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**JEWISH
BLIND &
DISABLED**

The key to independence



THE KEY

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FROM OUR CEO



Over the last few months, I have enjoyed nothing more than leaving my house to visit our developments and seeing, in person, our amazing tenants for the first time in a while. I don't use the word amazing lightly but so many of our tenants over this last

year have astounded us all.

As I walked into the garden of a development last week, I saw a tenant whose husband's life was cut unexpectedly short due to Covid at the start of the pandemic. It was our first Covid loss and it hit us all so very hard.

With smiling eyes, face not visible because of her mask, she came straight over to me and asked me for a hug. She wanted to hug me and to say thank you for everything. She wanted me to know she would never have coped without the support from Jewish Blind & Disabled and she then went on to inform me it wasn't just coping with the loss of her husband but her own health issues.

She was, and still is, recovering from major surgery. Despite these challenging times, she is still smiling, trying to come to terms with her loss and making the most of life.

Making the most of life and living life to the full is a common theme I often hear from our tenants.

The majority of our tenants are not born with a disability or sight loss. So many of them face what we often refer to as the life-changing moment from a road traffic accident to a medical diagnosis. One recently described it to me as a life-shattering bolt out of the blue.

Our tenants are well used to the challenges and curve balls that life throws and maybe that is why they have at times astounded us during this past challenging year.

It only takes a visit to one of our developments to hear and see the importance of what we do. We provide the housing and support that enables people to make the most of life, to live life to the full despite their disability.

Seeing tenants in person has been reinvigorating. So many tenants informing me they don't think they would have coped if it weren't for Jewish Blind & Disabled. The feedback has made the long working hours and stress

of the last year worthwhile. They are a much-needed reminder as to why we as a team do what we do and why we can't stop or take our foot off the gas now. We really do transform lives. As we start to come out of the pandemic, people still need our service and support.

We have some huge challenges ahead, none more so than our fundraising challenge. However, I am confident that the Trustees and staff at JBD are coming out of this pandemic stronger, bolder and more determined than ever before.

I hope you are with us every step of the way as without you, our much-needed supporters, none of this would be possible.

Thank you.

Lisa Wimborne
Chief Executive



TREVOR'S STORY



The move has made a fundamental difference to my life; it has given me a stable base that I otherwise wouldn't have had.

Having previously lived in a friend's spare room for three years, Trevor moved into Jewish Blind & Disabled's Cherry Tree Court in 2018. In 1992, when Trevor was 33 years old, he had a serious car crash which severely injured his neck and resulted in him developing atrophy in his spinal cord. The accident has caused a range of problems with his mobility, has affected his hands and legs and he has lost the ability to do any fine movements such as using a pen and he now uses a walker.

In his own words, Trevor said: "I had a really nasty accident but it could have been a lot worse - the other person had to be cut out their car. Despite having several operations on my neck over the years, the injury isn't fixable and the spinal cord dysfunction is slightly progressive. The injury to my neck has caused a whole range of problems."

Trevor discovered Jewish Blind & Disabled through his partner. He said: "the application process was really quick and easy; I think it was about three weeks between applying and moving into my flat. The help on hand was phenomenal. I had no furniture or anything for the flat and I couldn't believe how everything was taken care of and so well organised."

"The move has made a fundamental difference to my life; it has given me a stable base that I otherwise wouldn't have had. I can get on with my life and don't have to worry. I have a sense of security and know that if I ever needed help from the house managers, they would be there. As an individual, I'm totally in control of what I do on a day-to-day basis - there is a community on my doorstep which I can choose to join, but equally it is in my power to switch it off."



The last 18 months have been incredibly tough for many and unfortunately in March 2020, Trevor tested positive for Covid and was later also diagnosed with pneumonia. Only two months later he suffered a major heart attack. Jewish Blind & Disabled were there to support Trevor throughout this time, putting a range of measures in place to support him on return from hospital and aid his recovery.

Trevor has benefited hugely from our befriending scheme. Last summer, Trevor was matched with Annabelle - a student volunteer, and they have been speaking on the phone weekly ever since. They met for the first time in person in April 2021. It was coincidental that Annabelle and Trevor both share a love of literature and since they have been speaking, Annabelle has helped Trevor write his first novel.

