

2026 IMPACT REPORT

October 2025 - September 2026

JFCS OF THE SUNCOAST

Help. Hope. For All.

40 Years

Letter
from our President/CEO



Dr. Helene Lotman,
JFCS President/CEO

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on this past year, I am reminded that the true measure of Jewish Family & Children's Service of the Suncoast (JFCS) is not simply found in numbers. It is found in people, in the lives touched, the relationships built, and the moments when someone finds hope, stability, or simply the reassurance that they do not have to face a difficult time alone.

For more than four decades, JFCS has been part of the fabric of our community. Rooted in Jewish values and the enduring principle of Tikkun Olam, we believe in our shared responsibility to care for one another and strengthen the community we call home. That commitment extends to every person who comes through our doors, regardless of faith or circumstance.

The impact reflected in these pages belongs to many. I am deeply grateful to our Board of Directors for their leadership and stewardship; to our staff for bringing skill, compassion, and humanity to this work every day; to our volunteers and committee members who so generously share their time, talents, and voices; and to our donors and community partners whose trust and generosity make our work possible.

And to those who turn to JFCS for help, thank you for placing your trust in us. It is a privilege to walk alongside you. Your courage, resilience, and determination are at the heart of why we are here.

As the needs of our community continue to evolve, JFCS will continue to respond with strength, compassion, and purpose. We will listen. We will adapt. And together, we will continue building a community where dignity, connection, and hope are within reach for all.

To everyone who is part of the JFCS family, thank you. Your commitment to one another is what gives this organization its strength and makes this work possible.

With gratitude,

Helene

Board of Directors

CHAIR
Dr. Stacie Herrera

VICE CHAIR
Marc Kanoff

TREASURER
David Shapiro

SECRETARY
Ellen Goldner

BOARD MEMBERS
Adrienne Bavar
Marshall Cutler
Dan Dannheisser
Michael Goldman
Brian Meinberg
Nancy Platkin
Kathie Roberts
Ken Waters
Sheila Weiss
Carol Welsch

EMERITUS BOARD MEMBERS
Barbara Brizdle
Marie Monsky

JFCS OF THE SUNCOAST

Help. Hope. For All.

VISION

A community of dignity and belonging, where mental well-being is a priority, and no one faces life's challenges alone.

MISSION

Guided by Jewish values, JFCS helps community members of all faiths build the resilience, stability, and support they need to thrive.

OUR CORE VALUE

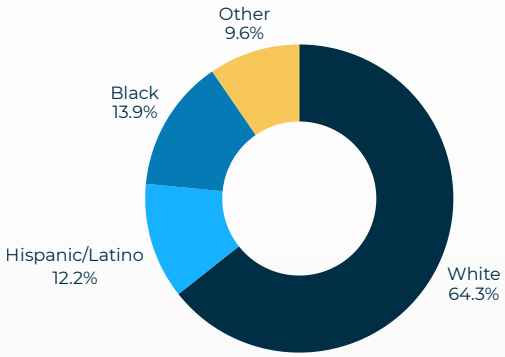
Tikkun Olam: Repairing the world through compassion, dignity, connection, and care with ethical action.



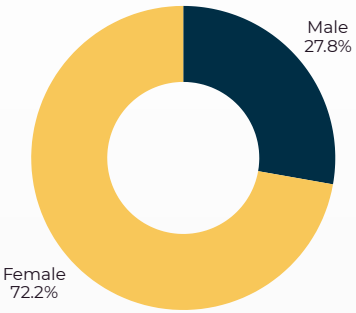
COUNSELING SERVICES

JFCS offers compassionate, professional mental health services to individuals and families of all ages throughout the community. Licensed clinicians provide confidential, trauma-informed care that help clients address a wide range of challenges, including anxiety, depression, grief, trauma, relationship difficulties, and life transitions. Through evidence-based therapeutic approaches, counselors empower youth, adults, and seniors to build resilience, develop healthy coping strategies, and achieve lasting emotional well-being. Services are offered in our offices, schools, homes, and community settings, ensuring that high-quality care is accessible to those who need it most.

