

# Bulletin

NCJW<sup>SM</sup>

Vol. 25, No. 4  
May-June, 2020  
[www.ncjwgrs.org](http://www.ncjwgrs.org)

 [facebook.com/ncjwgrs](https://facebook.com/ncjwgrs)

National Council of Jewish Women  
Greater Rochester Section



## What is NCJW's Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote 2020 campaign?

Since our founding, NCJW has worked to promote voting rights by advocating for women's suffrage, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Motor Voter Act, and beyond. NCJW believes that our vote is our voice, and our democracy is at its strongest when every voice is heard. In that spirit, the Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote 2020 campaign (PTV 2020) provides NCJW advocates the tools they need to make a meaningful difference in the 2020 election from beginning to end, including resources to hold voter registration, voter education, and Get Out the Vote (GOTV) events, as well as provide sections with a leadership development opportunity via a PTV 2020 captain cohort.

The NCJW national office is asking sections and action teams across the country to join the campaign and designate PTV 2020 captains to plan and execute voter engagement events. On November 3, 2020, NCJW and every participating section will be able to say that we made a measurable and meaningful impact in the 2020 election.

Sections that join the PTV 2020 campaign commit to two things:

- 1) Designating a PTV 2020 captain;
- 2) Holding at least two voter engagement events leading up to the 2020 election.

NCJW national has in-depth guides for planning a voter registration event, candidate forum, and voter Shabbat dinner. However, your section is not limited to these events. Your advocates can phone bank, educate on the issues, work on a ballot initiative, advocate for voting reforms, and more. Once a section completes the process of designating a PTV 2020 captain, it has officially joined the campaign.

There are many ways to infuse voter engagement into every single event your section holds between now and the 2020 election. This is true even if your section decides not to join the PTV 2020 campaign. Here are some ideas:

- Bring voter registration forms (or a laptop for online voter registration) and ask people to fill them out at every event;
- Call every person who attended your section's events in the past year to encourage them to vote in November 2020;
- Ask every section member to commit to talking to three people in their network about the importance of voting.

For more information, visit [ncjw.org/act/action-resources/promote-the-vote-protect-the-vote/](https://ncjw.org/act/action-resources/promote-the-vote-protect-the-vote/)

**NCJW,GRS  
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2019 - 2020**

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Debi Brenner

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Melissa Pheterson  
Terri Richardson  
Pauline Rutberg  
Cathy Schneider  
Kathye Simon  
Wendy Strauss  
Randi Fox Tabb  
Stacey Trien

**Change of  
address?**

If you have a  
change or correction  
of address,  
please contact  
**Brenda Comisar**  
at  
**BrendaRComisar@  
gmail.com**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Challenging times, moments that test us, media blitzing, daily reminders that today is a different day. I constantly say to myself: "What can I do today?" and try not to think of all the things I can't do. I've used this mantra before when dealing with health issues and life transitions. In the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) mutual aid movement, they talk about "one day at a time"—that resonates now for many people.

While we may not know what the future looks like, we do have control of how we want to navigate this period of COVID-19. It is a time to order our world, focusing on who is important and what is most important. Some of our community members were struggling with emotional, mental and behavioral health issues before this virus took hold of our world. The added stressors and uncertainties have compounded their concerns. Others have experienced sadness and grief for loved ones who have passed away and for loss of work, school, finances, routine, recreation and community engagement activities. The lack of physical interaction, hugs and touch of friends and family takes a toll. Physical contact is profoundly beneficial for all aspects of personal health. We are finding alternative ways to interact with one another through Zoom gatherings and social hours, writing snail mail letters and cards, increased phone calls, Facetime and texts, distancing walks, drive-by greetings and spontaneous gift giving. These acts of kindness show people a gesture of love and care. While we don't know when we will be able to shake hands or give a warm embrace or hardy pat on the back, we can show one another we are there for them.

