



Hinda annual event 2024 was a huge success. Attended by over 130 people. Thank you for your generous support and believing in second chances.



THE HINDA INSTITUTE

Everybody Deserves a Second Chance

Annual Report

2024-25

Thank you to our sponsors...



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Hinda is Second Chances

Letter from the Director of the Hinda Institute



Imagine what it feels like to be defined by your worst mistake — and to believe you'll never be given another chance. At the Hinda Institute, we know that with compassion, guidance, and support, people can turn their lives around. Our motto says it all: everybody deserves a second chance.

For over 45 years, I've walked alongside men and women as they reenter society after institutionalization. I've seen despair transformed into hope, and broken families reunited — but none of it happens without the generosity of people like you.

The Hinda Institute gives real human beings the chance to:

- *Rebuild their lives with dignity.*
- *Heal fractured relationships with their families.*
- *Break free from the cycle of hopelessness.*

I ask you personally to join me in this life-saving mission. Give the Gift of a Second Chance. It wouldn't happen without the generosity and commitment of people like you.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Rabbi Binyomin Scheiman

Essential and Unique Role



Dynamic re-entry program assists casework clients and families in rebuilding their lives for good.



Monthly reentry education programs and classes.



Supports family members, spouses, parents, and children: the innocent collateral damage of crime.



We serve as Jewish prison chaplains for Illinois, making monthly visits to prisons and jails statewide.



IMPACT

The Hinda Institute is the only organization that supports individuals and their families from incarceration through reentry and beyond. Our holistic approach resulted in a remarkable recidivism rate* of **less than 5%** in 2024. Our clients and families have overcome stigma and challenges to rebuild their lives, with most transitioning to stable employment and contributing positively to their communities. **In 2024, we serviced:**

- 221 casework clients many of whom are in urgency and crisis (3997 interventions, 4135 hours of assistance)
- The demand for our casework grew; new cases rose by 47% this year reflecting the urgency of need in our community.

Testimonial - Hinda is Hope

"Hinda has given me a community that understands and supports me and has helped me not feel so alone. Attending the Hinda Helps family group has connected me to other families and helped me to ask for help as well as accept support. It is difficult to imagine my life if Hinda was not part of it. There is not a day that goes by without a Hinda moment."

— Annual Survey 2024

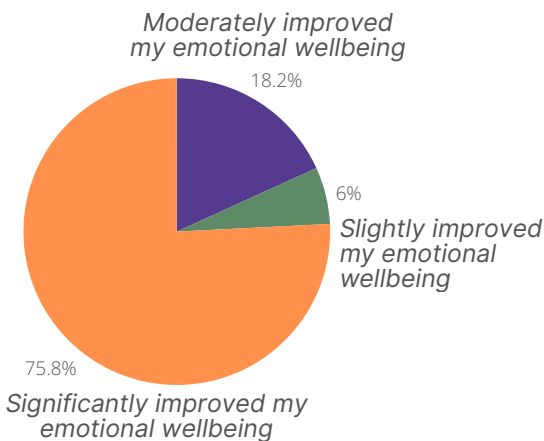
*Recidivism rate refers to the percentage of individuals who return to prison or jail after being released. It is a critical measure in the criminal justice system, as it helps assess the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. The benchmark recidivism rate in the US is 45–50%.

Hinda is a Lifeline for Mental Health

Accessing mental health care in Illinois is increasingly challenging due to workforce shortages, the shortage of mental health facilities (1,200 psychiatric beds for a state population of 13 million) and low Medicaid reimbursement rates. Most critically, many patients in Illinois are released with minimal support and follow-through from correctional institutions. Seventy-one percent (71%) of people with mental health challenges encounter the criminal justice system, mostly for smaller crimes committed as a consequence of their untreated mental health or addiction issues. Sheriff Tom Dart himself described Cook County Jail as the largest underserved mental health institution in Illinois (Modern Healthcare). Fortunately, policies in Illinois are now recognizing that there is in effect a false dichotomy between mental health and incarceration.

The Hinda Institute provides a critical point of access to mental health services for vulnerable members of our diverse community, and aims to increase connections and investments in mental health care to ultimately reduce the over-incarceration and criminalization of individuals with mental health disorders. In 2024, 70% of our clients and families identified ongoing mental health challenges and 64% substance related issues; but only 53% have access to licensed therapists (45% of our clients are on Medicaid). Hinda Institute is a beacon of light for anyone looking for nonjudgmental mental health support. We offer a spectrum of trauma informed professional therapeutic services.

The ability to build and/or restore relationships, feel empathy and belongingness are immensely important to successful reentry and rebuilding your life. Our 2024 survey demonstrates the impact we have had this year on the lives of our families and the efficacy of our approach.