Race/Ethnicity



Gender



186
Total clients served

1,303
Total sessions

74%
Improved anxiety scores

74%
Improved depression symptoms

99%
Client satisfaction

Finding Her Voice

For one 11-year-old girl, even a simple conversation with a teacher felt overwhelming. Social anxiety made it hard to speak up, ask for help, or face moments that other kids took in stride.

In counseling, she and her therapist took it one small step at a time. Through gradual, structured practice and a lot of encouragement, she began facing the situations that once frightened her. Her mother joined the work too, gaining a deeper understanding of what her daughter was feeling and how to support her.

Today, she is starting conversations with her teachers and stepping into moments she used to avoid. With each brave step, her confidence grows at school, with friends, and in the world around her.

ADAP

Adolescent & Diversion Assistance Program

The Adolescent Diversion and Assistance Program (ADAP) at JFCS of the Suncoast provides early intervention and support for youth at risk of entering or further engaging with the juvenile justice system. ADAP helps adolescents build positive pathways through individual and family counseling, skill-building workshops, and restorative justice practices. By connecting youth and their families with skilled case managers, therapists, and community resources, the program fosters accountability, healthy decision-making, and stronger family relationships.

The goal of ADAP is to prevent future delinquent behavior and promote lasting change. Each group focuses on developing the skills and behaviors needed to reduce destructive patterns. Referrals come from Juvenile Probation Officers, School Resource Officers, and Law Enforcement.

261

Total clients served

2089

Total sessions

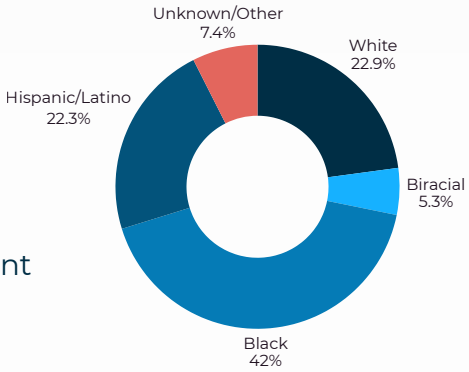
97%

Have no further involvement with the Department of Juvenile Justice while participating in the program

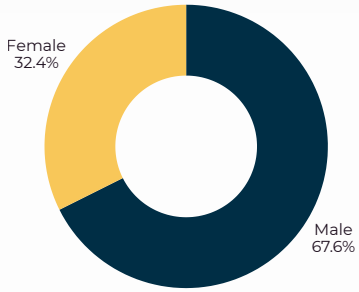
92%

Remain free from criminal involvement for at least six months after completing the program

Race/Ethnicity



Gender



Choosing a Different Path

When Daniel arrived in Florida, he brought more than his belongings. Raised in Tennessee amid hardship and instability, he came with a theft charge, a court case and a path that seemed already set. Just months away from becoming a legal adult, he was at a turning point. Living with his older brothers and working full time to support himself, he knew he wanted something different for his future. He committed to JFCS's ADAP program and began doing the work to move his life in a better direction.

Week after week, he showed up and completed every court-ordered class and requirement he needed to finish diversion and have his charges dismissed.

What changed his direction wasn't only the coursework; it was the relationship. As his time in the program drew to a close, his ADAP clinician explained that services would soon end. He answered right away: "What do you mean, miss? I'm going to call you when we're done, because you're someone I really like talking to. I don't have anyone in my life I can talk to like I talk to you." For many of the young people ADAP serves, the program is the first place an adult listens without judgment and believes in who they can become. Offered consistently, that belief is what turns a court referral into a fresh start.



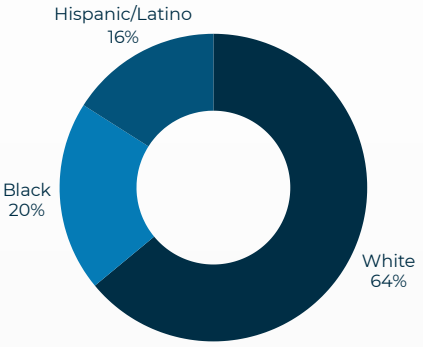
CAMP MARIPOSA®

Camp Mariposa Sarasota, part of the Eluna Network and endowed by the Rubin Family, is a free, year-round mentoring and prevention program for youth ages 9–17 impacted by the substance use of a parent, caregiver or close family member.