CREATING THRIVING JEWISH COMMUNITIES

Trevor said: "I'm lucky to have pulled through after having a heart attack. It made me think about what I wanted to do...writing a book was something I always wanted to try and Annabelle came in at the right time and helped me; she inspired me to do it."

Although the last year and a half has been a hugely challenging and life-changing time, Trevor said: "when I came out of hospital, I was in a very bad place. But, it has been a really profound time for me and a huge positive of the last year has been writing my novel. I wouldn't have been able to write it without Annabelle's support and it has always been an ambition of mine. I have various conditions that have lingered since having Covid but I have managed to find my creative mojo which makes some of the pain worth it."

Annabelle said: "I remember it was the first lockdown and everyone was quite restless and didn't really know what to do with themselves. I heard about JBD's volunteering service and I thought it would be really lovely to befriend

someone and speak once or twice a week. It worked out really well because I ended up getting paired with Trevor."

All in all, Trevor said: "I am very grateful to have moved and I genuinely don't know what I would have done without Jewish Blind & Disabled over the last few years. I haven't got to worry about where I'm living and it allows me to just look after myself and get on with my life; knowing that I am in safe hands and have a secure flat to call home. The support on hand has been quite remarkable and has really helped me. It's not just about providing somewhere to live; it is so much more than that."

As life slowly starts to return to what it was pre-pandemic, Trevor is looking forward to being able to spend time with family and friends and seeing live acts. Annabelle and Trevor have agreed to continue speaking and seeing each other. In Annabelle's own words "it's developed into a lovely friendship that will last a long time - this is not going to end when lockdown ends."

A move into a Jewish Blind & Disabled development means so much more than just bricks and mortar. Each of our developments are unique communities and offer the opportunity for tenants to be part of a warm and welcoming Jewish community.

Covid-19 forced us to change the way we were working quite drastically and tenant events and activities took to the world of Zoom. From online exercise classes to discussion groups, language lessons and a whole array in between, there have been over 400 Zoom sessions since the start of the pandemic. Tenants have been able to connect with each other in ways we could never have envisaged with many tenants using the internet for the first time.

We know that nothing can replace face-to-face contact and the reopening of communal lounges and gardens has been welcomed by many. With restrictions easing and as we look to the future, we want to take some of the best parts of what's worked on Zoom to enhance the communal life in each of the developments.

We are working closely with tenants encouraging and supporting them to play a leading role in shaping their own community through planning and delivering

interesting and engaging events, classes and social activities that match the interests of themselves and their fellow tenants in their development. Whether someone has a hobby they are passionate about and could share with others or if someone has ideas about something different they would like to learn or do, we hope to create a range of programmes that are tenant-led and individual to each development.

Each of our communities are different and unique and the range of activities and events on offer should reflect different interests of tenants in each development. Whilst communal life isn't for everyone, many of our tenants tell us being part of a supportive Jewish community was a reason they wanted to make the move into one of our unique mobility apartments.





EDUCATING AND ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Whilst attitudes about disabilities have changed since our founder, Cecil Rosen, created Jewish Blind & Disabled in 1969, there is still some way to go until people living with disabilities in the UK are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

At Jewish Blind & Disabled, we know that we can play a role in increasing understanding of disabilities and in turn changing attitudes. We believe this should begin within the education system. Our schools programme, launched in 2012, aims to educate and engage young people about a range of disabilities and provide them with an understanding of day to day life for someone living with impaired vision or a physical disability. The programme

introduces them to the importance of aids and adaptations to enable independence and what accessible housing means.

Pupils at Menorah Primary School were recently joined via Zoom by Frances & Dick James Court tenant, Michael, who is blind. Michael spoke to the pupils about his gradual sight loss and the impact on his day-to-day life. For many of these primary school aged children this was the first time they had met someone who is blind. As so many young people do, they had lots of interesting questions to ask him including: what is braille, what his stick is for, if he was born blind and how he knows how to get to places or cross the road.

Mrs Menczer, the Head Teacher of Menorah Primary School said: "The sessions were really well received. The children benefited a lot from hearing Michael's experiences and both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children raised very good questions which Michael dealt with brilliantly. Thank you for facilitating this session and we very much look forward to welcoming you again in our school."

