



# SHARSHERET®

2016 Report to the Community

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Crosses  
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This report is made possible in part by Oncology

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## MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**W**e are at a pivotal moment in Sharsheret's history. Although we are deeply saddened by the loss of our dear founder, Rochelle, we have laid the foundations for a promising future. The outpouring of love, support, and commitment from each of you during this time of transition ensures that we are ready for our next phase of organizational growth. And Sharsheret has never been stronger.

Sharsheret is fiscally sound, our programs are effective, and our reach is expanding. We have been awarded significant grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Jewish communities around the country. Sharsheret has also received the highest possible rankings from Charity Navigator, the Better Business Bureau, and Guidestar for our exceptional work.

Partnering with major medical centers and the federal government enables us to enhance the quality of care for women living with cancer and brings us into the highest reaches of research relating to the psychosocial aspects of cancer care. Our collaborative efforts with 60 local Jewish agencies reduce the cancer burden for thousands nationwide.

We are guided both by the incredible women and families of Sharsheret who inspire us every day, and by our new 5-year strategic plan which outlines a road map for our growth.

I look forward to hearing from you in the months ahead, and to learning from your experience and expertise. It is our collective strength, the many links in Sharsheret, which will carry on Rochelle's Dream that no Jewish woman will face breast cancer or ovarian cancer alone.

Warmest regards,

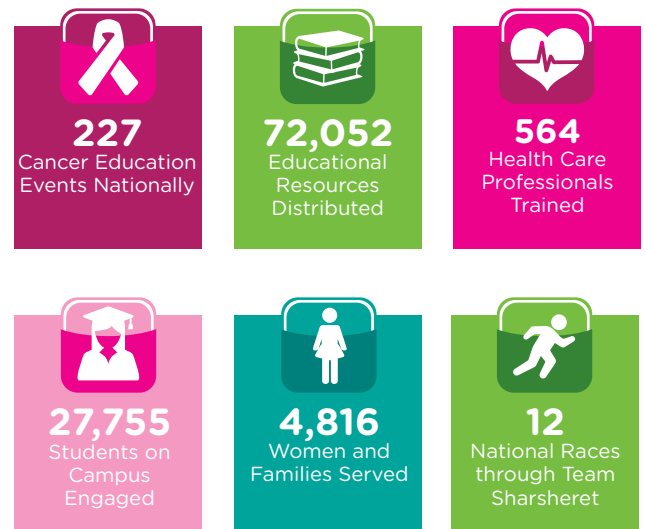


Elana Silber

## THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS

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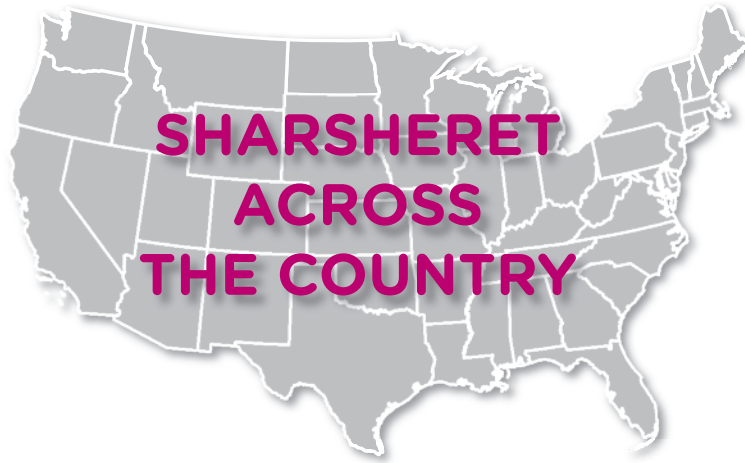
## THIS YEAR: BY THE NUMBERS





## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Sharsheret is where you are. We host educational outreach events at local synagogues, federations, community centers, and in private homes all across the country to raise awareness and offer support to women and families facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer. Sharsheret's outreach team works with organizations and individuals to develop events that meet the specific needs of every community. These events include Pink Challah Bakings, parlor meetings, home events, and health care professionals training seminars.



Summer Barbeque



Pink Challah Baking



Pies for Prevention



Fashion Show



Home Event, LA



Professional Training



Home Event, NY



KJ Sisterhood Planning Meeting

To bring a Sharsheret event to your community, contact Melissa K. Rosen at [mrosen@sharsheret.org](mailto:mrosen@sharsheret.org).