For children whose home lives can feel unpredictable or isolating, Camp Mariposa provides a safe, welcoming community where they discover they are not alone. Through overnight camps, teen programming, family events and ongoing mentorship, participants build trusted relationships, develop healthy coping skills and strengthen resilience.

Camp Mariposa's commitment to long-term support allows youth to return throughout the year, growing alongside peers who understand their experiences and caring mentors who continue to show up.

Race/Ethnicity



Gender



47
Unique campers served

35
Families supported

202
Camp experiences

100%
Understand the dangers of drug & alcohol use

From Camper to Counselor

For more than three years, one young camper came to Camp Mariposa carrying a story he wasn't ready to tell. Like many of our campers, he knew what it meant to love someone struggling with substance use, and he knew how heavy that could feel.

This year, he returned in a new role: Junior Counselor. The boy who once needed support became a role model for younger campers, showing leadership, compassion and confidence all weekend long. Then, around the campfire, he did something he had never done before. He read his letter out loud, sharing his story with courage and honesty.

The circle of support that once held him is now his to pass on.

OMAP

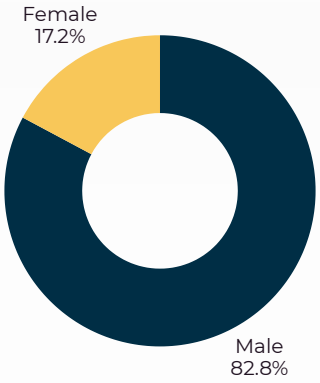
Operation Military Assistance Program

The Operation Military Assistance Program (OMAP) at JFCS of the Suncoast provides critical support to low-income veterans and their families across Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, and Lee counties. Designed to prevent and resolve homelessness, OMAP offers comprehensive case management, financial assistance, and employment support to help veterans secure and maintain stable, permanent housing. With a compassionate, client-centered approach, the program empowers veterans to overcome barriers, achieve long-term self-sufficiency, and successfully reintegrate into their communities, ensuring that those who served our nation have the stability and resources needed to build a brighter future.

510
Household members served

378
Veterans served

Gender



119
Veterans housed

4
Achieved homeownership

96%
Client satisfaction with services provided

A Veteran's Path Back to Stability

After serving his country, a local veteran never imagined he would one day face losing his home. A financial setback left him struggling to keep up with housing costs and uncertain about what would come next.

Through OMAP, JFCS stepped in with financial assistance and individualized case management to help stabilize his housing while addressing the challenges that put him at risk of homelessness. With a safe place to live, he could focus on rebuilding his financial independence and moving forward.

Today, he is stably housed and better equipped to support himself.

For this veteran, OMAP provided more than a roof over his head. It provided the stability he needed to regain his independence and begin again.



