

APPLICATION

ONE FOR ALL

A PUBLICATION OF
 ChesedChicago

How Our Government Programs Department Makes a Difference

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Shas for Shidduchim is back

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A MESSAGE FROM

**RABBI
SHMUEL
FUERST**

DEAR FRIEND,

As we reflect on an exciting and meaningful season at ChesedChicago, I am filled with gratitude for your support, which allows us to continue serving our community with heart and dedication.

This issue celebrates some wonderful milestones: our **Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** for our new building - a space that will expand our ability to help families and individuals in need; updates from **Simcha Link** on their ongoing efforts to make the shidduch process smoother and more accessible; introductions to **new ChesedChicago team members** who bring energy and passion to our work; and a closer look at our **Government Programs Department**, which helps families access vital benefits and resources when they need them most.

Thanks to your generosity, we can reach more people, provide more support, and create lasting impact. Together, we are building a stronger, more caring community, and we look forward to continuing this important work with your partnership.

Wishing you a safe and healthy winter,



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
- 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

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:

- Appliances
- Clothing
- Furniture
- Housewares
- Sports Equipment

AFFILIATE PROGRAMS

Ateres Chaya Bridal Gowns

Ginat Shoshana

Jane Webster Simcha Gemach

United Bikur Cholim Kitchen

SimchaLink
847-679-0496

joblink
773-866-1111



IN LOVING MEMORY OF Mr. Bill McGraw, "The Bike Man"



It is with heavy hearts that we mourn the passing of Bill McGraw, affectionately known in our community as "The Bike Man." For more than a decade, Bill came to ChesedChicago every spring, faithfully volunteering his time and expertise to tune up and repair our bicycles, ensuring that each one was safe, functional, and ready for distribution to children in our community.

Bill loved biking - the freedom, the joy, and the sense of adventure it brought. More than that, he loved sharing that passion with others, making sure that every child who received a bike could experience that same thrill and happiness. With every turn of a wrench, he brought joy, warmth, and dedication, reminding us that acts of chesed, no matter how small they may seem, can have a lasting impact on countless lives. Generations of children (and adults!) rode away from our warehouse with smiles and confidence, thanks to his generosity and care.

His presence was steady, reliable, and filled with humility. Bill never sought recognition or praise; he simply loved to give. And yet, his impact was monumental. Year after year, he helped bring joy to children and families, leaving an indelible mark on our community and our hearts.

We will miss Bill deeply. His kindness, gentle spirit, and commitment to service will always be remembered. As we continue our work, we honor his legacy by striving to bring the same dedication, love, and care to every child and family we serve.

May his memory be a blessing, and may his acts of chesed inspire us all to give generously, continue his legacy, and bring joy to others as he so selflessly did. 🍷



In Bill's own words:
**"Seeing smiles
on kids' faces...
this is what
gives me joy
and nachas"**

LEGACY TRIBUTE

In honor of Bill's unwavering dedication and kindness, our bike department will now be renamed in memory of "The Bike Man"



Stay tuned for our upcoming **SPRING BIKE DRIVE**, held in loving memory of Mr. McGraw - The Bike Man - continuing his beautiful legacy of bringing joy and confidence to children in our community.

A MILESTONE MOMENT:

Ribbon Cutting

MARKS CHESEDCHICAGO'S CONTINUED GROWTH

IT WAS A MORNING FILLED WITH GRATITUDE, PRIDE, AND EXCITEMENT AS CHESEDCHICAGO OFFICIALLY CELEBRATED THE RIBBON CUTTING OF OUR NEW BUILDING - OUR SECOND WAREHOUSE FACILITY - ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26.

The event marked an important milestone in ChessedChicago's ongoing mission to serve the community with compassion and dignity. Staff, volunteers, community members, and local leaders gathered to celebrate the expansion, including State Representative Kevin Olickal and State Senator Ram Villivalam, whose partnership and support were instrumental in helping secure funding for the new facility.

This new warehouse represents a step forward in our ability to "Fill the Need." The building now houses ChessedChicago's clothing, toys & books, and bridal departments, creating a more spacious and dignified shopping experience for families who rely on these essential services.

By relocating those departments, the original building has been reconfigured to accommodate a larger, more efficient food pantry and co-op, as well as expanded administrative offices, ensuring smoother operations and greater capacity to meet growing demand.

Executive Director Rabbi Yossi Fuerst shared, "This new building reflects the incredible growth of our organization and the trust our community places in us. With more space and better resources, we can serve more families with even greater care."

The celebration was beautifully coordinated by Mrs. Laura Lerer of RED Events, who generously donated her time and expertise to plan the event. Guests enjoyed a meaningful program, light refreshments, and guided tours of the new space.

As ChessedChicago continues to expand, the mission remains the same: to meet real needs with compassion, dignity, and community partnership. Our ribbon cutting event signaled a shift into a future with broader reach and deeper impact. 🌟



I came here as a newly elected representative three years ago, and I was blown away by ChessedChicago and all the incredible work they do every day. And so it was easy for me to fight for ChessedChicago in Springfield. This place embodies dignity and respect.

REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN
OLICKAL



I was blown away by how beautifully designed the new warehouse was. Seeing how much attention to detail was placed on making sure our community's needs were met in such a dignified way made me proud to be part of this special community.

DAVID HARTMAN, SUPPORTER



ChesedChicago is an incredibly special place that gives people light, hope, a hand up, and a push forward. We have to acknowledge that, sometimes, it's hard to ask for help. To have a facility and organization committed to dignity like ChesedChicago, that was what struck me. Thank you for inviting us, thank you for partnering with us, and thank you for the work you do every single day to help residents in our district.

SENATOR RAM VILLIVALAM

To our donors, volunteers, and community members, your generosity and spirit of giving helps sustain our organization every day. We truly could not do any of this without you.

NACHUM MEYERS, BOARD MEMBER



THANK YOU TO LTC INTERIORS FOR THE EXCEPTIONAL WORK THEY PUT INTO RENOVATING THE NEW BUILDING.

Behind the Scenes:

HOW OUR GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS DEPARTMENT MAKES A DIFFERENCE











The roots of ChesedChicago’s Government Programs Department go back to 2010, when we began helping community members navigate public assistance programs on an informal basis, with the invaluable guidance of Mr. Paul Bernstein. Recognizing the growing need for this type of support, Mrs. Chani Goldman was hired in 2014 to lead the effort full time, with Mrs. Andrea Tannenbaum joining to assist in 2020. Since then, the department has expanded tremendously in scope, reach, and effectiveness, becoming an essential resource for hundreds across our community.

At ChesedChicago, our Government Programs Department does far more than help people fill out forms. We provide hands-on, personalized support to help community members access the benefits they’re eligible for.

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Navigating government assistance programs can be overwhelming. Many people assume they don’t qualify, or they get lost in the paperwork. Mrs. Goldman’s knowledge, experience, and extensive network make all the difference.

We have built connections with key contacts across multiple agencies and offices, including:

-  Supervisors at the Lincolnwood DHS office
-  Regional DHS supervisors
-  Contacts at the state senator’s office
-  50th Ward Alderman’s office
-  Springfield Medicaid office and the emergency & presumptive eligibility department
-  Local WIC office supervisor
-  State Representative Kevin Olickal’s office
-  Citizens Utility Board

They allow Mrs. Goldman to guide community members toward programs that will truly help them, while weeding out options that aren't relevant or beneficial.

Beyond applications, we're also there when things go wrong. Whether an agency sends paperwork late, misprocesses a case, or creates delays that jeopardize benefits, our staff intervenes, troubleshoots the problem, and pushes for a timely resolution.

Programs we assist with include:

DHS

- SNAP (food stamps)
- TANF (cash assistance)
- Medicaid health insurance

CEDA

- LIHEAP grants for gas, heat, and electric bills
- UBR grants towards water bill

Our team can help you check eligibility and apply for these programs, making what can be an intimidating process smooth and manageable. And the impact is real: so many people have been helped through this department, often with life-changing results. And their gratitude says it all.

HERE'S WHAT SOME OF OUR CLIENTS HAVE TO SAY:

"Having (finally) received both STW and LIHEAP, I just want to say thank you to both of you. You were extremely helpful, proactive, and professional as you assisted me in saving my family a small bundle this winter. Thank you for being there for our community!"



”

"We appreciate so much all the help in settling in when we moved to Chicago. The valuable advice regarding government programs made a tremendous difference."

At ChesedChicago, we are proud to have a team that combines expertise, compassion, and connections to make a meaningful difference in people's lives. If you or someone you know could benefit from assistance with government programs, please reach out. We are here to help.

MRS. CHANI GOLDMAN DHS & CEDA PROGRAMS

✉ cgoldman@chesedchicago.org
☎ 847-679-7799 x 319

MRS. ANDREA TANNENBAUM CEDA PROGRAMS

✉ atannenbaum@chesedchicago.org
☎ 847-679-7799 x 108

ChesedChicago Welcomes

We're thrilled to welcome four new faces to the ChesedChicago team! Each brings energy, dedication, and a shared passion for helping our community.

Mrs. Ariel Sugarman, Simcha Link Coordinator



Mrs. Sugarman plays a vital role in ensuring the smooth day-to-day flow of the Simcha Link office. She handles a wide range of administrative tasks and helps coordinate Simcha Link events, supporting the program's mission of bringing joy and dignity to family celebrations. Her efficiency and warmth make her an invaluable part of the team.

“ Seeing firsthand how this organization impacts the community in so many ways is truly amazing. I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute.

Ariel

Nachman Treisman, Assistant Warehouse Manager



“ I love knowing that when I get up in the morning, my whole day is about doing chesed. Helping people, serving our community, and making sure everyone who walks through our doors leaves with what they need, and with a smile. That's what makes this job so special.

Nachman

Nachman brings hands-on experience and strong attention to detail to our growing warehouse operations. In his role as Assistant Warehouse Manager, he helps oversee inventory and logistics, keeping everything running smoothly behind the scenes.



Jewish United Fund
TOGETHER for GOOD

THANK YOU, JUF!

