

Provide Holocaust survivors support they need

Your Turn

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Guest columnist

Recent studies indicate that 80,000 Holocaust survivors are living today in the United States—and more than 30,000 are living at or near poverty. There are nearly 100 known Holocaust survivors living in the Greater Rochester area, all of whom are aging and need access to the best care possible.

Holocaust survivors are living witnesses to one of the darkest periods in human history, and their stories provide invaluable insight into the atrocities committed during that time. Their firsthand accounts help us understand the magnitude of the Holocaust and the impact it had on individuals, families, and communities. By learning from survivors, we can gain a deeper understanding of our history and how we can work together to prevent similar atrocities from occurring in the future. It is our responsibility to ensure that both them and their stories are not forgotten.

As survivors age, it is important that we continue to listen to their stories, honor their experiences, and ensure they have access to services and supports in this chapter of their lives.

Rochester is fortunate to recently receive significant funding to provide critical services for our community's survivors through grants from both New York state and private foundations. A total of \$255,000 will support survivors' emergency needs, fund a care management position dedicated to this population, and increase access to health care related services. The

grants were awarded by The Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester, KA-VOD—Ensuring Dignity for Holocaust Survivors, and New York state through funding secured by Senators Samra Brouk and Jeremy Cooney as part of the Holocaust Survivors Initiative announced last year by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

As we all know, Monroe County, like many others across the country, continues to age as a population. Based on the most recent census data, 18% of our county is 65 or older and with an aging community comes increased needs. This is particularly important for our aging Survivors as they navigate unique circumstances.

Jewish Family Service's programs and services are available to anyone in need, regardless of their religious background or beliefs. A significant part of JFS's work is providing essential services that support the aging population and help them maintain their independence and dignity. These funds enable JFS to provide critical services and support to those who have suffered so much and are now focused on living the best life possible as they age and face new challenges.

We are proud to be part of this effort and to continue serving our community with compassion, respect, and excellence.

Deb Rosen is president and chief executive officer of Jewish Family Services.