

## For Cecille



*My friend and colleague, Cecille Asekoff, after 40 years of dedicated service, was celebrated at her retirement this week. Among family, colleagues and friends, we showed our gratitude for her achievements, her vision, and her energy. Here's what I said to her...*

My dear friends,  
Stanley, Sarah, John, Shira, Ariel, Grace, and Shoshana,

Let me tell you something about vision.  
Vision is when you create something from nothing.

In a country in which the entire concept of Jewish spiritual and pastoral care was, essentially, non-existent and undeveloped, Cecille created a Joint Chaplaincy program from scratch.

Forty years ago, Cecille began a path that changed the way that we think about spiritual care in the Jewish community in North America.

Along the way she helped create an international movement to promote a caring community, awareness of end-of-life care, and spiritual training for counseling.

Cecille is dynamic, a pillar of our community, and a force for good.

In Greater MetroWest she has been at the forefront of those reminding us that an individual's spiritual needs are sometimes – often – just as important as other needs. Thousands and thousands of lives touched, improved, changed. Here at home, across the American Jewish community, and in Israel.

The collaboration of chaplaincy programs in Israel and New Jersey, which began some 15 years ago, all started when Cecille took a team of ten rabbis and healers to Israel to share their skills. How do you minister to the needs of the sick, the elderly, the dying? How do you humanize the work of chaplains, understand each other, work and learn together? All this began under Cecille's leadership.

The best leaders leave a legacy behind.  
And that is what Cecille has done.

Not just in how she created and led the National Association of Jewish Chaplains, now called Neshama.

Not just in how she created and led our Greater MetroWest Joint Chaplaincy Committee. Important and life-changing though they both are.

But also in how she guided the hundreds of graduates of training programs here and in Israel in clinical, spiritual, pastoral care on a multi-faith level.

This is a lasting legacy of caring for those in need, and of building a better Community.

We're so deeply grateful for your vision, Cecille, and for all that you've created here.

It is a legacy of goodness and caring that will last for many, many years to come.

Thank you.