Shavuot, the spring holiday in the Jewish faith, has become known as the Festival of the Giving of the Torah. This festival connects to Passover, as it is celebrated after the Israelites' exodus

from Egypt; they came to Mt. Sinai and received the 10 Commandments. Shavuot began as an agricultural festival marking the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer growing season. Israelites brought their harvested "first fruits" to the Temple in Jerusalem. With its agricultural roots, the holiday today celebrates the Torah, education and the values of the Jewish culture. This year the holiday runs May 28 through May 30. High school youth will have confirmation ceremonies virtually (often conducted on the eve of the holiday) to celebrate their continued commitment to Jewish studies and life. People usually stay up late to read the Torah and engage in lively discussions. Shavuot will be observed differently this year, but as we are resilient, creative people the holiday will be marked in a symbolic, meaningful way.

In many synagogues, it is customary during Shavuot to read the Book of Ruth, a powerful story of commitment and conversion of faith. Ruth proclaimed to her mother-in-law Naomi: "Do not entreat me to leave you, for wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. So may the Lord do to me and so may he continue, if anything but death separate me and you." A profound message of this story is Ruth's intimate connection with Naomi; Ruth made a vow to stay with Naomi even though Ruth was a widow and had no husband to keep them together. She honored the elder woman with loyalty and embraced her customs, faith and community.

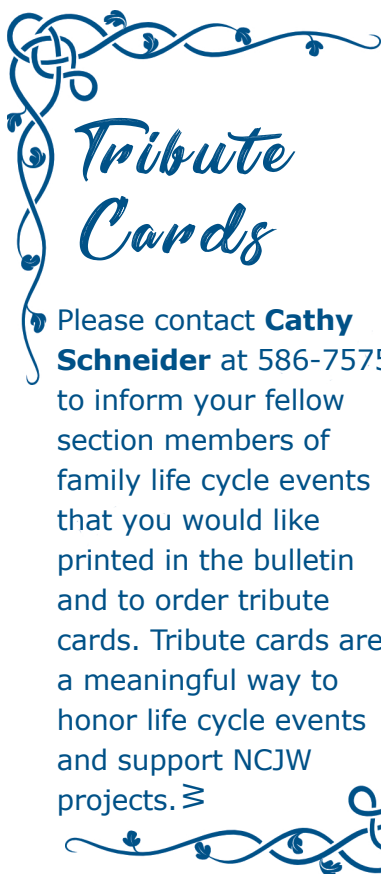
The National Council of Jewish Women is comprised of diverse people, and thus its name is not reflective of all its members. While we may have started

*continued on next page*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued

out as different from one another as Ruth and Naomi when they first met, we have grown and share a bond and connection to help take care of this world, our communities and each other. At this time, we need to glean the fields to assist our neighbors and provide basic needs, emotional support, and a virtual linking embrace to face today's challenges. A gift that is emerging is the deeper connections we have with one another during these trying times. A simple, kind gesture goes a long way to feeling appreciated and loved. Please take care. ≧

Warmest regards,  
**Jane Amstey**, President  
Janera1@yahoo.com



### *Tribute Cards*

Please contact **Cathy Schneider** at 586-7575 to inform your fellow section members of family life cycle events that you would like printed in the bulletin and to order tribute cards. Tribute cards are a meaningful way to honor life cycle events and support NCJW projects. ≧

## ACTS OF COMMUNITY KINDNESS IN CHALLENGING TIMES

During this time it is often difficult to think beyond the walls of our homes, and when we are able, even more difficult to know what to do. Never has a small gesture, kind words or a handwritten note been needed or meant so much. With that in mind, we as a group wanted to reach out to friends and families who were working every day and were also experiencing isolation from loved ones. Using gift cards generously donated to us by Wegmans earlier in the year, we performed a few small acts of kindness and love. Our dear friend **Wendy Strauss** works at St. John's Nursing Home, where NCJW-GRS members

also have loved ones living. We were able to drop off flowers to help decorate the table for the second night seder led by Wendy. In addition, we provided snacks, including protein/nut bars, chips and chocolate, for staff to enjoy during their breaks. For Jewish Senior Life, we purchased a dozen small potted plants to be used by the activity director to brighten the day of both staff and residents. If you know of any acts of kindness we could perform as a group, please let me know by emailing me at [terrilrichardson@yahoo.com](mailto:terrilrichardson@yahoo.com). ≧

