



## Memo

**To:** Jewish Federation of Ottawa Board of Directors  
**From:** Andrea Freedman, President and CEO  
**Date:** April 3, 2023  
**Re:** President's Report

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Here is an update on Federation activities since our last meeting on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### **National and International Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA)**

Several years ago, JFNA asked for a discussion with Canadian Federations to re-negotiate our dues. The pandemic put these discussions on hold, but those negotiations are now beginning again. There is a national committee and Federation past chair, Linda Kerzner is the lay representative for coast-to-coast communities. JFNA has signaled that they are asking for a significant increase.

Ottawa derives direct benefit from JFNA in a number of ways. Examples include professional development; marketing materials (e.g. Ukraine and annual campaign tool kits, including a customized video); and staff cohorts – primarily of benefit to Micah and myself. Additionally, we have two Ottawans, who participate in the National Young Leadership Cabinet.

There are however entire components of JFNA's work not relevant for Canadian communities, primarily in the area of government relations and their Israel office.

It should be noted that I was asked and, with the consent of Ian and Karen, have accepted to chair the Intermediate-sized CEO professional affinity group beginning in September for a 2-year term.

### **Partnership2Gether (P2G)**

P2G meetings historically have taken place twice each year – fall meetings in Israel and spring meetings in Canada. The Canadian meetings rotate between all the Canadian cities involved in the partnership (Ottawa, Vancouver, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Atlantic Canada). After a pandemic hiatus, Ottawa will be hosting the meetings this year. They commence Saturday evening June 17<sup>th</sup> through June 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Israel @75 trip**

As previously reported, Ottawa has 27 participants signed up for the upcoming Israel@75 trip organized by the Toronto Federation. Federation offered to partner with all local congregations and in the end, Congregation Machzikei Hadas chose to partner with us and actively recruited. The Montreal Federation is also participating in the mission and the Ottawa delegation will be joined on the bus by a few participants from Kingston. An orientation meeting was held on March 29<sup>th</sup> and the trip will take place April 24<sup>th</sup>-May 1<sup>st</sup>. Both Ian and I are participating in the mission.

### **Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs**

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, community leaders met with Shimon Fogel (CEO) and Gail Adelson Marcovitz (Chair) who provided

a briefing to approximately 25 community leaders.

### **Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation**

At the Foundation’s board meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup>, the board decided to maintain a 4% disbursement rate, even as investments saw a negative return (-8.5% net of all fees). It should be noted that even with the exceptional decision by the Foundation to maintain disbursements at 4% (.5% greater than the current legal mandate), the negative 2022 return means that for many community organizations, this will still result in fewer dollars. Additionally, the board also voted to continue allocating the undesignated dollars to the Federation to be included with our grants and evaluation process. We are grateful to the Foundation for their continued support and confidence.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

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Congratulations to the entire campaign team (particularly Josh Engel, Evelyn Silverman, Micah Garten and Yudit Simmons) as Campaign 2023 has now officially surpassed the 2022 total!

	<b>Campaign 2023, as of 02/15/23</b>	<b>Campaign 2023 as of 03/28/23</b>	<b>Campaign 2022 Final</b>
<b>Total Dollars</b>	\$4,871,067	\$4,892,317	\$4,888,116
<b>Total Donors</b>	1,476	1,491	1,624

### **PJ Pay It Forward Campaign**

The 2023 campaign was very successful with 31 new donors acquired on a goal of 18. This compares to 13 new donors last year. Total raised was \$3,301, but more importantly, these donors will now be added to the campaign structure and assigned specific canvassers with the goal of converting them to regular annual campaign contributors.

### **Handwritten cards**

As part of our annual strategy, the campaign team sends handwritten solicitation cards to unclosed gifts of donors in a certain giving range, who have given for at least 3 consecutive years. The process is timing consuming but traditionally has a much higher response rate than regular direct mail. This year because of bandwidth, we were only able to send 20 cards, however 3 responded (15%) and it garnered \$1,980. One of these donors had moved away but liked the card so much they agreed to keep donating going forward!

### **Canvasser Survey**

The annual canvasser survey was sent and 25% of canvassers responded, with responses from first time canvassers to those who have been doing it for 45 years! Overall, extremely high levels of satisfaction and interactions with Federation staff received top marks. Canvassers particularly appreciated the new initiative to send them thank you cards with the sum total of pledges they had secured. We also had a few suggestions on changes to the pledge card that we will work on implementing.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING

	Program Details	Measuring Engagement
<b>Archives</b>	<p>March 9: The Archivist gave a presentation to the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation Board about the role of the Archives in the community.</p> <p>April 10: The release of the latest episode of Archives Podcast, 613 Archives on the theme of the 90-year history of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa/Vaad Ha'lr.</p>	<p>Previous podcasts reach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nov 2022 – Ottawa’s Jewish Cemeteries, 316 downloads</li> <li>• Jun 2021 – The OJCF, 185 downloads</li> <li>• Apr 2020 – JFS, 206 downloads</li> <li>• Dec 2019 – The Rideau Bakery, 263 downloads</li> <li>• June 2019 - King Edward Shul, 516 downloads</li> </ul>
<b>PJ Library</b>	<p>March 3: PJ in PJs Purim Edition – Shabbat dinner, Purim Party.</p> <p>March 11: Outdoor Havdallah in the Rabbi Bulka Kindness Park in partnership with Ottawa Jewish Community School.</p> <p>March 23: Babies and Bagels monthly home-based inclusive playgroups that welcome all types of families and the only Jewish playgroup in Ottawa open to dads.</p> <p>March 29: PJ Parents Night Out at Shilow Brewery.</p> <p>PJ Passover Get Togethers: We are encouraging families to "welcome the stranger" and invite families that don't have seder plans to apply for the PJ Get Together grant and come up with a creative way to engage new families in our</p>	<p>30 families including many newcomers Israeli and Russian-speaking families.</p> <p>5 families</p> <p>7 families</p> <p>30 people</p> <p>PJ Library, via the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, provided 27 “Get Together Grants” (\$100 for supplies) to Ottawa families in 2022. 5 have been provided to date in 2023.</p>

	<p>community. Michelle and Emily will be leading their own PJ Get Togethers and inviting some new families.</p> <p>Informal engagement (phone calls, coffee dates, play dates) continue.</p> <p>PJ Library Ottawa Testimonials:  <i>"We are so happy that PJ Library is doing things again in person... it is our Jewish home"</i> - Family at Kindness Week program</p> <p><i>"This program made my day, and my week!"</i> - Mom at Babies and Bagels</p>	
<b>Emerging Gen</b>	<p>March 27: <b>Think n' Drink</b>, a new monthly gathering features speakers from different fields (such as business, science, lifestyles, and more). Ben Shillow, owner of a Kosher brewery in Ottawa was the first speaker.</p> <p><b>J-Fellows Mentorship Program:</b> Starting April 19, will offer 4 sessions over 3 months. Sessions led by Jewish professional speaking about work and leadership in the workplace. Participants will be matched to a mentor in their profession. The program is limited to ten young professionals, and recruitment has begun!</p>	27 people
<b>MOMentum Women's Trip to Israel</b>	<p>March 9: An <b>Info-Session about the Trip &amp; Year-Long Journey</b> was well attended. There are 32 spots available, and women must have children under the age of 18 living at home to be eligible. The year-long journey begins with the 8-day Israel trip, then continues with a commitment by participants to attend monthly Jewish engagement (educational, social, etc) programs.</p>	43 attendees To date, 20 people have applied to join the trip (April 3).
<b>March of the Living trip for high school students</b>	<p>The trip departs Sunday April 16 – April 30. The students have participated in a Shabbaton in Ottawa and five joint CTC pre-trip sessions on a variety of topics meant to prepare the students for the trip, which begins in Poland and ends in Israel.</p>	Ottawa contingent: 2 chaperones, eight students (4 from Ottawa and 3 from Kingston, and a lone student from London will also join our contingent).

<b>Partnership 2Gether</b>	<b>P2G Educator’s Conference in Israel, July 3-6.</b> Every second year, our Partnership gathers educators who are involved in school partnerships. Ottawa will be sending two teachers: one from OJCS which is partnered with Hanadiv School in Metulla, and one from Temple Israel School partnered with Einat HaGalil near Kiryat Shmona.	The school partnerships strengthen the school’s Israel programming and bring the “ <i>gesher chai</i> ” living bridge concept to life.
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**MicroGRANTS**

The committee has allocated \$77,006 to date since July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, to fund a total of 38 community initiatives. The following have received funding since March 8:

Inbal Marcovitch	HaKibbutz: Hebrew Speaking Leadership Children & Youth Groups	\$2,500
Michael Kent	Pre-Purim Wine Tasting	\$300
Hen Tomer	Mimouna Celebration	\$2,500
Dorothy Stern & Hillel Lodge	Voices from Home	\$1,875
Chabad of Wellington	Inclusive Community Passover Seder and Matzah distribution	\$1,875
Regina Teplitsky	Yossi Gavni - Comedy Show	\$2,500

**Grants & Allocations**

Jewish Journeys community impact grant is open and accepting applications. Numerous meetings with individuals and agencies have taken place to ensure understanding of, and alignment with, this new stream of funding.

**Hillel Ottawa**

**Student Engagement:**

- March 21<sup>st</sup>: Candle Making
- March 24<sup>th</sup>: Word swap on campus – see details below
- March 24<sup>th</sup>: Israeli style Shabbat dinner
- March 29<sup>th</sup>: Grad students Jews and Brews
- March 30<sup>th</sup>: Pre-Passover Prince of Egypt movie night
- April 11<sup>th</sup>: Passover Matzah Pizza lunch

Hillel Ottawa is committed to finding a Seder experience that fits each student’s unique needs. Students who may not feel comfortable attending the more religious Seder at Chabad are encouraged to reach out to Hillel Ottawa and they will provide several options including a community seder at Temple Israel (free of charge for any student), or a match with a family for local home hospitality.

