



## A collection of legacy stories

Dear Friends,

This March marks two years since the onset of the Pandemic. For many, it has been a challenging time, as well as a time of reflection on what the future will bring. Personally, I have been able to find fulfillment in time spent with my family and in my contributions to the betterment of our community.

I have always known the vital role that Jewish Family and Child Service plays in our community. I am extremely proud of how the agency, from the board to volunteers and staff, has adjusted to the new “normal” and risen to meet the ever-changing challenges faced by our clients. The gratitude from clients is overwhelming and, at times, very emotional. It is the generosity of our donors that enables JF&CS to constantly strive for continued excellence and to provide support for our most vulnerable.

I want to take this opportunity to remind you how meaningful it is to leave a legacy to support a cause that is important to you. Your gift makes a lasting impact in perpetuity, but you can begin making a difference now. By setting up an endowment in your lifetime, not only will you see the immediate impact of your gift, you will also be contributing to the long-term financial sustainability of the agency. The GWLS donors featured in this report made the decision to set up endowments, and you will read why this was important to them.

It is with pride that I, too, continue volunteering and contributing to the sustainability of JF&CS. Please join me as I look forward to 2022 being the start of healing, good health and prosperity.

Warmest regards,  
Richard Cummings



### Gordon S. Wolfe

Those who knew Gordon, speak of him with great admiration and respect. Gordy, as he was fondly called, was a man of passion – passion for his family, camp, JF&CS and for the community in which he lived.

Gordy met his wife Linda at Camp Ogama during the summer of 1956. Little did Linda know at the time, that she would be spending the next 24 summers at camp, the last eleven of which were at Camp Wabikon which they owned and operated from 1969 – 1980. They were married in June of 1959 and were blessed with 3 wonderful children – Deborah, Michael and Carrie. Gordy was a devoted husband, father and grandfather.

In 1981, Gordy was hired as Executive Director of Jewish Family & Child Service. It was under his leadership that JF&CS was able to usher in an era of expansion, opening new offices and creating innovative programs across the GTA.

Gordy was a visionary and brought to the agency new and controversial programs that targeted some of the most vulnerable members of the community – abused woman and children. In 1984, JF&CS implemented Woman Abuse Services and in 1985, a Child Abuse Prevention Program. In addition to these programs, JF&CS expanded to York Region and offered a Jewish Hospice Program among other programs.

In the 2001/2002 JF&CS Annual Report, Gordy wrote “Our tradition teaches that the measure of a community is how the community cares for its most needy members, those who are most

vulnerable. We are directed to advocate for those who may be unable to advocate for themselves. When a need is identified, we are compelled to respond. Our tradition does not permit us to stand idly by. These teachings and values are embodied in the services and mission of Jewish Family & Child Service”.

What better way to honour Gordy than to establish the Gordon S. Wolfe Legacy Society in his memory.

[Click here](#) to read more.



# Bobby Cherniak

## *Remembering a Man at Peace in a Canoe*

When Bobby Cherniak understood that his health was failing, he reached out to JF&CS to discuss a camp fund for donations received in his memory. It was very important to him that children should have the opportunity to experience camp and the outdoors, and finances should not prohibit any child from doing so.

What do we know about this generous man and why this was such an appropriate gesture?

Bobby Cherniak always emphasized the importance of helping others and giving back to the community. From a very young age, living in the Jewish community of Windsor, Ontario, his family showed him the value and impact of giving back. His father, Archie, helped pioneer the first government-subsidized senior citizens' housing in Windsor and remained an active volunteer in the community. Bobby's mother, Biddy, had a huge heart and welcomed family and others for Shabbos dinners and Jewish holidays. Both were founders of Temple Bethel in Windsor. They had high expectations for their three children and gave them the tools needed to achieve their goals.

Bobby's great love for the outdoors was nurtured from an early age. He spent many years at summer camps, first as a camper at Camp Nahelu and then as a camper and staff member at Camp White Pine. He loved making

friends, participating in sports on land and in the water, and being exposed to new experiences. Bobby developed strong relationships with peers, counsellors and staff, including Joe Kronick and Gordy Wolfe, whom he admired for their social work-informed approach to camp philosophies. Joe's son Adam Kronick says about Bobby, "He was truly a legend at Camp White Pine. His dedication to helping others was always evident.

The impact he had on so many will not be forgotten." Camp was not just camp for Bobby, but rather a chance to positively impact others, learn many skills, and foster lifelong relationships within the summer camp setting.