**Terri Richardson**

## NCJW NATIONAL CONFERENCE CANCELLED Voting Moved to Online Platform

Due to the current pandemic, the NCJW National Convention unfortunately was cancelled. There was much deliberation on how to proceed with the aspect of issues that needed to be voted on during the conference, and it was decided that they would move to an online platform in a national online voting meeting.

Based on the size of our section's membership, we are allowed five local delegates to cast votes. The delegates for

the Greater Rochester Section are: **Jane Amstey, Ellie Rosenbloom, Brenda Comisar, Terri Richardson** and **Mollie Traub**. National arranged for delegates to have a week to complete their online ballot, ending May 17, 2020. The ballot contains the new slates for NCJW officers and board of directors for 2020-2023, bylaws and resolutions. This convention is a wonderful opportunity to bring people together and we hope to be able to gather next year. ≧

# 2019-2020 ANNUAL REVIEW

This year we celebrated our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary as the Greater Rochester Section of the National Council of Jewish Women! What a milestone! Throughout the year our members were busy, involved in many projects. Unfortunately, we were not able to gather for our annual meeting at the beginning of May to share a meal, celebrate our achievements, honor our Hannah G. Solomon award recipient, Dr. Daniel Ari Mendelsohn, and Woman of the Year, **Nancy Gabrielsen-Tinnes**. Both Dr. Mendelsohn and Nancy will be honored at our recognition brunch next April 25, 2021 (we have a full year to celebrate them and their commitment to our community). In this bulletin issue, we are highlighting our organization's past year. Even with physical distancing we continue to make a difference in our community.

This year's highlights:

- The 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on September 15, 2019, brought 200+ members together. The keynote speaker was Catherine Cerulli, JD, PhD, an advocate for women and marginalized people.
- Greater Rochester Section membership continues to grow and is now 400+ members strong!
- The Consider College group continues to provide assistance to former mentees by providing books for their young children.
- Books, Mommy and Me may have found a new home, partnering with Jewish Family Services. This is something we will move forward with in the coming year.
- Advocacy efforts have been made throughout the year – writing letters, sending postcards, making phone calls and paying visits to elected officials -- on important topics, including reproductive justice, voter registration and education.
- The Take Action Night Event, co-sponsored with Planned Parenthood of Central and Western NY, brought more than 100 attendees on January 21, 2020, to promote the Pro-Truth Campaign to educate communities about the dangerous and deceptive tactics of so-called "crisis pregnancy centers" (fake clinics).
- Our second annual Spread the Love campaign was fulfilled on February 2, 2020, with our 5<sup>th</sup> Street Block Club partners. We collected and packed 100 drawstring bags with warm gloves, mittens, hats, sock, and candy. They were distributed on February 9 to families in northeast Rochester.
- The P.A.D. Project has been continually active with many groups hosting parties throughout the year. When COVID-19 arrived and the many P.A.D. parties had to be cancelled, the team found safe, creative ways to continue to provide women essential feminine product kits.
- Throughout this year, our section has supported local groups in providing basic needs, such as diapers for Keep Our Promise families, food for Mary's Place Refugee Outreach and the Brighton Food Cupboard, and other efforts of Jewish Family Services.
- In March, outreach calls were made to our members who don't use email. We wanted to let them know our

organization is thinking about them and make sure they are up to date with what is happening and how our community can assist if they have needs.

