

# DOROT Generations

## Committed to the Core

An Interview with Board President, Donna Jakubovitz

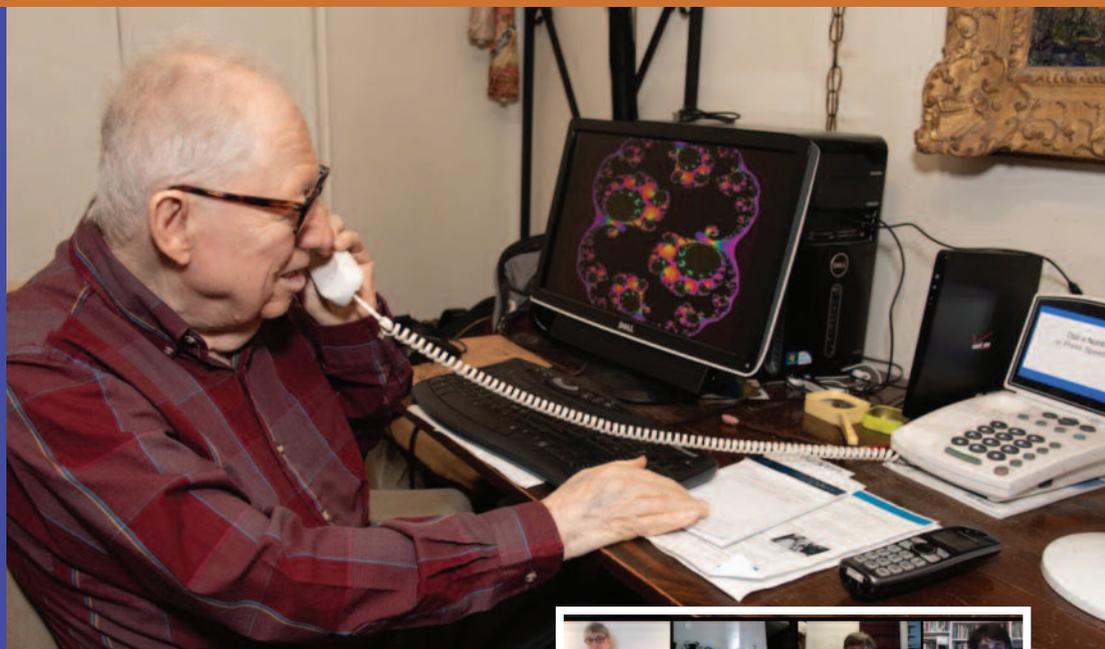
*Donna Jakubovitz joined the Board of Directors in 2009, became Board President in 2015, and will step down when her term ends on June 30, 2020. She shares some insight on her time at the helm.*

### What drew you to DOROT? To seek a leadership position?

My parents instilled in me many lessons. I learned the importance of giving back to the community. I was fortunate growing up to have all of my grandparents for a good number of years and I was always very close with them. When my children and I wanted to find a way to volunteer together, DOROT was on my radar. We started volunteering at Package Deliveries. After that I became more involved and I fell in love with DOROT.

This was my first time being a Board President and I have grown so much. I often say that I was spoiled by my experience

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## Programs Move Online and on the Phone



### Helping Seniors Stay Safe and Stay Connected during COVID-19 Crisis

DOROT quickly and carefully modified its programming, transforming signature onsite and in-home programs to online, on the phone and doorstep delivery so that seniors maintain critical social connections while in isolation. DOROT is reaching thousands of seniors with programs for those with little or no computer access or skill to those who are tech savvy.

### Connect from Home by Phone with University Without Walls

To meet the growing demand for phone-based programming during COVID-19, University Without Walls has expanded the number of discussion-based programs in the arts, literature, and current events facilitated by engaging experts. Seniors dial into a world of possibilities for stimulating conversation and lifelong learning. Participation is free. Call 1-877-819-9147 or email [www@dorotusa.org](mailto:www@dorotusa.org) to find out more and to register.

*The expansion was made possible through a gift from the Jewish Communal Fund through UJA-Federation of New York.*



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# DOROT from Remote

Dear DOROT Community,

The past two months have been among the most challenging in my 10 years as executive director. With lives of seniors at great risk during the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to act quickly and responsibly to limit their exposure.

In less than two weeks, we made significant changes to the way we deliver programs. We moved our onsite and in-person programs to computer and phone, recognizing the significant “digital divide” between older adults who are adept at using a computer and smartphone and those who are not.

With social isolation now recognized nationally and even globally with the same urgency that we have known since DOROT was formed in 1976, we offered insight and guidance on this serious risk to public health to audiences large and small. I’ve urged everyone who will listen – including millions of people watching my national TV interviews on MSNBC and the CBS Morning News – that the best way to safeguard the health and well-being of seniors during this challenging time is to stay away. Stay connected, of course, but from a safe distance as older adults are by far the most vulnerable population during this pandemic.

Through it all, we have been remarkably successful in providing older adults in our community with social connection and access to resources that are, in many cases, a lifeline. I attribute our success to: 1) commitment from an incredibly hardworking, innovative and caring staff; 2) donors, both individuals and foundations, who have come forward to support our important work during this challenging economic time; 3) the Board of Directors, under the visionary leadership of President Donna Jakubovitz; and 4) the incredible community of older adults and volunteers, of all ages, who understand and appreciate the importance of intergenerational connections and remaining engaged and connected to your community.

Wishing everyone good health and strength during this most challenging of times.

Mark L. Meridy  
Executive Director

## Committed...

*continued from page 1*

as Board President of DOROT because of the exemplary leadership of Mark (Meridy), the senior management and all of the staff. Everyone is just so smart, professional and committed to the organization and its mission.