Whilst we continue to grow and develop our programme with young people, this year also saw us launch a new partnership with UJS (Union of Jewish Students). This partnership aims to increase awareness of the work of Jewish Blind & Disabled and encourage students to get involved through volunteering or fundraising.

Jewish Blind & Disabled Chief Executive, Lisa Wimborne, said: "We believe we have a role to play in helping young people understand disability and to ensure they see people beyond their disability. We are so grateful to The Desmond Foundation for sponsoring this work - we know it will have a lasting impact in changing attitudes and raising awareness of Jewish Blind & Disabled."



If you are a teacher or connected to any schools and would be interested in a session with a tenant, or if you know any students who would like to take part in our upcoming student firewalk event on September 5th and help us raise vital funds, please contact Abi Spital on abi@jbd.org or 020 4548 8678.





RE-LAUNCHING OUR INDEPENDENT LIVING ADVISORY SERVICE

Back in 2019, we launched our Independent Living Advisory Service to take our expertise into the community; providing people living with physical disabilities or visual impairment with advice, support and adaptations that enable them to remain in their own home.

Through the service, we have enabled over 100 people to be able to stay in their own properties for longer and have purchased over 160 different aids and adaptations to enable independence. Examples have included putting in place assisted technology which allows the control of functions within the home via remote controls or Wi-Fi, installing bath boards and hand rails to make showering or bathing possible where there have previously been struggles, and sharing everyday aids such as the Knork – a specially designed combined knife and fork that is designed for people who have the use of only one hand.

Whilst the scheme often focuses on the small aids and adaptations that can make a big difference to people's lives there are no limits in place. The scheme is there to enable people to retain their independence and Jewish Blind & Disabled will, alongside the everyday items, consider supporting larger items that will enable people to live their life to the full.

One woman who contacted us is in her 50s, living with fibromyalgia and a heart condition, was housebound and in desperate need of an electric wheelchair so she was able to get out and about and be more independent. Following a visit from the Independent Living Advisory Service, Jewish Blind & Disabled provided support with funding for a wheelchair. She wrote to us to thank us for our support and commented: "I

very much appreciate your help, and am enjoying the freedom to be out."

When the pandemic hit in 2020, the service was temporarily put on hold but we have now relaunched it; resuming an in person service with all the necessary Covid procedures in place.

The Independent Living Advisory Service is an Occupational Therapist led service. Occupational therapists are qualified to find solutions to everyday problems, enabling individuals to reach their full potential.

Thanks to a generous donation from The Rachel & David Barnett Charitable Trust the service has been free at the point of access for anyone who needs it. If clients have the means to pay for their own aids and adaptations, then they do so. Clients whose main income is from state benefits are offered aids and adaptations on a long-term loan basis from JBD.

If you know someone who could benefit from our help, please email ila@jbd.org or call 020 8371 6611 (option 2).



FUNDRAISING UPDATE

As an independent charity that does not receive any government funding, it is only through our fundraising that we are able to continue to develop and manage our unique developments of mobility apartments.

We held a small thank you tea in the garden at our Fairacres development for the generous individuals and families who have recently supported the creation of a new accessible sensory garden and the refurbishment of the communal areas in this development. This work would have also not been made possible without some recent legacies left to Jewish Blind & Disabled.



Thank you tea!



National Lottery funding

We are delighted to have received National Lottery funding for the first time. The grant will cover the running costs, including a part time driver, for our mini bus in North East London. The minibus takes tenants to supermarkets and local shops and there are trips twice a week from each of our developments.

Over 80 people joined us for our annual Golf Day at Hartsbourne Golf Club. Huge thanks to Lloyd Botchin for his continued support in organising the event. The event raised just under £25,000.



Annual Golf Day



Cheque presentation

Malcolm, a tenant at Aztec House, nominated Jewish Blind & Disabled as the beneficiary of a raffle organised by his Freemasons Lodge. The Lodge presented JBD with a cheque for £450. Philip Feldman, the Lodge's Charity Steward said: "The Grip of Friendship Lodge is delighted to be able to support Jewish Blind & Disabled which does such fantastic work for the community."

To keep up to date with news and events, please follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram - @JBDCharity



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