

Bulletin

NCJWSM

Vol. 26, No. 1
September, 2020
www.ncjwgrs.org

 facebook.com/ncjwgrs

National Council of Jewish Women
Greater Rochester Section

Have You Been Counted in the 2020 U.S. Census?

Many people have not completed their census applications. This information is imperative as census results determine how billions of federal dollars are spent to fund states and our communities. It affects how many seats in Congress each state has and determines funds for schools, highways, infrastructure, health clinics and much more. Many people are nervous about sharing their personal household information with the government. By law, under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about you, even to law enforcement agencies.

Shape the



of your community.

United States[®]
Census
2020

Because of the public health crisis, the U.S. Census Bureau has extended to September 30, 2020, the deadline for completing the census. It can be done online, by phone or by mail. For information, go to the Census Bureau website at: 2020census.gov. There are phone services to support diverse languages and an established TDD line for the deaf and hard of hearing community. See the phone extensive list online. Phone support contact in English is: (844) 330-2020.

If you have submitted your 2020 Census already, please take a moment to encourage others to do so personally in conversations and phone calls, or posts on social media.

**NCJW,GRS
Officers & Directors
2020 - 2022**

President
Jane Amstey

President-Elect
Lisa Waltzer

Treasurer
Ellie Rosenbloom

VP Administration
Lisa Waltzer

VP Membership
Nancy Gabrielsen-
Tinnes

Financial Secretary
Brenda Comisar

Recording Secretary
Wendy Strauss

*Immediate Past
President*
Amy Stein

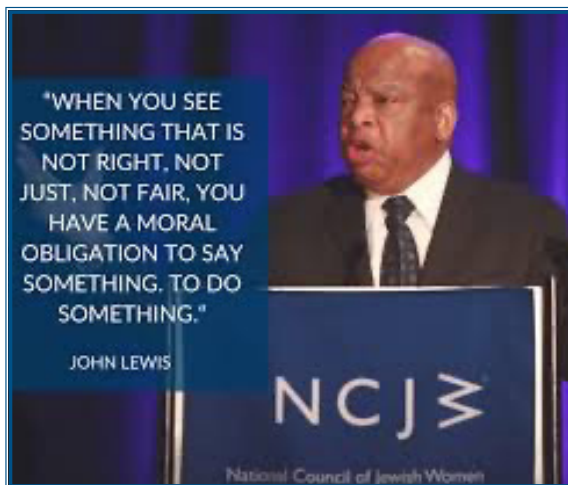
Directors
Linda Bice
Rikki Brodsky
Donna Cohen
Marilyn Fenster
Cindy Finestone
Sandra Frankel
Barbara Grosh
Cindy Hirschberg
Gloria Kaplan
(Honorary)
Emily Levin
Jennifer Loviglio
Lisa Maas Vangellow
Karen McArthur
Leslie Newman
Melissa Pheterson
Terri Richardson
Pauline Rutberg
Cathy Schneider
Kathye Simon
Randi Fox Tabb

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

During these current times, we have had to re-orient ourselves, navigate through uncharted territories and adjust to new, changing norms. We have experienced loss of loved ones, activities, work, school, traditions and more. As COVID-19 has impacted us all, so too have monumental issues of this day. The Jewish people have stood with our Black and Brown communities in addressing our country's history of slavery, its consequences and systemic racism. Now is our time to mindfully listen and reflect on our behaviors, attitudes and actions. In learning how to be thoughtful partners, we stand together and respond to hate wherever it may be.

Our country recently lost a hero, a longtime friend of the Jewish community and Israel, with the passing of Congressman John Lewis. Sheila Frank, past NCJW leader and Atlanta Section President, was a friend of Lewis's. She wrote a wonderful tribute to him in the Atlanta Jewish Times (July 27, 2020), noting their relationship over the past decades fighting for social justice: "Congressmen Lewis lived every day reaching out to anyone who passed his way. 'Black and white, straight and gay, Christian, Muslim or Jew, we are one people, one family, one house,' he repeatedly told us." In 2017, at the NCJW National Convention held in Atlanta, Lewis received NCJW's Faith in Humanity Award. "He left the podium to the music of Pharrell Williams' 'Happy' and danced into the crowd of activist women who enthusiastically joined with him," Sheila recalled. What a joyous memory for our fellow members to cherish! Congressman

Lewis left us with his final inspirations, his hopes and marching orders, which were published in the New York Times the day he was laid to rest (July 27, 2020). "Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build what we called the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself," he wrote. "Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it." He said he hoped "when historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression and war." We are grateful to Congressman Lewis's dedicated service to our country and he is an honored blessed memory.



During this election year, the Greater Rochester Section is focusing on voter education and safe and accessible voting. Everyone's vote is important, and our section's Public Affairs Committee, led by **Rikki Brodsky** and **Lisa Maas-Vangellow**, is

working hard to ensure this powerful action is secure for us all.