## ROCHELLE'S DREAM

### No Jewish Woman Will Face Breast or Ovarian Cancer Alone



1972-2015

To celebrate our visionary founder, Rochelle L. Shoretz A"H, and her tireless advocacy and aspirations to support women and families facing breast and ovarian cancer, Sharsheret is proud to launch *Rochelle's Dream: A Campaign For Our Future*. Rochelle's Dream, like Rochelle herself, is bold and ambitious. Our goal is to raise \$10 million over the next three years to secure Sharsheret's growth and future. With your support we will establish the Rochelle Shoretz Founder's Fund. The Fund will fulfill Rochelle's Dream by ensuring that every Jewish woman and family, major medical center, synagogue and temple, and college campus will benefit from Sharsheret's critical cancer programs. With your help, no Jewish woman will face breast or ovarian cancer alone. We will welcome 100,000 new families as links in our Sharsheret chain and we will advance our position as the field leader bringing Jewish perspectives on breast and ovarian cancer to the national level.

Your investment will build and guide Sharsheret's future. You will have the opportunity to designate your gifts to Rochelle's Dream, name Sharsheret programs and offices, become Founder's Jewels, and propel us into the next phase of our dynamic growth.

Join in Rochelle's Dream.  
Contact Nila Lazarus at  
[nlazarus@sharsheret.org](mailto:nlazarus@sharsheret.org)  
to discuss giving opportunities.



## OUR VOICES: DEVORA FARRELL



Welcome to my chemo-brain. I don't know if the dear ones in my life have caught on to my current propensity to call them all "sweetie" because I can't remember their names in the moment. Or, if the cashiers in stores know that I used to qualify for Mensa membership, now that I need them to figure out the change due back to me when I pay for my purchases. It's a lot of humbling to swallow. Sometimes, I see the humor;

sometimes, I cry over the losses; sometimes, I remember to thank G-d for every breath.

What I do know, is that whether I'm having a scary, pain-filled day, or I'm energetic and ready to take on the world, I can count on my Sharsheret counselor's cheery "Hey, Devo!" By the way, she's the only one I let call me that. Since the beginning, when I was diagnosed with Stage IV cancer five years ago, I have spoken to the Sharsheret staff member, who oversees the Embrace program for women living with advanced breast cancer or ovarian cancer, and she can help me handle it. I can cry, I can indulge in very dark humor, I can ask for more information about treatment options - wherever I am emotionally, she meets me there with warmth, compassion, gentleness, and that basso profundo laugh of hers.

Sometimes, when I call Sharsheret, I have to really concentrate on keeping my voice steady when asking to speak with my counselor. Sometimes, my words stick in my throat, and all I can do is cry. She waits patiently. I can feel her arm on my shoulders through the phone line. Often, that's all I need: kind understanding without my needing to worry if I'm burdening her. I know I'm not. I know that as much as I gain from her clarity and expertise, she gets excited by my epiphanies and humorous comebacks.

There have been times that I've been reminded that my counselor does not actually live at the Sharsheret office, waiting for my phone calls (kind of like the first time you run into your first grade teacher at the grocery store), and I ask to speak with one of the other available staff members instead. You know what? They also helped me solve whatever issue I needed help with. They did so with confidence, knowledge, and an "I'm up for anything" attitude. Kindness above all else. How about this for a new tagline: **Sharsheret: Where Kind People Answer the Phone.**



For more information about our metastatic cancer program, please contact Shera Dubitsky at [sdubitsky@sharsheret.org](mailto:sdubitsky@sharsheret.org).



## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CIRCLE

**S**harsheret's Young Professionals Circle (YPC) educates professional young Jewish women and men to be proactive about their health, and empowers them to raise community awareness about breast cancer and ovarian cancer, become involved with Sharsheret, and save lives. YPC hosts events nationwide affording networking opportunities within the context of exciting social events.

**This year we will expand YPC to three cities: New York City, Boston, and Miami Beach.**



NYC YPC Event

To get on our YPC mailing list, contact Devorah Silverman at [dsilverman@sharsheret.org](mailto:dsilverman@sharsheret.org).



