

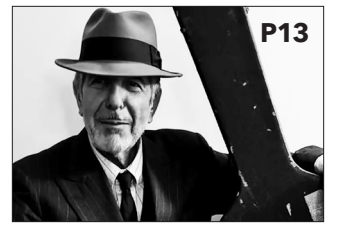


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Hamilton Jewish

News

The voice of Jewish Hamilton

Why we need to talk about antisemitism

With anti-Jewish hostility increasing on both the extreme right and left, the #nomoreantisemitism conference speakers say it is time to pursue new strategies to address the problem

STORY BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

AN ANGRY torch-bearing mob of white supremacists marches in Charlottesville chanting "Jews will not replace us," their banners emblazoned with swastikas. The following day, an anti-racism group puts out a message of support for Blacks, Muslims,

women, LGBTQ+, trans people, immigrants and other minorities, neglecting to mention the very people who were the object of the marchers' attack. In Toronto, an assailant rips the kippah off of a 70-year-old orthodox Jew walking with the aid of a walker outside a suburban shopping plaza. A 15-year-old girl posts "Shabbat shalom" on TikTok, and is immediately subjected to an onslaught of trolls who attack her with the hashtag #freepalestine. This is the face of modern antisemitism, a subject that brought hundreds of participants and dozens of international experts to Hamilton in November for the #nomoreantisemitism conference organized by the Hamilton Jewish Federation.

WHY WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT ANTISEMITISM CONTINUES ON P4

“Do I think antisemitism is a problem we can eliminate? No, but I do think we can change the conversation around it.”

DARA HORN, AUTHOR OF "PEOPLE LOVE DEAD JEWS"



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

In a provocative keynote address, author Dara Horn questioned the efficacy of Holocaust education. She believes it is too often used to teach a universal lesson about man's inhumanity to man and is an example of Jewish erasure.

More #nomoreantisemitism conference coverage inside: Cover story, columnists, photos and more information resources.

STARTS PAGE 4

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GUEST EDITORIAL

What I have learned about antisemitism in our time



Jazmin Rymberg

COORDINATOR
#NOMOREANTISEMITISM CONFERENCE

IN NOVEMBER of 2021, I was hired by the Hamilton Jewish Federation to organize the inaugural #nomoreantisemitism conference.

In the early stages of planning, I looked for examples of antisemitism in local and national news reports. Unfortunately, I didn't have to venture too far, as news reports about antisemitic incidents appeared almost weekly — albeit, mostly in Jewish publications. Among them were hate-motivated home invasions, antisemitic incidents in schools involving Nazi salutes, and white supremacists proudly waving a swastika flag at the Ottawa "Freedom Convoy." I was deeply disappointed when our Prime Minister responded to the latter by describing the flag as "a symbol of hate," rather than acknowledging that the protestors were apparently fighting for the freedom to be antisemitic. It is only since the infamous Kanye West tweet that I have noticed the media and public figures calling this hostility towards Jews by its true name: antisemitism.

What's been most disturbing to me over the last 12 months is seeing several potential allies to the Jewish community equate standing up against antisemitism to taking a political stance on Israel. Some of the people I asked to participate in, attend, or promote the conference, for instance, hesitated, for fear of being perceived as standing up for Israel, rather than for the Jewish community.

What also concerns me is the amount of ignorance about the Holocaust and surge in antisemitic attacks around the world.

The Government of Ontario's recent introduction of a mandatory learning requirement on Holocaust education to the province's Grade 6 curriculum beginning in Sept. 2023 is a good starting point, but it is not enough. The responsibility of education should not fall solely on teachers' shoulders. Parents and guardians need to teach their children that hostility towards other races, religions, and genders can lead to global atrocities. It is important that we teach younger generations to confront the past in order to create a better future.

Jewish identity is more than remembering the Holocaust and fighting against antisemitism. Being Jewish can and should be celebrated. In addition to planning this conference, I have been responsible for planning the Jewish Book Festival and I've made a concerted effort to bring different Jewish stories to the forefront — stories that showcase different perspectives on Jewish identity, and different struggles beyond the Holocaust and antisemitism, as well as the joys of being Jewish.

I am honoured to have played a part in such an important initiative. Hamilton's reputation as "The Hate Capital of Canada" is certainly not what we want to see in our headlines. In the aftermath of this conference, I believe we can now call ourselves: "Hamilton: The Capital of Hope."

Why we must ally with other minority groups

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I enjoyed reading Harvey Starkman's piece about the importance of having allies in the Sept. 2022 issue of the HJN. We would do well to ally ourselves with other minority groups, even if our own people had nothing to gain from it directly,

because it is right to seek justice and support human rights, and to work against racism or homophobia. It is a necessary part of tikkun olam, repairing the world. We can only eliminate organized antisemitism by joining forces with the other groups that are targeted by the same extreme forces. Indeed, racism and antisemitism are both promoted by white supremacists, who blame Jews for everything that they see as bad, from environmentalism to the rise of people of colour. We have seen the deadly impact of these lies in the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting. Similarly, it was a Hamilton white supremacist group that attacked people at Pride in 2019.

Congratulations to us, Hamilton, on voting in a more progressive City Council, and keeping the most blatantly hateful candidates out of our municipally elected bodies. There is much more to be done, and it must be done together, as a united front.

MIRIAM SAGER

The HJN welcomes letters to the editor. To submit a letter for publication, email wschneider@jewishhamilton.org.



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Hamilton Jewish News celebrates 36 years



PHOTO BY DONNA WAXMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Veteran Canadian Jewish News journalist Ron Csillag (pictured above with HJN editor Wendy Schneider) was the featured speaker at a celebration marking 36 years of the Hamilton Jewish News held at JHamilton on Sept. 21. The Hamilton Jewish Federation organized the event both to mark the community newspaper's milestone anniversary and to honour its long-time editor Wendy Schneider and all those who have contributed to the HJN through the years.

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Why we need to talk about antisemitism

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

The #nomoreantisemitism Conference has put Hamilton on the Jewish map

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

THE CONFERENCE was the brainchild of Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg, who first conceived of the idea after Federation established combatting antisemitism as one of its new strategic priorities two years ago. The number of hate crimes targeting Jews in Hamilton had risen to an alarming degree during the pandemic and Rymberg believed a conference about the rise of global antisemitism could make a difference. But the momentum really began in July 2021, after Rymberg participated in a virtual seminar for educators put on by Yad Vashem, and secured funding from Margaret's Legacy, the Azrieli Foundation, McMaster University, and MASPIK! a partnership between the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs and JNF Canada.

The #nomoreantisemitism conference opened on Saturday night, Nov. 19 with Yad Vashem senior historian Robert Rozett giving an historical view of antisemitism, followed by a provocative keynote address by Dara Horn, author of *People Love Dead Jews*. She had the audience sit up and pay attention when she declared that decades of Holocaust education has had no measurable impact on antisemitism. The problem, as she sees it, lies in the well-intentioned but misguided practice of universalizing the Nazi genocide against the Jews.

To illustrate her point, Horn pointed to the example of many Holocaust museums or exhibits including a section on other genocides and human rights atrocities. "If you go to an exhibit at the National Museum of African American History about American slavery, you don't then enter into an exhibit that tells you about human trafficking around the world today and what are you going to do to prevent it," she asked. "And the reason they don't do that is because that would be turning the struggles of the Black community into a symbol of something that actually mattered. It is dehumanizing to be used as a symbol. It is even more dehumanizing to be used as a warning and that is what Holocaust education is being used for."

Horn also questioned the wisdom of Holocaust exhibits that try to portray Jews "just like everyone else."

"The problem with that is the Jews spent 3,000 years not being like everybody else," said Horn. "It's the distinctiveness of Jewish culture and experience that is so important to us. And that's what we're being asked to erase in order to gain public respect."

Horn's remarks were echoed the following day by Jody Spiegel, director of the Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program at the Azrieli Foundation, who cautioned against teaching the Holocaust as a metaphor or cautionary tale that can be used to warn young people of the dangers of bullying.

"The use of the Holocaust as a metaphor erases years of Jewish history and realities of our oppression. We need to stand up against hate in all forms but we also need to stand firmly in our own Jewishness—both our history and our Jewish future. Antisemitism is not new and when we bend to excuse it or fear defining it, we perpetuate it," she said.

Defining antisemitism, however, has become a surprisingly polarizing issue, given the controversy surrounding the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. In an impassioned address to conference attendees, the honourable Irwin Cotler, Canada's special envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and fighting antisemitism, recalled how the 2001 Durban World Conference Against Racism devolved into a hate-fest against Israel and the Jewish people and ushered in a two-decade long era of "a new, virulent, escalating, globalizing anti-Jewishness which singles out Israel and the Jewish people ... for discriminatory treatment in the family of nations."

After 15 years of discussion and debate, the IHRA Plenary adopted its Working Definition of Antisemitism, in May, 2016, a document that's been under attack ever since by left wing groups, the same groups, says Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, from which Jews have found themselves increasingly excluded.

Given that social justice and inclusion are embedded in "Jewish DNA," this has been especially painful for Jewish progressives. Fogel spoke about "erasive antisemitism" on the left, that requires Jews to "erase" their lived experience of discrimination and any positive feelings they may have for Israel.

"If you assert that Israel is a core part of your identity as a Jew, then you're disqualified from having a seat at the table," said Fogel. "But you can't because Israel is the quintessential evil of the progressive class."

This attitude is the prevailing one on university campuses, for which Jewish students are ill equipped to address.

"Absent an anchoring in what our tradition is, you have no ability to appreciate why (Judaism) is worth saving or why you should invest in doing the saving," said Fogel. He says what is really needed is a concerted effort on building both Jewish literacy and a sense of pride among young people about being Jewish.

"We can't get Jewish students into advocacy unless they have a reason to do it," he said in response to a question from the audience. "That reason is being Jewish. First, get them to feel good about their Jewishness and to value it."

In the days following the conference, Rymberg received an outpouring of appreciation from attendees, speakers, public school board representatives and the Hamilton Police Services, who requested use of the conference's opening video about antisemitism in Hamilton. Rymberg says his primary goals have been met:



CONFERENCE PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIELLE BLANCHER PHOTOGRAPHY

Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg is flanked by Evelyn Myrie, community activist in the area of anti-Black racism and Hamilton mayor Andrea Horwath

"We can't get Jewish students into advocacy unless they have a reason to do it. That reason is being Jewish. First get them to feel good about their Jewishness and to value it."

SHIMON FOGEL
CEO, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs



Far left, Shimon Fogel, CEO, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA)

Left, Dr. Robert Rozett, senior historian in the International Institute for Holocaust Research, Yad Vashem.



Joint presenters Jody Spiegel, director of the Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program at the Azrieli Foundation and the Honourable Irwin Cotler, Canada's special envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and combatting antisemitism.

#NOMOREANTISEMITISM

Campus outreach



Yad Vashem educators Yoni Berrous (above left) and Dr. Robert Rozett gave pre- and post-conference presentations to Hamilton high school students, teachers in training at Trent University (above centre), members of Windsor's Jewish community and Jewish law students at Western University (pictured right, Misha Apel, co-president of the Jewish Law Students Association with Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg.)

putting Hamilton on the "Jewish map" —Yad Vashem has already invited Federation to have a seat at its annual gathering of international partners—and establishing Federation as the central address for any organization or group looking for resources on

combatting hate and antisemitism.

"We dreamed about this for two years," he said. "I'm very proud that we helped a lot of people open their minds about how to deal with Holocaust education and antisemitism in a different way."

CONFERENCE REPORTS CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE

Before the conference, I believed that antisemitism came from right-wing extremists, but now I know I was wrong



BY **TAMARA VINEBERG**
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I HAVE a confession to make. I have been blind.

When the words regarding antisemitism rise, I've put shields up so I wouldn't see. This might be strange coming from someone who has facilitated a mosaic art project around antisemitism. Let me explain.

Thanks to my work at the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, I attended the #nomoreantisemitism conference in Hamilton. Before hearing the speakers over two days, I had a preconceived notion of what Jew hate is. My perception was that it came from the right and extremists; I excluded others in society from this. I was wrong.

Several speakers at the conference provided historical context to antisemitism. Some of you, like me, may have forgotten that individuals have been singling out Jews since the Roman and Greek Empires. Historian Robert Rozett of Yad Vashem framed it well by saying the evolution of antisemitism is not a straight line. Stereotypes developed because of laws allowing Jews to do certain types of employment. Over time, ideas and perceptions became entrenched concerning Jews.

Author Dara Horn brought up a point in her keynote speech that I related to. Jews are taking part in their own erasure. We are teaching

others that Jews are people like everyone else and we are not different. However, this erases our pluralism. She also established an interesting point that hit home with me—the relationship between antisemitism and the Holocaust. We repeatedly teach students that the Holocaust resulted from Jew hate, but we forget to instruct them on the historical background that this hate goes back centuries. Students need to understand that Jews come from a rich culture and history.

Another eye-opening moment for me was hearing about hate taking place from the political right and left. Michael Levitt, CEO and president of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies, illustrated examples from both sides.

The far left has antisemitism rooted in anti-Israel and anti-Zionism rhetoric, while the far right perceives Jews as a threat to civilization because they are perceived to control the banks, media, and government. Shimon Fogel of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) encourages Jews to engage in the conversations around antisemitism and hate. We need to read, learn, and appreciate the toxicity of hate. Then we should engage other Canadians and build allies.

Irwin Cotler put it bluntly that we are witnessing a resurgence of global antisemitism, but we have the absence of outrage. This is an assault and Jews can't fight this alone. The key battleground is hate bubbling up online and in social media.



Conference attendees listen in rapt attention to keynote speaker Dara's Horn's presentation.



Far left, Tablet Magazine's editor-in-chief Alana Newhouse.

Left, Michael Levitt, CEO and president of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies

Speakers raised this position many times during the conference. Lisa Hepfner, MP for Hamilton Mountain, encouraged attendees to take part in the Government of Canada's roundtable to address online safety.

Alana Newhouse, founder and editor of The Tablet magazine, illustrated how our society is broken. On one side, we have the people who love and advocate for the status quo. On the other side, we have the brokenists—those who believe what was working before is no longer working for civilization. She says the world is changing and we shouldn't be surprised that Jews are considered the enemy. Alana encourages us to be more active about antisemitism instead of reactive.

"Be more Jewish. The moments

I feel uncomfortable about talking about my Jewishness are the moments I need to push through it."

She also encouraged us to open all doors and meet others at their spark or interest in Judaism. If someone loves Jewish food, literature, or film, support them with these types of resources.

