

# ONE FOR ALL

A PUBLICATION OF



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A MESSAGE FROM

**RABBI  
SHMUEL  
FUERST**

**DEAR FRIEND,**

With Spring upon us, ChesedChicago - with your help - is busy preparing our community for the Pesach season.

We are grateful to everyone who participated in our 8th annual Shas for Shidduchim campaign. Your partnership is vital to us as we endeavor to provide shidduch and newlywed-related services.

In this issue we highlight the move of our simcha-related departments to our new building. B”H, the transition was smooth, and they are now housed in a beautiful setting that enhances the experience for kallahs and families making simchas.

Our seasonally-relevant programs such as the annual Spring Food Drive, Second Time Around pickups, Yom Tov lending gemach, and of course, Pesach orders, are operating smoothly to help ease your Yom Tov preparations.

**New for this edition: See pages 9 - 12 for our Donor Impact Statement for 2024. I think you will find it very informative.** With your help, we are continuing to focus on making ChesedChicago’s provisions and services easily accessible to our community.

Thank you for your interest and support. Wishing our community happy and healthy Pesach,

Rabbi Shmuel Fuerst  
Co-Founder, ChesedChicago

**OUR SERVICES**

**Provisions**

*Our warehouse provides essentials such as:*

- Fine-Neiman Community Food Pantry
- Food Vouchers
- Clothing
- Furniture & Appliances
- Baby Needs
- Toys, Bikes, School Supplies
- Bridal Needs
- Medical Equipment
- Co-Op Shop for Klei Kodesh
- Seasonal/Holiday Distributions

**Medical Assistance**

*We're here for you in times of medical need, assisting with and facilitating services such as:*

- Fertility Treatment
- Medical Insurance
- Extraordinary Medical Expenses

**Financial Stability**

*We provide a wide range of finance related assistance programs, such as:*

- Tax, Debt, and Financial Counseling
- Government Benefits Assistance
- Interest-Free Loan Fund
- Single Parent Assistance
- Simcha Assistance
- Utilities Assistance
- Eviction Prevention and Home Repairs
- Education and Camp Assistance

**Education & Family Services**

*Our team offers critical services that assist families in need, including:*

- Youth Volunteerism
- Mentoring

**Second Time Around Pick-Ups / Drop-Offs**

*Our incredible second-hand program upcycles numerous essential household and clothing items. The main categories we provide include:*

- Clothing
- Furniture
- Appliances
- Housewares

**AFFILIATE PROGRAMS**

Simcha Link

JobLink

Ginat Shoshana

Jane Webster Simcha Gemach

Ateres Chaya Bridal Gowns

# Volunteer Appreciation Night



During Chanukah, ChesedChicago hosted an appreciation night for our dedicated female volunteers. Approximately 30 women were treated to an evening of fun and connection, where they enjoyed a delicious buffet and created resin mezuzah covers.

The projects came out beautifully! Attendees were delighted to hear words of inspiration from Mrs. Mindy Reiss, who uplifted the crowd with divrei chizuk, reinforcing the importance of their work. To add to her message, Mrs. Reiss had gathered anonymous testimonials from people whose lives had been touched by ChesedChicago, and presented them to the volunteers. The statements conveyed profound appreciation that resonated deeply, and attendees left invigorated, with a renewed sense of commitment. 🌟



**The statements conveyed profound appreciation that resonated deeply, and attendees left invigorated, with a renewed sense of commitment.**





# Chicago Unites to Bring Z'chusim for Shidduchim



*“Rabbosai, I don’t know if Chicago right now is the coldest city in the United States, but I can tell you that this room is the hottest city right now in the entire United States with this siyum haShas.”*

These words, shared by Rav Eytan Feiner, shlit”a, electrified the atmosphere at the 8th annual Shas for Shidduchim siyum, held on Monday, January 20th. The siyum was a culmination of over 400 lomdim gathering to complete Shas in just 24 hours—a powerful z’chus for Klal Yisroel’s singles. The event also attracted over 200 children who participated in Shas for Shidduchim Jr., learning all of Shisha Sidrei Mishna, adding even more z’chusim to this tremendous undertaking of limud haTorah.

This year’s initiative generated an overwhelming response, with nearly 5,000 singles receiving z’chusim through the tremendous limud haTorah of the lomdim.