Hinda Casework and counseling support has helped me to:

- **Cope better with my life**- 96.8%
- **Deal with crisis**- 96.5%
- **Deal with anxiety/anger/depression**- 93.1%
- **Become more self aware**- 92.3%
- **Boost my self esteem**- 92.3%
- **Deal more effectively with problems**- 96.9%
- **Feel more confident**- 93.5%
- **Become more independent**- 84.6%
- **Grow spiritually**- 93.1%
- **Have hope for the future**- 93.7%
- **Apply lessons in my daily life**- 90.3%

IMPACT

IN NUMBERS

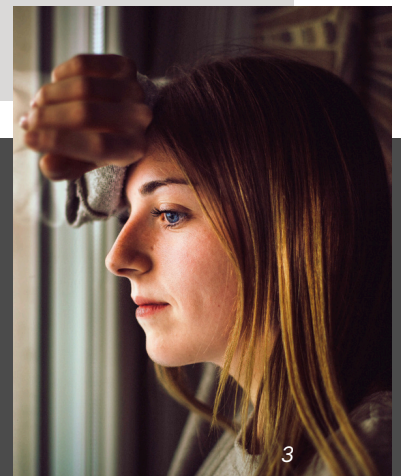
In 2024, we provided a spectrum of counseling services:

- **Casework support** – 3,081 hours (93% satisfaction rate on 2024 survey)
- **4 Support groups** – supporting families and returning citizens – 1,067 hours (96% sat. rate)
- **Peer counseling** – 161 hours (96% satisfaction rate)
- **Chaplaincy** – 156 hours (92% satisfaction rate)
- **Contracted licensed therapists** – 851 hours (100% surveyed satisfied)



Hinda Hero - Hinda is Healing

"I became acutely aware of how even strong intact family systems can become affected when our own daughter, a University student and full-bright scholar, experienced a relapse of bipolar symptoms and was incarcerated for repeatedly texting. After 18 months in jail, my daughter was released as innocent in mental health court. However, she was deeply traumatized by her experience and ended up serving a longer period than she would have had she actually been charged. There was no exit strategy. Hinda visited my daughter weekly while detained and supported me and my daughter upon reintegration without judgement through support groups, casework and an open heart throughout the process."



Hinda Helps People in Crisis and Urgent Need

Hinda supports individuals facing crisis, urgent need, poverty, and unemployment—80% of our clients live below the poverty line, and 39% are unemployed. To address these challenges, we employ an in-house employment specialist and have trained our staff to navigate the ongoing housing crisis in Illinois. We also conduct home visits for select elderly or infirm clients, ensuring care reaches those who need it most.



Legal Advisory Team

The Hinda institute has a legal advisory team & paralegal that guides our families in navigating the legal system, and provides referrals.



Our Caseworkers achieve results and help clients accomplish their goals!

In 2024, casework assistance provided:

- 283 general casework assistance cases
- 90 employment cases, guiding clients through readiness, job search, placement, and retention
- 151 housing assistance cases
- 118 instances of reentry support
- 94 family services cases
- 59 legal services cases
- 73 medical assistance cases
- 257 mental health assistance cases
- 62 substance use support cases
- 50 food security assistance cases
- 210 family support and social integration cases
- 52 cases of direct financial assistance

IN NUMBERS

Testimonial - Hinda is There for You

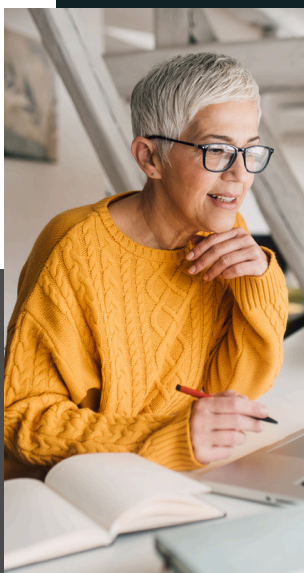
"Hinda support and counseling provided me with new skills to approach my daily life. I feel like they are there for me for anything from housing, spiritual support, food, clothing and legal stuff. I feel connected".

— Annual Survey 2024



Hinda Hero - Hinda Provides Critical Support

Barb had lost her part time retail job and now couldn't pay her rent. She was a part time employee, older and underemployed and was barely making the rent as is. Due to her record, she was also vulnerable to discriminatory practices and rejection in the office. She was anxious that she would be facing homelessness; a real fear in Illinois's desperate housing market. Our Hinda employment specialist helped her develop a professional resume and referred her to job fairs. She also created digital formats to help with the application process. With persistence and assistance, Barb found an incredibly good management position- her dream job.



Hinda Saves Families & Children - Innocent Victims

The Hinda Institute supports mothers and children who have nowhere else to turn for non-judgmental advocacy and care after a loved one has been detained. These individuals are the innocent victims—the often unrecognized collateral damage of the criminal justice system. They face multiple traumas, including broken family structures, the loss of communal and family support, and financial devastation. Many also endure ongoing prejudice and ostracism from their communities and those they turn to for help. Our surveys show that the impact is even greater for children. Hinda stands by these women and children, providing free counseling, legal support, financial assistance, and help with employment.