What this conference has done for me is open my eyes. There isn't one aspect of antisemitism. We must continue learning about this form of hate. We need to provide historical context and find new ways to educate others about Jew hate. All Jews need to be embraced from wherever they are coming from. Now let's go forward and find new ways to shout out against antisemitism as a community.

"Dara Horn brought up the point that I related to. Jews are taking part in their own erasure."

TAMARA VINEBERG
Associate Director
Communication and
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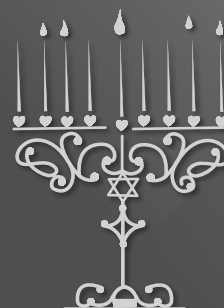
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PARTICIPANTS REFLECT ON THE #NOMOREANTISEMITISM CONFERENCE

An educator's perspective

Like many educators, my fear is of being seen as too Jewish and of serving my own kind over other marginalized groups



BY **JESSICA TAYLOR CHARLAND**
SPECIAL TO
HAMILTON JEWISH
NEWS

I RECENTLY had the privilege of attending the inaugural #nomoreantisemitism conference in Hamilton. With a coffee in hand, I took my seat in the gallery, eagerly waiting to hear the wisdom and advice of the opening speakers. After a poignant introductory film compilation of images and facts, and a moving welcome address by Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg, Dr. Robert Rozett, senior historian at Yad Vashem, took the stage. He started by impressively packing more than 3,000 years of history into a short 30 minutes, noting that to understand antisemitism today, one needs to know the history. He shared sentiments echoed by many of the weekend's presenters that we need to educate students (1) on the Holocaust, (2) on the wider history of antisemitism, (3) on Jewish culture, and (4) to strengthen the values that help us fight against all forms of hatred.

As an educator in the teacher education program at Brock University, I thought about my own practices in these four areas. I certainly think I excel in fostering values and attitudes to fight against all forms of hatred, and most schools have character education programs to foster this. I do share some personal anecdotes about Jewish family life with my students,

but I don't often talk about the Holocaust or antisemitism. Part of the reason is my fear of being accused of being too Jewish, of serving my own kind over all the other marginalized groups in need of attention. (This has been a feeling shared by Jewish educators at other workshops I have attended). The other is that it is simply not part of my curriculum. (In September 2023, when Ontario's new Grade 6 Social Studies document comes out with explicit Holocaust curriculum, you can bet I'll be among the first group of eager readers).

I wonder how many Jewish educators feel my same hesitation, and how many educators in general use the excuse of not knowing enough history or not having any curricular guidance to even start the conversation. I came to this conference in hopes of leaving empowered to do more.

I was ripped from my moment of self-reflection when Dara Horn, award winning author and Jewish scholar, blazed onto the stage. Full of enthusiasm and dark wit, she was both educational and entertaining. I was especially excited to hear her speak after reading her newest publication, *People Love Dead Jews* — a title she was shocked her editors let her keep and a book I couldn't put down once I'd started. Asking how people are supposed to care about Jewish deaths if they don't care about how Jews lived, Horn argued one of the faults of Holocaust education is the tendency to connect with the general audience by showing that Jews

"were just like them." Horn labels this as a form of cultural erasure and insists on the teaching of Jewish identity and culture to show the world what was lost and to confront the falsehoods that foster antisemitic thought. When we don't have this whole picture approach, she warns that students walk away from Holocaust education thinking that antisemitism is simply reduced to something that happened in the '30s and '40s, in Germany, by a man named Hitler, and resulted in the killing of six million Jews.

In a presentation the following day, Jess Burke, outgoing director of community training at CIJA, stressed the importance of presenting Jews as a monolith. She asked "if not us, who is going to tell our stories?"

It became clear that educators need to make Holocaust education personal. Yoni Berrous, educator at Yad Vashem, discussed how educators can use social media and technology to reach today's digital-native youths. He talked about the use of short accessible clips, challenging students with critical dilemmas, and using student-centered approaches.

Danna Horwood, founder of Margaret's Legacy, shared a documentary of her family's Holocaust story and classroom-ready materials — including a lesson on embracing our core values that I can immediately see myself using.

Marc-Olivier Cloutier and Michelle Sadowski of the Azrieli Foundation shared their extensive collection of first-person survivor memoirs and accompanying lesson plans. Each of these stories came with the context of life before and after the war, and in beautiful multi-modal assemblages,



Margaret's Legacy executive director Dana Horwood with Margaret's Legacy educator Lila Strub



Jess Burke, outgoing director of community training at the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, gave a compelling presentation in the conference's educators track.

making viewers brim with emotion and empathy.

Teachers who attended this conference no longer have the excuse of not knowing enough about the history of antisemitism that pre-dates the Holocaust; nor the excuse of not having the right material to share — for it became abundantly clear how much was out there ready to use. I walked away understanding that education, when done right, is an important piece of the puzzle to fighting antisemitism. There is a lot more that needs to be done outside of schools, but I feel a little more equipped to do my part.

Jessica Taylor Charland is a PhD student at OISE and teacher educator at Brock University.

"I walked away with an understanding that education when done right, is an important piece of the puzzle to fighting antisemitism."

JESSICA TAYLOR CHARLAND
Teacher, educator,
Brock University

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PARTICIPANTS REFLECT ON THE #NOMOREANTISEMITISM CONFERENCE

No boundaries to antisemitism

A community member reflects on the long road ahead to cultivate Jewish pride and escape the oppression of fear



BY HELEN METZ
SPECIAL TO
HAMILTON JEWISH
NEWS

I WAS fortunate to be able to attend the Hamilton Jewish Federation's #nomoreantisemitism conference last month, and came away feeling both disheartened and stimulated.

I was disheartened to learn about the extent of antisemitism in Hamilton, in Canada, and around the world. Also disturbing was learning that antisemitism both "punches up and punches down," the first being the belief that Jews are wealthy and smart, and the second a perception that Jews are dirty, evil, immoral, conniving and threatening. Many of the speakers referred to antisemitism as the world's most enduring hatred. Hatred begets hatred—as we have witnessed, so sadly, with the Holocaust.

I was also distressed to learn statistics that show many North American students believing that the atrocities that took place during the Holocaust have been exaggerated. This kind of

Holocaust distortion leads to Holocaust denial, and its root causes are ignorance and a willingness to believe inaccurate statements.

I learned that antisemitism has its roots in the Greco-Roman Empires and increased with the growing prominence of the Church and the accusation that the Jews had killed Christ. We also heard that Jews have been demonized and de-legitimized since time immemorial.

Historically, Jews have been blamed for a myriad of illnesses and plagues, from the Bubonic Plague to COVID, an observation that had Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg, quote Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks who once said, "We need to build a future in which people no longer die for their faith."

There was much more to this conference, however, than depressing facts. What I found stimulating, and even hopeful, was the way we were called upon to inform, educate and call out antisemitism when we see it, whether it be on social media or in our daily lives.

This is especially relevant when it comes to the demonization, delegitimization and double standards that

are so often leveled against Israel, a phenomenon former Soviet refusenik and Knesset member Natan Sharansky called the "3 Ds."

Another example of delegitimization can be seen in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) settings, when progressive groups reject the notion that Jews should be included amongst discriminated against minorities. The messaging we heard was to not let fear take over, to educate and instill Jewish pride, and to feel good about being Jewish.

Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs CEO Shimon Fogel concluded his excellent presentation by advising the audience to combat antisemitism through what he calls the "3 Es," namely, "education," "engagement," and "excluding" those whose intention is to do harm. Irwin Cotler, later added a fourth "E" to the mix—"empowerment."

The overall theme of the conference was that prejudice and racism must be eliminated in all their forms, and that antisemitism is toxic to democracy overall. It is the canary in the coal mine, and a slippery slope towards the demise of democracy. Let us all be vigilant.

Helen Metz is a retired teacher and social worker, mother and grandmother, and a volunteer for the Hamilton Jewish Federation.



The Honourable Irwin Cotler greets a long line-up of admirers after a riveting presentation about global antisemitism.



Conference attendees were deeply engaged during Q&A sessions and post-session discussions.



Empowerment was the takeaway

A McMaster student shares his impressions and points to the cascading impact of antisemitism around the world



BY JACOB METZLER
SPECIAL TO
HAMILTON JEWISH
NEWS

ON NOV. 20, I had the privilege of attending the second day of the #nomoreantisemitism international conference in its advocacy track. If someone were to ask me what word best described the day, I would say "empowerment." Whether explicitly mentioned or not, empowerment was the theme of every presentation, as one speaker after another stressed that it is time to stand up to hate, no matter its form; we should not be silent when society pushes one group beneath its heels.

Another stark message emanating from the conference was that hate will not stop on the doorsteps of Jews. It will move on to the next door and then the next. This message is one which the Honourable Irwin Cotler, the day's excellent keynote speaker, has spent his career trying to spread. Cotler, who has been a tireless advocate for human rights for decades, spoke passionately about the dangers of antisemitism. Using the metaphor of the canary in a mine shaft, he said that Jews may be the first to feel the effects of toxic hate in the mineshaft of democracy, but they will not be the last. Cotler's words reminded me of German theologian Martin Niemöller's eerie prose after the Second World War: "Then they

came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me." Antisemitism is not, and should never be a Jewish problem.

Just as the fight against antisemitism is not the prerogative of Jews alone, educating the world about the horrors of the Holocaust should not solely be a Jewish responsibility. That's why I was so inspired by Edward Serotta's talk on Holocaust education in the lands where the Holocaust happened. A journalist, photographer and filmmaker specializing in Jewish life in Central and Eastern Europe, Serotta is the founding director of Centropa, an organization that equips non-Jewish educators with the tools and knowledge to give their students a reason to care about their countries' Jewish history. Centropa does this by giving students opportunities to research the pre-Holocaust Jewish culture of their country, making the students stakeholders in the process. This approach encourages students not to see Jewish victims of the Holocaust as only victims, but rather as a people with a rich and vibrant history. The only way to make people care about something, says Serotta, is to show them why they should care.

That day's final and perhaps most powerful message was a renewed commitment to the eternal pursuit of "never again." Those words, which have defined the lives of so many Jews since 1945, must never be forgotten. These two words, "never again," do not just refer to antisemitism.



Edward Serotta gave a presentation about Holocaust education in the lands where the Holocaust took place.

Rather, they are a constant pledge to ensure that hate never becomes so systemic that it reduces people to less-than-human. We must fight against all forms of hatred to truly uphold that pledge. Ultimately, a commitment to "never again" is a promise to cast hate off from the face of the world forever, no matter how impossible that task may seem.

Jacob Metzler, who was born and raised in rural British Columbia, is a first-year social sciences student from McMaster University. Since he was young, he has been interested in human rights and social justice. Jacob hopes to expand his ability to advocate for the issues that matter to him and fostering a connection to his Jewish heritage and the Jewish community in Hamilton during his time at McMaster.

NEED TO KNOW

All resources listed below are available through the Hamilton Jewish Federation by calling 905-648-0605.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Unlearn Antisemitism, an online resource hub to learn about, identify, and take action to address antisemitism. Website: unlearnantisemitism.ca

Fight It, a hub of information on what antisemitism is, its manifestations, and different ways to confront it if you encounter it in the workplace. Website: fightit.ca

TEACHING RESOURCES

Antisemitism Today – Facing History and Ourselves equips students to recognize contemporary manifestations of antisemitism.

Website: facinghistory.org/resource-library/antisemitism-today

Azrieli Foundation Echoes and Reflections empowers educators with dynamic classroom materials and professional development. Website: echoesandreflections.org

Yad Vashem Educational Resources, available online at: yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials.html

BOOKS

Why So Many People Still Don't Understand Antisemitism by Yair Rosenberg
Skin in the Game (2017) by Eric K. Ward
Antisemitism Here and Now (2019) by Deborah Lipstadt, about the re-emergence of antisemitism.

Uprooted: How 3000 Years of Jewish Civilization in the Arab World Vanished Overnight (2018) by Lynn Julius is on the Mizrahi experience.

Locked Doors: The Seizure of Jewish Property in Arab Countries (2001) by Itamar Levin is a recounting of the economic persecution of Jewish communities under state-sanctioned government order in Iraq, Egypt, Syria.

JCENTRE FOR WELLBEING UPCOMING NEW PROGRAMS

BEAT THE WINTER BLUES

Gabriele McSween talks about some great techniques you can use to improve your mood during the cold and dreary winter months. This program is in association with Hamilton Jewish Family Services

COACHING TO COPE

PhD Rebecca Fried dives into the motivational strategies to cope with stress and anxiety for university students preparing for final exams. This program is in association with Hillel.

ORGANIZE YOUR SPACE AND CLEAR YOUR MIND

Professional organizer Corrie Goldfinger talks about how to eliminate clutter in your space and in your mind. We could all use some decluttering in our life!

PILATES

This weekly beginner class with Debbie Strub goes over the introductory moves to Pilates to strengthen your body and increase your mobility. Bring your own mat and water bottle!

MYKEEPER.COM

Learn about this amazing company, which sheds a new light on death using virtual memorials. This modern approach allows you to keep the memory of your loved ones alive, online.

PAINT WITH MAGGIE

This workshop is designed for kids to express themselves artistically. Paint step-by-step on canvas, while being guided by artist Maggie Norris. Create a beautiful piece of art and impress yourself with your inner artist!

NUTRITION BASICS

Personal trainer and fitness expert Erin Lewis discusses the importance of nutrition and how to fuel your body for optimal daily performance.

MOSAICS RETURNS: FAMILY EDITION

Shawna Robbins returns for another incredible mosaics project, family style! Build your self-confidence using art and create a beautiful tile mosaic to take home!

EXPRESSIVE ART THERAPY

Registered therapist Eliora Wolfe welcomes kids in Grades 6, 7, and 8 to use art, music, drama and writing to express themselves while discussing any topics that might be on their minds. Four weekly sessions.

CANNABIS AND YOUTH

Dr. Adam Norris is back to discuss how to talk to your children about cannabis. This informative talk will give you the tools to approach this controversial topic with your preteens and teens.

SONGWRITING WORKSHOP

Join Barry Livingston and Paula Baruch for this incredible 6-week program for kids aged 13+ and adults. Learn the fundamentals of songwriting in a fun and engaging, small group setting. Get your musical creative juices flowing!

ACTING WITH AIDA!

Join us at the JHamilton for a fun interactive experience and introduction to basic acting including improvisation, monologues, scene study, speech, acting styles, and movement. Gain confidence, public speaking skills, physical activity and self-discipline. Geared for kids aged 6-12.