For some, the impact of Shas for Shidduchim is deeply personal. R’ Shua Sauer, who flies in from New York every year to participate, shared his own story:

*“Last year, the day after I returned from Shas for Shidduchim, my 29-year-old son introduced my wife and me to a wonderful girl from Toronto. A short while later, we had the privilege of walking him down to the chuppah.”*

As the final words of the siyum echoed through Chicago’s beautiful Ateres Ayala Simcha Hall, a sense of achdus and simcha filled the room. Lomdim and their families joyfully danced to the vibrant sounds of Mesamechei Leiv Orchestra.

Adding to the inspiration of the evening, attendees were surprised with a special video message from Rav Moshe Hillel Hirsch, shlit”a, who powerfully emphasized the greatness of limud haTorah:

*“Every mitzvah brings d’veikus. But there’s one mitzvah, and one type of act, which brings d’veikus more than anything else, and that is Talmud Torah.”*

The contributions made to Shas for Shidduchim help fund ChesedChicago’s year-round shidduch and newlywed-related services, supporting countless singles as they navigate the journey to marriage. Through the combined power of tzedakah and limud haTorah, this initiative continues to serve as a segulah for shidduchim. 🌟



*Photo credits: Bottom Line Marketing Group*

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**“Last year, the day after I returned from Shas for Shidduchim, my 29-year-old son introduced my wife and me to a wonderful girl from Toronto. A short while later, we had the privilege of walking him down to the chuppah.”**

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Thank you to Agudas Yisroel of West Rogers Park for graciously allowing the use of the shul for the learning portion of this meaningful initiative.

Thank you to Mesamechei Leiv Orchestra for providing the sound and musical accompaniment for the siyum.







# An Elegant Shift

## OUR WEDDING-RELATED DEPARTMENTS HAVE A NEW HOME

We are thrilled to announce the relocation of our wedding-related departments to our new building, offering a more elegant and spacious setting for our shoppers.

Ateres Chaya Bridal Gowns, Jane Webster Simcha Boutique Gemach, and Ginat Shoshana are now taking appointments at the newly renovated 7100 N. Ridgeway Avenue. This move allows us to showcase our gown and houseware collections in a beautifully designed space with enhanced lighting, expanded fitting areas, and an overall upgraded shopping experience. The new location provides a more comfortable and elevated atmosphere, making it easier to find the perfect gown for special occasions. We appreciate your support during this transition and look forward to welcoming you to our impressive new venue.

## ATERES CHAYA BRIDAL GOWNS

For over 25 years, Ateres Chaya has been providing bridal gowns for the kallahs of our community. There is a large selection of beautiful gowns available to borrow at no cost.

Sponsored in memory of Mrs. Roberta Hope Ray Katz, a”h.

We are absolutely thrilled about the new location! The expanded space allows us to showcase the gowns more beautifully, provide a more comfortable experience for kallahs, and offer personalized service in a stunning new setting. Every detail was designed with the kallahs in mind, and we can't wait to service them in this inviting space!

*The Ray Family*



## JANE WEBSTER SIMCHA BOUTIQUE GEMACH

The Simcha Gemach lends wedding gowns for immediate family members of the chosson or kallah, for a nominal fee. Over the years, the gemach has grown exponentially. It now serves an estimated 300 women and girls each year and is constantly updating its stock. The boutique boasts 200 gowns, ranging in sizes 2-20 for women, plus a line of matching children's gowns. Dedicated to the memory of Mrs. Jane Webster, a"n'h.



We are so proud to welcome our community members into this beautiful new setting and help them find the perfect gown for their special day. The reaction from people has been absolutely priceless! As soon as they walk through the doors, their faces light up with excitement. With more space, enhanced lighting, and private dressing rooms, we can now offer an even more comfortable and personalized experience.

*Mrs. Sara Webster*

## GINAT SHOSHANA

Ginat Shoshana has been enhancing the homes of Chicago kallahs for over 40 years. Originally started by Mrs. Rashie Schnell, a"n'h, Ginat Shoshana provides a comprehensive kitchen and dining package to help Chicago kallahs set up their new homes. Numerous kallahs have been assisted since the founding of this project. Ginat Shoshana is dedicated in memory of Mrs. Shoshana (Rose) Reifer, a"n'h, and Mrs. Rashie Schnell, a"n'h.

Ginat Shoshana's new showroom greatly enhances the kallah's experience when choosing items for her new home. It's wonderful to see the look on their faces when they see everything displayed so beautifully. Mothers can't believe it when they walk in - especially those who have had daughters shop at our previous location. They are overwhelmed by the expansive layout and ease of choice. We are so grateful to be able to offer this upgraded experience.