ChesedChicago is deeply grateful to the Jewish United Fund (JUF) for their generous grants supporting our community this season.



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New Team Members

Mrs. Sarah Leah Gertsberg, Warehouse Assistant



Sarah Leah is a vital addition to our warehouse team, assisting with sorting, stocking, and preparing items for distribution. Her enthusiasm and commitment to teamwork help ensure every family receives what they need with care.

“The concept of chesed is very important in Jewish law. The very first Jew, Avraham, was known to have extraordinary abilities to help others. For me, working in an organization that helps people in our community is an extraordinary opportunity to participate in chesed, and I am very grateful for that.”

Sarah Leah

Rabbi Itchy Isenberg, Data & Systems Coordinator



Working with the data side of ChesedChicago gives me a window into just how many people’s lives are touched here. It’s amazing to see how much good happens behind the scenes and to play even a small role in helping it run smoothly.

Itchy

Itchy provides valuable support to our Executive Director and staff, assisting with reports, record keeping, and day-to-day administrative tasks. His superb problem-solving skills, reliability and positive attitude help keep our operations organized and efficient.



Thanks to JUF, our clothing department is well-stocked with coats, hats, gloves, scarves, tights, and boots, keeping families warm through the winter. Their additional support for our Fine-Neiman Community Food Pantry comes at a crucial time, helping us feed hundreds of families affected by the recent pause in SNAP benefits.

Simcha Link **UPDATES**

TEFILLAH PARTNERS INITIATIVE

Simcha Link recently launched the Tefilla Partners initiative for high school girls to 'adopt' a single and daven for her to find her zivug. The mission is to foster a sense of spiritual connection and mutual responsibility among girls in our community by encouraging heartfelt tefillah for one another's future. Through Tefillah Partners we aim to strengthen Emunah and build community, one tefillah at a time.

To submit your name for davening, or for any questions, please email Ariella Mayer at tefillahpartners@gmail.com



MEET YOUR ADVOCATES EVENT FOR BYHSC ALUMNI

On November 9, Simcha Link and Bais Yaakov High School hosted a "Meet Your Advocates" event for alumni of BYHSC. Nearly 50 attendees joined us for this special program, which brought together our dedicated local shadchanim along with six other shadchanim: Mrs. Rochel Fine, Mrs. Raizel Halon, and Mrs. Sara Rivkie Greenspoon from Lakewood; Mrs. Ruth Galet and Mrs. Sara Bitterman from Toronto; and Mrs. Chana Gitty Willner from Philadelphia.

It was an opportunity to connect, network and meet experienced shadchanim in a warm, welcoming setting.

Thank you to our local participating shadchanim, Mrs. Shelly Adler, Mrs. Alexa Friedman, Mrs. Naomi Homnick, Mrs. Rivkah Sarah Jaffe, Mrs. Estie Karman, Mrs. Rivkie Levitin, Mrs. Frumit Roberts, Mrs. Nechama Sherman, Mrs. Nina Siegal.

We hope that these efforts will yield positive results, bez"H!



MAKING DATING A LITTLE EASIER

Need-based support, because every match matters

At Simcha Link, we understand that dating can be both exciting and expensive - especially when last-minute travel is involved. That's why we're here to help.



TRAVEL ASSISTANCE: We help cover the cost of airline tickets for those traveling for dates, whether boys flying into Chicago or girls heading to the East Coast.



CAR LENDING PROGRAM: Simcha Link owns two cars that we happily lend to boys visiting Chicago for dating, making it easier to get around and focus on what really matters.



DATING GAME GEMACH:

We have the following games available for borrowing:

- Perfect Matches
- Table Topics
- Meaningful Minute

Our goal is simple: to make dating a little less stressful and a lot more possible.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Tammy Rubin CLOTHING DEPARTMENT

How did you get involved with volunteering at ChesedChicago?

After retiring from teaching early childhood for many years, I was eager to find some volunteer work. Covid had been so isolating and I really wanted to connect with people. I reached out to Marilyn Siegal who works at ChesedChicago and she suggested coming over there. I was familiar with the organization from past donations and I thought it could be a good fit – and it is!

What does a typical volunteer day look like for you?

I volunteer in the clothing/housewares department.

After the clothing is sorted, I tag and then hang items in the appropriate area. Our new space is just wonderful and spacious. I definitely get my daily steps in!

We always have a laugh when a unique item comes in and we wonder whether it will be snatched up or stay for a while.

What motivates you to stay involved at ChesedChicago on a consistent basis?

I look forward to seeing the staff and volunteers, and meeting new people. We all have our different strengths, and I enjoy the collaborative nature of ChesedChicago.

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

I would say ... come with a willingness to help and a caring attitude. And a smile! Always remember, we never know what struggles a person is going through.

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

Personally, I think the most important work they do is helping people in times of need, with compassion and respect. When families are facing challenging times, ChesedChicago is there every step of the way. 🍷

Our new space is just wonderful and spacious. I definitely get my daily steps in!

As the year comes to a close, **please consider ChesedChicago for your year-end gift and take advantage of 2025 tax benefits.** Together, we can keep our community nourished and cared for.

Visit www.chesedchicago.org/donate

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