

Sunshine Pantry founder Sharon Straus dies at 75

The Jewish Review staff

Sharon Straus, 75, founder of the Sunshine Pantry Food Bank, passed away Wednesday, Aug. 21 at the age of 75.

Straus founded the Sunshine Pantry in 1981. While storing food donations for one of her sons' Cub Scout food drives, she had the realization that families faced hunger all year. She launched her project with a simple objective: "We believe no child should go to bed hungry."

The Sunshine Pantry operated from Straus' garage in Beaverton, serving hundreds of families every month, until 2007 when the operation moved to an industrial space. Straus went above and beyond the usual food pantry basics; she ensured she had ingredients for people from minority communities to cook the foods they knew and loved. She maintained an ample stock of kosher foods. She also stocked school supplies and other essentials – and some fun stuff for kids, including birthday cakes.

"I want the children to feel

normal," she told *The Oregonian* in 2007. "So yes, they get milk and cheese and bread, but also chips and candy. Those are what make a child smile."

Straus received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Lifetime Volunteer Achievement from Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski in 2009, the Service to Beaverton Award in 2008 and the Rabbi Joshua Stampfer Community Enrichment Award in 2017.

"I want people who come here to feed their stomachs and their souls," Straus told *The Oregonian* in 2007.

She is survived by her husband of 54 years, Stewart Straus, and her four sons: Brian, David (Irina), Eric (Hiliary) and Robert (Jennifer), and grandchildren Maiya, Maksim, Markus, Oliver and Cecily. She was preceded in death by parents Milton & Ilene Rosenthal, 71.

Her funeral was Sunday, Aug. 25 at Shaarie Torah Cemetery.

Learn more about about Sunshine Pantry at [facebook.com/SunshinePantry.org](https://www.facebook.com/SunshinePantry.org).

Walking Beside You to focus on partner loss for fall sessions

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

Losing a spouse or partner is a unique kind of grief—deep, complex and farther reaching than one may anticipate. It's also the subject of the latest edition of Jewish Family & Child Service's Walking Beside You grief group.

Meeting at 10:30 am on Tuesdays from Sept. 10 through Oct. 29 at Congregation Beth Israel in Portland, this specialized session of Walking Beside You is the product of feedback from past clients and Walking Beside You participants and is funded in part by a grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Women's Giving Circle.

Lead facilitator Missy Fry, who is JFCS's Lead Aging and Adult Services Clinician, said that partner loss often comes with financial concerns, issues of how to support children, both young and grown-up, and intense feelings of loneliness and isolation. Additionally, as survivors have often served as caregivers when their partners were sick, the sudden disappearance of those responsibilities can lead to questions around identity and purpose.

"There's also a lot of things in our culture that are designed for couples, that speak to couples or families," Fry said. "If you're finding yourself all of a sudden in an empty home, it can feel really overwhelming."

On top of these feelings of loss is often fear.

"We may have planned for things to look a certain way or just been unable to even imagine what things would look like beyond this, so there's a lot of unknowns," Fry explained. "What will the future look like? Will I be alone from here on out? Will I feel alone? If I spend time with other couples, will I feel like the third wheel?"

Rabbi Sarah Rensin, JFCS's community chaplain, will serve as a guest facilitator for some sessions.

"The question that sometimes comes up is 'How do I grieve Jewishly?'" Fry said. "The wonderful thing about Rabbi Sarah is that she has a lot of experience working in hospice and also working with families."

This is the seventh session of Walking Beside You – a project Fry took on wanting to replicate the group that supported her when she experienced grief as a child. After transitioning to Zoom and hybrid sessions due to the COVID pandemic, Walking Beside You is now fully in-person again.

"We're not made as a species to look at each other through a screen," Fry said. "We are meant to have these deep, meaningful connections to one another."

Participation in Walking Beside You is free. For more information or to join, contact Fry at (503) 226-7079 ext. 133 or email MissyFry@jfcs-portland.org.

INTRODUCING THE SPOTLIGHT SERIES!

Don't miss the chance to be a part of these amazing events, supporting the 2025 Campaign for Community Needs.

Join us for one or both events! Registration details coming soon!

save the dates



10.28.24

DARA HORN

Dara Horn is the well-known author of *People Love Dead Jews*. This promises to be a meaningful evening as Dara's thoughts and perspectives are deeply relevant to the times we are living in today.



11.17.24

COMEDY FOR PEACE

JEWS. MUSLIMS. COMEDY. NO POLITICS. JUST LAUGHS.

Comedy For Peace combines the best Jewish and Muslim stand-up comedians for an inspiring, funny, and unforgettable evening. The show brings interfaith diverse communities together, with the belief that we can make a difference through the art of comedy.



A One

WWW.JEWISHPORTLAND.ORG

www.jewishportland.org

For additional information and questions, please contact Wendy Kahn at wendy@jewishportland.org
** You will be asked to make your gift to the 2025 Campaign for Community Needs **

[jewishportland.org/subscribe](https://www.jewishportland.org/subscribe)