



Jewish Community Services of Hawai'i

Fall 2024

A Conversation with Hawaii State Representative Lisa Marten

Lisa Marten represents Hawaii's 51st district. She is the Chair of the Human Services committee and a member of the Health Committee, Education Committee, and the Higher Education and Technology Committee.



Photo Credit: LisaMarten.com

JCS: Have you had any uniquely Jewish experiences in Hawaii?

Lisa: My Jewish experiences are all personal - celebrating Jewish holidays with my extended family that lives here and with other Jewish community members that do not have family to spend the holidays with. I also used to bring Channukah and Pesach into my children's classrooms every year with stories, games and crafts as those holidays were not otherwise celebrated at school.

JCS: Do you feel your Jewish values impact your passions about advocacy and social justice?

Lisa: Yes! My Jewish values and character cause me to question and to speak up. My mother was the first girl to have a bat mitzvah at her temple in California and has continued to push for gender equality (and for the less fortunate) ever since. She is a Child and Family Therapist who just retired last month at the age of 81. Now, as Chair of Human Services, I find myself interacting with the same agencies she has worked with over the decades.

JCS: What do you feel is your greatest accomplishment?

Lisa: By far my greatest accomplishment is raising kind, successful sons - spoken like a true Jewish mother. In my community, I am most proud of a project to plant a native forest on the watershed of Hāmākua Marsh State Wildlife Sanctuary in Kailua through a non-profit I started called Healthy Climate Communities. It is a labor of love and is something that all the school children and community volunteers who helped will leave behind. If there is a group that wants to get their hands dirty, I would be happy to host you at Hāmākua Marsh to help care for the native forest there and check out the endangered birds.

At the Legislature, I hope my greatest accomplishments are yet to come. However, I have been busy passing Bills related to child welfare, elderly services, homelessness and mental health, and to the environment.

JCS has given a gift to the entire community – this newsletter really includes all of us.

-Newsletter Recipient

There are no words to describe the relief I'm experiencing. I am forever grateful. Thank you!

-Crisis Client

I am so grateful to have found JCS: participating in the Monday Zoom meetings opened a lot of opportunities to attend cultural and social events.

- Kupuna Zahav group member

JCS Brings Statewide Jewish Leaders Together



Hawaii Leadership Gathering at Temple Emanu-El

On August 5, 43 individuals representing 18 Jewish organizations, met to share ideas, brainstorm collaborations, and consider how to help our Hawaii Jewish community thrive. With a grant from The Weinberg Foundation, we collaborated with Colby College's Center for Small Town Jewish Life, and their associate director, Rabbi and Professor David Freidenreich.

We heard clearly that everyone's priority, universally, was to help create a sense of statewide community. We discussed potential collaborations, best practices for successful programs, and the need to address antisemitism in Hawaii. There was a real concern about Israel, the impact of the war on our local community, and on college campuses.

Taking the First Step: New Beginnings This Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah is the perfect time to try something new. Join a movement class? Come to our book club? Take a free class at UH? Volunteer with JCS?

Stepping out of your comfort zone and embracing new experiences leads to more confidence, brain growth, and a broader perspective on life. It also introduces you to new people and enriches your life in unexpected ways.

Evidence shows that starting small helps with that first step. Here are some ideas of how to start:

1. Make a list of 3 things you liked to do when you were younger, or before COVID.
2. Google a topic you are curious about, or "how to start exercising" for example.
3. Ask a friend to be your (exercise, organizing, whatever) buddy and check in daily by text.
4. Celebrate and congratulate yourself for taking ANY step towards your goal!



Every action you take is a move toward renewal, aligning perfectly with the spirit of Rosh Hashanah.

Teamwork: Working Alongside Chabad for a Complex Client



Rebbetzin Pearl Krasnjansky & Israeli visitor

A while ago we were called by Straub Medical Center to help a very ill Russian speaking visitor get back to Israel. Their social workers were working hard supporting him but needed to collaborate with JCS. Of course, it was about 4PM on a Friday when they called.

We contacted Rebbetzin Pearl Krasnjansky, director at Chabad of Hawaii (on Oahu), and she sprang into action with sundown around the corner! She helped find a Russian speaking volunteer to help translate in person, and she immediately went to visit him armed with kosher food.

After a lot of work and collaboration with the Straub social workers and Pearl, this patient made it back to Israel safe and sound.