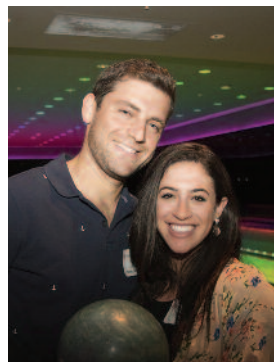
Miami Beach YPC Event



NYC YPC Event



NYC YPC Event



Miami Beach YPC Event



Miami Beach YPC Event



## SHARSHERET ON CAMPUS

Our Sharsheret on Campus program brings breast cancer and ovarian cancer awareness to 150 colleges and universities across the country. Through partnerships with campus organizations such as AEPi Sorority, AEPi Fraternity, Chabad on Campus, Challah for Hunger, Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Life on Campus, and Moishe House, Sharsheret has reached more than 27,700 students on Pink Day and throughout the year.



University of Michigan



Rutgers University



University of Maryland



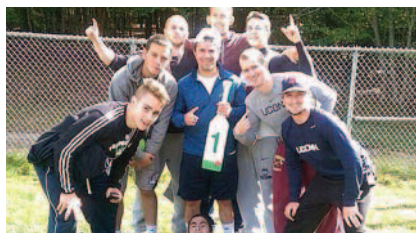
Moishe House Seattle



Princeton University



Adelphi University



University of Connecticut



Yeshiva University and  
Stern College for Women

**27,700**  
Students Educated!



Binghamton University



Moriah School



University of Pittsburgh



University of Maryland



Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy

To bring Sharsheret to your campus, contact Ellen Kleinhaus at [ekleinhaus@sharsheret.org](mailto:ekleinhaus@sharsheret.org).

## 2015 JEWEL CIRCLE



**S**harsheret's Jewel Circle offers family and friends meaningful opportunities to recognize loved ones and support Sharsheret's critical services. Sharsheret Jewels are established in honor or in memory of loved ones or to commemorate a special milestone.

Sharsheret celebrated with our current and prospective Jewel families at City Winery. The evening featured Dr. Elisa Port, the Chief of Breast Surgery and Director of the Dubin Breast Center at Mount Sinai Hospital, and Lauryn Weiser, a Sharsheret founding Board member.



### \$50,000 - PINK DIAMOND

Anonymous  
Vivian and Stanley Bernstein  
Sherry and Neil Cohen  
Family of Itza and Abe Stern  
Sussman and Wieder Families

### \$25,000 - DIAMOND

Anonymous  
Katja Goldman and Michael Sonnenfeldt  
Lewis Family Trust  
Rochelle L. Shoretz A"H

### \$18,000 - EMERALD

The Carmi Family  
The Gorlin Family Foundation  
Melanie and Rabbi Salomon Gruenwald  
Alissa and Sammy Zagha

### \$10,000 - SAPPHIRE

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Dr. Nicole and Raanan Agus  
The Dubitsky Family and Friends  
Holzer Family Foundation  
Becky and Avi Katz  
Marla and Jonathan Mehlman  
Barbara and David Messer  
Courtney Mizel  
Lois J. Oestreicher  
Suzi Rudd Cohen and Philip H. Cohen  
Henry and Marilyn Taub Foundation  
The Terumah Foundation  
Mitzi Traurig A"H  
Tova Weinstock and Aviva and Yannai Segal  
Joanne and Ephraim Zayat and Ashley and Glenn Weiss

### \$5,000 - RUBY

Anonymous  
Anonymous  
Virginia Bayer and Rabbi Robert Hirt  
Debra and Leon Black  
Sarah and Michael Blum  
Martin and Mary L. Boyer Foundation  
Dr. Tammy and Dr. Hillel Bryk  
Dr. Patricia and James Cayne  
Ulrika and Joel Citron  
Rena Cole and Ephraim Bernstein  
Suzanne Doft  
Lisa and Doni Farkovits  
Herman Forbes Charitable Trust  
Linda Gerstel and Edward Joyce  
Avi Gilbert  
Dr. Tamar and Michael Greenspan  
Linda and Mark Gruenbaum  
Terri and Andrew Herenstein  
Robin and Mark Hoenig  
Joan S. and Leon Meyers Foundation  
Marti Meyerson and Jamie Hooper  
Jordanna and Marc Nadritch  
Dahlia and Mark Nordlicht  
Heather O'Neil and Arie Belok  
Dr. Adena Osband  
Batya and Nachman Paul  
Marnie and Moe Rice  
Dr. Elana and Rafi Rosman  
Melodie and Martin Scharf  
Leslie and Mark Sidell  
Lillian and William Silber  
Windhover Foundation



To establish your Jewel, contact Nila Lazarus at [nlazarus@sharsheret.org](mailto:nlazarus@sharsheret.org).





