

Jewish Journal

October 16, 2024

Kosher Family Lounge opens at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital

By Linda Chase
Contributing Editor

Jewish families committed to keeping a kosher diet now have space to store, prepare and eat food at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, thanks to the generosity of local donors that contributed to make the area a reality.

Donations by Ben J. and Dorit Genet, Avi and Debra Naider, Healing Hearts and the Jewish Federation of Broward County established the Kosher Family Lounge, an area that also includes space for prayer and relaxation. Healing Hearts, a nonprofit organization that helps families during times of medical crisis, will stock the lounge with refrigerated and frozen meals, snacks, hot and cold drinks, prayer books and reading materials.

While patients who keep kosher have always been able to get meals that meet their dietary needs, the same hasn't always been true for families that are sometimes at the hospital for extended periods of time.

"The kosher lounge will be a healing space for a parent that just needs a breather while caring for a child being treated at Joe DiMaggio," said Rabbi Yochanon Klein, founder of Healing Hearts.

The Hollywood-based, pediatric facility serves children and families in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties, home to one of the country's largest Jewish populations. In a recent two-year period, it is esti-



From left, Esther and Yochanon Klein, Keith Goldmann, Sharon Truske, Jason Barell and Joyce Dorn. COURTESY OF HEALING HEARTS

mated that as many as 7,000 patients who identified themselves as Jewish were treated at the children's hospital.

"This is a special place for both the Jewish community and our hospital family and I thank the donors for their commitment to this effort," said Sharon Truske, director of major gifts at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Foundation, at the ribbon-cutting event. "While we have lots of family space in the hospital, this is the first permanent area dedicated to observant Jewish families with specific dietary needs."

While the Kosher Family Lounge is the

first space of its kind within Memorial Healthcare System, it won't be the last. Another room currently under construction at Memorial Regional Hospital will serve families of adult patients. That room is being funded by Avi and Debra Naider, Healing Hearts, Bikur Cholim of Hollywood and the Jewish Federation of Broward County.

"It's often the little things that create the biggest impact," said Keith Goldmann, chief philanthropy officer at the Jewish Federation of Broward County. "Ensuring Jewish families have a kosher space where they feel supported while they are caring for

"The kosher lounge will be a healing space for a parent that just needs a breather while caring for a child being treated at Joe DiMaggio."

— Rabbi Yochanon Klein, founder of Healing Hearts

their loved ones in the hospital is incredibly important to us."

Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital is one of the nation's leading pediatric hospitals, offering a comprehensive scope of healthcare services and programs in a caring, compassionate setting designed specifically for children. A level one trauma center that is part of the Hollywood-based Memorial Healthcare System, it combines advanced technology, the expertise of board-certified specialists and a patient and family-centered approach to heal the body, mind and spirit.

The hospital's nonprofit foundation focuses on philanthropy to positively impact patients, families and underwrite programs, facilities and equipment that support the pediatric facility's mission.

Connect online at jdch.com and [@jdchospital](https://www.facebook.com/jdchospital) on Facebook, X, YouTube, and Instagram.