As our Board of Directors transitions at the end of June 2020, deepest thanks and appreciation go to all the efforts of **Soralee Cook, Stacey Trien** and **Debi Brenner** for their commitment to our Greater Rochester Section. Your work, input and support for our organization have been stellar! You will be missed on the board, yet we know you will stay connected with our organization. ☹



MARY'S PLACE  
REFUGEE OUTREACH  
BLOSSOM ON NEW GROUND

*A welcoming  
community for  
refugee  
empowerment*

## HELP NEEDED

**Jennifer Loviglio**, NCJW-GRS recording secretary, volunteers at Mary's Place Refugee Outreach. She has brought to our attention that, in this time of crisis, the need for Mary's Place to serve its refugee and immigrant clients is critical. If you are inclined or able to help, please see the following links to an Amazon Wish List and to Mary's Place for monetary donations: [marysplaceoutreach.org](http://marysplaceoutreach.org) and [https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/39KXVD8SME3B9?ref\\_=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/39KXVD8SME3B9?ref_=wl_share)

Thank you for your generosity! ☹

## HANNAH G / WOMAN OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION BRUNCH RESCHEDULED

Although we cannot meet this year, plans are underway for a fabulous recognition brunch in 2021! Please mark your calendar for Sunday, April 25, 2021, when we will celebrate our honorees at a brunch at Irondequoit Country Club. The recipient of the Hannah G. Solomon Award is Dr. Daniel Ari Mendelson, Konar Family Professor of Geriatrics & Palliative Medicine in the Division of Geriatrics and Aging at the University of Rochester and Associate Chief of Medicine & Co-Director of the Geriatric Fracture Center at Highland Hospital. Our Woman of the Year Award will be presented to **Nancy Gabrielsen-Tinnes.** ≧



A FAITH IN THE FUTURE.  
A BELIEF IN ACTION.®

## VIRTUAL VIRTUOSITY

With all our spring P.A.D. parties cancelled or postponed because of COVID-19, the P.A.D. Project community thought there had to be a way to continue helping our Rochester neighbors while staying out of harm's way.

We came up with the idea of having a "Virtual Pad Party." NCJW-GRS members were invited to visit our special Amazon wish list, order a package or two of pads, liners or tampons and have them sent to **Soralee Cook's** house.

After receiving many boxes, **Gina Horowitz** and Soralee, both masked and gloved, counted everything and put 25 kits' worth of supplies into individual clear trash bags. These were distributed to volunteer assemblers, and once completed, delivered to agencies that work with women in need.

We want to say a big, sincere thank you to all who participated! With your generosity, we were able to assemble 450 kits.

The following agencies were happy to receive them: Baden Street Settlement, Charles Settlement, Mary's Place Refugee Outreach, YWCA, Cameron Community Ministries, Catholic Family Center, Brighton Food Cupboard, Veterans Service Agency, Salvation Army's Hope House, Mothers in Need of Others, Ibero-American Action League, Center for Youth and Community Lutheran Ministry, Inc.

Thank you to volunteer assemblers: **Vancy Boyar, Linda Bice, Lynda Bowen, Linda Bartlett, Nancy Tinnes, Lisa Waldman, Lisa Waltzer, Arlene Schenker, Barbara Grosh, Lisa Scott, Erin Egloff, Ronny and Alan Frishman, Dawn Wisset, Shoshana Germanow, Ellie Rosenbloom, Susan Hellman, Julie Holzbach** and **Nancy LeVant.**

Special thanks to **Terri Richardson** for setting up the Amazon Wish List and to **Dawn Wisset** for help with the blasts. ≧

**Gina Horowitz**

## WELCOME TO OUR NEW 2019-2020 MEMBERS

Tunya Griffin  
Ginny Hronek  
Greg Mendelsohn  
Ann Leonard  
Lorri Diggory  
Keri Berger  
Peter Stein  
Kevin McGowan  
Daan Braveman  
Jeremy Wolk  
Joy Ryen Plotnik