## OUR VOICES: MELANIE GRUENWALD

In the Bible, we learn the story of Noah - a man who took a journey he never would have planned. Somehow, this story of an unexpected journey is compelling to us, as adults, and as a community. What is it about a person of character facing adversity, taking a leap of faith, and coming out on the other side?

Somehow, that seems to be the story of life. For all of us. One of my friends recently said to me that sometimes we have to be reminded that we are actually not the ones driving the bus. Just when we think we have it all together, life will throw us a curve ball.

Here's my curve ball.

In November 2014, I ran the New York marathon, and was inspired by my incredible experience. There is nothing like New York. I signed up as quickly as I could for the New York Marathon 2015 with Team Sharsheret. I believe in Sharsheret's work, I have friends and family with breast and ovarian cancer, people who undergo genetic testing and face decisions related to BRCA genetic mutations which can lead to breast and ovarian cancer.



Melanie and her mother, Sheila Sasson

I began my 20 week marathon training plan in June for Team Sharsheret. I raised money for Sharsheret, I learned more about their programs and their services. My mom even began to volunteer in their offices. What started out as a great cause and a great way to run the New York marathon, became personal. In September, 8 weeks before the race, I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

I was immediately supported by Sharsheret. I was connected with a counselor who asked about my children and their ages and interests, and sent a "Busy Box" full of quiet activities for when "mommy doesn't feel so well," along with resources for me, and for Salomon, my partner and primary caregiver. Once I decided on a treatment plan, Sharsheret connected me to a "peer counselor" who had walked the same path as I would. Just yesterday, I received a "pillow of support" in the mail.

**"IN SEPTEMBER, 8 WEEKS BEFORE THE RACE, I WAS DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER."**

And the story of the marathon - well, I'm not running New York this year but I kept training, because I don't know what else to do with myself. Running keeps me together physically and mentally. I thrive when I'm on a plan. I decided that once we set my surgery date, I would find a local Denver marathon to run. And I did. I will be running a marathon with over 30 friends and over 25 supporters at stations along the way. It has been so much more fun to think about running than about breast cancer. But, yes, breast cancer is part of the story.

One of my friends reached out to Channel 7 News and there was a great segment about me, this journey and the marathon. Kveller.com shared my story as well. As a result, I have surpassed my \$10,000 fundraising goal for Sharsheret.

What is it about unexpected journeys, adversity, and fierce crazy determination that open our hearts? I think it's because they're in each of us. We all take journeys, like Noah and like me, that are unforeseen. Those journeys become part of our stories.

I am so grateful to Sharsheret and to my community for accompanying me on this path.



For more information about our Peer Support Network, contact Sharon Stahl at [sstahl@sharsheret.org](mailto:sstahl@sharsheret.org).



## EXPANDING IN SOUTH FLORIDA

Since its opening in 2013, local programming, outreach, collaborations, and partnerships have expanded tremendously. This year, we reached more women and families in Florida, hosted more events, and conducted several health care professional trainings.

For more information about Sharsheret in Florida, contact Briana Schwarz at [bschwarz@sharsheret.org](mailto:bschwarz@sharsheret.org).