IN NUMBERS

In 2024, our clients were predominantly Jewish (94%), women (91%), and older, with an average age of 61. Many are retired (30%), living on fixed incomes (14%), or juggling multiple jobs to support loved ones.

- Most live below the poverty line—65% earn under \$30,000—and many face serious challenges: 33% need housing support, and 50% report emotional or mental health struggles. Many are mothers caring for adult children with mental illness or addiction, providing both emotional and financial support.
- Family support made up 39% of our casework in 2024, with 94 cases of direct assistance and 210 cases focused on social integration and ongoing support.
- Each week, 5–10 women attend *Hinda Cares*, our support group offering a safe, welcoming space for connection and healing.
- During Hanukkah and other holidays, we provide gifts for 20+ children through a partnership with Decalogue and generous donors. We also host holiday events and offer uplifting courses to engage and support our families year-round.



Chanukah Gifts for Kids



Testimonial - Hinda is Belonging

"No one else I know has ever had to deal with a family member being incarcerated, and I felt totally isolated. Hinda has given me a community that understands and supports me, and has helped me not feel so alone."

"Attending the Hinda Helps family group has connected me to other families and helped me learn to ask for help, accept support, and not feel so strange and isolated."

— Annual Survey 2024

Hosting a Bas Mitzvah



Hinda Hero - Hinda is Family

In 2024, I had the honour to attend one wedding, help organize two dignified Jewish burials, and two bas/bar mitzvahs. At these critical points in a person's life journey, it is important to have supportive family and friends; but where that is not possible, Hinda steps in. The bar/bas mitzvah celebrations are especially meaningful. Often, I have known these children since they were five or younger and have witnessed their tremendous challenges and resilience. These children are not only growing up with an absent parent(s) in fractured, high-stress homes, but also deal with tremendous shame and ostracism through no fault of their own. A bas/bar mitzvah is one of the most meaningful days of your life and should be filled with celebration, photos of precious moments, great food, reading from the Torah, a recommitment to Judaism, and goals for the future. It is hard, however, to organize a celebration by yourself—especially if you are dealing with financial challenges, family issues, and anxiety about what your friends will think, and even about your own future. You are not like the other kids in your class. This year, I taught Torah portions, helped with Dvar Torahs, learnt about life with these children, as well as attempting to play basketball! Our shul organized a beautiful spread, balloons, and a photographer for the families, while I helped with activities. But it is about more than celebration—we are there to forge connections for life, provide psycho-social support, and break the criminal justice cycle, one child at a time.

Hinda is Transformative Education

Our national Reentry Education Program is unique. With high quality, relevant courses, facilitators with professional degrees who partner with people with lived experience, we have impacted hundreds of lives. Most importantly, we have created a community of support and advocacy.



Quality Courses

- Participants found our courses to be relevant and valuable (94.3%), clear and well-structured (97.2%), interactive (88.2%), and interesting (97.1%).
- Facilitation was particularly well evaluated. Facilitators were rated as knowledgeable (97%), engaging (94.1%), compassionate (93.9%), and professional (93.9%).

Changing Lives for Good (Survey 2024)

After our courses, participants are:

- Coping better with life- 93.5%
- Dealing better with crisis- 96.3%
- Dealing better with anger- 93.5%
- Becoming more self-aware- 96.9%
- Have boosted their self-esteem- 87.1%
- Dealing more effectively with problems- 94%
- Feel more confident- 90.7%
- Becoming more independent- 82.8%
- Growing spiritually- 89.6%
- Have hope for the future- 90%
- Applying lessons learnt to their daily life- 97%

Some Guest Facilitators

2024-25



Elizabeth Kelley, JD



Dr. Kutzen, Professor LCSW



Mark Weinberg, JD



Alan Mills, JD



Rahmiel Drizin, JD



Adele Nicholas, JD

- **700** hours of reentry education
- **97** unique clients nationally
- **25** average attendees per course
- **10** courses in 2024 (new courses monthly)
- **Reentry Topics:** Psycho-social Skills e.g. Post Incarceration Syndrome, Legal and practical skills.

IN NUMBERS



Testimonial - Hinda is Growth

"You brought me into your group to learn, study, grow, and more. I've learned a lot—my mind has been opened to many things I never thought about. I felt welcomed and loved. You're like family to me, and I'm very grateful for the classes you offer and to be part of the circle. Thanks for all you do."