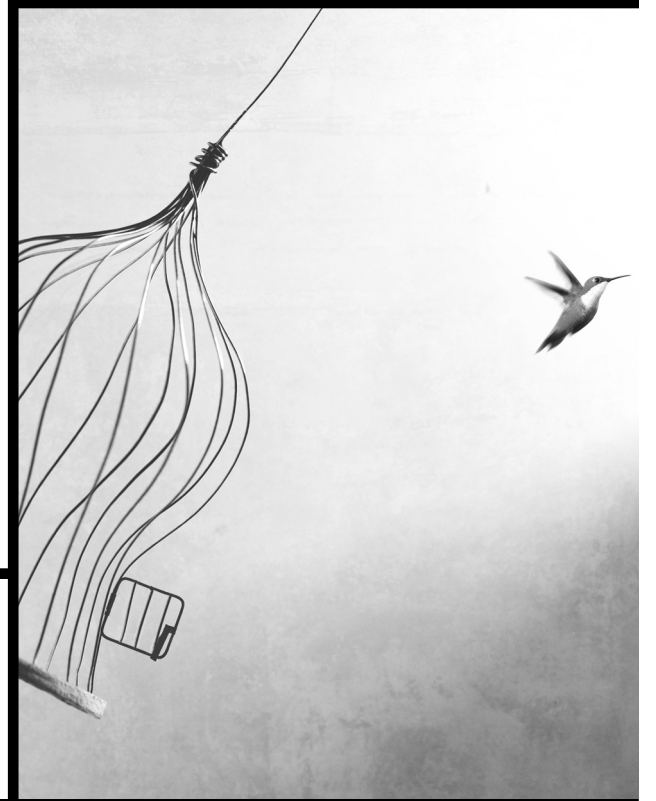
WELCOME TO THE JCENTRE FOR WELLBEING

The JCentre for Wellbeing's goal is to reduce the social isolation and anxiety that so many people are experiencing by offering a place for people to come together and connect. The Centre will offer informal activities, groups, and drop-in programs, and a public awareness and educational program in collaboration with the mental health community in Hamilton.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

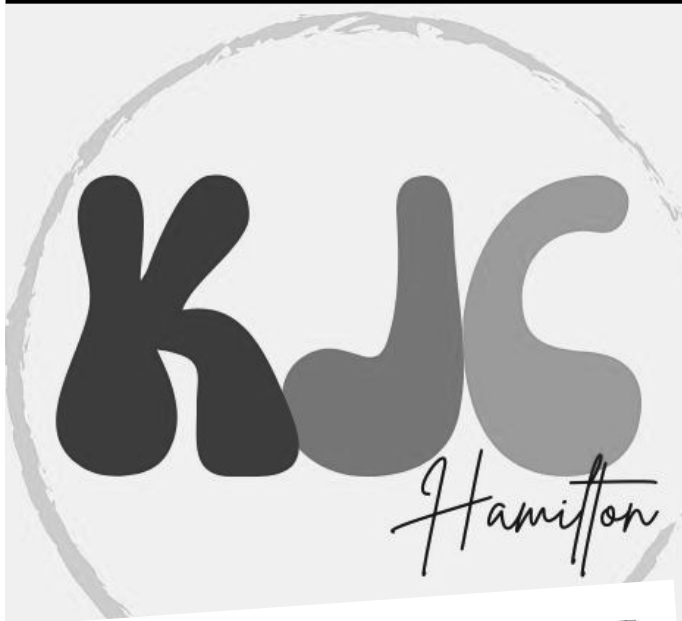
PLEASE CONTACT MAGGIE NORRIS
AT MNORRIS@JEWISHHAMILTON.ORG
905.648.0605

THE JCENTRE FOR WELLBEING IS SUPPORTED BY
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HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

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KADIMAH JCAMP WINTER BREAK

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

Session 1 | Dec. 27 - 30, 2022

Session 2 | Jan. 3 - 6, 2023

KADIMAH JCAMP ALL-YEAR-ROUND

Kadimah JCamp Day, Jan. 27

Family Day Program, Feb. 20

Spring Kick-Off Event, May 7

Kadimah JCamp Jumping Day, June 11

KADIMAH JCAMP MARCH BREAK

March 13 - 17, 2023

KADIMAH JCAMP PASSOVER

April 10 - 11, 2023

KADIMAH JCAMP SUMMER CAMP 2023

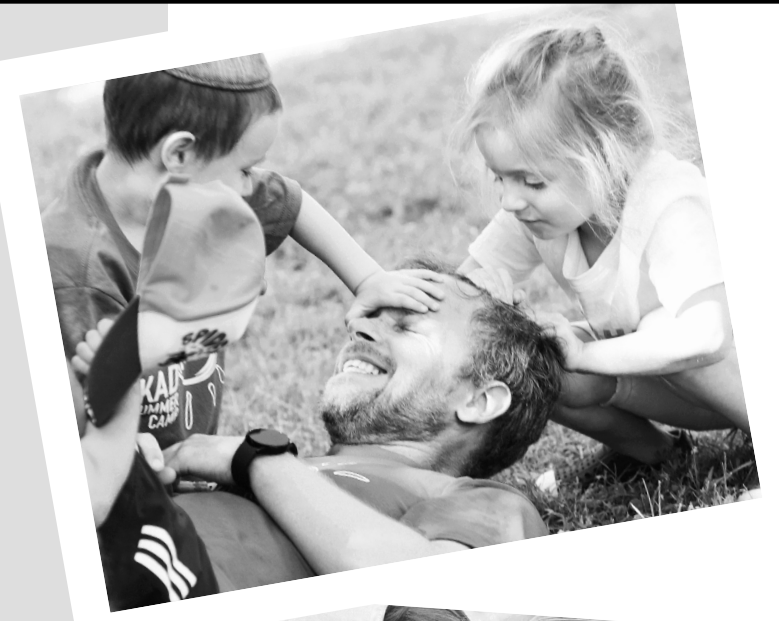
REGISTRATION OPENS FEB. 1, 2023

8 Sessions | July 3 - Aug. 25

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION

PLEASE CONTACT IVAN CHERNOV

AT ICHERNOV@JEWISHHAMILTON.ORG | 905.648.0605



Federation CEO secures a new long-term contract

Gustavo Rymberg is credited for his visionary leadership and the energy he brings to the Hamilton Jewish Federation

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

WHEN GUSTAVO RYMBERG took on the role of Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO back in August 2017, he told Federation president Jacki Levin that he wanted to transform Jewish Hamilton. This would turn out to be no empty promise.

In the five years during which he's occupied Jewish Hamilton's top communal position, Rymberg has orchestrated an impressive list of accomplishments so extensive that the Federation board recently voted to extend his current contract to March 2028. The decision, according to Federation vice president Jason Waxman, was unanimous.

"It's not only that we wanted Gustavo to stay on, but we really needed him to stay on," he said. "Over his initial contract period, he's really taken ownership of the role in a way that benefits the whole community ... There's a lot of passion there and I think the entire Hamilton Jewish community is better off."

A native of Argentina, Rymberg began working his way up the Jewish communal ladder not long after he and his family moved to Winnipeg in 1997 as part of an initiative to grow the city's Jewish community.

"What the Winnipeg Jewish community did for us the moment we arrived was incredible. It's one of the reasons I appreciate Federation," he told the HJN in 2017. Rymberg

eventually took on a part-time marketing position for the then newly opened Asper Jewish Community Campus, which also became the moment he envisioned a new career path for himself that he dreamed would culminate in becoming the CEO of a Jewish Federation.

Over the next two decades, Rymberg pursued his goal with single-minded focus in a trajectory that included five years as marketing and membership director with the Ottawa JCC and seven years heading up marketing, programming and revenue development for Toronto's two northern Jewish community campuses, and culminating in his being hired for the CEO position at the Hamilton Jewish Federation.

The beginning of his tenure could not have come at a more opportune moment. The Lower Lions Club JCC had been sold two years earlier, leaving the community without a neutral gathering space for events and celebrations. Federation staff were working out of rented office space and the Annual Community Campaign had stayed at the same levels for as long as anyone could remember.

But Rymberg proved to be up to the task. Over the next three years, he brought the dream of a Jewish community campus that much closer through the creation of JHamilton, a money-saving venture that saw four Jewish organizations share space. He implemented the long-talked about merging of the Hamilton Jewish

Federation and the JCC, brought an influx of younger members into the Federation board of directors, facilitated the establishment of new strategic priorities that reflected the Jewish community's changing priorities, and launched a number of innovative community programs, such as the Marvin Caplan Jewish Book Festival and the Hamilton Jewish Film Festival. But the most tangible manifestation of Rymberg's leadership has been the unprecedented growth in Federation's Annual Community Campaign.

"When Gustavo first came, the Campaign was just over a million dollars and last year it was \$1.7 million, which is almost a 70 per cent increase in four years. That's because of him, really," said Federation treasurer Lorne Rochweg.

Jason Waxman echoed that sentiment when he called Rymberg a fundraising "rock star."

"Every year he breaks his own record, which is just better for all the beneficiary organizations. He's consistently raised the bar for himself and for all the volunteers working under him ... I think most people think he's never going to get there and he always gets there. It's really impressive."

Federation president Howard Eisenberg credits Rymberg for "changing the whole culture at Federation," while board member Lowell Richter sees Rymberg's leadership "translating to the JCC becoming stronger. He's the instrument."

But the word most often used by the individuals interviewed for this article to describe Rymberg is "visionary." When the HJN spoke with Lorne



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Rochweg days before the inaugural #nomoreantisemitism conference that Federation hosted in late November, he recalled the skepticism among board members when Rymberg first articulated the possibility nearly two years ago.

"He's pulled it off," said Rochweg. "It's amazing. It's really putting Hamilton on the map and that's because of him and his vision."

Jacki Levin couldn't agree more. "Having just put Hamilton on the Jewish world map," she said, "Gustavo is not one to rest on his laurels. He is working to deliver even more exciting programs and to reach out to the unaffiliated, the marginalized, and the vulnerable. He loves this community and we certainly love him."

Gustavo Rymberg, CEO, Hamilton Jewish Federation

"There's a lot of passion there and I think the entire Hamilton Jewish community is better off."

JASON WAXMAN
Vice-president, Hamilton Jewish Federation

Two new faces at JHamilton

Newcomer Ivan Chernov and Dundas native Maggie Norris bring experience and passion to their roles

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

IT'S A HEALTHY sign when an organization —such as the Hamilton Jewish Federation—can continue to attract new and enthusiastic staff members. Such is the case with the Federation's two latest hires – newcomer Ivan Chernov, who is both Kadimah JCamp director and children and family program coordinator at the JCC, and Maggie Norris, whose mandate is to plan mental health and wellness programs as part of Federation's new JCentre for Wellbeing.

Argentinian native Chernov has a background in physical education and Jewish community youth work. He and his wife, a pharmacist, moved to Hamilton a year ago from Buenos Aires. While working as a specialist at Camp Kadimah last summer, Chernov's personal magnetism and work ethic did not go unnoticed.

"You could see that he loved what he was doing," said Rymberg. "He loves to be with kids and he has passion and energy." By the end of the summer, Rymberg knew he had found his new camp director.



IVAN CHERNOV



MAGGIE NORRIS

Over the last several months, Chernov has been hard at work planning Winter Camp (beginning on Dec. 27), and monthly children's activities for kids from ages four to 11.

"My dream is having an activity here every week, but my first goal is to see kids learning Jewish values through monthly group activities," he told the HJN.

Dundas native Maggie Norris spent much of her youth volunteering in Hamilton's Jewish community before earning her Masters degree in science, health studies and gerontology from the University of Waterloo. After living in Chicago and Youngstown Ohio for a number of years, she, her husband, and their three children moved back to their hometown to be closer to family.

JCENTRE FOR WELLBEING PROGRAM

Mosaics with Shawna Robbins



PHOTO BY ADAM NORRIS

Shawna Robbins also known as "the Tile Lady" shows a group of artists how to break tiles and re-imagine them to create an interesting and unique mosaic art piece. The two-part family event took place on Oct. 23 and 30 at JHamilton.

Norris's goals are to provide our community with informative lectures and creative activities for all ages that are designed to improve the overall mental health of participants. Her programming will include educational and engaging activities that appeal to all ages.

"We're providing people with an opportunity to bring more positivity in their life by doing what they love and

putting themselves first," she said.

JCentre for Wellness programs also include a wide range of offerings, including lectures, exercise classes and art workshops (see page 8)

For more information you can find us online at hamiltonjcc.com, email mnorris@jewishhamilton.org, or call 905.648.0605. We'd love to hear from you.

It is you, our community whose support, encouragement, and hard questions have helped Shalom Village's lights stay bright in the face of tremendous challenges. And it is our staff who are beacons lighting the way as they bring care and comfort to all those who call Shalom Village, "home."

The hard work and passion of our staff, combined with the dedicated knowledge and courageous decision-making of our leaders, and the unfaltering support of the community, and our donors are our oil. Together, they fuel our commitment to provide possibilities for legacy, learning, and love, to those facing incredible health challenges, and the need to make the often-heartbreaking move to a new home.

Our staff are skilled at bringing light and love to each resident and community member we support at Shalom Village. Each and every day, they find ways to brighten their day, making it possible for them to experience moments that matter today, tomorrow and throughout their lifetime.

Each team member uses all of themselves; their knowledge, and their skill to help our residents to define what their moments that matter are. Then they roll up their sleeves, and work together in skilled ways to help them happen. They are helping people to live deeply and meaningfully within the context of tremendous personal and individual health and social complexities, grief, worry, and the realities of a pandemic, communal living, and resources.

Our staff live and breathe our mission, to make every moment matter, AT HOME @Shalom. We count

on your belief in us; an unwavering belief and support, coupled with our hard work, to be the fuel that feeds the light in each of our staff, allowing them to continue to light the way for our residents, and family members. Together, we will continue to grow the quality and consistency of our lights, making the living of moments that matter a reliable, rich experience for all of us, AT HOME @Shalom Village.

Pat Morden, Interim CEO



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Thanking our Heroes at Chanukah

It has been said that each of us is a living Hanukkah candle capable of spreading our own inner light in the world and living a story of heroism by doing so.

At Shalom Village, we are fortunate to have approximately 300 heroes working within our walls. They are housekeepers, dietary-staff, kitchen staff, personal support workers, nurses, maintenance and more.