Pink Challah Baking, Miami Beach



Casino Night



Casino Night



Pink Challah Baking, Hollywood



Casino Night



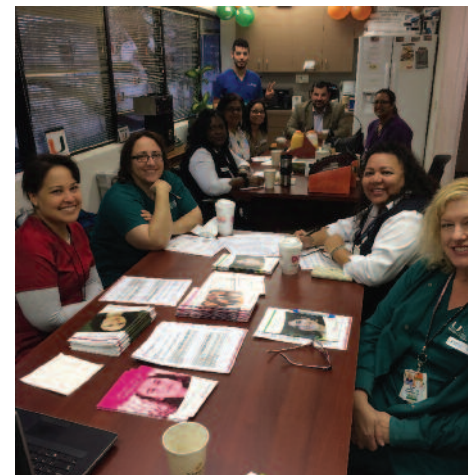
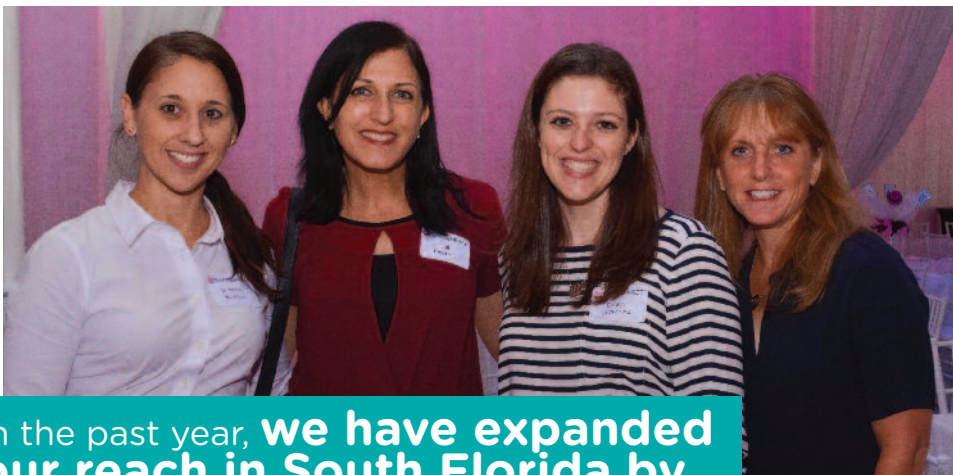
Pink Day



Casino Night



Yoga Event



Professional Training

In the past year, **we have expanded our reach in South Florida by 75%** through health care professional trainings and educational outreach events.

## PARTNERS OF EXCELLENCE



Center for Jewish Genetics

**S**harsheret is proud to collaborate with 60 Sharsheret Supports partners nationwide. Sharsheret Supports partners provide breast and ovarian cancer support and education in local communities on an ongoing basis. We are also pleased to have 10 Partners of Excellence, organizations that have gone above and beyond to meet the needs of their local communities.

Sharsheret Supports partners receive program development guidance, educational resources to share locally, and more. Partners of Excellence also receive financial support. Please contact us if you know of an organization that may be interested in partnering with us to address the needs of its local community.

### Our Partners of Excellence:

- Bikur Cholim Chesed Organization, Boro Park, NY
- Center for Jewish Genetics, Chicago, IL
- Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit, Detroit, MI
- Jewish Family Service of MetroWest, Florham Park, NJ
- Jewish Family Services & Harry and Rose Samson Family Jewish Community Center, Milwaukee, WI
- Jewish Family Services of Greater Orlando, Orlando, FL
- Jewish Family Service, San Diego, CA
- Nishmah, Jewish Community Center, St. Louis, MO
- Temple Beth Am, Pinecrest, FL
- Westchester Jewish Community Services, White Plains, NY

Learn how to become a partner. Contact Melissa K. Rosen at [mrosen@sharsheret.org](mailto:mrosen@sharsheret.org).

## PINK SHABBAT® PROGRAM

**S**harsheret’s Pink Shabbat program educates women and men about the increased risk of hereditary breast cancer among Jewish families, the impact of breast cancer on the Jewish community, and Sharsheret’s breast cancer programs for Jewish women and families of all backgrounds. Through Sharsheret’s Pink Shabbat program, participating organizations are empowered to take action, share information, and support others.



**“SO PROUD** to have participated! Count us in for next year, and every year until we find a cure!”  
 — SHARSHERET PINK SHABBAT COORDINATOR



Plan a Pink Shabbat in your community. Contact Melissa K. Rosen at [mrosen@sharsheret.org](mailto:mrosen@sharsheret.org).

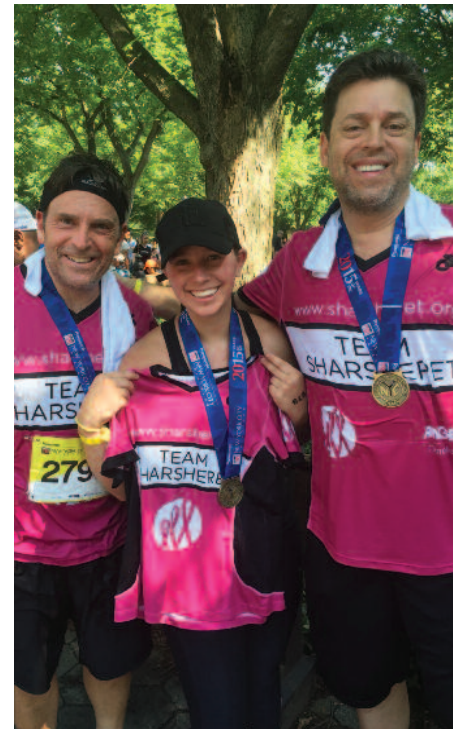


## RACE WITH TEAM SHARSHERET



Whether you are already an athlete, aspire to be one, or prefer to cheer from the sidelines,  
**GET INSPIRED BY TEAM SHARSHERET AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