As things have moved from the rhythm of our previous lifestyles, this time may provide us with more moments of reflection, and the ability to act for positive change. Ultimately, we may create a beloved community where we all can feel welcomed and connected. ∑

Warm regards,
Jane Amstey

WE WANT TO MEET MEMBER NEEDS

The Greater Rochester Section is being thoughtful on how to meet our members' needs, stay connected and help members keep current on issues of importance. Our Board of Directors has been reviewing our action planning for this year and would like to hear from you about how we can best serve you. A short survey has been developed and will be sent out via email to gain your input about your concerns, your passions and how to provide the opportunities that will be most beneficial to you during this time. To those without online presence, board members will make phone calls; board members also will be checking on all our 400 members over the next few months. We want to make sure you feel connected with our NCJW,GRS community. ≧

P.A.D. PROJECT Ready . . . Set . . . Go!

Our spring PAD Party (we called it "virtual") was a big success. Without gathering in a group at any time, we were able to purchase, assemble and distribute 475 menstrual kits to 18 agencies.

With COVID-19 still preventing group activities, and the need in the community still strong, we are excited to announce that we are planning another "virtual PAD party" in the autumn.

Let's aim for 750 this time!

We will once again set up an Amazon Wish list, where you can purchase products and

#ABORTIONACCESS4ALL Digital Lobby Day

On August 12, the National Council of Jewish Women, in partnership with the Act for Women campaign and All* Above All, hosted the #AbortionAccess4All Digital Lobby Day. Participants engaged with members of Congress on social media, through lobbying visits and calls to congressional staff to advocate for the Women's Health Protection Act (WHPA, HR 2975/S 1645) and the EACH Woman Act (HR 1692/S 758).

WHPA would invalidate onerous state restrictions blocking

access to abortion while the EACH Woman Act would ensure the affordability of this care by ending political interference in public and private insurance coverage. Together, these critical bills have the potential to create a future where all can access the abortion services they need without cost barriers, delays or burdensome limitations. For information on reproductive justice, active legislation and ways to take action, go to the NCJW website: <https://www.ncjw.org/work/reproductive-healthcare-access-equity/> ≧

HELP US TURN PASSIONS INTO ACTIONS

As members of NCJW,GRS, we are a group of generous, passionate women (and men) who, when called upon, move quickly and with amazing intentions to help and advocate for women, children and families in the community. Please join me as the New Ideas and Community Impact Committee transitions and pivots into the Community Caring Committee. We will deepen our long-term relationships with the 5th Street Block Club and Keeping Our Promise, as well as explore and

respond to immediate needs as they arise in the community. We will help filter needs and focus our efforts on turning our passions into actions!

If you are interested in joining our committee efforts please email me. If you have ideas or know of programs in immediate need, please share. We look forward to adding new members to this dynamic committee! ≧

Terri Richardson
terrilrichardson@yahoo.com

send them to **Soralee Cook's** house.

We are ready for you to sign up for one of two jobs:

Assemblers: These individuals will receive enough pads, tampons and liners to assemble one or two batches (25 kits per batch).

Deliverers: These volunteers will deliver completed batches to agencies that need them. This can be done with a minimum of contact.

To sign up for one of these jobs, please email me. ≧

Gina Horowitz
ginarose@rochester.rr.com

PRO-TRUTH UPDATE

As you may remember, on a very stormy, winter January evening, over 100 people (our members and concerned community members and elected officials) came to Temple B'rith Kodesh for Take Action Night, a monthly event sponsored by Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York (PPCWNY). NCJW,GRS was honored to partner with PPCWNY for this very successful and informative evening.

We learned about the Pro-Truth Campaign and were educated on the deceptive and dangerous tactics that "fake clinics" are using to lure in vulnerable women.

One of the items discussed at this event was the Limited Service Pregnancy Center

(LSPC) Study Bill. We received excellent news that this bill has passed the assembly and has gone to the Senate's Women's Committee. As a refresher, here is some basic information about the bill and why it matters:

What is the LSPC Study Bill?

Bills S6311 and A8212 call on the NYS Commissioner of Health to appoint a nine-person task force to conduct a study on unmet health and resource needs of pregnant people in New York. The study will also collect information to analyze what impact LSPCs have on the ability to obtain accurate, non-coercive health care information and timely access to a comprehensive range of reproductive and sexual health services.

It is essential for the State of New York to know how LSPCs impact pregnant people's options and health care. It's time for transparency from all LSPCs in New York. We require information and accountability from the places that claim to provide care to pregnant people. We need to know how LSPCs' tactics are impacting the health of pregnant people in New York, and this bill is an important first step.

We will keep advocating for the reproductive rights of ALL women and will do our best to keep you informed of the progress of this important bill. ≧

Rikki Brodsky and Lisa Vangellow

Co-Chairs, Public Affairs Committee

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Please watch your mailbox for a letter asking for your NCJW,GRS 2020-2021 membership renewal.