*Mrs. Batsheva Schnell*



# Fast Connections, Lasting Impressions

## SIMCHA LINK SPEED DATING EVENT

On Motzei Shabbos, February 1st, Simcha Link hosted its first Speed Dating event. Geared towards professionals and college students ages 21-30, it was well-attended by 40 participants from Chicago, Detroit, South Bend, and Minneapolis.

Registration was required so that a general equal number of men and women could be properly prepared for. Upon arrival, each attendee received their individualized schedule for the evening.

The room was set up beautifully, with delicious refreshments and votive-lit tables set up for one-on-one meetings. The women each sat at a table, while the men moved from table to table at the sound of the bell, every 5-10 minutes.

Five Simcha Link shadchanim were present throughout the night to support and consult with the attendees as desired.

After the event, participants



received a feedback form to complete and indicate if they were interested in pursuing anyone specific. Simcha Link will be assigning a shadchan to each match for follow up. In fact, we already have one date going, and are hoping for more in the near future!

Feedback has been extremely positive. Participants felt that the program ran smoothly, and they enjoyed it. For some, it was their first experience with speed dating, and they were impressed with the other attendees. "I really enjoyed it and I had the chance to meet so many people I did not know," said one woman. "It's crazy there were so many incredible suitors living in Chicago who I had never heard of before. Thank you again for a great event."

With such a great response, as well as requests for similar events, we look forward to hosting more Speed Dating evenings soon! 🍷

Thank you so much!  
This was the best  
dating event that  
I've ever been to!

Very well arranged and put together. A huge thank you to the wonderful organizers! May you all be zoche to bond many pairs of singles into happy and successful marriages.

It was a great experience!

Thank you to our planning committee, and thank you to Magen Chicago for providing security services for the event.





**ChesedChicago**

IMPACT THROUGH KINDNESS

# Donor Impact Statement

FOR 2024

Dear Friend,

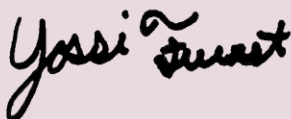
As a stakeholder in ChesedChicago, we'd like to keep you updated on our accomplishments in 2024 - and our continuing vision for serving our community in 2025.

You will see facts and figures used throughout this section of the newsletter. That's the easy way to quantify your impact.

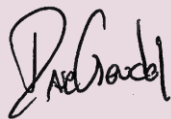
But it is the stories we hear every day that tell a much more compelling tale. There were over 7,500 individual stories in 2024: That is the number of clients (up from 7,000 in 2023) we served last year in one or more ways.

It is only because of compassionate donors like you that we can provide such a large and impactful safety net for our community. On behalf of the community members we are honored to serve, we are so appreciative of your support of our neighbors and friends.

With tremendous gratitude,



Rabbi Yossi Fuerst  
Executive Director



Dave Gendel  
Development Director

## About Us

The staff of ChesedChicago is guided by a mission that is both clear and comprehensive – to provide life-changing assistance to those who are in need. This mission is further articulated by our core values. We strive to meet these ideals with all of our work in service to our Chicago community.

### Mission

ChesedChicago empowers Jewish people with financial challenges to become increasingly self-sufficient through a wide array of supportive services provided with dignity, sensitivity, and discretion.

### Core Values

It is not just what we do that is essential, but also how. Our core values listed below indicate our guiding operating principles. Together, these values inform all of our interactions with clients.

**KINDNESS**

**HOPE**

**DIGNITY**



# Key Metrics in 2024

*Inflation was the biggest factor impacting ChesedChicago and its clients in 2024. Because of the recent inflation spike, the number of unduplicated community members impacted grew to over 7,500 people.*

## Basic Services and Provisions

	2023	2024
Total impact for all departments	<b>7,000</b> unduplicated clients	<b>7,500</b> unduplicated clients
Pieces of furniture distributed	<b>611</b>	<b>555</b>
Clothing shopping appointments	<b>783</b>	<b>1,156</b>
Winter coats and boots distributed	<b>449</b>	<b>453</b>
People helped with government benefit applications	<b>447</b>	<b>748</b>
Cumulative JobLink job offer salaries	<b>\$ 5,697,000</b>	<b>\$7,526,000</b>
Volunteers	<b>1,267</b>	<b>2,736</b>