**T**eam Sharsheret participates in **CANCER AWARENESS MARATHONS, TRIATHLONS, AND ATHLETIC EVENTS** across the country to help support Jewish women and families facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer. Team Sharsheret athletes are awarded slots for sold out races and opportunities to compete in any race of their choice.



Contact Ellen Kleinhaus at [ekleinhaus@sharsheret.org](mailto:ekleinhaus@sharsheret.org) to learn how you can race with Team Sharsheret.



## OUR VOICES: AMY POLLAK



As life moves forward, Sharsheret moves forward with you. Three years ago, I wrote an article for Sharsheret's newsletter, highlighting my experience as a single woman living with the BRCA mutation, out in the dating world. So

I successfully navigated the dating game, and caught myself a husband, all with a BRCA label to boot. The thought of children was the next frontier. OY! The emotions and fears about having a healthy child are daunting enough, anxiety about genetics was something that I needed some help with.

I had dealt with anxiety and fears before, but children for me seemed to be a crossroad. After having a prophylactic mastectomy in 2011, I knew that I had given up my ability to breastfeed. Having a child would bring up all of those emotions and crystallize my inability. Dealing with my own BRCA status is one thing, but potentially passing it down to another filled my eyes with tears. I needed to start somewhere. I sought help from a wonderful health psychologist, who worked with me through all of these potential realities. He was invaluable.

Since I am an Ashkenazi woman and married an Ashkenazi man, we knew we didn't hit the genetic lottery jackpot, but we needed to get my husband tested for BRCA. Waiting for the results was one of the longer weeks of our life, but luckily he was negative.

With that out of the way, pregnancy was next. We learned about all the rational and irrational normal pregnancy anxiety. Both blended nicely with the reoccurring breastfeeding and BRCA thoughts that would pop up from time to time.

And then you have a baby.

Oddly enough, my anxieties about breastfeeding subsided after I gave birth to my son. Breastfeeding itself is a whole other discussion for some, but for me, I was able to bond with my child by feeding him. So what if it was through a bottle? I am here to feed him, which was more than enough. Period.

Every now and then I have a fleeting thought about what if my son is BRCA2 positive? I then think of my mother. My

For more information about the genetics program, contact Adina Fleischmann at [afleischmann@sharsheret.org](mailto:afleischmann@sharsheret.org).

mother was diagnosed with breast cancer when she was 25 and 36; she's now 66 B"H. The research, technology, surgical technique, knowledge, availability, and communication landscape has completely changed since she went through this. And then I think, hopefully the next 20 years will have as much advancement as the prior 30. I need to live my life. I can't live guarded by the "what ifs." We will deal with that situation if we get dealt it, just as my parents did.

And Sharsheret is there to help you along the entire journey, beside you. Having someone to talk to at Sharsheret was paramount in helping me feel comfortable these past 7 years. When this all began, there was no one like me. Sharsheret gave me a community and I am happy to give back and be a face for someone else as a peer supporter.



## SHARSHERET CONTRIBUTES TO NATIONAL RESEARCH

On a by-invitation basis with federal agencies and major cancer centers, Sharsheret partners in research studies and evaluations to strengthen support programs for women and families facing breast cancer.

## RECENT RESEARCH PROJECTS:

The LINK Program: Enhancing and Sustaining Structured Support Services for Jewish Young Women Diagnosed with Breast Cancer (2014-2019): CDC Cooperative Agreement to evaluate, enhance, and scale up interventions for young Jewish breast cancer survivors.

Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center Research Collaboration (2014-2019): To design and conduct a comprehensive formal evaluation of The LINK Program interventions.

Thriving Again: Life After Breast Cancer for Young Jewish Women (2011-2014): CDC Cooperative Agreement to address unmet structured support services and education needs of young Jewish breast cancer survivors.