While teaching and running a computer business, Bobby was very involved in the Jewish community. He volunteered at numerous Jewish organizations in Toronto, such as UJA and Beth Tzedec Congregation. As a volunteer in JF&CS's Big Brother program, he fostered a deep and meaningful relationship with his little brother that lasted 40 years.

While Bobby believed that religiosity depends on one's relationships with others, his spirituality also manifested itself in his love of the outdoors. This is demonstrated in his 'Canoe



Commandments.' He was at peace in a canoe out on the lake, and many family vacations were spent on camping trips or fun adventures with his wife (Sharon), two children (Rebecca and Aaron), their spouses (Noah and Sali) and three grandchildren (Ronen, Leora, and Talia). Married to Sharon for almost 40 years, they enjoyed many canoe trips together, including visits to Algonquin Park. "He was graceful in the canoe; being outdoors and in a canoe were great for his soul," Sharon adds.

Bobby had a sweet and loving soul, invigorated by nature, wisdom and relationships. His legacy lives on as one of kindness and vibrancy and reminds us not to be afraid to learn new things, make the most out of new opportunities, and always look for the good in people.

As he wished and, in his honour, the Bobby Cherniak Camp Endowment Fund was established at Jewish Family and Child Service. The generosity of the donations and the tributes accompanying them reflect the admiration and love of those who knew him.

### ***Canoe Commandments:***

1. Choose partners well and be a good partner.
2. Manage your load and value what's important.
3. Be keen to explore the new – new places, new ideas, and new experiences. But also make time for the old cherished memories, relationships, and traditions.
4. Savour life, the fine things like the arts and the seemingly simple things, like nature.
5. Always leave the campsite cleaner than it was when you arrived, and leave fresh firewood at the fire pit. Live a good life directed with values.

# Sharon List

Growing up in Toronto, life for Sharon revolved predominantly around family, friends, school, and synagogue. The people in her world lived in circumstances similar to her own. During her later school years, she developed a broader perspective of the needs of the community around her. Once she began her teaching career, she had her first experience meeting and working with social workers.

Several of Sharon's students received support from social workers, addressing the needs of those struggling with poverty, isolation, family and/or personal mental health concerns, and accessing available supports. Over the years, Sharon had worked with several agencies, professionally and as a volunteer, and knew the impact that direct service could have on the lives of students.

Through a unique opportunity working with the Psychology and Psychiatry research departments at Sunnybrook Hospital, Sharon negotiated to have a social worker provide support at the secondary school where she was assigned. An outcome of this was increased access to services for students. This prototype program was then adopted by several other agencies. Years later, through her work in York Region, Sharon had the opportunity to collaborate with the JF&CS School Social Work Program, eventually becoming the liaison between the agency and the school board.

Sharon's relationship with JF&CS continued to grow through the years. Upon retiring, she was able to donate more time to the agency and joined the Program Committee as a community volunteer. Since joining the Board of Directors, Sharon has served in a number of positions and continues to be a member of the Programs & Services, Finance and Governance Committees. She has also initiated additional committees that focus on the continuous growth and improvement of the agency.

Sharon believes that success at school is dependent on many factors. An important one is the time to consolidate the learning that has taken place each day. The best time to do so is right after the school day - with an opportunity to complete homework, review the lessons, and have conversations about what has been taught and learned. Sharon and her late husband Ralph knew that it was essential to participate in their family's daily learning, beginning with a routine of "kitchen table" homework time and ending the day with reading to their children every night.

When Ralph passed away, the family received many generous donations to JF&CS in his honour. Sharon knew how significant it was to both her and Ralph to be able to support their own children with their schooling. To the List family, it felt right to create an endowment fund to provide the same assistance for those children unable to receive it at



home. The Ralph List Family Fund was established to provide support to the Homework Club. The Homework Club is a support program offered to students who require academic support and who would benefit from one-on-one homework mentoring/tutoring with a caring volunteer.

"JF&CS is one of only a few multiservice agencies in the GTA servicing a broad community. Our community needs continue to grow. Providing a legacy gift to JF&CS will help to ensure that community needs will continue to be supported, that ongoing identification of emerging needs occurs, and that the agency will continue to respond in new and creative ways to those needs," Sharon shares. She believes that one person's contribution to society leads others to become more involved.

**JF&CS**  
JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILD  
SERVICE OF GREATER TORONTO

*Your gift will be your legacy*

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For further information about planned giving please contact  
Brenda Gurvey at 416-638-7800 x 6226 or [bgurvey@jfandcs.com](mailto:bgurvey@jfandcs.com)