

Local

JFGT honored with Excellence in Organizational Operations Award



Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo (JFGT) received the Excellence in Organizational Operations Award from the Greater Toledo Community Foundation at its 2023 Northwest Ohio Nonprofit Excellence Awards in late October. The annual event was sponsored by The Andersons, The Blade, Greater Toledo Community Foundation, and The Center for Non-profit Resources. Huge thanks to the JFGT team for making this recognition possible and for their outstanding work every day. Thanks also to our lay leaders for their incredible support, including JFGT President Mark Greenblatt and Toledo Jewish Community Foundation (TJCF) Chair Matt Kripke. The award includes \$8,500 in unrestricted grant funds to support JFGT's mission.



Scan the QR code (or visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hYHWLUMYxoto) to watch a video of JFGT CEO Stephen Rothschild's acceptance speech at The Pinnacle in Maumee.



Happy Tears

By Lauren Sachs

Lauren holds a bachelor's degree in English and Psychology, and a Master's Degree in Social Work, from the University of Michigan. After completing advanced clinical training at Yale University, Lauren worked as a therapist and consultant in a variety of settings. During her time in Jewish Toledo, Lauren has received the Harry Levison Young Leadership Award and the Shining Light Award, and is currently a board member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo. Lauren is also the author of a forthcoming book about her late husband, his joyful approach to life and work as an oncologist, and how examining his life helped her better cope with her grief.



The chill in the air, an overcast sky, and the contrasting color of the leaves are all one needs to recognize that the seasons have started to shift in the Midwest. As the seasons evolve and I begin to anticipate the long winter to come, I cannot help but think of all the change that has occurred in my life since my husband died over three years ago. While we all know that time constantly marches forward, we are sometimes still caught unawares as we observe the subtle and not so subtle shifts that life brings. At times, I have been resistant to the natural progression of life, wanting

to hold on to the status quo either out of a desire for comfort or because the shifts have felt out of place and painful, as in the case of my loss. Over time, I have found that accepting the natural flux makes it easier to tolerate and also allows for a more conscious preparation for all it portends.

When one thinks of making preparations for the change in seasons, common sense helps guide our planning. We know that stocking up on cold weather essentials like cozy socks, spare gloves, and warm layers will make us more comfortable and secure as temperatures dip below freezing. Gathering these provisions may save us time, make things a bit more convenient, and also help us feel psychologically prepared once the true chill of winter sets in. Likewise, as I began to work on healing from my loss, I learned that planning for the more challenging days of remembrance on the calendar helped me better cope with the emotional toll I would inevitably face. Still, gearing up emotionally looks quite different than getting ready for a change in the weather. I have found that self-care is one of the best antidotes to the painful feelings which naturally arise at these times. Though acts of self-care can be as varied as taking a walk, practicing yoga, talking to a friend, staying well-hydrated and nourished, or even getting a massage, they all share the common thread of self-nurturance.

Early in the wake of my loss, even as I leaned into these self-care practices, I discovered that the sense of comfort I was seeking was accompanied by another unwelcome feeling: guilt. Though I knew I had been through an incredibly arduous experience, it was hard for me to engage in self-care without sensing that I was doing something wrong. Somehow, I felt guilty that I got to move forward in my life while my husband was no longer here to enjoy the fruits of his labors. Through exploring these guilty feelings with my therapist and in my support group, I eventually came to realize that nurturing myself was healthy for me and that guilt was a very common emotion experienced by those who have been widowed. By giving myself permission to truly take care of myself, not only could I manage the pain of my loss more readily, but I also found I could be more present for my daughters and model positive and proactive coping skills.

Through acknowledging the inevitability of change and leaning into the transitions rather than pushing them away, I have learned to accept my past, assuage my guilt, and develop a sense of optimism about my future. I will continue to look forward with hope and a sense of grace for myself, knowing that I can handle whatever life throws my way with a bit of self-compassion and understanding.



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