Breast Cancer in Young Women Project (2010-2012): Evaluation study, conducted with Sisters Network, Inc., to identify, strengthen, and promote real-world, evidence-based interventions that provide psychosocial and reproductive health support to young Ashkenazi Jewish and African American breast cancer survivors.



## THE NEXT GENERATION

### MEET OUR B'NAI MITZVAH

Every year, remarkable young adults nationwide make a huge impact by raising awareness and critical funds for Sharsheret as part of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah projects. Our B'nai Mitzvah ensure that Sharsheret is here for anyone whose life is touched by breast cancer or ovarian cancer.

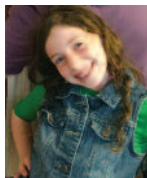
To learn more about sharing your celebration with us, contact Sarah Eagle at [seagle@sharsheret.org](mailto:seagle@sharsheret.org).



Mali Antosofsky (Teaneck, NJ)



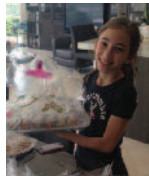
Galia Atik (New York, NY)



Michal Berger (Edison, NJ)



Charlotte Blinken (Englewood, NJ)



Samantha Cleeman (Hollywood, FL)



Tikva Epstein (Bergenfield, NJ)



Gabriella Gotesman (Bergenfield, NJ)



Samantha Kanner (Englewood, NJ)



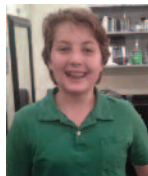
Edna Kraemer (West Orange, NJ)



Naomi Kraemer (West Orange, NJ)



Henna Krauss (Yonkers, NY)



Ethan Marom (Englewood, NJ)



Tiferet Mondrow (Bergenfield, NJ)



Manny Nagel (Teaneck, NJ)



Tehilla Robbins (Atlanta, GA)



Andrew Schwartz (Denver, CO)



Kyle Slavin (Highland Park, IL)



Cara Spivak (Monmouth Junction, NJ)



Ethan Tarnarider (Redwood City, CA)

### OUR VOICES: TIKVA EPSTEIN



A few months before my Bat Mitzvah, my mom's co-worker and a close family friend found out that she had breast cancer. Our friend, a pediatrician, just like my mom, didn't know where to turn and asked my mom if she

knew any organizations that could help her. While our friend isn't Jewish, my mom decided to call Sharsheret to see if they could help her. Sharsheret assured my mom that even though our friend wasn't Jewish, she still had a place at Sharsheret and of course Sharsheret would do everything they could to help her.

That night, I overheard my mom retelling her conversation with Sharsheret to my dad. My mom was so touched by the way Sharsheret opened their arms to help our friend that she started crying. I didn't really know that much about Sharsheret until that night, but when I heard that a Jewish organization was going to help our friend who is not Jewish through her battle with breast cancer, I knew that I wanted my Bat Mitzvah project to support Sharsheret.

My Bat Mitzvah took place over the summer, while I was in camp, so I decided to host a camp bake sale that would support Sharsheret. Together with my bunk, we baked cookies and pink challah and then we sold them to the other campers. All of my bunk mates and friends loved being involved and learned a lot about Sharsheret. I'm so glad I overheard my parents' conversation that night, because Sharsheret added so much meaning to my Bat Mitzvah celebration, and I know I will be involved with Sharsheret for many years to come.

**OUR B'NAI MITZVAH** ensure that Sharsheret is here for anyone whose life is touched by breast cancer or ovarian cancer.

## SHARSHERET ANNUAL BENEFIT

**J**oin hundreds of friends, old and new, in celebration of Sharsheret at our Annual Benefit, Sunday, May 15, 2016, at the Marriott at Glenpointe in Teaneck, New Jersey. Participate in a silent auction showcasing valuable gift packages, electronics, jewelry, Judaica, and fine dining and shopping gift certificates.

More than 600 guests attended in 2015, where we recognized volunteer Alissa Zagha with the Lisa Altman Volunteer Tribute Award, and Linda Gerstel and Ed Joyce as our Guests of Honor.

Visit [www.sharsheret.org/benefit](http://www.sharsheret.org/benefit) or call 866-474-2774 for reservations.