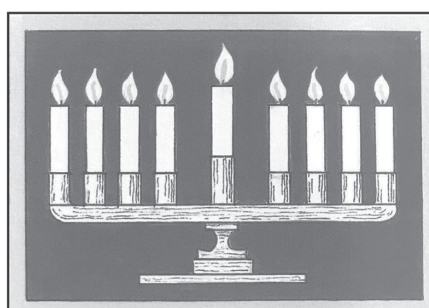
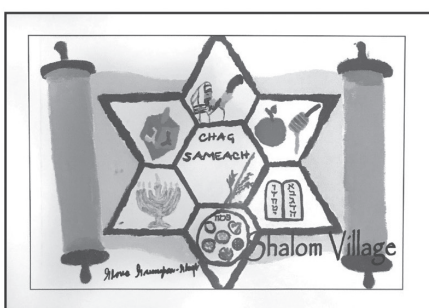
Working in long-term care has always been a labour of love. The people who spend their days working to support our seniors have always been remarkable, dedicated, and loving souls. Those same people have persevered through what is arguably one of the most difficult times to work in healthcare. And for Shalom Village, the past year, as we know, was exceptionally trying.

This year's holiday campaign will raise funds to say thank you to every Shalom Village employee with a Heroes at Hanukkah Hamper, brimming with goodies, gifts and treats. The Shalom Village Foundation will raise funds and accept donations of suitable goods to pass along to the wonderful people who share their light and love all year long, and in the most trying of times.

For more information, contact Laurie Pringle or Kathleen Thomas at Foundation@ShalomVillage.ca

This year, let Shalom Village help you stay connected to your friends and loved ones. Shalom Village Tribute Cards are a great way to support our seniors, and remind people you've been unable to see, that you're thinking of them.

To send cards simply visit ShalomVillage.ca and click on the "give today" link. If you'd like to send multiple cards, or prefer to speak to someone at the Foundation, feel free to call us at 905-529-1613 X227.



JNF Hamilton welcomes Orna Richter to its team

Orna Richter replaces Suzy Polgar as head of JNF regional office

BY **ABIGAIL CUKIER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

SUZY POLGAR lived in Israel on and off for six years in the late 1970s. After moving back home to Canada, she didn't return to Israel for more than 30 years.

"I loved to travel around Israel in the 1970s. When I returned in 2013, my husband I were driving around and I mentioned that Israel looked more beautiful than I remembered," Polgar says. "I knew the Jewish National Fund had planted millions of trees. So I realized at that moment, that Israel really was more beautiful. I would have to say that was my proudest moment."

Polgar started working for the Jewish National Fund of Regional Ontario in 2012 doing programming and outreach before becoming executive director in 2016. Travelling to Israel each year, she says she sees the impact the JNF has. "It is more than trees now.

It is amazing to meet the people whose lives we have affected or the organizations we have helped," she says.

Recently, Polgar decided to step away from her role as executive director, with Orna Richter taking over the position in May. "Orna has an extensive background in the Jewish community and in fundraising and has a great understanding for who we are and who Israel is. It was a great match," says Polgar, who is continuing as senior donor relations director in the organization. "My family is growing. I've got two grandkids now and I needed to step back. So it was just perfect. We work amazingly together and we will continue to work together."

Richter moved to Hamilton five years ago with her family from Edmonton, where she had been director of development for the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. In Hamilton, she worked for the McMaster Children's Hospital Foundation and then as director of development for "The House" in Toronto. Richter also sat on the board of Jewish Family Services and was a director on the



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUZY POLGAR
Suzy Polgar, will be JNF Hamilton's senior donor relations director



PHOTO BY TALYA OHAYON, SPECIAL TO THE HJN
Orna Richter, executive director, JNF regional office

board of the Association of Fundraising Professionals in the Golden Horseshoe region. Richter joined the JNF board in 2018 and became associate director

of JNF Regional Ontario in April 2021.

Richter says she is guided by her strong connection to Israel. She says the story of Israel and the story of the Jewish people is about the triumph of the human spirit. Her grandfather was a member of the Haganah, building Israel from the ground up with his bare hands and assisting Jewish refugees from German-occupied Europe off boats and into safety. Her father at age 21, fought in the Sayeret Golani brigade in the Yom Kippur War of 1973. As a child, Orna and her brother spent summers in Israel with her father.

Growing up, Richter was involved in Jewish youth groups in Edmonton and then later with Hillel while she was a student at York University. "I have a very deep connection to Israel, and then there is my volunteer and professional experience. I want to bring that background and instill a sense of pride in our donors who have supported us for so many years," she says.

"I find sometimes donors are giving to the JNF because they love Israel, but they don't actually know the work we're doing, and

the extent to which their dollars are transforming lives in people from all backgrounds and faiths who live in Israel. My passion lies in educating donors about projects in order to foster deep ties, build trust and make sure that JNF and Israel remain relevant to them."

Richter also plans to provide opportunities for community members of all ages, faiths and backgrounds, to engage with JNF and learn about Israel and the vital work it does.

"Sometimes, people do not understand why we care about Israel so much. Antisemitic rhetoric runs wild and free on social media. Our job at JNF is to have real conversations here in the diaspora. We do not only build the foundations of Israel's future, but we must practise constructive dialogue even, and especially with, people who do not share our political or personal beliefs.

"Israel needs a voice in the diaspora. Israel is open, inclusive, progressive and the only democracy in the entire region. Let's talk about that. Let's create relationships where there were once enemies."

Chag Chanukah Sameach

Wishing you and your loved ones warmth and light this Chanukah season.



Barry Yellin

Jeffrey Manishen

Brad Wiseman

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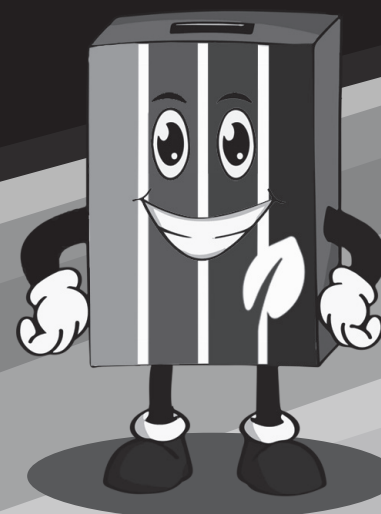


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A Hamilton family bids a final farewell to the Queen

The Balinson family's connection to the British monarch ran deep and spanned three generations

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

WHEN NEWS OF Queen Elizabeth's death spread across the globe on Sept. 8, Scott Balinson was ready. As a member of the late Queen's cherished Hamilton's Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, he had been pre-selected to march in Her Majesty's funeral procession.

Military service is something of a Balinson family tradition. Balinson's father, Morley Balinson, a veteran of the Korean War, was a member of the Canadian Reserves and the first in the family to join the Argylls. Morley's older brothers Bob and Alex fought in the Second World War, and when Alex's plane was shot down in the skies above Malta, their father Henry, the irascible editor of Hamilton's Yiddish language newspaper of the era, would go on to eulogize his son in his final editorial.

Another Balinson family tradition was having close encounters with the late Queen herself, moments that were especially meaningful for Balinson's mother Joan and his grandmother Isabel Barker, whose ancestors had immigrated to Canada from the UK during the Irish potato famine. Ironically, these encounters came about because of Balinson's father's side of the family.

"The connection of the Argylls to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth is an extremely long connection. She was Colonel-in-Chief of the Argylls prior to her coronation, when she was still Princess Elizabeth," he explained, which is why the Queen frequently made a point of presenting the regiment with colours during her Canadian visits.

It was during one of these visits that the Balinson family was invited to attend a garden party in the Queen's honour in 1984 at Fort York in Toronto. While his family looked on in amazement, the Queen, who Balinson remembers was wearing an Argyll brooch on a bright yellow outfit and "one of her very stylish hats," stopped in front of Scott Balinson, a 19-year-old newly minted soldier during her walkabout.

"You're in the band," she said, having observed his distinctive uniform reserved for members of the Argylls' Pipes and Drums band.

"Yes, Your Majesty," he replied.

"You have a large band," she went on, which Balinson heard as "you're a very large man" (he's 6'2"). "Yes, ma'am," he managed to reply just as one of his friends snapped a photo.

"I was quite awestruck with her," recalls Balinson, describing the Queen as "extremely charismatic, who carried herself with great poise and dignity."

History repeated itself in 2002, when the Queen presented her Argylls with regimental colours at a huge, orchestrated event at Copps



PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT BALINSON



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

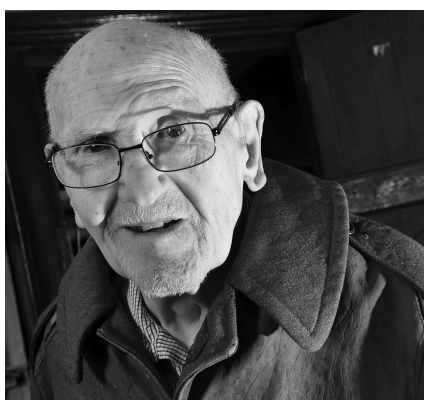


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HJN

Coliseum in honour of her golden jubilee. Scott and the late Carmen Balinson's son, Max was one of two children of Argyll members chosen to present the Queen with flowers. The day, which will forever be etched in Balinson family lore, began with family patriarch, Morley Balinson's reciting a Hebrew prayer during the opening consecration and culminated with the Queen exchanging a few words with five-year-old Max, whom his parents had outfitted in a specially tailored Argylls uniform for the occasion, a moment captured by a Hamilton Spectator photographer.

"It was a long day for a five-year-old but he carried it off beautifully and looked terrific," said his proud father.

Learning something about his

family history makes it easier to grasp the significance of Scott Balinson being given one final opportunity, 20 years later, to pay respect to the monarch who, for seven decades, had meant so much to his regiment and to his family.

The HJN spoke with Balinson weeks after his return from a 10-day whirlwind trip to the UK in September, where he was one of close to 6,000 military personnel who marched at the Queen's funeral. As a member of a pre-selected Canadian contingent, Balinson had just 36 hours following the news of the Queen's death to pack his bags and travel to Ottawa, where the Canadians caught a military jet to the U.K. There, they were met by liaison officers of the British military and

driven to an army base 30 miles west of London, where they trained for the funeral parade. The experience was unlike anything Balinson had experienced in a long military career.

"The mess facilities were just absolutely clockwork — 1,800 soldiers moving through in 10- or 15-minute increments, 250 at a time," he said. Equally impressive were the vocal cords of British sergeant majors from various ceremonial regiments who skillfully guided hundreds of soldiers, including 12 army bands, in drills designed to simulate the timing and distance of the actual parade.

All of that, however, was just the prelude to a series of "extraordinary experiences, like being bussed to the parade grounds at 3 a.m. on the day before the funeral, where thousands of soldiers, cavalry included, executed every aspect of the parade, and leaving the base at 2 a.m. on the day of the funeral and witnessing the crowds lining the surrounding streets and parks kilometres deep.

"There were just so many people. There was a real quiet dignity but you could just see that every single person had their phone camera on."

Arriving at their pre-designated position, the soldiers stood at attention for an hour and 20 minutes, "which is a long time for any body of soldiers to stand at attention but it required that degree of discipline and patience and to show reverence to the solemnity of the occasion."

Joan Balinson was watching the proceedings on television, reliving memories of similar moments shared with her late mother.

"I had that sense that she was sitting beside me and that we were watching, listening and talking together," she told the HJN.

While she wasn't in the habit of spending hours in front of the television, Joan found herself rising at 6 a.m. every morning during the week leading up to the funeral "listening very carefully to what was being said. The music was glorious ... It was all very deep. There was just an opportunity to sit and be in the moment," she said.

Scott Balinson shares his mother's sentiments about the British monarchy.

"They're people who have had a profound impact on our history and our country's identity. I know there have been a lot of challenges regarding our colonial history as we come to terms with reconciling aspects of the residential school system, but there are also many good things. The rule of law and constitution and peacekeeping, and being a beacon for hopefully future generations of immigrants coming to make this country a better, stronger place," he said. "Although it's a Highland regiment, my regiment has people of every faith, gender and race ... My father was a Jewish highlander and a regimental sergeant major. There are people from Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries joining the Canadian Armed Forces. It's an incredible institution."

Above: Queen Elizabeth II stops to chat with a 19-year-old Scott Balinson at a military event held in Toronto at Fort York in September, 1984

Left: Five-year-old Max Balinson presents the Queen with flowers during the Monarch's 2002 visit to Copps Coliseum.

Morley Balinson, a Korean War veteran, was the first member of the Balinson family to join the Argyll Sutherland Highlanders.

Joan Balinson, an enthusiastic royalist, rose early every morning during the week leading up to the Queen's funeral to watch the ceremonies from her living room.

Upcoming film festival has Jewish roots, universal themes

The 2023 Hamilton Jewish Film Festival returns to The Westdale with an outstanding mix of feature films and documentaries

BY **HELAINE ORTMANN**
HAMILTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

“A filmmaker’s most important tool is humanity. You want to be able to capture humanity in your stories and bring out humanity in your characters.”

Ryan Coogler, co-writer and director of *Black Panther* and its sequel *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*, could well have been talking about the slate of films offered up at the next Hamilton Jewish Film Festival, that will be returning to The Westdale from Feb. 26 – 28, 2023. Films that articulate the Jewish and universal human themes of: displacement and belonging; love, loss and grief; mortality and acceptance; antisemitism and racism; joy, exaltation and transcendence.

Now in its fifth year, the Festival continues its mandate to bring entertaining and thought-provoking films to engage the broadest spectrum of the Jewish community, and provide an opportunity for the greater Hamilton community to learn about Jewish culture, Israel and Jewish history.

Over a period of months, a committee of volunteers as diverse as the films themselves, screened features and documentaries to select five titles aimed at attracting cinephiles and those who happily self-identify as “movie buffs.”

Following the opening reception, the curtain rises on Sunday, Feb. 26 at 1 p.m. with *More Than I Deserve*. Nominated for seven Israeli Academy Awards, this Jerusalem Film Fest Best Screenplay winner captures the raw and unadorned story of Ukrainian-born mom Tamara and 12-year-old son Pinchas as they seek to survive and thrive as new immigrants to Israel and develop an unlikely friendship and relationship with their religious neighbour, Shimon.

At 3:30 p.m., there is *Rose*, a tour-de-force portrayal of a Parisian wife, mother, and grandmother who, at age 78 after the loss of her husband, seeks to pick up the pieces and recreate herself. The film probes familiar and consequential questions. Does she—an older woman—still hold value as a matriarch in a family that no longer seems to need her and is preoccupied with their own generational issues? Can she, how can she, step forward, with grace and integrity intact, into a new life that is predisposed to youth and performance?

At 7 p.m., *On This Happy Note* delves into the personal and psychological landscape of Anat Gov, one of the most influential playwrights in Israeli theatre, as she faced a terminal diagnosis of cancer. Not maudlin, at times humorous, the film, produced almost a decade after her death, uses her own words, excerpts from her plays, and footage of her family and friends to trace Gov’s coming to terms with the end of her life and her wish to leave a happy ending. A Q&A follows the film with virtual guest Dr. Marissa Slaven, palliative care physician.