**Advocacy:**

Hillel Ottawa hosted the Word swap delegation on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Word Swap is a program of StandWithUs that brings young Israelis to Canadian campuses to engage students in dialogue about Israel. This is a well-loved program by many students, and Hillel is thrilled to be able to offer it for the first time since the pandemic. The Israelis were in Ottawa for both the Word-Swap program and the Israeli-style Shabbat Dinner, with multiple opportunities for students to interact with them and ask questions, etc.

Unfortunately, in March we learned that the Maccabee Task Force has decided to withdraw their funding from Canadian campuses. They have reassured us they are committed to finishing off this year but will no longer be giving funding for the next academic year. This will have a significant impact on Hillel's budget (current grant is \$22k), and staff are considering options for next year. It also means that the task force trip hoped for in August will not be taking place.

## OPERATIONS

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**OVH:** The first pop up restaurant experience (sushi night) took place on Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup>. The event sold out in advance and we hope to expand the offerings in future events. The next one is scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

The staff engagement monthly lunch & learn series came to a close on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Staff members were invited to gather and learn from a subject matter expert (2 internal, 2 external). The sessions were fun, informative, and engaging, and received positive feedback. The next series will launch late-spring.

## COMMUNICATION

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### March 2023 - Communication update - Feb. 16, 2023 – March 28, 2023

**Eblasts:** Communication activity is steady with 62K individual message being sent the since last report on February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The open rate is very good at 58%.

#### Highlights include:

**Statement on Israel:** Sent out on Sunday March 26<sup>th</sup>, this was a carefully considered response to the crisis in Israel. It received a 60% open rate and a wide range of responses pointing to the controversial nature of the topic. Community members sent replies directly to Andrea with some pleased with message, some disappointed that the message wasn't stronger, and others upset we had even written a statement. Despite a mixed reception, there were no unsubscribed recipients.

**Agency Shabbat message:** The second in the special agency Shabbat messages was delivered to good response. Jon Mitzmacher of OJCS wrote the message. There was a 59% open rate and many people replied directly to thank Jon.

#### Donor stewardship

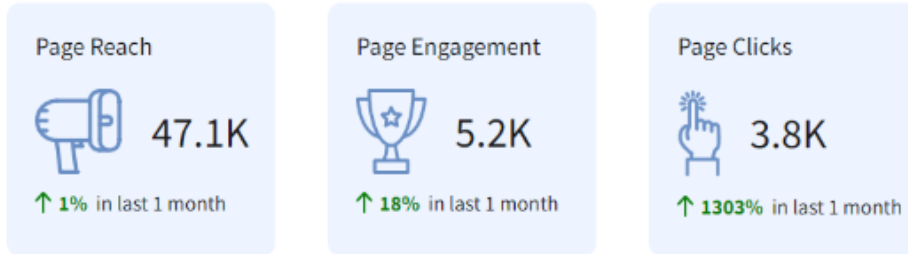
**Gift in Action:** A directed email sharing the success of a few new microgrants supporting Purim was sent to donors to thank them and share an example of how their gift makes a difference. Open rate was excellent at 68%.

**Lion of Judah newsletter:** A spring newsletter was sent to our Lions sharing updates, a donor profile and thank you to the newest members. Open rate was 88% and many recipients responded with a thank you for the message.

**Ukraine, one-year later:** To mark the one-year anniversary of the war, we wrote a letter thanking donors and sharing the updated impact of their gifts to help Ukrainians in crisis. They had a 55% open rate.

## Social media

**Facebook** stats are steady compared to the last 30 days with some increase in engagement over reach.



Highlights of the Social continue to be the Faces of Jewish Ottawa campaign:

Post	Date	Post reach	Engagement
Faces of Jewish Ottawa My most Jewish memory is driving down Bathurst Street in Toronto and seeing in each pocket all different types of Jewish people. I was around 8 years old, and it was at this...	Thu, Mar 16	4,340	1,138
Faces of Jewish Ottawa My most "Jewish" memory happened when I was six years old and I immigrated to Israel. It was then that I first realized that I am a Jewish. As a Jew, I am most proud of the history...	Thu, Mar 2	4,283	963
Faces of Jewish Ottawa Discovering that my family suffered during the pogrom in Lviv, Ukraine more than 100 years ago and managed to send their children outside of the conflict zone to Romania before...	Thu, Mar 23	2,693	430

## Instagram

Reach is down but followers are up and website clicks are also steady. We are unsure what caused the drop in reach, but will be monitoring and adjusting if needed.