Most of our referrals come from congregations, like Temple Emanu El, Chabad across the islands, and Maui Kosher Farm. And they come from hospital social work departments and other non-profit case managers.

We love working with our community partners, and we can still honor the confidentiality of each client.

Hearing from You: Funny Moments Being Jewish in Hawaii

Thank you to all who answered our call for funny or interesting experiences you have had being Jewish in Hawaii...

- ***My kumu, now 85, grew up in Manoa and never knew that there were Jews until she was all grown up. She thought Jews were just something in the Bible. - Maui***
- *Since I retired and moved to Kailua, I'm sorry to say I haven't been engaged in the community. I don't drive these days, so it's a drama to get to the temple. So, I often walk alone on Kailua beach, past the lifeguard station where there used to be a big tree. I would stand next to that tree and sing "Eitz chaim le macha zichim...etc. ". It just seemed to fit. Back in London, the congregation always seemed inspired by that song. Anyway, 2 years later they cut that tree down...but I'm still alive, still here! Phew! Shalom Haverim! - Oahu*
- ***This happened in my early 20's shortly after moving here. A new friend had invited me to his Christian Bible Study. One of his friends told me that meeting me, he felt closer to Jesus because Jesus must have looked like me since I'm Jewish. - Oahu***
- *Before my first Passover in Hawaii, I went to Safeway because I was told that I could find Matzoh. I asked an employee of the store which aisle the matzoh was in and she hesitated for a minute before bringing me to the cheese aisle where I found mozzarella! - Oahu*
- ***When I first moved here, somebody mentioned the JCC. I thought oh great how cool. Hmmm... turns out it's the Japanese Cultural Center! - Oahu***
- *Recently a health care professional asked me if their Jewish clients would need a translator. -Oahu*
- ***With a local hiking group, years ago, one of those "what are you" discussions started where the answers were "Japanese," "Chinese," "Okinawan." I answered "Jewish." They looked at me and asked, "what's that." And I realized (not for the first or last time) I wasn't in Illinois anymore. - Oahu***
- *Being a Jewish haole in Hawaii gave me more empathy for minority communities. - Oahu*

Donating Stock Made Simple

Hear directly from one of our Board Members, and Hawaii Star Advertiser columnist Bob Sigall, about an easy way to support JCS:

"DonateStock.com makes it simple and easy to donate to JCS of Hawaii. In the past, I'd sell mutual funds, receive the proceeds, and then send a check to JCS. If I gave JCS \$1,000, I would have to pay capital gains tax on the profit, which could be an additional \$200. However, DonateStock allows me to bypass the capital gains tax, but still get the tax deduction. I love it!"

<https://donatestock.com/jewish-community-services-of-hawaii>

**A SMART WAY TO GIVE:
DONATE STOCK TO JCS**

Just takes minutes to donate
and NO capital gains tax!



<https://donatestock.com>

Assuring the “J” in Jewish Community Services of Hawaii



Rabbi David Freidenreich, Kamala Trotter/Oahu, Aiko Lindsey/Maui, Raquel Glassman/BI, Tonya Martin/Oahu

The JCS team recently held our second annual staff retreat, focusing on best practices, protocols, and policies, as well as our own professional development. Rabbi David, from the Center for Small Town Jewish Life at Colby College, led an insightful discussion on the Jewish values that guide our work. We are fortunate to have such dedicated and talented staff (and consultants) across the islands.

[Contact us](#) if you feel you have something to teach our staff about our community, or the wide-ranging needs of our clients.

Raising Awareness with Local Nonprofits

“Your presentation to our staff came at the right time. I have encountered many misunderstandings about Jewish culture and religion, and this was badly needed.”

- Jewish staff member at a statewide agency

A funny thing is happening in our effort to educate local nonprofits about JCS. Originally our goal was just to let them know about our services, but then the questions started....

“What is Jewish?” and “How will we know if someone is Jewish?” and “What do we need to know to serve Jewish people better?”

Fair questions.

During our “talk story” style presentation, we first establish that there is no one answer to ANYTHING Jewish, and that JCS is not a religious organization, nor are we authorities on Judaism.



Mimi Lind at Navian Hawaii All Staff Meeting, July 31



That said, we explain that being Jewish is not just one thing – it’s experienced as a religion, culture, identity, a set of traditions and values, and more. And that, just like “Cafeteria Catholics,” there are as many ways to be Jewish as there are Jews. And not even everyone agrees on that!