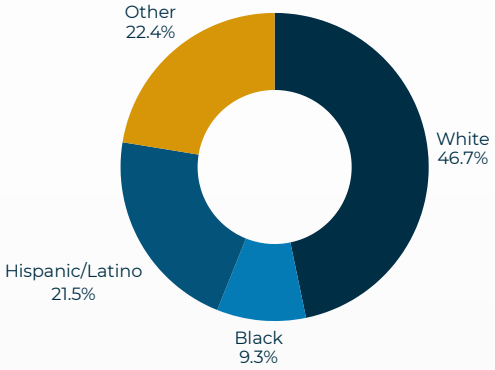


CYRS

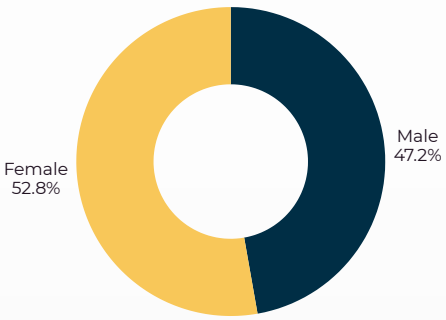
Community Youth Response Services

The Community Youth Response Services (CYRS) program provides free, short-term mental health support to Sarasota County youth ages 9–17 who are experiencing high levels of distress but do not require emergency crisis intervention. Designed to fill a critical gap in youth mental health services, CYRS offers up to 90 days of individualized counseling, family support, and case management to help stabilize youth and their families during challenging times. Referrals come from schools, law enforcement, crisis hotlines, and the families themselves. With flexible in-person and telehealth options, CYRS ensures that youth and their families receive timely, compassionate, and accessible care.

Race/Ethnicity



Gender



146
Clients served

1291
Sessions

68%
had a reduction in depression and/or anxiety scores

100%
satisfied with the services provided by the program

Finding Her Way Back

When a 15-year-old girl was referred to CYRS, she had stopped going to school and pulled away from the people around her. At first, she refused to take part in counseling at all. Her counselor stayed patient and consistent, and little by little she began to open up and engage.

When her CYRS services ended, she and her parents chose to keep going together through JFCS Family Counseling. There, the whole family made remarkable strides. They learned to communicate more openly, respond to one another with care, and rediscover a sense of closeness and even playfulness. By the end, her parents saw a daughter with new confidence, self-awareness and a voice of her own.

They still face challenges, but today they face them together, with a stronger relationship and a better understanding of one another.

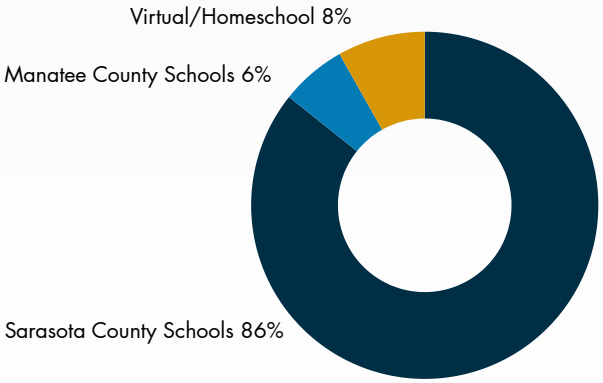
VIBE

Real Life, Real Skills

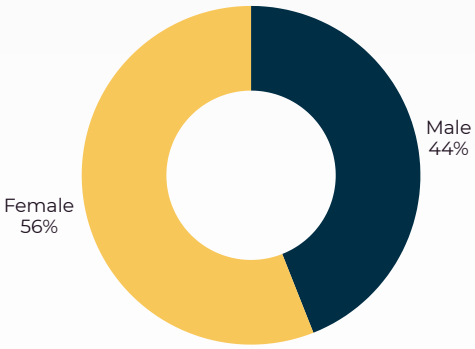
Vibe is a new JFCS program created to help high school students in Sarasota, Manatee and Charlotte counties navigate real-life challenges, from relationships and money to preparing for life after high school.

Serving students in grades 9–12, Vibe combines small-group, skill-based workshops with one-on-one support and community partnerships. The program responds to growing concerns facing local youth, including social isolation, mental health challenges and declining communication and coping skills, while helping students build stronger relationships, practical life skills and confidence in what comes next.

Schools



Gender



49
Total youth served

27
Female

22
Male

Turning a Dream into a Plan

When Wes first joined the Vibe program, he was quiet and hesitant to engage. As the program progressed, that began to change.

A personality assessment helped Wes recognize his strengths and better understand what made him unique. When he shared his dream of playing professional football, Vibe helped him look beyond the dream and ask an important question: What will it take to get there?

With guidance, Wes began breaking his goal into achievable steps, setting timelines and identifying the actions required along the way. He learned that having a goal is only the beginning. Reaching it takes a plan, commitment and follow-through.

That is the impact of Vibe: helping young people recognize their potential, believe in what is possible and gain practical tools to move forward with confidence.