*Donna with her children Robyn Spector and Gary Spector, proud DOROT volunteers for many years.*

### What sets DOROT apart from other nonprofits?

New York is a transient place and people are so busy. The fact that DOROT offers a variety of opportunities to volunteer, whether a one-time Package Delivery or Birthday Visit or more frequently as a Friendly Visitor or Tech Coach, is unique. DOROT meets you where you are. There is a volunteer opportunity that fits every schedule.

### What is DOROT's greatest strength?

There is a growing older adult population and tremendous need for the expertise that DOROT has developed over the years. **A silver lining from this pandemic is that we have had to figure out how to engage both volunteers and seniors remotely. There is an entire world of older adults who are homebound, not just in New York City.** We're learning that there are ways to effectively provide remote programming and DOROT's staff is amazing in their ability to pivot during this crisis.

### What advice do you have for those who want to become more involved whether in a young leadership role or as a board member?

There is a misconception that being on the board is only about fundraising. While fundraising is vitally important, our leadership is committed to our mission and engaged in a personal way. We have a high caliber of board members and we have had a number of board members who have joined after their own experience with a senior. Being able to 'touch the work' is unique to DOROT. Personal stories have a tremendous impact. We've had some new people join the board in the last few years and hopefully we'll continue to get even more people to join the board!

### What are you going to miss the most about being Board President?

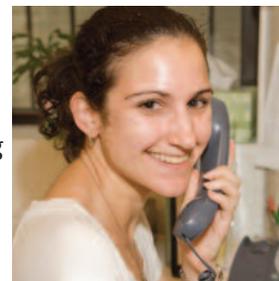
I'm staying on the board so I'm not leaving the organization. I serve on an expansion committee and am looking forward to planning for the future of DOROT. I will definitely miss working closely with Mark and the senior management team.

## Programs Move...

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### A Friendly Voice on the Other End

Over 2,300 volunteers registered to make Caring Calls within days of the new program's inception, demonstrating a deep interest in safeguarding the well-being of older adults. Volunteers make once or twice weekly calls for four weeks, offering warm conversation, social connection and a lifeline for those in need. Seniors interested in the program can register by calling 212-769-2850 or email [info@dorotusa.org](mailto:info@dorotusa.org).



### Tech Made Easy with New Guides

New Tech Guides contain step-by-step instructions on how to teach seniors to use their smartphone to check email, FaceTime, text and more. Guides for Zoom video conferencing are also available for phones, iPads and Windows computers. Please call DOROT at 917-441-3706 to receive a guide.

### Meal Deliveries Continue Uninterrupted

Kosher Meals from Home and Emergency Meals are operating without interruption and have expanded to meet the needs of clients homebound due to COVID-19. A partnership with local grocery stores allows DOROT volunteers to call in grocery orders and arrange delivery. For more information or to make a referral, call (212) 769-2850 or e-mail [ir@dorotusa.org](mailto:ir@dorotusa.org)



### Onsite Programs Go Online

"If they can't come to us, we'll go to them," said DOROT Programs@Home Director Wendy Handler. Older adults log onto Zoom to take classes such as Gentle Chair Yoga, Creativity Circle, Qigong, Wisdom Tales storytelling workshop, Memoir Workshop, Everyday Revelations poetry workshop and many more. Join the email list and register for classes at [DOROTprograms@dorotusa.org](mailto:DOROTprograms@dorotusa.org).



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**DOROT**

A copy of DOROT's most recent financial report may be obtained through the Office of the State Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271, 212-416-8000. It is also available on DOROT's website, [www.dorotusa.org](http://www.dorotusa.org).

Please consider a donation to DOROT today. Help us to reach thousands of seniors during the COVID-19 emergency, who now more than ever need our services. Give today!  
[dorotusa.org/donate](http://dorotusa.org/donate)

## Ways to Give

### Generations Society

DOROT is built on the generosity of compassionate individuals. A planned gift ensures that your support will make a real difference for the older adults in our community. Consider these three simple ways to support DOROT through your long-range financial planning.

**THROUGH YOUR WILL:** Include DOROT in your will or living trust.

**THROUGH YOUR RETIREMENT PLAN:** Name DOROT as a beneficiary.

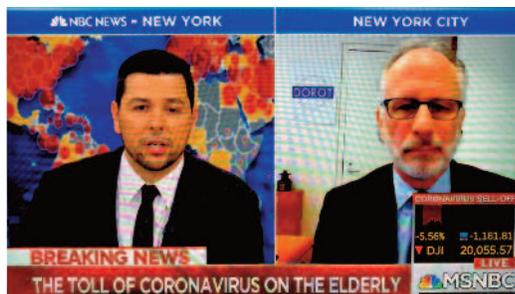
**THROUGH YOUR LIFE INSURANCE:** Designate DOROT as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

*To discuss any of these options and to learn how to join DOROT's Generations Society contact Mallory King, Director of Development, [mking@dorotusa.org](mailto:mking@dorotusa.org)*

### It's a Mitzvah

The **Mitzvah Circle** is a group of donors who give monthly to ensure that DOROT has a steady, dependable source of funding to further its mission to alleviate social isolation and loneliness among older adults in New York City and Westchester. Becoming a monthly Mitzvah Circle donor is an easy and significant way to make a difference. *Make a gift at [dorotusa.org/donate](http://dorotusa.org/donate) or email Eliana Sugarman at [esugarman@dorotusa.org](mailto:esugarman@dorotusa.org) or call 917-441-3720.*

## DOROT in the News



DOROT Executive Director Mark Meridy urged people to protect the health and well-being of vulnerable older adults during COVID-19 by staying away, maintaining connection instead by phone and computer. He appeared on CBS Morning News, MSNBC, WNYC, Fox News, NY1 and WABC.