It’s clear that our local nonprofits are interested and eager to better serve their Jewish clients. It’s also clear that a lot more needs to be done to help educate our larger community. So much good could come of this.

[Contact us](#) if you know of local nonprofits that could benefit from learning more about our services, and how they can better serve their Jewish clients.



We are so proud of the hard work that our clients do to make changes and accept help. Accepting help is a huge barrier for so many of us.

JCS care managers support clients to reach their goals of financial or emotional stability, the right amount of help at home, and many other more unique challenges.

Recently Kamala (Oahu) and Raquel (Big Island) were able to help three clients move from homelessness to housing. Aiko (Maui) helped two kupuna with complicated transportation needs, and connected fire survivors with housing. Mimi provided crisis therapy to clients with panic and grief.

Bianca (Kauai) helped someone get through the senior

housing list for more affordable housing. And Tonya (Oahu) helped us earn “high marks” on our audit in the Spring!

Because Hawaii is so small, we must be careful to protect our clients' identities, but there are so many more people we have supported.

Another success is helping people stay connected to community. We know that loneliness kills and so we prioritize reducing isolation. We connect people to congregations to match their religious and cultural values and we connect people to social groups and activities.

Do you know someone who could use support? Do you want to walk alongside someone in need and volunteer with us? Do you want to feel more connected? [Contact us ASAP!](#)

I just wanted to thank you
for an amazing event
yesterday. My mind has been
thinking non-stop about the
day and ways to make a
difference.

-Jewish Leaders Gathering
Attendee

Thank you SO much for
coming to the house and
doing so much more than
I would ever have
expected. Many, many
thanks!

-Grieving family member



JCS of Hawaii invite you to
**An Evening of Dinner, Dancing, and Cabaret
with Shari Lynn**
Sunday, November 17, 2024 at 5pm
Oahu Country Club
\$225 Early Bird
\$250 after October 21
[Click here for reservations](#)



Jewish Community Services of Hawaii

Caregivers Support Group
For family and friends who care for those with disabilities and chronic conditions like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, cancer and the like.

1st and 3rd Mondays, 2-3:30PM at Temple Emanu El
2nd and 4th Mondays, 2-3:30PM on ZOOM

Facilitated by Skye Morrison, LSW
RSVP Required:
Text, call, or email: Kamala 808-861-7801 or Kamala@jcs-hi.org



[Click here to email](#)



Jewish Community Services of Hawaii

JCS of Hawaii Book Club

Last Sunday of every month
11:30AM

at
a private Kaka'ako residence near Ward theater



Scan QR code or
email Kamala@jcs-hi.org to join

[Click here to email](#)



Resources for seniors and aging

Relationship and family abuse

Assistance with basic needs

Help with social isolation and loneliness

Crisis intervention and mental health referrals

Substance misuse intervention

O'ahu:	Kamala@jcs-hi.org	808-861-7801
Maui/Moloka'i:	Aiko@jcs-hi.org	808-723-0575
Kaua'i/Lana'i:	Bianca@jcs-hi.org	419-967-6693
Hawai'i Island:	Raquel@jcs-hi.org	808-365-9292

www.jcs-hi.org

Grief Support Group

For those who lost a loved one and want to join others on the path to acceptance and healing.

6 weeks

Temple Emanu-El

Tuesdays, 2-3:30 pm

Start date ASAP



Led by grief specialist Skye Morrison, LSW

For information and RSVP

text, call, or email:

Kamala 808-861-7801 or kamala@jcs-hi.org



[Click here to email](#)

JCS Movie Club

Movie club meets when a great movie is showing and folks want to go!

We suggest a row for you to buy your tickets, and then meet after to discuss and schmooze.

Join us by emailing Kamala@jcs-hi.org to find out about our next movie!



[Click here to email](#)



Coping with Rising Antisemitism and News Around the War

Support group for Hawaii's statewide Jewish community

On Zoom

RSVP for information about meetings:

Aiko@jcs-hi.org
or 808-723-0575

[Click here to email](#)



Jewish Community Services of Hawaii
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Jewish Community Services of Hawai'i

**Working to keep our Hawaii
Jewish community safe, healthy
and connected!**

Contact us!

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