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TAMMUZ 5779

Hamilton
Jewish

News

The voice of Jewish Hamilton July 2019

BEN CAPLAN AND THE HPO HEADLINE COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

LChaim! A Toast to Jewish Hamilton kicks off Community Campaign

STORY BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**,
THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

HAMILTON JEWISH FEDERATION announces the official launch of its 2020 Community Campaign with a celebratory concert on Sunday, Sept. 8, 2019 at Mohawk College's McIntyre Performing Arts Centre. Headlining "L'Chaim! A Toast to Jewish Hamilton" are the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and the multi-talented Ben Caplan, who will perform and act as the evening's emcee. The son of Judi and the late Marvin Caplan and an award-winning singer/songwriter and performer, Ben Caplan says he's thrilled to be coming back to his hometown "to participate in this beautiful presentation of art and culture." The evening will feature beloved Jewish songs and compositions that represent significant events in modern Jewish history and reflect the diversity of Jewish Hamiltonians, whose roots are Eastern European, Spanish, African, Israeli and Middle Eastern. With the hall's seating capacity of 1,029, the concert promises to be the largest community campaign launch in recent memory.

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PHOTO: JAMIE KRONICK



PHOTO CREDIT: STEPHEN SHAMES

JEWISH HIGH SCHOOL, REIMAGINED

Adraba uses a blend of teachers and technology to enhance learning experience

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THE LEGACY OF MAX AND STELLA ROTMAN **P2**

“He was fearless, outspoken, intimidating and passionate”

DERMOT NOLAN REMEMBERS
BILL MORRIS: **P10**

Hamiltonjewishnews.com



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To Max, the value of any person, regardless of religious persuasion, lay in their positive actions and their desire to pay it forward." **HOWARD KATZ AND LARRY SZPIRGLAS**

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GUEST EDITORIAL

THE LEGACY OF MAX AND STELLA ROTMAN



PHOTO: WENDY SCHNIEDER, HJN

The 2019 Max and Stella Rotman Humanitarian Youth Award winners

BY **HOWARD KATZ AND LARRY SZPIRGLAS**

THIS YEAR MARKED the 50th anniversary of the Max and Stella Rotman Humanitarian Youth Awards, an annual award ceremony created by the Jewish Community Centre and the City of Hamilton 50 years ago to honour the memory of an outstanding individual and recognize Hamilton youth who demonstrate the same selfless dedication towards helping others.

Max Rotman was the JCC's athletic director during its golden years on Delaware Avenue. He was our basketball coach, friend, mentor and pied piper. To Max, the value of any person—regardless of gender, nationality, skin colour, or religious persuasion, lay in their positive actions, their generosity and their desire to pay it forward. He and his wife, Stella, were like second parents to so many of our community's youth during times of crisis, and his premature passing was an incredible loss to his family, and both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

It was Bill Stern, who was executive director of Federation's predecessor, the Council of Jewish Organizations, who came up with the idea of holding a city-wide youth award ceremony in



PHOTO: JCC ARCHIVES

Max Rotman with a camper, circa 1963

Max's memory one day while strolling by City Hall. Bill went inside to pitch the idea and left a short while later with a co-sponsor.


In its early years, the Max Rotman Award event was held at Hamilton City Hall, where a committee voted for a single winner from among all the nominees. Many of those early award winners would go on to careers consistent with their volunteer

work. Donna Marcaccio became the director at the Rygiel home. Sam Brownstone's son, Harvey, would go on to become a highly regarded family court judge.

In the event's 13th year, Sam Brownstone became very ill, resulting in the floundering of the Max Rotman committee he had overseen. At the same time, a number of agencies were voicing concerns about what they perceived as a biased nominating committee. With the entire event threatening to fall apart, the JCC decided to switch the format from a single winner to a more inclusive award ceremony that honoured all the nominees. We probably should have done that sooner since, in Max's eyes, you were a winner whether you were a star or sat on the bench.





It was the right move. The number of nominees increased dramatically. Since then, most years have seen between 40 and 60 nominees honoured with a medal and certificate at the event, which now alternates between Hamilton's three main synagogues.