## Select Essential Needs

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Value of food and cards distributed	<b>\$2,440,000</b>	<b>\$3,560,000</b>	<b>\$4,012,000</b>	<b>\$4,496,000</b>
Provided for single parents	<b>\$242,000</b>	<b>\$365,000</b>	<b>\$412,000</b>	<b>\$367,000</b>
Provided for scholarships and camperships	<b>\$166,000</b>	<b>\$202,000</b>	<b>\$382,000</b>	<b>\$385,000</b>
Teen programming	<b>\$79,000</b>	<b>\$211,000</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>	<b>\$320,000</b>
Total medical and pediatric therapies	<b>\$363,000</b>	<b>\$605,000</b>	<b>\$846,000</b>	<b>\$1,024,000</b>
Provided for eviction prevention	<b>\$191,000</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>	<b>\$283,000</b>	<b>\$342,000</b>
Provided for utilities assistance	<b>\$48,000</b>	<b>\$61,000</b>	<b>\$72,000</b>	<b>\$83,000</b>

## Annual Expenses by the year

<b>2018</b>	<b>\$4,574,000</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>\$5,003,000</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>\$5,379,000</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>\$5,712,000</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>\$7,700,000</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>\$9,300,000</b>
<b>2024*</b>	<b>\$9,729,000</b>

\* Unaudited

LARGE INCREASE DUE TO COVID IMPACT (between 2021 and 2022)

LARGE INCREASE DUE TO INFLATION IMPACT (between 2023 and 2024)



## UNIQUE ASPECTS OF CHESEDCHICAGO

- Our year-round **organizational foci** are basic human needs.
- We have nearly **40 years of experience** and steady leadership in high-volume community food distribution and programs.
- We offer a **comprehensive program menu** that addresses all areas of self-sufficiency.
- We have **2 amazing facilities** for storage and distribution to clients.
- We provide many **volunteer opportunities** during the distribution for several organizations.
- We offer significant interest-free **loans**.
- We serve nearly **30% of the Jewish community** in our catchment area.
- We have tremendous **purchasing power** with suppliers.
- We have many significant **partnerships** in our community.
- Through our experience we know community members who are **truly in need**.
- Our **leadership** is the Dayan of the community.
- 90% of our expenses go directly to program management.
- We are **rated a 4** (out of four) star rating from Charity Navigator, the nation's leading not-for-profit rating organization.

## PARTNERSHIPS IN 2024

*ChesedChicago is grateful to the following community agencies for partnering with us to meet the needs of children and family members.*

- The ARK
- Arie Crown Hebrew Day School
- Associated Talmud Torahs/ REACH
- Chicago Mitzvah Campaign
- Institute for Human Reproduction
- Institute for Soil and Soul
- JDBY/YTT
- JUF Chicago
- Maot Chitim
- NCSY
- Niles Township Food Pantry
- Orthodox Union
- Rush North Shore Medical Center
- Shearis Yisroel Pesach Fund
- Village of Lincolnwood
- Yeshiva Ohr Boruch/Veitzener Cheder

## >> GOING FORWARD IN 2025

- We will have our second warehouse at 7100 N. Ridgeway open for all gemachs including free clothing, toys, sports equipment, and baby gear, Ateres Chaya bridal gowns, Jane Webster Simcha Boutique, Ginat Shoshana bridal housewares, and seasonal distributions.
- We will enhance the shopping experience in our food and clothing departments by expanding space, offering a wider selection of food in the Co-op and Fine-Neiman Community Food Pantry, and improving the overall ambiance.
- We will expand and strengthen our Simcha Link division by hiring a new staff member and increasing programs and outreach.

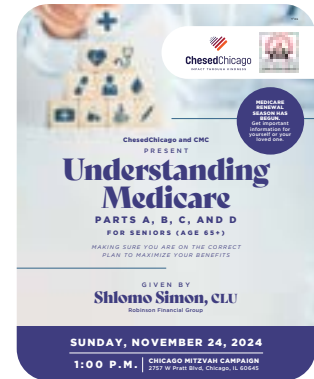


# Insightful Lecture: Understanding Medicare

ChesedChicago recently collaborated with Chicago Mitzvah Campaign to host an informative lecture, “Understanding Medicare, Parts A, B, C, and D” for seniors ages 65 and up. Given by Shlomo Simon, CLU, Robinson Financial Group, the lecture provided important information about various Medicare programs, enabling attendees to ensure they are on the correct plan to maximize their benefits. With Medicare renewal season beginning, it was a timely and enlightening talk.

The presentation was very well-received by 70+ attendees in person and over Zoom.