**Dana Post Adler**  
Guest of Honor

**Deborah Leipzig**  
Lisa Altman Volunteer  
Tribute Award

**Dr. Elana Rosman**  
Young Leadership







## OUR VOICES: MOLLY SIGEL

For as long as I can remember, things have always gone according to plan. I was able to graduate from high school and participate in a gap year program in Israel. Then, I returned home and went to school in New York, chose my major and minors, and took on leadership positions in Hillel. In the spring of last year, I was very lucky to be accepted to a number of graduate programs and planned on beginning my graduate studies in Israel soon after graduation.

All of that changed when I received a phone call from my doctor that my test results came back with a 20 centimeter tumor in my right ovary. Was it cancerous? Would I need surgery? Was I going to have treatment? What would happen to my graduate school plans? For the first time in my life, things were no longer going according to plan. I learned that I had Stage 3C ovarian cancer and would need surgery followed by 12 weeks of chemotherapy. The life that I had once planned for myself changed in that moment.



**“MY PEER SUPPORTER WAS EVERYTHING THAT I HOPED I COULD BECOME.”**

Before I had been notified that my tumor was in fact cancerous, many people name-dropped the organization “Sharsheret.” I had indeed heard of Sharsheret through various events that I had been to within the Jewish community. I decided that I would consider giving them a call if, and in this case when, I did find out that my tumor was cancerous. I was very concerned that because of my young age and rare diagnosis Sharsheret would not be of assistance. Boy, was I wrong.

The first time I spoke to a member of the support team, I was told they would do everything they could to support my social-emotional needs, at whatever time or place I was. In addition to that, Sharsheret would also find someone who had the same or similar diagnosis at the same age for me to speak with, a peer supporter as they call them. I told the woman that I was speaking to that it would be nearly impossible to do such a thing because my diagnosis was so rare, one in more than a million. Little did I know. I got a call back within the next few days that Sharsheret had in fact found a peer supporter for me. My peer supporter was everything that I hoped I could become. She had been diagnosed in the fall following her college graduation while she was just starting at Harvard Law. After a year of surgeries and treatment she was able

to get back on her feet and go back to law school, and graduated a few years later. Today, she is 34 years old and a successful corporate lawyer in Manhattan. For me, her story was the light at the end of the tunnel. My peer supporter was the first person I contacted when I got my final diagnosis. She was the person I spoke to about what it would be like to lose my hair. And she was the person who gave me the support I needed to get through to the next day.

Not only did I have my peer supporter as a part of my support system but I also had my contact from the support team. In the beginning of my journey I called Sharsheret often with questions and concerns. Looking back, I called during my most difficult moments, including when I was losing my hair, and in my happiest moments, like when I was done with treatment. About two months into my treatment one of my best friends from school told me that she was planning to coordinate a bi-coastal “Team Molly” walk initiative, one to be held in LA for my family and friends here, and the other to be held in New York for my school and camp friends. Choosing Sharsheret as the beneficiary of our fundraising efforts was easy for us. Sharsheret had been there and continued to be there in the best and the worst of times for me. When my friend told me the walk in New York would be in November, I dreamt of the idea of attending. How nice could it be for me to be healthy enough to travel across the country and be a part of an amazing effort to fundraise for an incredible organization? All I needed was permission from my oncologist. I told my Sharsheret counselor that I had thought of coming to the walk in New York with the permission I needed. The first thing she said was that if I was allowed to go she would be there too. Now, that is support. I was lucky to be given permission to go and spend time with friends and family in New York, and attend the walk this past weekend. There were over 200 people walking and running with us as part of Team Molly.

Now, here we are \$6,141 later, raising money for an important cause and something so close to my heart. Sharsheret has been there for me in the best of times and the worst of times and has truly made this experience so much easier for my family and me. From the peer supporter Sharsheret put me in touch with to my many conversations with the support team; Sharsheret has been there through it all. I finished treatment at the end of September and have since been considered in remission. Thanks to Sharsheret I know that I have them to fall back on for whatever I may need no matter how grim the circumstance. Sharsheret taught me to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I am now looking forward to a long, healthy, and happy life.

For more information about our ovarian cancer program, contact Shira Kravitz at [skravitz@sharsheret.org](mailto:skravitz@sharsheret.org).



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## SHARSHERET TO OPEN A LOS ANGELES OFFICE

Sharsheret will open a regional office in Los Angeles in Summer 2016.

The regional office will serve Sharsheret's active community in the California area, and will be the hub for all activities in the region.

To get involved with the LA office, contact Devorah Silverman at [dsilverman@sharsheret.org](mailto:dsilverman@sharsheret.org).


## Get Connected!

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