Several years ago, the JCC decided to change the name of the award to include Max's wife Stella, who served others with equal devotion to that of her husband. Above all, Max and Stella believed in service above self. That is the legacy they left us.



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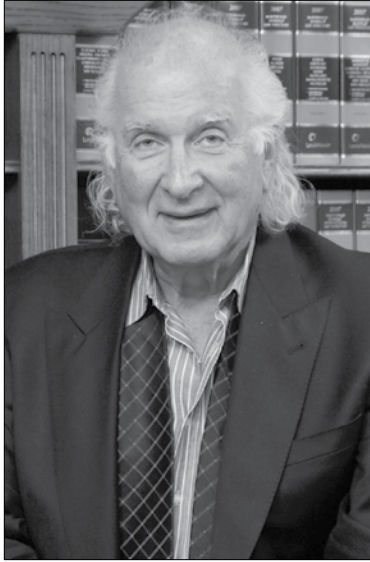


PHOTO: WENDY SCHNIEDER, HJN

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PHOTO: BAYA VERTES

WELCOME TO HAMILTON

Grow Hamilton chair Laura Wolfson waits at Pearson International Airport in early June for the Priel family who moved to Hamilton from Israel. Joining her at the airport was committee member Baya Vertes, who found the family a house to rent, stocked their kitchen and hosted them for their first Shabbat dinner. Over the last several months the committee has been in close contact with several other families planning moves from Montreal, Toronto, Fredericton, British Columbia, New York, Israel, and Brazil.

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COMING UP

ROSH HASHANAH ISSUE

- Deadline for booking ad space - July 29, 2019
- Deadline for receiving editorial copy - Aug. 5, 2019
- Deadline for receiving ad copy - Aug. 27, 2019
- Estimated date of arrival - Sept. 13, 2019

HJN

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There's no other way kids are going to be able to build viable Jewish lives without an education. **DAN AVIV** Adraba lead educator

A REIMAGINED JEWISH HIGH SCHOOL

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**, THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

CANADA'S FIRST Jewish high school to use a "blended learning" model is coming to the GTA and Hamilton this fall. Adraba, a Talmudic term meaning "on the contrary," offers an alternative approach to traditional classroom learning by blending face-to-face Jewish learning with technology. Adraba's goal is nothing less than to create a generation of literate Jews, who know how to access Jewish texts, culture and historical sources, who are confident about their Jewishness, and who can become effective contributors to their community.

How Adraba works

Adraba Hamilton students will meet at JHamilton twice a week from September to June. Sessions will alternate between interactive online conferences with Adraba lead educator Dan Aviv and follow up meetings with an on-site educator whose role will be to answer questions and assist students with assignments. Toronto-based sessions will be recorded and archived, so that students seeking clarification or catching up on missed classes can access them at their convenience. Assignments will take into consideration students' varying learning styles.

"The technology allows the student as the learner to learn pretty much anytime they want, in any place they are located, and assignments can involve 3d printing, video production, putting on a play, creating some kind of artwork," Aviv told the HJN. "It really comes down to a negotiation between student and teacher about what that would look like."

Why Adraba?

Developed by educators Frank Samuels, Sholom Eisenstat and Dan Aviv, Adraba is based on the premise that giving teachers access to the best technology available makes their teaching infinitely more

effective. Dan Aviv points to the experience of visiting a reconstructed school house from pre-Confederation times to illustrate how little teaching methods have changed over the years.

"(The school house) pretty much looks exactly the same as today. There are desks in rows, there's a blackboard. There's a teacher in the front of the room. Every other realm of our lives has changed, except for the traditional school," he said. Change is especially critical in the Jewish world, he emphasized, "because the whole millennial-long project of the Jewish people could theoretically end with us unless we do something about it."

Why Now?

