an organization to provide support for Jewish women with breast cancer. I immediately called Sharsheret and spoke with the incomparable founder, Rochelle Shoretz A"H. We spoke for hours, and I received the support that I needed, the connection that I had been missing. It felt like the weight of my diagnosis and treatment had been lifted.**

As we took on the challenges of breast cancer treatment and surgeries, Jamie and I never gave up on our dream of having children. Luckily, with the support of my medical team, before I started chemotherapy, I began the process of in vitro fertilization and had eggs extracted, fertilized, and frozen. For months we shuttled between home and hospital as I underwent chemotherapy following a bilateral mastectomy and as Jamie studied for the bar exam. Sharsheret was always there, too, to provide personal support whenever and however I needed it.

Revisiting the subject of children after I returned to work, we received conflicting advice from doctors about whether or not I could or should carry a fetus to term. As we were debating and considering our options, my brother's wife, my sister-in-law, Elizabeth Mines, volunteered the most loving, selfless, and generous solution: she would be our surrogate and carry our child into this world. We were beyond touched and overjoyed. After deep consideration, we gratefully accepted her offer. With incredible courage, support, and medical care, we became a family of four when Sophie and Rachel were born.

But my story doesn't end there. In 2006, we relocated our family to Hong Kong because of Jamie's job. Sophie and Rachel were growing up; we always dreamed of having a big family. Having used all of our frozen embryos to have the girls, we needed to decide if we were willing to undergo another round of IVF and all of the hormones associated with it, prior to having my ovaries prophylactically removed. After much consideration, we once again decided to expand our family in a way that



Amy Tadelis, mother of four, fitness enthusiast, and breast cancer survivor, was diagnosed at age 28.

would not put me at any increased risk for a recurrence of my breast cancer. We turned to the adoption unit in the Social Welfare Department in Hong Kong where we were living. After months of rigorous assessments, classes, and visits with case workers, we matched with a three-year-old boy we named Levi and became a family of five. In a surprise twist, during Levi's adoption process, we learned he had a newborn sister. There was no debate; if and when she was available for adoption we would welcome this most special baby girl into our family. After more than two long years of waiting, our precious gift, Ruby Shai, came home. Our beautiful family was now complete.

Our children enrich our lives every day. While Levi and Ruby are Chinese and have converted to Judaism and Sophie and Rachel are of Jewish descent, ethnicity has never been an issue. We are simply a family. Their personalities all come together perfectly.

This past August, I was lucky enough to celebrate my 18th Chai anniversary of being cancer free, a few short months before Sharsheret's 18th Chai anniversary. **From the very first day when I picked up the phone to call Sharsheret, my life has been interwoven with Sharsheret's chain. Over the past 18 years, I have been fortunate to play many roles at Sharsheret from volunteer to staff member, to even President of the Board of Directors. But the most meaningful role has been benefiting from both sides of our support program — I have been a caller and a Link, a peer supporter.**

As a caller, I sought support and advice for myself on numerous issues including most recently when I learned the upsetting news that my breast implants had been recalled. And, as a Link, I have shared my story bringing strength and hope to others. **Sharsheret helped me heal by offering specific support whenever I had a question. Sharsheret also provided me with a purpose and an opportunity to share my experiences in the hopes of making even one woman's experience with breast cancer easier and just a little bit less lonely.**

My Sharsheret story began when I found someone to talk to, who truly understood what I was going through, and 18 years later my Sharsheret story continues to unfold.

# SUPPORT CHANGES LIVES



## OUTREACH, EDUCATION & GENETICS SUPPORT

Mollie Bauer, California

“I’d lived with the knowledge of my BRCA2 mutation for 11 years, suppressing the reality of the information and living in denial until I learned about Sharsheret. **For four years, Sharsheret has helped me understand my personal barriers, deal with my emotions, and explore the realities of my future.** I participate in webinars, attend panels, talk with Sharsheret staff, and am linked to a peer supporter who understands my situation. **All of these services and programs gave me the courage to finally undergo a prophylactic bilateral mastectomy with reconstruction that has literally changed, and saved, my life.**”



## SUPPORT FOR THOSE LIVING WITH METASTATIC (STAGE IV) CANCER

Alyson Tischler, Connecticut

“Sharsheret helps me feel less alone. I could not believe the thoughtful and age appropriate care package they assembled for my son. **My Sharsheret social worker helps me learn how to accept my diagnosis and makes me feel extra supported and loved.** I keep items they send me close by as a reminder of their support.”



## CAREGIVER SUPPORT

Michael Goldsmith, New Jersey

“Whether you realize it or not, you cannot do it alone. **What you learn from Sharsheret is that you have to have somebody in your camp** that you can tell anything and everything to, and who can **share with you their experience** because they have been through it and have gotten to the other side.”



## OVARIAN CANCER PROGRAM

Kia Spruill, Texas

“I started 2019 with a stage 4 ovarian cancer diagnosis and chemotherapy. I felt like I was drowning. I live in a small community so I started looking for support online and found Sharsheret. I was put in touch with a Sharsheret social worker who was able to give me the support I needed right away, and then I received my Best Face Forward package and survivorship kit within a week. **I joined the Embrace Facebook group, asked many questions, and received even more support and encouragement.** Cancer steals so much from women. **Our loved ones don’t always know how to support us in the ways we need.** I am so grateful that I was understood and welcomed into Sharsheret.”



## BEST FACE FORWARD 2.0 FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES PROGRAM

Laura Cohen, New York

“Sharsheret’s help has been an integral part of my recovery. My Sharsheret social worker has virtually held my hand during a seriously challenging time, both emotionally and physically. **Best Face Forward 2.0 is so important because it helps you to feel whole again.** My new Best Face Forward 2.0 wig is gorgeous, and I can hardly wait to finish reconstruction and get the subsidized nipple tattooing. That will be the final step in helping me feel like the woman I was before cancer. Sharsheret’s support, both financial and emotional, has been truly amazing. I’m so very grateful.”

# ROCHELLE'S DREAM & JEWEL CIRCLE

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.

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# SHARSHERET

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