Ed Fenster  
Michael Rosenbloom  
Cecelia Horwitz  
Carol Steron  
Nancy Haney  
Lynda Bowen  
Ann Vella  
Lynn Gatto  
June Jefferson  
Rabbi Debbi Till  
Jenny Rosen

LeeAnn Riesenberger  
Cheryl Andler  
Hava Holzhauer  
Cathy Harris  
Phyllis and Marty Korn  
Leslie Newman  
Jane Beck  
Linda Rubens  
Gail Drew  
Sarah Abbamonte

# NCJW,GRS 2020-2022 SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

## Executive Board

1. President- **Jane Amstey** (term ends 2021)
2. President-elect- **Lisa Waltzer**
3. Treasurer- **Ellie Rosenbloom** (term ends 2021)
4. VP Administration- **Lisa Waltzer** (term ends 2021)
5. VP Membership- **Nancy Gabrielsen-Tinnes**
6. Financial Secretary- **Brenda Comisar** (term ends 2021)
7. Recording Secretary- **Wendy Strauss**
8. Immediate Past President- **Amy Stein**

## HONORARY BOARD MEMBER

**Gloria Kaplan**

## DIRECTORS (term ending 2022)

**Donna Cohen**  
**Cindy Finestone**  
**Cindy Hirschberg**  
**Emily Levin**  
**Lisa Maas Vangellow**  
**Karen MacArthur**  
**Leslie Newman**  
**Melissa Pheterson**  
**Terri Richardson**

## DIRECTORS (term ending June 2021)

**Rikki Brodsky**  
**Linda Bice**  
**Marilyn Fenster**  
**Sandra Frankel**  
**Barbara Grosh**  
**Jennifer Loviglio**  
**Pauline Rutberg**  
**Cathy Schneider**  
**Kathye Simon**  
**Wendy Strauss**  
**Randi Fox Tabb**

## Nominating Committee for 2020-2022 Slate

**Amy Stein**, chair  
**Soralee Cook and Vancy Boyar**, previous co-chairs, nonvoting  
**Jane Amstey**  
**Cindy Finestone**  
**Ellie Rosenbloom**  
**Michele Ruda**  
**Pauline Rutberg**

# MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

We need your voice and financial support more than ever. Please consider renewing your membership now for July 2020 through June 2021. With your renewal, you join more than 400 local members who, inspired by Jewish values, turn progressive ideals into action. Through advocacy, education, and community engagement services, NCJW works on its own and in coalition with other organizations to fight for social justice and improve the lives of all people.

Renewal is easy! You have two options: You can either mail a \$36 check made out to NCJW-GRS to Ms. **Brenda Comisar** at 12 Terrain Drive, Rochester, NY 14618, or go to our website ([www.ncjwgrs.org](http://www.ncjwgrs.org)) and use your credit card to renew. Please include a note that the amount is for membership.

If you are a life member, please consider making a donation at this time. A donation of \$36 or more gives you the opportunity to provide a gift membership to anyone you choose.

These are unprecedented times and NCJW-GRS continues to impact our local community:

- We brighten the lives of the residents and staff at nursing homes with flowers and food.
- We continue to assemble and deliver feminine hygiene PAD kits to women in need.
- We assist Mary's Place Refugee Outreach Program and Keeping Our Promise.
- We continue our proud partnerships with Planned Parenthood, League of Women Voters, Brighton Food Cupboard, the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Block Club and many more wonderful organizations.
- We provide members timely information on current affairs and local and national elections.

Another wonderful benefit of your membership is the national weekly news wrap-up and NCJW call-to-action emails. Just log in to [www.ncjw.org](http://www.ncjw.org) to sign up.