BSF

Building Strong Families

The Building Strong Families (BSF) Program helps working families with school-aged children remain safely housed and avoid homelessness. When a family is at risk of losing their home, early intervention can make all the difference. Through temporary assistance with rent, mortgage and transportation costs, JFCS steps in before financial hardship becomes a crisis.

Keeping a family housed protects more than a roof overhead. It gives children the stability to stay in school, maintain routines and thrive, while helping parents regain their footing and move the entire family toward a more secure future.

> **“The help we received was the difference between us having a roof over our heads today and being on the street. We were days away from eviction. ”**
>
> — Building Strong Families Client

166
Households served

758
People served

100%
Avoided a disruptive school move

Keeping a Family Together Through a Difficult Season

When a parent faced a serious medical challenge, the family’s financial stability quickly unraveled. With income disrupted and rent falling behind, the family risked losing their home. For their child, that could have meant leaving behind friends, teachers, and the familiar routines that made life feel safe.

JFCS Building Strong Families provided temporary financial assistance and case management, helping the family stay housed while the parent focused on recovery and finding a path forward. With support and time to regain their footing, the family stabilized their finances and remained in their home. Their child stayed in the same school, surrounded by familiar faces and the security of a community they knew.

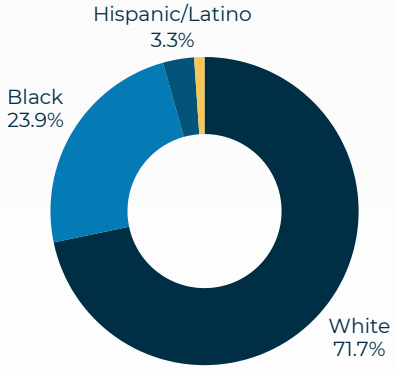
JFCS helped turn a family crisis into an opportunity to recover, rebuild, and move forward together.

IGNITE FORGE

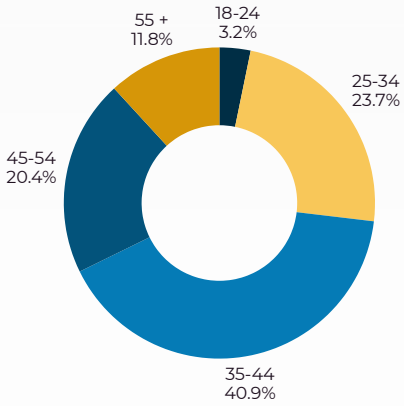
Fatherhood Program

The Ignite Forge Fatherhood Program challenges men to connect with purpose in the relationships that matter most, while filling an important gap by providing dedicated support for fathers and father figures. Over 12 weeks, participants strengthen relationships with the children in their lives, rebuild trust and develop healthier connections with family, friends and coworkers. Through personalized coaching and group sessions, participants learn to communicate effectively, manage emotions and make intentional choices that support stronger, more stable families. With flexible participation options, Ignite gives men the tools and support to grow, lead and thrive.

Race/Ethnicity



Age



92%
Feel like they've become a better father

93
Clients served

90%
Feel like they've improved their relationships

Stronger Fathers, Stronger Families

After completing Ignite Forge Fatherhood Program, 42-year-old Alex found himself struggling with alcohol use, emotional distress and unstable housing in a Sarasota motel. In a moment of crisis, he reached out to the people he had come to trust at JFCS.

His Ignite advocate listened, stayed with him through the difficult conversation and immediately connected him with a trusted detoxification program. Alex later shared that the brotherhood, practical skills and support he received during the 12-week program had given him hope when he needed it most.

Several weeks later Alex called again. This time, the news was different. He had reconnected with one of his adult children and they were spending Sundays together watching football and rebuilding a relationship that had been lost.

Alex's story shows the lasting impact of Ignite: a father in crisis knew where to turn, received help when it mattered, and began taking meaningful steps toward recovery, stability and rebuilding his family.