— Annual Survey 2024

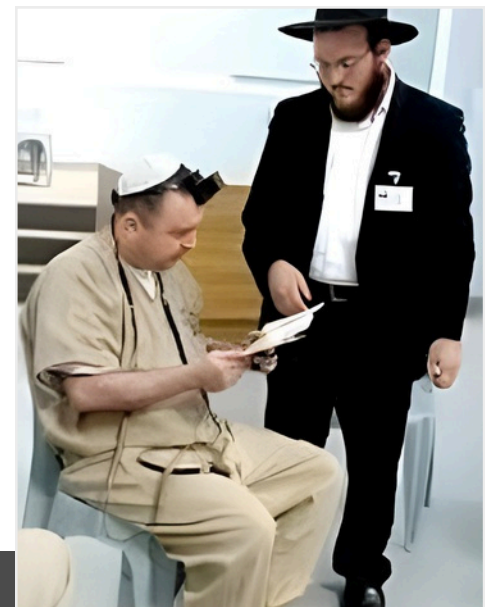
IMPACT

Hinda is the Jewish Prison Chaplaincy Program of Illinois

For over 45 years, Hinda Institute chaplains and dedicated volunteers have been visiting correctional institutions throughout Illinois—monthly, and in some cases weekly. They provide counseling, courses, books, kosher food, Jewish holiday celebrations, advocacy, and, most importantly, hope and a listening ear.

During the Jewish holidays, they bring holiday food, religious items, and the joy of celebration into places of tremendous darkness—ensuring that those who are isolated are not forgotten. They also work to protect clients’ religious rights in accordance with American law and to support each individual until they can successfully reenter their communities.

Counseling in IDOC



IN NUMBERS

- 4 chaplains
- 150 clients visited a month (weekly in jails)
- 30 institutions, over 45000 miles of travel
- 2 new county jails in 2024



Hinda Hero - Hinda is Reentry with Dignity

For a significant portion of 30 years, I existed within the dark confines of steel bars, concertina wire fencing, and stone walls. Hope is a scarce commodity when facing oneself and the consequences of bad, selfish choices that led to serving a prison sentence. The last 20-plus years of that time in my life, the singularity of abiding hope for a second chance at life, shone like lightning every month when the Rabbi would visit. Always, his humor, insight, and wisdom brought joy and reassurance. He guided me in becoming more genuinely connected with my Judaism.

When I became due for release, I was homeless, had no family support, no job, and was experiencing considerable apprehension about reentering society. Through the Rabbi's willingness to connect me to the amazing resources of the Hinda Institute, I found housing and employment right away. I was assigned a caseworker who assisted me in navigating the return to the rigors of daily living, making sure I understood issues such as Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, CTA discounts, and many ways of confidently rebuilding my life.

The Rabbi was always just a phone call away, with his generous servant's heart and solid insights. Due to childhood traumas and post-incarceration syndrome triggers, I was also afforded the opportunity to work with an excellent therapist who understood. My social interactions improved and have continued to do so. Above all, I felt I belonged to a community that embraced me with warmth and welcome.

Sixteen months later, things are going exceptionally well—health, home, work. I attend Hinda classes monthly and support groups weekly. I am excited to begin training for the possibility of becoming a Peer Support Specialist in the near future, as well as returning to university to complete my baccalaureate studies and pursue a master's in Restorative Justice, which would grant me the honor of giving back to others experiencing the same need for hope that I once did.

Hinda is Celebration, Identity and Community

All our clients and families have a warm, welcoming, nonjudgemental place to go for the Jewish holidays; Hinda organizes the most inclusive parties in town with great food and fun. We also deliver holiday packages reminding our families that they are not alone or forgotten. We have an amazing group of volunteers that bake, pack and deliver our packages every holiday. Our chaplains also ensure that all Jewish detainees are able to celebrate the holidays.

Each of our clients have their own spiritual journey, and often seek identity, community, meaning and redemption as part of their healing process. Hinda is there for them in the darkest moments as well as moments of Joy.

Baking/ & Preparing Cakes



IMPACT

In our 2024 survey, our clients and families said that they were now:

- Getting along better with my family - 88.5%
- Dealing better with people - 88.9%
- Feeling less isolated - 93.5%
- Empathizing more with others - 89.7%
- Feeling part of a community - 90.3%

Delivering Holiday Packages



Assembling Holiday Packages



Preparing Chanukah Gifts



Menorah Lighting in IDOC



Delivering Passover to IDOC



IN NUMBERS

- **60-80 packages delivered every holiday** – Kosher food, religious items, and holiday materials for Jewish individuals in correctional facilities.
- **Holiday gathering** – Celebrations that bring connection and joy to otherwise isolated environments.
- **4 courses on spirituality** – Classes exploring Jewish faith, ethics, and personal growth.
- **25 weekly one-on-one Torah or Hebrew classes** – Personalized study and mentorship.
- **Learning programs in correctional institutions** – Education that fosters purpose & community.

Work with Us: Contact Info



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