GRAEME MITCHELL - REDUX COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

The Festival continues on Monday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. with *Neighbours*, an uncompromising film that uses humour and satire to depict the childhood of little Sero as he experiences life in a Syrian border village in the early 1980s. The lessons he learns in school (do not speak Kurdish, venerate Assad, promulgate hate toward Israel and Jews) are upsetting and confusing to him; moreso because his next-door neighbours are a loving and caring Jewish family. The film, inspired by the director’s personal experiences, is followed with a conversation with virtual guest Dr. Scott Abramson, modern Middle East historian and a postdoctoral fellow in Israel Studies at Northwestern University. He will talk about Middle East minorities and Israel’s relationship with the Kurdish nation, past and present.

The Festival closes on Tuesday, Feb. 28 at 7 p.m. with the acclaimed feature-length documentary, *Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen, A Journey, A Song*. As the most definitive exploration of the singer-songwriter through his iconic hymn, the film accesses never-before-seen archival materials including Cohen’s personal notebooks, journals and photographs, performance footage, and rare audio recordings and interviews. Following the film is a conversation with virtual guest Cantor Gideon Zelermyer of Montreal’s Congregation Shaar Hashomayim who collaborated on “You Want it Darker,” the title song of Cohen’s Grammy Award-winning album. Cantor Zelermyer officiated at Cohen’s private family funeral.

For the full schedule and to order tickets, follow the links at jewish-hamilton.org.



PHOTO BY SHAI PELEG



COURTESY OF COHEN MEDIA GROUP



PHOTO BY VARDI KAHANA



NACHBARNDPX

The three feature films and two documentaries that will be screened at the 2023 Hamilton Jewish Film Festival include (Clockwise from the left) **Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen, A Journey, A Song** (U.S.A. 2021), **More Than I Deserve**, (Israel 2021); **Rose** (France 2021), **On This Happy Note** (Israel 2021), **Neighbours** (Switzerland 2021)

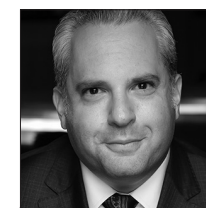
The festival also features Q&As with special guests



Dr. Marissa Slaven
Palliative care physician



Scott Abramson
Historian of the modern Middle East



Cantor Gideon Zelermyer
Leonard Cohen’s cantor

2023 HAMILTON JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE

WHEN

Sunday, Feb. 26 to Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023

WHERE

Westdale Theatre

SCHEDULE

Sunday, Feb. 26

1 p.m. MORE THAN I DESERVE

3:30 p.m. ROSE

7 p.m. ON THIS HAPPY NOTE

followed by pre-recorded Q&A with Dr. Marissa Slaven

Monday, Feb. 27

7 p.m. NEIGHBOURS followed by pre-recorded Q&A with Scott Abramson

Tuesday, Feb. 28

7 p.m. HALLELUJAH: LEONARD COHEN,

A JOURNEY, A SONG followed by pre-recorded Q&A with Cantor Gideon Zelermyer

COST

Ticket price per film: \$15

Opening film plus reception: \$25

Festival pass: \$60 includes opening night reception

TICKETS AND INFORMATION

Phone: **905-648-0605**

Email: info@jewishhamilton.org

Online: jewishhamilton.org

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**THIS CHANUKAH,
YOU CAN BE A LIGHT
THAT BOTH
ILLUMINATES THE
DARKNESS AND
DISPELS IT.**

HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION

#Here for Good



Each night of Chanukah, we add another candle to the menorah, and with each successive flame, we brighten our homes and our spirits, while reminding ourselves that even in the darkest of times, we have the power to bring light into the lives of those who need it most. And more. This year, the light each one of us brings serves to expose antisemitism and diminish it.

Today, social media and a culture of misinformation continue to dangerously amplify the voices of hate. And as we've repeatedly seen, animosity can have devastating consequences. Your contribution to the Hamilton Jewish Federation will help us shine a beacon powerful enough to penetrate even the darkest shadows of antisemitism and decrease its influence. With your gift, you'll power education, amplify the voice of truth, and inspire people of all faiths to recognize and respond to antisemitism in any and every form it appears.

WITH YOUR CONTRIBUTION TODAY, YOU ALSO KINDLE THE FLAMES OF JEWISH IDENTITY.

Your generosity becomes a light that ignites our children's thirst for Jewish education and culture.

YOUR GIFT GENERATES WARMTH AND LIGHT IN THE LIVES THAT NEED THEM THE MOST.

Here in Hamilton, in Israel, and in more than 70 countries around the world, you help ensure that our most vulnerable populations receive the critical support they so desperately need.

Your help can make this Festival of Lights one that brings relief to those living in fear, sustenance to those living with hunger, comfort to those who are alone, and hope and support to millions of Ukrainians who have fled or been displaced by the war waging in their country.

So this year, as you light the Chanukah menorah and watch the flames grow brighter each evening, may it remind you of the light you provide with your gift to Hamilton Jewish Federation and the impact you make on the lives of your extended global family.

Thank you in advance for your compassion and generosity.

We wish you and your family a happy, safe, and meaningful Chanukah. Chag Sameach.

PLEASE HONOUR YOUR PLEDGE BY FRIDAY, DEC. 30 TO RECEIVE YOUR 2022 TAX RECEIPT.

Send your cheque payable to Hamilton Jewish Federation, pay online or call the Federation office by noon on December 30th.

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*A charity can only issue a receipt for the 2022 tax year if the donation was received in 2022.

If the postmark on the envelope containing the donor's payment is dated on or before December 31, 2022, this is also acceptable.

Terri Lewis is being honored with the internationally recognized 2022 Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award for her involvement in the Hamilton Jewish community



The prestigious, internationally recognized Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award is given to Lions of Judah who have demonstrated the highest ideals of leadership and involvement. A proud Lion of Judah since 2013, Terri is part of the most dynamic philanthropic group of Jewish women in the world. They are strong women of all ages and an international sisterhood of thousands of global activists who care deeply about the Jewish future.

Terri's parents, Annette Dorfman and Sam Handelman, were two impoverished teenagers when they arrived in Toronto from Russia in the early 1920s. The couple worked hard, married and settled into Canadian society. By the time their third daughter Terri was one-year-old, they had saved enough money to open a poultry processing plant in Watford, Ontario. Despite their being the only Jews living in the small town located halfway between London and Sarnia, Terri's mother still kept a strictly kosher home.

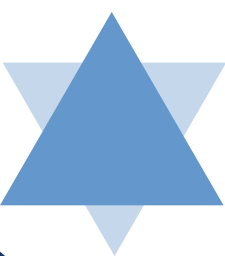
Charitable giving has always been a big part of Terri's life. As a child, whenever she and her siblings received their weekly allowance, the first thing they were taught was to allocate a portion for those in need and add it to the blue tzedakah box on their kitchen table.

"Because our parents never forgot their humble beginnings, one thing we knew for sure was that in every budget we made, we had to include one line for savings and one line for charitable donations," she has said.

For decades, Terri and her husband Milt have been stalwart supporters of many Hamilton Jewish organizations. While the majority of the Lewis family charitable donations are done jointly by Terri and Milton, Terri was eager to create a philanthropic legacy in this community through the Lion of Judah Endowment (LOJE) Fund, a permanent fund, given by women, that ensures that their Lion of Judah gifts will be made every year in perpetuity.

"When I first heard of the LOJE program, I decided that I was one of the lucky ones who could contribute. And then, I wanted nothing more than to pay up while I was alive, to see any good that might come from my generosity," said Terri.

Terri Lewis's commitment to the continuation of Jewish life in Hamilton - a commitment that goes beyond her own generation, and beyond her children's, is a commitment to the eternal well-being of the Jewish people and to a historical legacy of caring, loving kindness and social justice.



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CAMPAIGN UPDATE
As of Dec. 2, 2022 we raised \$1.033,042 57%
of our goal of \$1.8 million

OUR JEWISH COMMUNITY KEPT GOING STRONG.
NOW, WITH YOUR HELP, WE GO FORWARD.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

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Lack of affordable housing an issue that impacts us all

Jewish Family Services hosts housing summit at JHamilton that addresses the lack of affordable housing in Hamilton

BY **HEATHER MCLEAN**
HAMILTON JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

IT IS virtually impossible to ignore that there is a housing crisis happening around us, not just in Hamilton but across the country. Housing, long established as a basic human right by international human rights law, acknowledges everyone's right to adequate housing. Yet housing has never been more commodified than it is today. Lack of affordability, lack of supply, and discrimination are some of the common issues that renters are facing today, and without systemic change the condition will only worsen.

With these issues in mind, Hamilton Jewish Family Services (HJFS) recently convened the Hamilton Housing Summit, which was held at JHamilton in November. The event, which was well-attended and highly engaging, included a panel discussion by Amanda Ciardullo from the City of Hamilton Access to Housing, Courtney Levesque from the Hamilton Housing Help Centre and Julia Kollek, founder of the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters, all of whom shared their perspectives and insights on the current housing crisis in Hamilton. Lack of supply to match demand, long wait lists for subsidized housing and increased homelessness were at the forefront of the discussion, the panelists highlighted the issues at hand and our moderator Dina Honig fielded meaningful questions from the audience.

In the spring of 2022, Oxford Economics placed Hamilton among the top five least affordable cities in North America, and the third most expensive city in Canada in terms of housing costs, and Hamilton's housing crisis is expected to worsen in the coming years. Skyrocketing rents are causing more and more Hamiltonians to fall through the cracks. The Social Planning and Research

Council (SPRC) recently found that the growth in renters in Hamilton continues to outpace the growth in homeowners of the city. Based on the latest census data from Statistics Canada, the report showed that between 2016 and 2021, the number of renting households in the city shot up by 11.5 per cent. Across Canada, more than 44 per cent of Canadians are spending more than a third of their income on rent.

Currently, the City of Hamilton rent-geared-to-income waitlist has approximately 5,000 people and a five to seven year wait list. Furthermore, if you do not accept the single option presented to you, you are removed from the list and must begin the sign-up process again. The lack of affordable housing forces many families into precarious housing situations. Some have no choice but to remain in unsafe home situations, while others move into hotels and emergency shelters.

Increased supply of affordable housing is essential in order to reduce the wait times for subsidized housing, and policy changes are essential to increase investment into social housing solutions. Hamilton Housing Help Centre works diligently to support clients struggling to find adequate housing through assistance programs including one-on-one casework to find appropriate rental options, financial support for first/last months' rent and utilities costs, mediating landlord disputes, and numerous other support programs to both renters and landlords.

The housing summit also highlighted an important and innovative initiative being led by Julia Kollek, founder of the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS), a grassroots non-profit that aims to ease the homelessness crisis in Hamilton. Kollek spoke about the growing homelessness issue in Hamilton and how the tiny shelter project can fill this gap on behalf of displaced residents. There



PHOTO: COURTESY OF HJFS

are currently approximately 1,543 people experiencing homelessness in Hamilton, and only 509 emergency shelter beds. Whether they are living in shelters or outdoors, our homeless community members experience dangerous living conditions and lowered life expectancies. The HATS project is solely funded by donations and grants, and presents an innovative solution that provides dignity and independence to the homeless.

Housing is an issue that impacts us all and one that we at HJFS have been hearing more about from our clients who struggle to afford their rent, buy food and meet basic needs. Much like food insecurity, lack of affordable housing can be alleviated with a basic income floor as witnessed during the pandemic. Food bank use did drop during the pandemic with the introduction of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), but those living on social assistance continue to struggle to meet their basic monthly expenses.

For those facing housing and food insecurity in the Jewish community, there are additional challenges, in that the cost of kosher food is significantly more expensive. The concept of taking care of one another is paramount in Judaism as expressed in the Talmudic precept that a community

must provide for all of its members' spiritual and physical needs. This fundamental right should never have to be compromised. This is why your support of the work we do at Jewish Family Services is truly appreciated and impactful, because it sustains our Kasher Food Bank, poverty reduction strategies, financial assistance, employment counselling, and mental health services.

The HJFS Housing Summit was just the beginning of a larger conversation we must continue to have about steps we can take to address the housing crisis. We can be advocates to support policy changes at all three levels of government. Solutions include increasing availability of affordable housing units, changing tax policies to encourage the private sector to build and operate rental housing, and providing input on urban planning. We can be advocates by demanding systemic change to ensure that something as basic a human right as housing in Canada is available to all.

We thank you for your support and invite you to come by HJFS for a visit or get involved in the work we are doing, whether by donating or volunteering with us. To learn more, please visit hamiltonjfs.ca or email info@hamiltonjfs.ca.

Amanda Ciardullo from the City of Hamilton Access to Housing speaks about Hamilton's housing challenges as Courtney Levesque from the Hamilton Housing Health Centre and Julia Kollek, founder of the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters look on.

Wishing all our donors, volunteers and friends a *Happy Chanukah*

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Mother's day reincarnate



Phyllis Shragge

I HAVE A proposal for the federal government: a statutory holiday to honour that often-downtrodden species known as the mother. "Wait," you say, "We already have Mother's Day. It's in May."

To that comment, I reply: "Ha!"

Mother's Day as we know it may be fine for what it is, a superficial acknowledgment of mothers. Certainly, Mother's Day in May is enjoyable, and without a doubt florists benefit from this day of recognition, as do restaurants. But how does Mother's Day positively impact mothers on a long-term basis? It doesn't.

What mothers really need is one day a year when we can be honest, brutally honest, without recrimination. I will backtrack a bit and clarify my proposal. This new Mother's Day (which I shall call Mother's Be Honest Day, or MBHD) will be designed specifically for mothers of adult children.

On MBHD, mothers will have a Get Out of Jail card, an opportunity to say what we've suppressed during the previous year. We can be forthright, even critical, without receiving backlash. We can save all our suggestions and set them free on this one day with a guarantee of immunity. Mothers who take advantage of this day will rest assured that their relationship with their children will not be impacted.

That's the crunch here. Our children can tell us they don't approve of our decisions, or our attitude, or our philosophy on life, but the reverse is risky. If we say anything even slightly negative, it may be interpreted as, God-forbid, criticism. We might jeopardize the closeness we have fought to maintain as our children have grown and set out on their own.

If we know MBHD has a set date on the calendar, we can relax during the other 364 days of the year knowing that eventually we will be able to tell it like it is. Mothers will prepare for this momentous day by compiling a list of comments and suggestions that are normally off-limits. As MBHD nears, mothers will be confident that what needs to be said, will be said.

Just making the list will be therapeutic to all mothers who have so much bottled inside.

From the inconsequential to the significant, here are some subjects that cause friction between mothers and adult children and are best left to MBHD.