JEWISH CONNECTIONS

Jewish Connections, in partnership with The Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee provides compassionate care rooted in Jewish values and communal responsibility. The program addresses the social, spiritual and material needs of the Jewish community through chaplaincy visits, bereavement and caregiver support groups, and spiritual counseling for those facing illness, grief or isolation.

The Jewish Financial Assistance Program helps individuals and families facing short-term financial hardship, while specialized services ensure local Holocaust survivors receive the benefits and care they deserve. From leading Shabbat and holiday services to organizing wellness and social programs, Jewish Connections nurtures hope, dignity and belonging across every stage of life.

> **"JFCS reminded me that community is about more than being together. It's about feeling understood, sharing traditions, and knowing there are people who care."**
>
> — Jewish Connections Client

160
Jewish clients served

79
Holocaust survivors served

20
Clients received financial assistance

What Matters Most

For one Jewish Connections client working his way out of homelessness, nearly everything he still owned was in a storage unit. Inside were treasures that could never be replaced: keepsakes that had belonged to his late mother.

When he fell behind on the fees, those belongings were set to be sold at auction that Friday. Just in time, JFCS stepped in to cover his storage costs, stopping the auction and keeping his mother's memories safe.

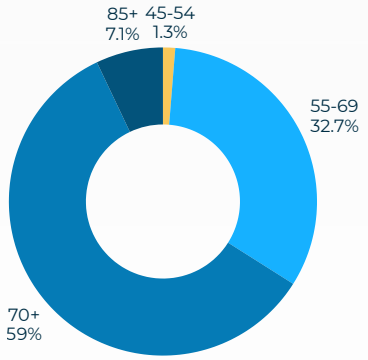
With that weight lifted, he could put his energy back where it belonged: searching for work and a permanent place to call home.

Sometimes the help that matters most isn't measured in dollars, but in the difference it makes in someone's life.

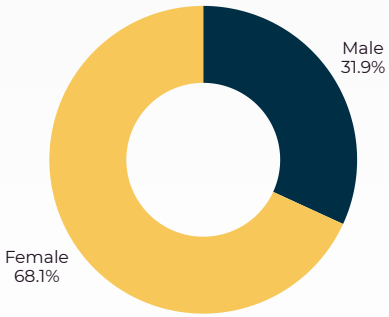
AGING SERVICES

Aging Services at JFCS of the Suncoast empowers older adults and their families to navigate the challenges of aging with dignity, respect, and purpose. Since 1998, the program has been a cornerstone of support for seniors in Sarasota County, particularly those affected by Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or other cognitive impairments, as well as their caregivers. Through weekly group therapy, caregiver support groups, individual counseling, and enriching programs like It's So Much More Than Lunch, JFCS helps reduce isolation, address depression and anxiety, and promote emotional and social well-being. Led by mental health professionals, Aging Services provides compassionate care, meaningful connections, and practical tools that foster resilience, purpose, and joy in later life.

Age Group



Gender



219
Clients served

100%
Reported a reduction in feelings of isolation

74%
Reported reduced symptoms of depression

A Home and a Companion

Through JFCS Aging Services, one older adult client has experienced a meaningful transformation while navigating the intersecting challenges of strained family relationships, caregiving responsibilities, and emotional distress. Through individual counseling, older adult support group participation, and caregiver support group services, she has developed healthier coping strategies, strengthened her emotional resilience, and gained the confidence to navigate caring for a close friend experiencing cognitive decline.

One of her most significant accomplishments has been rebuilding meaningful connections with her adult children, fostering healthier communication, and renewed family relationships. With continued therapeutic support and peer connection, she has experienced decreased symptoms of depression and anxiety, improved overall well-being, and a renewed sense of purpose and hope.

Her journey exemplifies the impact of JFCS's compassionate, person-centered, and integrated approach to care. .



THANK YOU

to all of our donors
and volunteers!

We appreciate you!



Contact Us

941.366.2224

info@JFCS-Cares.org

2688 Fruitville Rd.
Sarasota, FL 34237

JFCS-Cares.org

Support our mission by doubling your donation when you donate through the Flanzer Trust.

DONATE ♥

Follow Us