Your NCJW membership helps us continue our important work, both locally and nationally. We are proud that we continue to grow, and our numbers give us power. 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.

Even during these unprecedented times, NCJW,GRS continues to impact our local community

with unique programs and partnerships. These include providing flowers and food to the residents and staff at nursing homes, delivering feminine hygiene PAD kits to women in need, and assisting Mary's Place Refugee Outreach and Keeping Our Promise. We are continuing our proud partnerships with Planned Parenthood, the League of Women Voters, the Brighton Food Cupboard, the 5th Street Block Club, and many more wonderful organizations. Also vital is providing members with timely information on current affairs and local and national elections.

It is more important than ever that our voices be heard. We

look forward to keeping your name on our membership list and seeing you at NCJW,GRS (virtual for now) events.

If you are a life member, please consider making a donation; a donation of \$36 or more gives you the opportunity to provide a gift membership to a person of your choice.

Please send your check for \$36, made out to NCJW,GRS, to 12 Terrain Drive, Rochester, NY 14618, or renew online at www.ncjwgrs.org/membership/ ≧

Thank you!

Brenda Comisar
Financial Secretary

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

What has NCJW,GRS done to date?

- Members of the Public Affairs Committee had a productive virtual meeting with Amy Grower, administrative assistant to County Executive Adam Bello. The committee has several action items, including sending statements to the Monroe County Legislature to be read aloud at their next meeting. The statements would focus on the importance of providing access, education and reasonable accommodations for early voting. The Public Affairs Committee will also be scheduling a meeting with the two county election commissioners.
- Members of the Public Affairs Committee met virtually with Congressman Joe Morelle to advocate for our position to have safe and accessible elections. Rep. Morelle completely supports all of the #VoteSafe goals and its mission. The consensus is that it is unlikely at the federal level to have much success in passing legislation to provide state funding that is needed.
- In partnership with the League of Women Voters to educate the community, a Zoom webinar took place on May 27 on the June primary elections. The Public Affairs Committee

will continue to work with the LWV to enhance our common interests for the November elections. We are working under the assumption that the pandemic will still be a factor in voting.

- Since information is fluid and facts change daily, the committee will disseminate a bi-weekly communication of what we know is available. When this is received, it is CRITICAL that section members forward to their friends and personal network in the greater Rochester community. All that is needed is that individuals support our mission and our progressive ideals.

What can YOU do TODAY?

- Dispel myths and rumors around voting. Communicate the truth:
 - Mail in ballots are safe and secure
 - Early voting IS available in New York State. The dates for early voting are October 24 through November 1. Early voting polling locations are different from Election Day in-person voting locations. AND, there are considerably fewer polling locations. IT IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT TO KNOW WHERE THESE EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS ARE – ANY REGISTERED VOTER CAN VOTE EARLY AT ANY OF THESE LOCATIONS.

- If you are able and feel safe, volunteer to be a poll worker. There is a shortage of willing and qualified poll workers. Contact either the Monroe County Board of Elections or your local town party for more information.
- Visit ncjw.org, Promote the Vote, Protect the Vote for further resources on how you can be a helpful advocate from the comfort of your home.

How can New Yorkers insist on safer elections in November?

- Send a letter to Gov. Andrew Cuomo and request the right to NO-EXCUSE voting with an absentee ballot. Here is a sample letter for you to personalize and mail: <https://ncjwgrs.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=dcfc357535d6a53faa21e817b&id=0ebf0ca96b&e=88b42b4045>
- Letters can be mailed to:
The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of the State of New York
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

YOUR VOTE IS YOUR VOICE - Remember #votesafe ☞

Thank you!
Rikki Brodsky and **Lisa Vangellow**
Public Affairs Committee Co-Chairs





**P.O. Box 92444
Rochester, NY 14692**

TIME VALUE



OR CURRENT RESIDENT

RECLAIM OUR VOTE

Women's Philanthropy at the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester is teaming up with the Jewish Community Relations Council and the Center for Common Ground to encourage all eligible people to register and vote in the 2020 general election.

Reclaim Our Vote is a non-partisan initiative by the Center for Common Ground that was launched in 2018 because of concerns related to voting access. Volunteers for the 2020 election cycle will target the following six states: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina and Texas. Volunteers will receive training on how to phone bank using site-specific scripts and provide potential voters with the tools they need to register to vote or check their status if they are already registered.

This initiative has the potential to significantly impact these states and we hope you will join us to ensure all voices are heard!

We are in the process of finalizing training sessions and will share those dates as soon as they are confirmed. For more information, please contact Gitana Mirochnik at 585-469-0521 or Sarah Walters at 860-690-4821.

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, and I look forward to working together with you. ♫

Ruth Sklarsky

President, Women's Philanthropy
Executive Council at Jewish Federation