(Please note: The following examples are general and do not reflect anything I want to tell my own adult children. I am Switzerland in this thesis.)

1) A mother may want to critique her daughter's clothing, but she doesn't dare. Her daughter, on the other hand, won't hesitate to criticize her mother's fashion choices. Remember when the daughter admonished her for wearing a jean jacket with jeans?

2) A mother cannot suggest anything, even TV shows, without the adult son or daughter snapping at her. For example, if the mother recommends British crime shows (which require subtitles to interpret, but that's another matter) the offspring will lash back, saying: Don't mention those shows ONE more time!"

3) A mother may consider recommending fewer sugar-laden foods or fewer snacks for her son or daughter's young family, but she knows to keep quiet. However, the daughter doesn't hesitate to critique her mother's long-standing eating regime, which, thank you very much, keeps her weight under control.

4) A mother would like to make suggestions about the grandchildren's schedules and activities, the books they read, and time allotted for TV and iPads. But she will not. All decisions related to the grandchildren are off limits.

5) A mother might even consider putting in her two cents regarding disciplining the grandchildren. But she keeps her thoughts to herself. She knows to shut up. The end.

The bones of contention are endless. The mothers of adult children will have a heyday on MBHD. Now, the question is: How to regulate the adult children's reactions to their mother's honesty on this special, very uplifting day? Now, that indeed, is the question.

P.S. While we're dreaming, I propose an extra bonus on MBHD. I propose that adult children be compelled to incorporate the following five words into a discussion: "Mom, what do you think?" These words may be interpreted as radical, but they will do wonders for the mothers' self-confidence.

Phyllis Shragge is a local writer, mother of five, and grandmother of five.

Finding your "J"



Rabbi Ben Shefter

WHAT WOULD you say if I told you that most of the hallmarks of Chanukah are not Jewish? How would you feel if you learned the traditions you know and love derive from other faiths and ethnicities?

The truth is that Chanukah is teaming with non-Jewish traditions. The game of dreidel derives from a German game called teetotum, played around Christmas. The letters on the dreidel, nun (נ), gimmel (ג), hay (ה), and shin (ש) are the rules of the game in Yiddish, it is only a later addition that it means "A great miracle happened there." Sufganiyot, jelly doughnuts now rampant in Israel, combines a Moroccan breakfast doughnut, sfenj, and the Polish ponchkis. The infamous potato latke originated as an Italian cheese pancake. The more one looks around the Jewish table; the more one realizes how much the local traditions and cuisine affect the celebration of holidays.

Not only does Judaism take traditions from local communities; faiths are influenced by Judaism. The advent wreath, the Christmas lights, and the Kwanzaa candles are all examples of communities using light in their winter celebrations around Chanukah time. The Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Avodah Zarah 8a, even explains that Adam created an eight-day celebration around the winter solstice, which communities have celebrated long before Abraham was even born. Some suggest that it was much later, when the Maccabee story happened, that the winter celebration became the unique Jewish celebration of Chanukah.

So what are we to learn from a holiday that feels like the multitude of holidays celebrated in December that borrow so much from one another?

For me, the answer started to form when I learned Maccabees I, a part of the Apocrypha written in the 2nd Century BC, that tells a version of the Chanukah story. In chapter one, a group of "wicked men," what one might call secular Jews, wanted to Hellenize Jerusalem. This meant building gyms and bathhouses, ceasing circumcision, and ending

religious worship in the Temple. A group of religious Jews, the Maccabees, fought the wicked Jews and the Syrian Greeks to reinstate Jewish tradition and culture. According to this version of the Chanukah story, Chanukah was founded as a religious holiday, a holiday reminding us of our commitment to God and pushing against modern culture and Hellenistic ideas.

Even though the story in Maccabees I seems to be a war between secular and religious ideologies, the proliferation of Chanukah celebrations throughout modern times has been about integrating Judaism into the small moments of people's lives. Being able to light candles to differentiate ourselves as Jews while blending the best parts of local traditions has enabled generations of Jews to be proud Jews who can feel part of their local, non-Jewish, community. In other words, the core of Chanukah is not about building a wall and keeping secularization out; it is about integrating modern advances into our Jewish practice and evolving Judaism into a vibrant religion for everyone. It isn't that gymnasiums and Hellenistic ideas are inherently wrong; it is about learning to elevate them to a higher, more spiritual, purpose.

"The core of Chanukah is not about building a wall and keeping secularization out, but about integrating modern advances into Jewish practice."

In Jewish education, this merging of secular and Jewish identity is referred to as finding the J. When a youth group runs an ice skating event, we can ask what is Jewish about it.

When Hillel runs Bagels, and Beyond, we can ask what makes this Jewish. When someone volunteers as a form of Tikkun Olam, we can ask what is Jewish about volunteering.

As a rabbi and educator, this concept of ensuring Judaism underpins everyday experiences drives my work. No interaction should be left without a backdoor piece of Torah or exploring how Judaism frames our current situations.

This year, as we celebrate Chanukah, I encourage you to take some time to learn about how Judaism influences and transforms the ideas, rituals, and traditions around you and spend the eight days finding your Jewish voice—or in other words, finding your "J."

Rabbi Ben Shefter, an orthodox rabbi from Baltimore, Maryland, is currently the Senior Director and Senior Jewish Educator at McMaster Hillel.

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There's always time for tea



Helaine Ortmann

"YOU DON'T look 69," said my twenty-something neighbour with the pink hair, still breathless from her morning run up and down the escarpment steps. We'd been talking about aches and pains, and the benefits of exercise, physio and movement.

As a child, I hated looking young, and being young.

I was mortified to sit in booster chairs with legs dangling, especially in restaurants. Unlike in the present era when getting boosted is a badge of honour, back then it was just plain embarrassing.

I started kindergarten at age four and a half; my teacher promising my mother they'd restart me the following year if I couldn't keep up. I did, and accelerated noch, combining grades three and four. It didn't help matters that I was a pitzel.

At 16, I attended McMaster University, a 20-minute bus ride from my house. Even today, I flush when I recall how the driver attempted to charge me children's fare. I might be the only HSR patron on record for insisting on paying the more costly student price for public transit.

"Good things come in small packages," my mom always said, bless her heart, doing her best to make me feel better about myself.

Now, as a senior—a term I use as uneasily as my mother called herself "gramma" after our first son was born—I appreciate the crumbs and morsels from family, friends and strangers when they comment on my youthful appearance, or more importantly these days, on my level of activity and energy.

It means everything to me to keep up, and keep going. This morning, for example, I exercised for three uninterrupted hours ... in my kitchen.

I rolled out and braided the dough for two challahs—a new and essential skill my cousin taught me via FaceTime through the pandemic. No slouch, I insist on the four-braid style for which I need to replay celebrity chef Jamie Geller's video. Senior's moment, I guess. (Right over left, left over right, right down to the middle,

replace it, left down to the middle, replace it, repeat.) For my older son, I topped one with savoury Everything Bagel spice; the other I left plain (save for the shiny egg-wash) anticipating the French toast my younger son likes to make.

Retired, yet still a recovering workaholic and multi-tasker, and because I had a container of sour cream stored in the fridge, I also made a coffee cake, courtesy of Barefoot Contessa Ina Garten. This, to freeze, because you never know when you might need it.

I assembled the cake in my well-worn dented 10-inch tube pan (batter, streusel, batter, streusel) while I replied to texts from my French toast-eating son and viewed messages from former co-workers on a What's App group titled "Power Women."

Checking the recipe to confirm the baking time, I panicked. Did I include one-quarter teaspoon kosher salt in the dough as Ina instructed, or regular salt? Oy vey, did I put in any salt? Senior's moment, I guess again.

As part of this morning's workout, I cleaned the kitchen counters, using a solution of vinegar, water and a bisel Dove dish soap that I tossed together, courtesy of an Instagram hack. For good measure, I damp mopped the floor, also with vinegar and water.

Then it was time to change into a t-shirt and workout pants, free from flour and sour cream. Hmm, my 40-minute chair-based yoga routine or 30 minutes on my stationary bike? I shelled a bowl of peas to noth while I made up my mind.

Five deep inhalations and exhalations later, shoulders and neck relaxed, I heard the front door. My husband was back from his monthly lunch with long-time friends.

Giddy with excitement at how productive I had been this morning—the smells of freshly baked challah and cake wafting through the house—I joined him on the front porch to relax.

"You're stopping for five minutes," he noted with approval.

Long enough to sip a cup of tea.

Helaine is by nature a trusting person and when someone comments on her youthful appearance she wants to believe them.

Community cancer support

Jewish organizations have partnered with Wellspring to introduce a peer support program for patients and caregivers



Emily Jane Pascoe

IN THE SUMMER of 2015, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. I was in my early twenties, planning a trip to Europe, and just about to start graduate school. Her surgery was scheduled for three weeks after my university graduation and plans were already underway for a party.

I sort of felt like Ben from The Graduate (1967) when he reluctantly dons the scuba suit gifted by his father, jumping into the pool to great fanfare. When Ben tries to climb out, his parents push him back into the water and all you can hear is his laboured breathing inside of the scuba suit as he sinks to the bottom. I could not anticipate the profound loneliness of the caregiving role that I was

about to take on. I will always be grateful to a close friend who encouraged me to build a "small circle of trust" because she recognized that, as a caregiver, I would also need support.

Everyone who has been touched by cancer has a story to tell. For many of us who belong to the Jewish community, we may be more comfortable sharing those stories with someone who understands where we are coming from. In a new partnership, L'Chaim Cancer Support Program (funded by the National Council of Jewish Women, Toronto) has teamed up with Wellspring Cancer Support Foundation to introduce a peer support program for patients and caregivers who are members of the Jewish community.

Peer support volunteers are compassionate, resourceful, and trained in active listening skills that allow them to listen to your story without judgment. They understand the difficulty of sharing the cancer experience with friends and family as too often the people who love us are unable to listen because they want to offer reassurance and find quick solutions. The

volunteer has been there; they know the shock of the initial diagnosis, the challenges of treatment, and the on-going stress and anxiety of having lived with cancer. They are familiar with the fear of surgery, the effects of cancer treatments, the anxiety of ongoing testing, all amidst family obligations. You can meet with the peer support volunteer over the phone or online, in a safe, confidential, and respectful environment. You can meet once or twice or as many times as you find helpful.

Wellspring is a national network that offers more than 40 programs for patients and caregivers, led by professionals and offered online free of charge. These programs include nutrition classes, personalized exercise programs for people in treatment and in recovery, online yoga, meditation, coping skills programs

like relaxation and visualization, money matters for financial stressors, a children and parents program for families coping with cancer, the healing journey program, as well as an education series of Be Well Talks.

Regardless of where you are in the cancer journey, whether you are supporting a loved one through treatment or if you are in recovery and just want to talk about what you have experienced, Wellspring can match

you with a peer support volunteer.

If you are a patient or a caregiver and are looking for support in the Jewish community, please contact Wellspring at wellspring.ca/online-programs/lchaim-caregiver-peer-support-request/ or email them at lchaim@wellspring.ca If you are interested in becoming a peer support volunteer with Wellspring and L'Chaim, you can submit a volunteer application on the Wellspring website.

Emily Jane Pascoe is a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto where she studies religion and Jewish Studies. She and her husband recently moved to Hamilton.

"I could not anticipate the profound loneliness of the caregiving role that I was about to take on until a friend pointed out that I also needed support."



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Shalom Village update: That was then, this is now



Pat Morden is Shalom Village's interim CEO.

Shalom Village as described in a recent Hamilton Spectator article does not resemble the Shalom Village of today

BY PAT MORDEN
SPECIAL TO HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

"NO ONE can go back and start a new beginning. Always we can start today to create a new ending."

Shalom Village as described by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) inspection report (reporting actions from earlier this year and late last year) and reported in the Spectator on Nov. 23 is not the Shalom Village of today. It does not clearly appreciate today's reality of an organization that has learned from all its experiences and is building on the strength and clarity of mission, dedication and the courage of its loyal staff, sound quality improvement actions, and the growing impact of solid informed leadership.

In the past months we have done, and continue to do, the hard work to understand the root causes of these findings, acted to address those findings, and are already seeing visible changed outcomes and the evolution of sustainable practices. Families, residents, and staff are speaking of the changed lived experience at Shalom Village. We have come a long way and are energized by the visible impact of our hard work to do more.

Our whole team is now working solidly together; dedicated, skilled professionals who are truly making moments matter at home at Shalom Village. We are confident

with our current practices, reviewed weekly, that the next report from the MOHLTC will engender much deserved confidence in the care and practices at Shalom Village.

When I spoke with Joanna Frketch, The Spectator journalist, I was very transparent about the past, while also being clear that we have made incredible progress. I invited her to visit us to see the current reality of Shalom Village, as it is today. The invitation stands, and I hope that someday soon, The Spectator will enthusiastically report the wonderful stories that unfold at Shalom Village every single day.

I am proud to be leading such a courageous and dedicated team. They have reflected on the learnings from the past and are moving from that, leaning into the future. My commitment to the staff and residents is to continue to be on the ground running with them, holding the vision, so they are always clear where we are going, to be a sound and solid place to land, to plan and that helps them back up again. I will work with the board of directors to engage and recruit leaders whose passion, knowledge and leadership excellence match and can advance those of the A.T.H.O.M.E team, a team that thrills me each day in their growing capacity to make every moment matter at Shalom Village.

The report spoke to five areas, with specific examples that did not meet the standards of the MOHLTC and, in truth, did not meet the standards of Shalom Village. In each of these areas we have taken significant steps:

1. *Care that was not acceptable.*
Given the serious nature of several

of the incidents directly tied to the behaviour of one staff member, we terminated their employment. We have reviewed with all our staff the resident's rights and their duty to report when they see or hear interactions that are not acceptable. We have met with the residents and families involved, apologized, and done our best to demonstrate that this is a safe home, where they can live with an expectation of each staff member treating their choices with respect, listening to them and being transparent.

2. *Infection Control*
We have acted quickly to isolate those who have tested positive for COVID and put measures in place immediately to prevent spread. We have fully and transparently communicated what was happening and what we were doing to all our collaborators. The result has been very limited spread, and often no spread. By working closely with Public Health, we were able to resolve these unavoidable cases of COVID in a timely manner. Our outcomes have reinforced the quality of the newly implemented procedures and expertise which we have put in place.

3. *Individuals with dementia who respond in unexpected ways to others and their environment*
We have created an experienced team, led by a senior nurse, that includes our social services worker to design and implement caring strategies to help mitigate the impact of their disease on themselves and co-residents. Additionally, the team will soon be further bolstered by specially educated personal support workers to help all our team members develop and consistently implement effective

plans of care. Potential altercations between residents with dementia will continue to be an issue for all long-term care homes, and we will work hard with our team to mitigate these.

