

Gesher Shalom Bridge of Peace

Gesher Shalom provides resources, services and support to Jewish individuals and families associated with Montgomery Hospice. We recognize that people are at different places along the religious and cultural continuum, and we work to meet each individual's spiritual and practical needs. Rabbis are available to help families with end-of-life discussions.

Montgomery Hospice Mission & Vision

To gentle the journey through serious illness and loss with skill and compassion. To bring comfort by providing the best care to our community.

About Montgomery Hospice

Montgomery Hospice is a community-supported nonprofit organization that has been providing hospice care to people in Montgomery County, MD for 35 years. Our team of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, spiritual counselors, social workers, certified nursing assistants, bereavement counselors and volunteers works with our patients and their families to provide quality end-of-life care in homes, extended care facilities and at Casey House, our acute care facility. Besides hospice services, we provide professional grief support for patients and families, as well as support groups and workshops for county residents. We offer first-class end-of-life education to professionals and community organizations.

for more information, contact:

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Montgomery HOSPICE

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Montgomery Hospice Jewish Resource Program



301 921 4400

www.montgomeryhospice.org/geshershalom

Jewish View of Hospice Care

Judaism affirms the importance and sanctity of life. At the same time, the Biblical author of Ecclesiastes recognizes that “to everything there is a season... a time for being born, and a time for dying.” The end of life is seen as part of the natural cycle of life. Although preservation of life and health is a primary mitzvah (commandment) in Jewish law, we are *also* obligated to prevent or diminish suffering. Jewish tradition recognizes that there may come a time when death is inevitable...when the goal of care changes from aggressively fighting disease to battling suffering caused by the disease.

~**Rabbi Gary S. Fink**

Montgomery Hospice

Senior VP of Counseling and Family Support

Gesher Shalom provides:

- Rabbinic Jewish Resource specialist
- Support for Jewish religious and cultural needs
- Comforting Jewish presence, counseling, education and support
- Culturally sensitive volunteers
- Jewish funeral/memorial resource information
- Shiva/memorial books available for loan
- Professional bereavement support
- Sensitivity training regarding the special needs of Jewish families including Holocaust survivors and their loved ones

Rabbis/Jewish Chaplains are available to:

- Provide individuals and families a comforting Jewish connection and presence
- Offer Jewish prayers, psalms, music
- Answer questions and provide information about Jewish ritual and religious practices
- Discuss Jewish funeral and memorial options
- Address ethical dilemmas regarding treatment decisions such as Jewish approaches toward feeding tubes and hydration
- Discuss Jewish views on end-of-life decision-making
- Provide community education on such topics as:
 - Jewish views of death and dying, life after death
 - Ways to provide comfort to those who face end-of-life illness and how to support their family members
 - Jewish funeral or memorial practices
 - Jewish perspectives on ethical dilemmas and difficult decision-making

Reflections

The whole world is a very narrow bridge; the important thing is not to be afraid.

כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֵּלּוֹ גֶּשֶׁר צָר מְאֹד
וְהַעֵיָקָר לֹא לִפְחֹד כָּלֵל

Kol ha-o-lam kulo gesher tzar me'od;
V'ha-i-kar lo l'fached klal.

~*Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav*

From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that we are here for the sake of each other - above all for those upon whose smile and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected....

~*Albert Einstein*

My God, may these things never end;
the sand and the sea,
the rush of the waters,
the crash of the heavens,
the prayer of the heart

~*Hannah Senesh*