





## VOTING

This month is the March primary election. Voting is very important. It is one way we use our voice and help decide who will run our city and our state and country. We are not voting for president this time and this election decides who we vote for in November. You have to be over 18 years old to vote.

When we vote, we have a say in people who will make decisions about many things that are important to us.

Everyone has different things that matter most to us. Some of the things some of us care a lot about are; health care, SNAP, disability services, transportation, Israel, accessibility, immigration and pay for DSPs. When you vote, you should choose about the things that are important to you.

Voting means that our voice matters. It is an important responsibility of being a citizen. When we vote we are using our voices.

Some adults with disabilities might go in with someone who helps them. That is okay. Someone can help explain things or help with the voting but the choice of who to vote for is still ours.

Voting shows that our opinions matter and that we have a say.

We are proud to vote!



## RAINBOW BANQUET

We Want to Talk about the Rainbow Banquet!

We thought this year's banquet was great! Jason's parents, Home Depot and Becca got awards.

We are so proud of Estella, J.W and Samantha who did the Hamotzei prayer with the Rabbi. The choir did a great job and Chloe did a great job on her solo. The choir sang Count on me, What the world needs now and You've got to sing- we are so proud of everyone who was in the choir.

Michelle, Jen, the Insofts and Luke spoke.

Things we loved at the dinner; the Moroccan cigars with meat, the desserts were crazy, the waffles the comfortable chairs, so many of us were in the video, that Jen talked about Kevin Bacon in her speech

The theme of the banquet was a work of heart. We had 702 people there and raised a lot of money for Keshet programs and there were a lot of JUF people there

We had a great time!



## INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH FEATURING:

Rachel Arfa



This month, the creative writing team members had the opportunity to interview Rachel Arfa, Commissioner of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities. Rachel, who is a deaf woman, visited with her interpreter Jen to help facilitate communication, Jen signed our questions and Rachel spoke her answers. Many team members p learned how to say “Hello, my name is…” along with their names in sign language, and introduced themselves that way

We had a lot of fun getting to know Rachel, and we hope she will come back again!

**Tova:** When did you become deaf?

**R:** When I was 18 months old. My Babysitter noticed first, but no one really took it seriously until one day I ran across the street and my mother was yelling “stop, stop!” and I didn’t hear her. Then my parents took me to a hearing Dr. who told them I was deaf. my parents were shocked.

**Brad:** Do you have any kids?

**R:** No, I have a dog named Ruby.

**Estella:** Do you like to travel?

**R:** I do. I went to Paris with my mom last year and I’m going to Baltimore tonight.

**Avi:** How long have you been working for the mayor?

**R:** About 5 and a half years for both Mayor Johnson and Mayor Lightfoot.

**Noah:** What is your favorite drink?

**R:** Hot chocolate-with marshmallows of course.

**Megan:** If you went to college, where did you go?

**R: I went to the** University of Michigan.



**JW:** What do you do for the mayor?

**R:** As Commissioner of the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, I work to make Chicago more accessible and inclusive for residents with disabilities. This includes helping create and improve city programs, making sure public services, events, and transportation are accessible, and advising the mayor and city departments on disability issues. I also work on policies and initiatives that promote equal opportunities and remove barriers so people with disabilities can fully participate in city life.

**Matt:** If you could hear one thing, what would it be?

**R:** I wish I could hear what dogs hear. They can hear up to 3 miles away.

**Samantha:** Do you use a TTY?

**R:** Not anymore. There are better ways to communicate. Texting and FaceTime!

**Mikey T:** What do you do as part of your job?

**R:** I can advocate for people that are having difficulty with accessibility because of their disability.

**Tmima:** Do you like to swim?

**R:** Yes. I learned to swim at Apachi Day Camp and I used to swim at the Bernard Horwich JCC when I was younger because I grew up in West Rogers park.

**Huvi:** What did you like about the Keshet Banquet?

**R:** Seeing Michelle speak and represent people with disabilities. Also, the inclusion choir.

**Danny:** How do you talk on the phone?

**R:** I don't. My phone has captions.

**Adam:** Do you go to adaptive shows?

**R:** Yes, they have signing shows and interpretive shows.

**Hal:** Are you an attorney?

**R:** Yes, I graduated from Law School at the University of Wisconsin.

**Brad:** What is the mayor like?

**R:** He has a family and used to be a teacher. He is very nice.

**Tova:** How old were you when you learned sign language?

**R:** I learned in high school when I was 15 years old.

**Tish:** What is something that you struggle with?

**R:** Even though I know the Mayor's cabinet, I need to work with the cabinet to get their support and sometimes that is challenging.



**Michelle:** If you could have Shabbat dinner with anyone, who would it be with?

**R:** I would like to have Judy Heumann who was a pioneer of disability rights with Michelle Friedman. I would like us to talk with her about the capital crawl and her advocacy for people with disabilities.

We were very proud to share with Rachel that we have been reading Judy Heumann's book Rolling Warriors and learning all about the Capital crawl and the fight for disability rights!!

### KESHET BIRTHDAYS!!!

March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Susan

March 8<sup>th</sup> - Jeremy

March 11<sup>th</sup> – Noah

March 11<sup>th</sup> – Adam F.