4. *Hiring Practices*
Our hiring practices were updated and changed prior to the last inspection and were in place at that time. They continue to be in place and are imbedded consistently into our practices.

5. *Nutrition and Choice*
Our dietary staff found the underlying reason for the mistakes and implemented changes to ensure our residents get food that tastes wonderful, is safe and allows them choice in how they want to manage their own lives. Food is important to most of us, both from a nutrition point of view and from a personal perspective. Finding a balance between what is healthy and what soothes our soul, especially when we are ill is hard for most of us. We will continue to work on that balance with our residents.

These changes have been augmented by ongoing regular staff education, many fine new staff joining our teams, the revitalization of relationships with external partners and internally, the sprucing up of our living spaces, as well as idea sharing. We have developed and continue to refine a robust quality improvement process with regular reporting that will help us keep an informed eye on our outcomes and allow for early detection with regards to any standard that is not being met.

"I am proud to be leading such a courageous and dedicated team at Shalom Village. My commitment is to continue to be holding the vision, so they are always clear where we are going."



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A Hamilton artist with a story to tell

Fortunée Shugar's art is an expression of both the joy of creating and the difficulties of exile

BY HARVEY STARKMAN
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

"I BELIEVE THAT everyone has a story to tell," writes Hamilton artist, teacher, and community volunteer Fortunée Shugar.

Shugar's story begins with the trauma of exile and dislocation. Born in Cairo, she was four years old when the Egyptian Jewish community was caught up in the aftermath of the 1956 Suez Crisis, the invasion of Egyptian territory and the occupation of the Canal Zone by Israeli, British, and French forces. At the time, the well-established and vibrant Jewish community in what was a richly multi-ethnic Egypt numbered about 60,000 people. Between 1956 and 1958, 25,000 Jews were expelled, their possessions confiscated, their lives overturned. Shugar, two siblings, and her parents were suddenly refugees. After three years in France, they received visas for Canada and a chance to start a new life. Today, only a hundred or so Jews remain in Egypt.

Shugar's first move was to Montreal. After public and secondary school, she attended Sir George Williams (now Concordia) University, studying design and drawing, but left before graduating. She went on to earn diplomas in dress design, pattern making, animation and cartooning. After seven years in British Columbia, where her two children were born, Shugar and her husband Bill moved back east to Ottawa to be closer to family, a decision that they would make again in 2016, when, as empty nesters, they moved to Hamilton in order to be closer to their own grandchildren.

The 30 years Shugar spent in Ottawa was a time of discovery and transformation. In 2005, she completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the University of Ottawa, graduating Magna cum Laude the same week as her son and daughter. At



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

Fortunée Shugar poses for a portrait in front of one of her many paintings which adorn the walls of her home.

university, Shugar was encouraged to begin painting and to experiment with Abstract art, and it was through painting that she found a voice to tell a dark part of her story. It was there, too, that she began to believe in her artistic vision.

"Intuitively, from deep within, your true soul comes out in the process of creating an abstract painting," she says. "The process is not easy and sometimes uncomfortable. Sometimes my work is chaotic; sometimes painful, reflective of the difficulties of exile."

But when Shugar tells this story, her conversation takes an unexpected turn.

"My focus is not on the actual refugee experience and how difficult it was," she says, "but how it has affected my passion about creating art and reaching out to people, wanting to help them tell their own stories."

Darkness is not the dominant tone in Shugar's work. It is brightness and joy. There is the joy that comes from working with her hands, the joy of opening her glass kiln and seeing the astonishing colours of her pendants,

of connecting to her heritage and her community through her pieces of Judaica, of spontaneous discovery as she applies colours to a canvass or works in mixed media. And there is, above all, a joy in creativity itself, a joy that she wishes to share.

To that end, Shugar has created the Hand to Hand Legacy Project, an activity that fuses her belief in the narrative power of art with her conviction that the process of making art is essentially a joyful activity that is available to everyone. The goal is to stimulate and help seniors create a special object that can be passed down through the generations, an object that would "preserve memories of their lives, their thoughts, their dreams, and (of course) their stories." The idea grew in part from the regret she feels from having no such connection to her own grandparents.

"I realized that this is how I could help others reach into their own life stories and create something meaningful and wonderful," Shugar writes in her project description. The program ran in 2019 through the auspices of Hamilton Jewish Family Services.

Then came COVID. Community funding will be needed to run the program again.

Being an artist is not easy. Artists work in solitude, often with little encouragement and financial security. Leaving Ottawa meant leaving behind galleries that regularly showed her work, and patrons who supported it. But in her six years in Hamilton, Shugar has discovered a warm and welcoming Jewish community that acknowledges her as an artist and appreciates her contributions.

Starting over is also not easy. Shugar credits her husband Bill, her children and grandchildren, her parents and family, her old friends and new friends for their support. But in true Shugar fashion, she doesn't stop her story here.

"Being an artist can be extremely satisfying, nonetheless," she adds. "Especially when one can pass the passion and the joy on to others."

Harvey Starkman is a regular contributor to the HJN. Fortunée Shugar's work can be viewed at fortuneesugar.com.

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JOSH SALMON

Welcoming the stranger: A Chanukah tale for the ages

A random act of kindness brings an unexpected reward

BY BARRY ROSEN
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

CHANA AND NACHUM lived with their four children in a small apartment in Montreal. Like many recent immigrants, they had little money and sometimes had difficulty paying their rent. They were, however, rich in one important way—there was always an abundance of love in their home.

Chana and Nachum would sometimes quibble about things that annoyed them about one another. Chana complained that Nachum was often kinder to strangers than he was to his own family. Nachum reassured his wife that family was his first priority.

Another disagreement between them was over religious observance. Chana was a strong believer in Jewish tradition. She kept kosher, made sure that every Jewish holiday was observed in their home, and lit Shabbat candles every Friday night.

Nachum had a strong interest in Jewish history, culture, food, and Yiddish literature, but he had little interest in Jewish observance. He thought that lighting Chanukah candles was a waste of time, but he tolerated this ritual since it meant so much to Chana.

It was the first night of Chanukah. The candles, the latkes, and a festive meal were ready. Chana and the children were excitedly waiting for Nachum to arrive home from work. He was late, which happened on more than one occasion. Finally, just as the sun was about to set, Chana heard the sound of a key in the front door and in walked Nachum.

She was about to greet Nachum with her usual kiss and hug, but she stopped herself when she noticed that Nachum was not alone. He was accompanied by a very odd-looking, unkempt stranger who had a long stringy beard, greasy hair, wearing an old moth-eaten winter coat. Chana could not help but stare at this unusual man whom Nachum had invited into their home.

Aware of his wife's disapproval, Nachum awkwardly introduced the stranger. "This is my wife, Chana," he said, "I'm sorry sir, but I've forgotten your name."

"Campbell," said the stranger, "Jim Campbell."

"Nice to meet you," mumbled Chana, drumming up as much enthusiasm as she could muster, which wasn't a lot.

"Excuse us," said Chana. "I would

"She was about to greet Nachum with her usual kiss and hug, but stopped herself when she noticed he was accompanied by a very odd-looking, unkempt stranger wearing an old moth-eaten winter coat.



like a private word with my husband.

"Certainly," responded the stranger. Chana smiled politely, and motioned for Nachum to join her in the next room.

Once they were alone, Chana said to Nachum in a loud whisper, "So tell me, who is this person?"

"Someone I just met," responded Nachum.

"Someone you just met!" exclaimed Chana. "Where did you meet him and why did you invite him to our home?"

"He was shivering in the cold while waiting for a bus so I offered him a lift. He looked like he could use a home-cooked meal, so rather than driving him to the men's shelter where he is living, I asked him to join us."

"Nachum, you do not know who this man is! He is a *fremde* (stranger). Did you ever think that he might be planning to kill us?" exclaimed Chana.

"Chana, don't talk *narishkeit* (nonsense). I am sure that he's harmless. He's an *oreme mensch*, (a poor man) who happens to be hungry," said Nachum.

Chana was exasperated by the whole situation. "Oy Nachum!" was all that she could say. She realized she had no choice but to have the stranger join them for the evening's traditional Chanukah meal.

Before they ate, Chana and Nachum gathered the children together, who were excited to be celebrating the holiday.

They lit the Chanukah candles, said

the appropriate prayers, and everyone, including Nachum, sang a few Chanukah songs. Their visitor also joined in.

It seemed surprising that a stranger with the name "Jim Campbell" seemed familiar with Chanukah prayers and songs in Hebrew. Their guest certainly did not appear to be Jewish.

After the meal, Jim thanked Chana and Nachum for their hospitality and shook both their hands. He stood up to leave, and asked where the closest bus stop was. Nachum insisted on driving him home.

Nachum drove Jim right to the front door of the shelter, and wished him the best of luck. Nachum watched as Jim entered the building. On his way home, Nachum thought about Jim and how difficult his life must be.

When Nachum returned home, Chana told him that she had found a small cloth sack under Jim's chair—a sack that obviously had belonged to their guest. They looked inside the sack and found 100 silver dollars. They were both shocked!

Nachum took the sack and drove back to the shelter to look for Jim. When Nachum inquired at the front desk, he was told that there was no one named Jim Campbell registered there.

Nachum then went to the police station and explained what had happened. The police officer on duty told Nachum that they would let him know if someone named Jim Campbell

contacted them seeking his money.

During the next several weeks, Nachum and Chana did not hear anything further from their guest. Nachum made several more visits to the shelter.

There was no sign of Jim Campbell.

At the end of the month, Nachum revisited the police station, and discovered that Jim had not contacted them. Nachum was then told that the sack and its contents were his to keep.

When Nachum got home and told Chana the news, the two of them reopened the sack. This time, in addition to the 100 silver dollars, they found a note thanking them for their generous hospitality and wishing them good health and happiness.

Back then, 100 silver dollars was a lot of money. Since both Nachum and Chana believed in Jewish values, they donated most of the money to charity, keeping only a small portion to help them pay their rent.

Chana and Nachum talked about what to make of Jim Campbell's visit to their home during Chanukah and the events that followed. While Nachum didn't know what to make of Jim Campbell, Chana was convinced that he may have been Elijah the Prophet, disguised as a poor man who was down on his luck.

But Nachum and Chana agreed that they learned one important lesson: when you are kind to a stranger, something good may happen to you in return.

HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY

History unfolds at Diamond Jubilee



Rabbi Yaakov Morel leads the HHA choir in an exuberant performance of "L'Chaim, A Toast to Life" at the HHA's Diamond Jubilee gala.

BY RABBI DANIEL GREEN

AFTER YEARS of isolation, hundreds of participants from the broad community mosaic gathered to celebrate and support the mission and vision of the HHA. In a world plagued by division and polarizing forces, the evening underscored how the HHA is a bonding agent that strives to champion our shared values and heritage.

The hallmark of the evening was the rededication of the HHA McLean Educational Centre, in honour of Jim and Stephanie McLean. Flanked by their children, all graduates of the school from the 1980s, the family reaffirmed their commitment to perpetuating the great HHA legacy. The children then presented their parents with the "ceremonial key" that symbolically opened the door to a new era.

There was also an unveiling of a 3D depiction of the full redevelopment of the school campus, and an announcement of several key dedications made to date.

The evening was punctuated by a moving tribute by the Class of '86 to their Grade 7 teacher, Sharon Levy. Despite the passing of 37 years, each former student shared how this remarkable teacher impacted their lives. An emotional Mrs. Levy responded by stating that this was the "pinnacle moment" of her teaching career.

The school also presented the Legacy Education Award to Ryan Kraftchek for 20 years of dedicated teaching. In a touching response, Mr. Kraftchek thanked his colleagues for creating such an exceptional environment for our children and educators to thrive.

The evening closed with an exuberant performance by the HHA choir, led by Rabbi Yaakov Morel, who sang a song titled, "L'chaim - a Toast to Life." It was a fitting summation to an evening celebrating the perpetuation of the eternal Jewish song of life. Lechaim!

MCMASTER HILLEL

Allyship, education and the fight against antisemitism



BY SYDNEY WISENER

AS ANTISEMITISM is seeing a worrisome spike around the world, McMaster Hillel has accelerated its efforts to

build relationships with other campus groups, with the hopes of learning more about each other, furthering engagement, and educating the wider campus community about antisemitism.

Our Holocaust education programming serves both as an opportunity to remember the past and foster a more positive future. One of our most successful programs took place on Oct. 19, when we co-hosted a movie night with the McMaster German Cultural Club at Hillel house. After watching the film *Reckonings*, which chronicles the tense negotiations between Jewish and German leaders following the Second World War regarding reparations to Holocaust victims, Ella Brown, co-president of the McMaster German Cultural Club, said, "it was exciting to come together to learn about reparations and hopefully set the precedent for further collaborations in the future." During the discussion that followed the screening, students from

both groups formed connections that will serve to grow further collaboration and partnership.

The German Cultural Club also helped promote a program that McMaster Hillel organized with the help of the Jewish Addiction Community Services Toronto, Courage2Change, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies on Exploring Intergenerational Trauma. The event educated students of different backgrounds about how the past affects us today, and offered insights into strategies for healing. Attendees began the healing process together when they heard testimony from Holocaust survivor Gershon Willinger. Many said they related to the intergenerational trauma experience program.

At McMaster Hillel, we know that allyship and education are essential elements of our strategy to counter antisemitism. We are appreciative of these collaborations, and are planning to continue building relationships with other groups on campus.

Sydney Wisener is in her third year of McMaster University's Arts and Science program, and chairs McMaster Hillel's Holocaust Education committee.



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

A welcome party for newcomers held at JHamilton in September was very well attended.

Our community is growing!

Newcomers welcome party at JHamilton attracts a big crowd

BY LAURA WOLFSON
J-WELCOME HOME COORDINATOR

A VERY LIVELY and successful Welcome Party for Newcomers held at JHamilton in September had an attendance of approximately 180 people, including 60+ children, who all had the opportunity to meet each other and be warmly greeted by representatives of many of our community's Jewish organizations.

Hamilton's Jewish community continues to welcome increasing numbers of Jewish families who are choosing to make their home here. Coming primarily from South America, Israel, the United States, and other cities in Canada, we know of 27 new families who settled in Hamilton in 2020 and 2021 alone. As of the end of August this year, an additional nine new Jewish families had arrived, and several more were expected.

What makes Jewish people choose Hamilton, and why is Hamilton Jewish Federation's JWelcome Home office continuing to receive multiple new inquiries every month from prospective new community members?