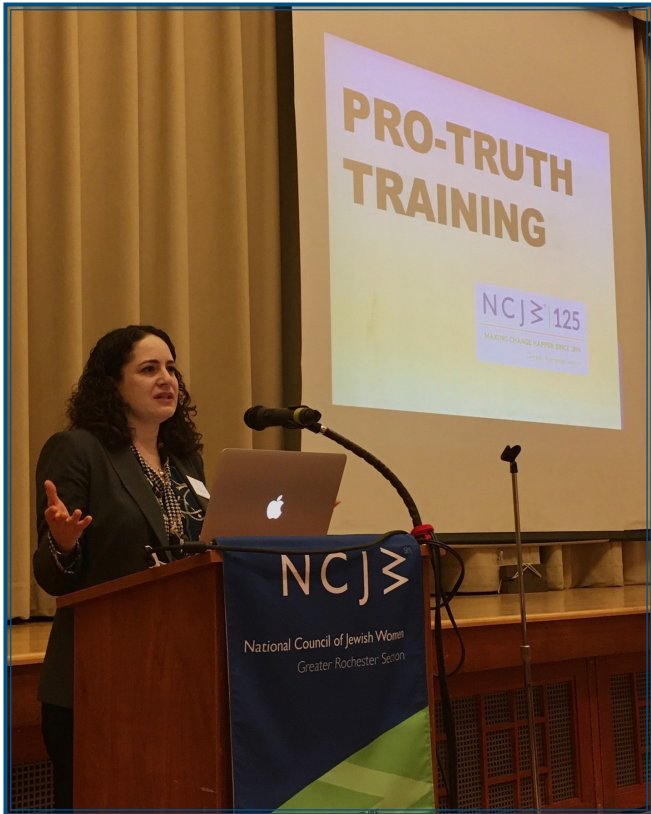
Most importantly, please let us know if you need assistance at this time by contacting our email: [info@ncjwgrs.org](mailto:info@ncjwgrs.org). We are here for you as a caring community. ☺

**Brenda R. Comisar**, Financial Secretary  
[BrendaRComisar@gmail.com](mailto:BrendaRComisar@gmail.com)

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Remember to check out our website  
for the latest NCJW-GRS news:  
[ncjwgrs.org](http://ncjwgrs.org)

# Glimpses of NCJW-GRS



*Take Action Night*



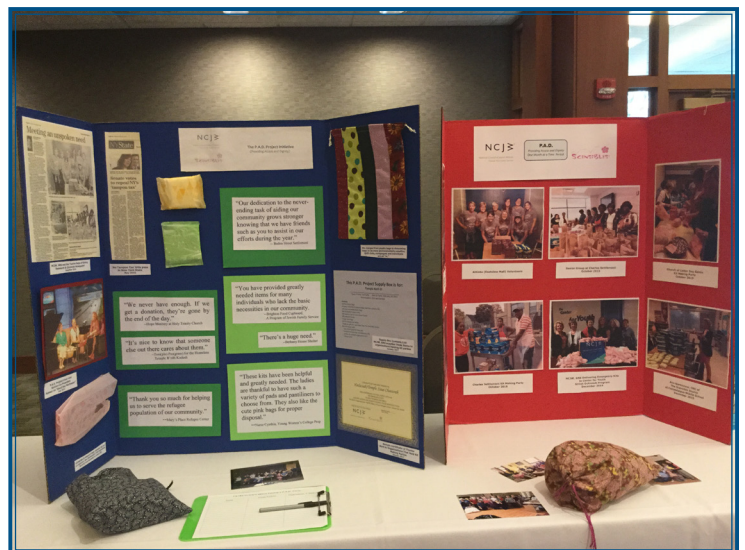
*Take Action Night*



*Anniversary Event*



*P.A.D. Project Assembly Party*





National Council of Jewish Women  
Greater Rochester Section

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OR CURRENT RESIDENT

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms.*

## **Thank you to our NCJW- GRS Bulletin Team!**

**Coordinator-- Donna Cohen  
Editor-- Marilyn Fenster  
Proofreader-- Ronny Frishman  
Layout and Design-- Amy LaGambino  
Printing-- Get Noticed with RJF  
Marketing ≡**