“People appreciated the program offering and the thorough presentation,” said Lisa Burnstein, Director of Senior Services at Chicago Mitzvah Campaign. “It covered a lot of territory and the handouts were excellent. The information about the difference between Medicare Advantage and regular Medicare was extremely illuminating and gave the audience something important to consider if they have one of those Advantage plans. Based on the information I learned, I am speaking to my own mother about making changes to her plan this year. Shlomo stayed long after the presentation to answer people’s questions, which you can imagine, were many! I am very grateful that we did this program and hope that we can do an update next year during renewal season. Thank you to ChesedChicago for putting this program together. I think it will help a lot of people in the community.” 🌟



**Based on the information I learned, I am speaking to my own mother about making changes to her plan this year.**



For a link to the presentation or to receive the accompanying handout, please contact [office@chesedchicago.org](mailto:office@chesedchicago.org).



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

SHE'ARIS HAPLATE

*Mrs. Estie Spero*

*A conversation with Mrs. Estie Spero, She'aris HaPlate Coordinator.*

### How did you get involved with volunteering at ChesedChicago?

My husband is in the catering industry and usually had leftovers. When ChesedChicago was looking for someone to lead the She'aris HaPlate leftover food distribution program, Rabbi Fuerst asked us if we would take on the project since we were already in the position to help, and the rest is history.

### What does a typical volunteer day look like for you?

My busiest days are the weekends. I usually get calls about leftovers needing to be picked up from shuls from weekend simchas. I also have baalei simcha and party planners dropping off food for distribution. Then I start making calls to distribute the food to the many families who need it.

### Why did you choose to volunteer at ChesedChicago specifically?

I grew up with parents, particularly a father, who was committed to chesed. People in need would call and come to our home at all hours of the day and night and receive the help they desperately needed. When I am at ChesedChicago, I feel my father's energy surrounding me in many ways.

### What motivates you to stay involved at ChesedChicago consistently?

I am able to make a deep impact. I get calls weekly about families who suffer from food scarcity in our community. Many people don't have the capacity to access other resources, but having prepared, ready-made, delivered options is something they can appreciate.

Dignity matters. Everyone receives food that is a fit for their family in a respectful way. This is important on every level of giving that ChesedChicago does, and I strive to align with that value.

### If you could tell future ChesedChicago volunteers one thing, what would it be?

A little goes a long way. Even if you only have an hour a week or a "limited" skill set, ChesedChicago has a way of maximizing each volunteer's efforts.

### In your opinion, what is the most important work that ChesedChicago does?

ChesedChicago helps the underserved, marginalized, and most vulnerable people in our communities. Accessing help and resources when one is struggling is often a complicated and overwhelming process. When one is already suffering, it can almost feel impossible. I have seen firsthand how each staff member treats every client with kindness, patience, and compassion. It's special to be part of such an amazing organization.

### What do you feel you gain from volunteering at CC?

I gain a sense of connection. Connecting to parts of my community that I probably wouldn't have the opportunity to contribute to, I feel connected in helping people and for making a difference in people's lives. ✨

**Dignity matters. Everyone receives food that is a fit for their family in a respectful way.**





## She'aris HaPlate What Is It?



### HOSTING A SIMCHA OR EVENT?

Share the joy by donating what's leftover to families in need.

With just one phone call, you can help those struggling to feed their families, and prevent perfectly good food from going to waste, all at the same time.

She'aris Haplate, a division of ChesedChicago, collects kosher food left over from simchas, events and food establishments and distributes it to families in our community.

It's a real win-win: no food wasted and fellow Chicagoans helped!

If you are making a bris, kiddush, bar/bas mitzvah, event or celebration, don't throw away your leftovers. Call She'aris HaPlate and we'll pick them up that day or the following morning.

We'll even bring our own pans.

And it will all go directly to families in need.

#### WE ACCEPT

- Main dishes
- Side dishes
- Bread
- Cakes/cookies

To arrange a pickup, call Mordy at 312-515-5335

Thank you for thinking of your fellow community members when celebrating your special occasion.





# YOUR NEIGHBORS ARE COUNTING ON YOU THIS PESACH.

## NOTABLE CHESEDCHICAGO STATS



**6,162**

PEOPLE



**\$1,540,000**

SPENT ON PROVISIONS



**8,479 LB**

MATZAH



**110,000 LB**

CHICKEN



**67,608**

EGGS

**HELP MAKE PESACH POSSIBLE**  
*for our community.*



**DONATE TODAY**

[www.chesedchicago.org/pesach](http://www.chesedchicago.org/pesach)