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The [Jewish Deaf Resource Center, Inc.](#) (JDRC) founded in 1996 and headquartered in New York, is proud to announce the election of its third president, Susan Cohen of Maryland.

Cohen, a long-time resident of Maryland, originally from New York, is an immediate past president of The Washington Society of Jewish Deaf (WSJD). Prior to taking on various leadership roles for WSJD, she and her husband, Jeff founded their synagogue's Deaf Access Committee and established the shul's Interpreter Fund when they were members there. Recently retired, she was a librarian for Montgomery County Public Libraries, where she served as the first coordinator of the new Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library. This also is the nation's first of its kind in a public library system. Cohen is excited to join JDRC as the organization's third president "I look forward to leading JDRC's wonderful efforts to continue to expand communication access between the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community and the wider Jewish community," said Cohen. "Big thanks to Alexis Kashar, our recent past president, for her devoted leadership and service to JDRC for the past ten years."

JDRC, co-founded by Marla Berkowitz, who served as its first president, and Naomi Brunnlehrman, is celebrating 25 years as a non-denominational national organization comprised of Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and hearing leadership whose mission is to build bridges between Jews who are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing and the individuals and organizations which serve the Jewish community in North America.

In 2011, JDRC served as consultants to the Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards for the passing of their rabbinic responsa on [The Status of the Heresh and of Sign Language](#). In that same year, JDRC's board voted to have Naomi Brunnlehrman, JDRC co-founder, serve as the organization's part time executive director. Brunnlehrman coined "Chazan of the Deaf," has her MA from The Jewish Theological Seminary and specializes in the interpretation of Jewish liturgy from Hebrew to American Sign Language (ASL) without relying on an English translation. She and JDRC Vice President Dr. Stephen Weiner, a retired provost of Gallaudet University, are thrilled that Cohen has agreed to join JDRC as its president. Weiner said, "Susan is the perfect leader to grow JDRC and cultivate coordinated efforts within the Jewish Deaf community and with the wider Jewish community."

JDRC is the administrator of [UJA-Federation of New York's Jewish Community Deaf Interpreting Fund](#) which provides partial reimbursement for interpreting or captioning expenses for non-profits in the UJA-Federation of New York geographic area.

JDRC is one of four founding organizations of an online ASL Havurah called the ASL Shabbat Coalition. As a result of the pandemic, the coalition was founded last year on the second night of Passover. The online ASL Seder was so successful with over 200 families across many states and several countries that the Havurah started to meet regularly online for Shabbat services the second Friday night of the month. Services are in ASL but are voiced and captioned to welcome all. Services are run and led by members of the Deaf community who take turns serving as spiritual leaders for the Havurah.

JDRC recently started an ASL Jewish liturgy study group comprised of Deaf, Hearing, CODA (adult children of Deaf adults), interpreters, rabbis and Jewish educators. Additionally, JDRC hired an ASL poet and linguist to work with them and produce a series of videos to serve as a resource for Deaf prayer leaders looking to lead their community in spiritual ASL Shabbat services.

Information about JDRC can be found on their website at www.JDRC.org. To receive information about the Havurah email ASLShabbatCoalition@gmail.com