Many of our newcomers have shared that they chose Hamilton because of four important factors: economic opportunity, beautiful natural areas, an active, vibrant and welcoming Jewish community, and a good variety of Jewish education options.

In addition, the JWelcome Home initiative provides a "soft landing" for newcomers: we assist with their search for housing and employment, we facilitate connections to our synagogues, Jewish schools, JCC and other Jewish organizations, we invite newcomers to Jewish programs and events free of charge during their first year in Hamilton, and we provide a very personal welcome.

The influx of newcomers strengthens and enriches our entire community, and we look forward to welcoming even more new families in the near future. Incentives for newcomers help make Hamilton

HOW CAN YOU HELP

- If you are an employer (in any field) who might be able to provide employment to a newcomer or facilitate employment connections.
- If you are willing to contact a newcomer family and invite them to your home for a meal, a social visit, or a playdate for kids. (personal invitations go a long way to making newcomers feel welcome!)
- If you have a business and are willing to offer a special discount for recent newcomers to the Jewish community
- Contact welcometohamilton@jewishhamilton.org.



Jewish and Queer?

Hamilton Jewish Federation's
J-LGBTQ+ Pride Committee
is inviting you to a

Queer Chanukah Party

Wednesday, Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m.
at JHamilton, 1605 Main St. W., Hamilton





Music! Kosher Snacks! Board Games!

This event is open for queer
Jewish youth and adults of all ages.

For more information, please contact
byrnewolfson@gmail.com



HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY

Introducing the Salmon Art Studio



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HHA

HHA teacher Gila Mesusany is a talented artist and gifted teacher who connects to each child with warmth and authenticity.

HAMILTON HEBREW ACADEMY

KIDS LOVE ART. Beyond the development of fine motor skills and spatial awareness, art gives permission to each child to express their individuality and feel a sense of empowerment to fill the "canvass of life." A cornerstone of education is to embolden each child to feel that they are "an original." What better way to achieve that than enable a child to create an original form of art. Art helps develop creative problem-solving skills and promote a form of self expression for those challenged by words.

To support all these critical developmental stages, the HHA is pleased to announce the establishment of the

Salmon Art Studio. Sponsored by Joshua Salmon in memory of his late father, Dr. Peter Salmon a'h, the Studio is the platform for self expression and development. Dr. Salmon was an inspirational figure in many areas of life, who taught the world how to thrive and contribute even under the most challenging of circumstances. A paraplegic towards the end of his life, Dr. Salmon began to paint with his mouth capturing the beauty of life in his still images.

The program is spearheaded by talented artist and gifted teacher, Gila Mesusany, who connects to each child with warmth and authenticity. The Studio should be completed in the next few weeks.

BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

Beth Jacob Update



PHOTO COURTESY OF BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

Beth Jacob's renovated foyer, accessible through the Cottage Street entrance

TAL-OR BEN CHOREEN

BETH JACOB Synagogue's 5783 High Holy Day services held at the Ancaster Memorial Arts Centre Theatre led by Rabbi David Russo (the grandson of Rabbi Israel z"l and Gloria z"l Silverman), Cantor Benjamin Z. Maissner, Harvey Bitterman and Brian Albert were a tremendous success. Thank you to the more than 400 people who chose to celebrate and worship with us!

September and October were filled with a lot of holiday related programming among them apple picking, *Tastikh* Down by the Bay, a special family service with David Gershon, Pizza in the Hut, two wonderful egalitarian *hakafot* parties, and a joint meal with McMaster Hillel at JHamilton. Since then, we have kicked off the BJ School academic year, celebrated the return of our monthly Mishpacha (family centered) Shabbat evening service, and completed a three-part adult education workshop with Alan Livingston on the Amida.

December will be another busy month at the BJ. On Dec. 20, BJ will join Anshe Sholom for a community-wide Chanukah party. To wrap up our Chanukah celebrations we will host a special kiddush after Shabbat service on Dec. 24. The meal is free of charge and open to members and non-members alike.

Beth Jacob is putting together a Bakers Team to help support the efforts of Hamilton Out of the Cold, a vital organization that provides meals for those in need

in our broader community from Nov. to March. Our participation in this incredible effort is guided by Cindy Richter. This is a great opportunity for individuals to give back on a flexible timeline. Bakers are encouraged to make muffins, cookies, or squares in their homes and send a picture of their efforts to be featured in our weekly newsletter. Volunteers are welcome to commit to prepare baked goods for one or for all organized meals. Baked goods can be made in advance and frozen, to be picked up by the Out of the Cold volunteers, or dropped off at the Erskine Presbyterian Church on meal dates Dec. 14 and Dec. 28. For more information, please contact office@bethjacobsynagogue.ca.

Since our internal move, we have quickly settled into our new area and anticipate that renovations will be wrapping up very soon. Our beautiful new foyer, pictured above, is perfect for hosting intimate parties and is already being used on a weekly basis for our Shabbat kiddush. We are delighted to be hosting b'nei-mitzvah celebrations in our new space and are looking forward to facilitating many more milestones and simchas.

These past few months have demonstrated your desire as a community to support a thriving local and regional Conservative synagogue. Follow our newsletter or contact our office for more details on our upcoming services and events.

TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM

Chanukah, however you spell it

CANTOR PAULA BARUCH

Chanukah, Hannukah, Chanukkah! However you spell it, after a month that holds no holidays (except for our beloved weekly Shabbat) we are ready to enjoy our Festival of Lights. At Temple Anshe Sholom we begin with a consecration service of our many new Religious School students on Dec. 3 as part of our Shabbat Morning service. Celebrating their dedication to learning Torah brings us all joy. We are also looking forward to enjoying songs and stories with the amazing David Gershon who is bringing his show 'Shine Your Light' to Temple on Saturday, Dec. 17 at 6 p.m. You can register your family on our anshesholom.ca website.

The days of Chanukah offer many opportunities to gather both online and in person with our Temple Community. We reached out to invite our friends at Beth Jacob Synagogue to join us for night of

celebrating Chanukah together. This community-wide event will be at Temple Anshe Sholom on Tuesday, Dec. 20 and features lighting the 3rd night candle together. Seeing many Chanukiot glowing together will be a wonderful symbol of the growing friendships and partnerships in our Jewish community. We plan to enjoy a cheesy Hallmark Chanukah Movie, play dreidel, sing songs and, of course, enjoy kosher jelly donuts, hot chocolate and other treats.

This season, when we seek more light and strive to keep it glowing, reminds us that all of us offer a unique light. Just as the ancient Temple was rededicated in this season, so too can we each rededicate ourselves to what is most important. Mindfulness on these themes is sure to result in gratitude and gifts that enhance our world.



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TEMPLE ANSHE SHOLOM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL
Learning program highlights

DORA-ANN COHEN ELLISON

TEMPLE Anshe Sholom's Learning Program welcomed 40 students in Grades JK through 12 this year. Each Shabbat morning and Wednesday afternoon, our school is buzzing with laughter as our students explore Jewish values, text, traditions and prayer. One highlight of the program is our immersive and hands-on Shalom Learning program. When our children learn by doing, it creates lasting memories that remain a part of them. We kicked off November with a lively family Kabbalat Shabbat, hosting Kehila Heschel students together with Temple students. Everyone was so excited to bring our students and families together for our first family Shabbat of the year. Our sanctuary was almost full, as students joined together on the bimah, leading our families in song and prayer.

Following our month-long exploration of Betzelem Elohim (In the Image of God) we begin our study of Gevurah (Courage), including spiritual courage and the willingness to take risks for the right causes, and incorporating the idea that we all can be heroic in our everyday lives by living an exemplary life and doing what is right and just. This is a beautiful value to connect to the historical understanding of Chanukah.

As part of our learning, students will be learning about how they can help others in our community, learning about the services offered at Hamilton Jewish Family Services and Hamilton Jewish Federation.

We will kick off our annual food and toiletry drive Dec. 1-15, and encourage anyone visiting the Temple to drop off items to our collection bin. On Dec. 11,



PHOTO COURTESY OF DORA-ANN COHEN ELLISON

Apple picking at our opening day.

we are hosting two children's activities, while families are also invited to shop at our Temple Art Show. From 1-4 p.m., children in JK-3 and Grades 4-7 are invited for two concurrent social programs; Movie and Craft for our younger children, and Movie and Games for our junior youth group- age children. All are welcome— \$5 (cash only) per child. Our Chanukah fun continues on Saturday Dec. 17, when David Gershon returns for an amazing and joyous performance. Shine your light with us from 6-7 p.m. To purchase tickets, visit templeanshesholom.shulcloud.com/event/shineyourlight. To support Jewish Family Services's food and toiletries drive, RSVP for Dec. 11 children's activities.

For more information about joining our Temple community, please contact Dora-Ann Cohen Ellison at dacellison@anshesholom.ca or visit anshesholom.ca.

KEHILA HESCHEL
Tomorrow's environment leaders

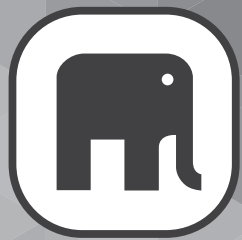


Kehila Heschel students build winter habitat for bees and other pollinators.

ANITA BERNSTEIN

KEHILA HESCHEL is committed to providing excellence in general studies and integrating it with Jewish values, civic responsibility, and environmental stewardship. How can Kehila Heschel school expose students to an enhanced Ontario curriculum as well as Hebrew language and Judaic studies? Kehila Heschel does this through its integrated curriculum and experiential learning approach. This school year, students are surrounded by discussion of global environmental and climate changes. Through Kehila Heschel's ecoschool/outdoor educational program, students are encouraged to become involved in positive change in their community. This fall, as students were learning about the symbols related to holidays of the month of Ellul and reflecting on how they can make a difference, students across the grades, subjects and languages learned about the challenges faced by bees and other pollinators and the impact it has on food security. Older grades honed their

research skills by learning about the different types of bees, their habitats and how the honey we eat at Rosh Hashanah, while hoping and praying for a sweet new year, is made. In math they learned about 2D and 3D shapes including hexagons of honeycombs and used them in artistic ways. In social studies they learned about different types of shelters and habitats and how we can all provide these for pollinators. Has your child asked you not to rake your fall leaves, so they provide shelter for pollinators? A field trip to the Eco House helped students understand the issues being encountered by pollinators and how each person can help. As a result, Kehila Heschel students are adding a pollinator bed to the school gardens. Students were excited about their newfound knowledge and shared the information with other classes and teachers. They felt empowered by the opportunity to actually be able to make a difference in helping pollinators. Want to learn more about Kehila Heschel's integrated curriculum? Visit kehilaheschel.ca and book a tour today.



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A first-hand observation of JNF Canada's impact in Israel

The number and variety of projects JNF supports is truly overwhelming

BY **HAIM GOLDSTEIN**
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

WHAT A TRIP! Of more than 30 trips to Israel, this was the most meaningful and emotional for me. There were 28 of us, both senior JNF staff and lay leaders from Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal.

Tel Aviv, the city I grew up in, was unrecognizable. Skyscrapers were everywhere, and construction cranes stood throughout the city—as well as practically everywhere else we visited in Israel. The country is truly blooming, life is vibrant everywhere, restaurants are packed to late hours—not to mention the beautiful warm sunny weather late in October.

The number and variety of projects and centres that JNF Canada supports is overwhelming. The first evening, we attended a concert at the Hassadna Jerusalem Music Conservatory for children from all levels of Israeli society, including new immigrants from around the world, at-risk children and special needs children. There was not a dry eye in the audience.

Our tour began with the grand opening of the Dr. Max and Gianna Glassman PTSD and Health Centre in Jerusalem, which was attended by many



JNF Canada's Mission 2022 participants pose at the Herzog Medical Centre in Jerusalem.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JNF CANADA

dignitaries, including Minister of Health Nitzan Horowitz. It was an emotional morning as we saw projects and plaques acknowledging Hamilton Negev Dinner honourees Luba and Yves Apel, and doctors Hertzal Gerstein, Mark Levine and Sandra Witelson.

We toured the vibrant Mahane Yehuda Market and visited the Kotel and the recently unearthed tunnels, which are a must-see. Friday afternoon in Jerusalem is a time like no other place in the world, where one feels the Divine spirit descend from above. On Shabbat, we walked to several parks built by JNF Canada and visited The King David Hotel.

The next day, we visited the Jerusalem Hills Therapeutic Centre, a home for youngsters who are victims of abuse and

neglect. The professional staff here are doing holy work as they take care of these boys and girls, hoping to provide a pathway back into society. A sign on the wall read, "Dream, Dare, You Shall Succeed."

On our way to the north, we planted trees at Eshtaol forest and visited Beit Shulamit, a cancer hospital being built in Afula, observed thousands of cranes and flamingos at the Hula Valley, and dedicated plaques at Airplane Park.

In the north, we visited Kibbutz HaGoshrim and Home for Life, an organization which builds homes for people with physical disabilities and reduced cognitive abilities. We also visited Kishorit, an innovative community where adults with special needs are able

to live a life with purpose and independence in a safe environment where they can thrive.

In Haifa, we visited the Shabtai Levi Home, a non-profit organization and emergency shelter that caters to single mothers and infants up to three years of age. Our next stop was Sderot, located on the border with Gaza. Here, we attended a groundbreaking ceremony of the Bervin JNF Canada House for Excellence (the project chosen by 2021 Negev Dinner honourees Lowell and Cindy Richter). In Ramat Gan, we visited a new hospital which will cater to people with Alzheimer's. In Holon, we visited the Wolfson Hospital's Save a Child's Heart wing, where 50 per cent of the children being treated are from the Palestinian territories

or Gaza, Iraq, and Morocco, and more than 40 per cent are from Africa. We also visited Jaffa Dalet, where mostly Ethiopian children get their after-school activities, a hot meal, and help with their homework.

On Oct. 26, we attended the Climate Solution Prize inaugural festival at the Hulda Forest. This new JNF Canada initiative is intended to find solutions to climate changes we all face by awarding \$1 million to an Israeli start-up or research team each year. Among the candidates that blew my mind was Watergen, a company that generates drinking water from air and the purest water I have ever tasted. Another company makes plastic bags that dissolve in water.

For me, the highlight of our trip was seeing the diversity of the projects that JNF Canada supports. We have our imprint on every corner of the country and in so many ways. JNF Canada enables each of us to do our little part to sustain Israel for generations to come.

It is said that Jews ought to be a light to the nations. The outcomes of the seeds that have been planted over the last 74 years are overwhelming. Israel's diversity and its flexibility to adjust to the changes of the world's needs is remarkable. In so many areas, we allow ourselves at JNF to further respond and build—that is the key to sustainability. JNF links the bond from our past to our present and it will ensure that Israel will be maintained for future generations.


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