The impetus for bringing Adraba to Hamilton came from Federation's education committee, after identifying a need for high quality post-B'nai Mitzvah programming in the community. The committee's proposal to have Hamilton be a satellite location for Adraba's Toronto program was unanimously approved by the Federation board in April. Bringing the Adraba program to Hamilton, according to education committee chair, Alice Mendelson, is "one of the most important steps" towards implementing Federation's new strategic plan that has identified the engagement of young adults in Jewish life as its number one priority. All of Hamilton's rabbis and supplementary school directors will be invited to provide input into the program.

Registration Information

Registration for Adraba Hamilton is ongoing and tuition assistance is available. Register at jewishhamilton.org or email grymberg@jewishhamilton.org for more information.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF MOHAWK COLLEGE

The McIntyre Performing Arts Centre at Mohawk College

L'CHAIM CONCERT LAUNCHES COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

The concept behind the L'Chaim! A Toast to Jewish Hamilton is to tell the stories and celebrate the diversity of Jewish Hamilton in words and music.

"Stories have always shaped the way Jews remember their past, interpret their present and imagine their future, while music has always been able to bring people together," said Hamilton Jewish Federation CEO Gustavo Rymberg. "Our plan is for this concert to be both highly entertaining and a powerful collective experience."

The L'Chaim concert will be conducted by William Rowson, one of Canada's most able and versatile young conductors. The event will coincide with the official launch of Federation's 2020 Community Campaign, which is expected to surpass the unprecedented success of the organization's 2019 campaign that raised more than \$1.2 million for a wide range of programs and services throughout Jewish Hamilton.

It's hard to imagine a more suitable emcee for the evening than Ben Caplan, who, by virtue of growing up in this community, was a beneficiary of years of UJA campaigns.

NEED TO KNOW

WHAT: L'Chaim! A Toast to Jewish Hamilton

WHEN: Sunday, Sept. 8, 2019; Time TBA

WHERE: McIntyre Performing Arts Centre, Mohawk College

TICKETS: Tickets go on sale after July 2 at jewishhamilton.org

CONTACT: Call 905-648-0605 or email grymberg@jewishhamilton.org for more information.

"Much of my work as a musician, songwriter, and performer has been informed by my Jewish identity and the education and cultural experiences I had growing up in Hamilton," he said.

"I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the Hamilton Jewish community for making me who I am today, and I look forward to sharing that gratitude along with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and my own ensemble of musicians. I can't wait to celebrate the Hamilton Jewish community live on stage."



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Coaching is not just putting people in the right spot. Coaching is helping people develop. This is my life's calling." **YINON RIETTI** Hamilton Honey Badgers assistant coach



Federation board member Dr. Larry Levin interviews Ora Markstein at Federation's AGM.

A GIFT TO THE COMMUNITY

BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

LOCAL SCULPTOR Ora Markstein, 95, has donated one of her sculptures to the Hamilton Jewish community. The piece, titled "At the Gates of Sheol", was unveiled at Federation's AGM on May 29 by Federation president Jacki Levin.

In her remarks, Levin praised Markstein, a Holocaust survivor, for expressing "the experience that she and millions of others went through." The sculpture depicts Markstein's experience when the Nazis took her sister, parents and aging grandmother from their home to a defunct brick

factory at the outskirts of Budapest. The family spent two weeks sitting on the factory's bare floor before being deported to Auschwitz.

"It is important to Ora that we not forget those who cannot speak for themselves. Her beautiful piece of art will do that for our community," said Levin.

In her own brief remarks, Markstein expressed her gratitude to the Hamilton Jewish community for welcoming her family so warmly when they first arrived in the city in the late 1970s.

"At the Gates of Sheol" will be on permanent display at JHamilton.



An artists' rendering of be:longings, soon to be installed at Churchill Park.

PUBLIC ART COMPETITION WINNERS

A volunteer jury has selected be:longings by Gary Barwin, Simon Frank and Tor Lukasik-Foss as the successful entry in the City of Hamilton's Churchill Park Public Art Competition.

Be:longings is comprised of a series of ten bronze-cast suitcases situated in different locations along the length of a path in the western section of Churchill Park.

The suitcases represent travel, escape, refugees, emigration, and the language of laws and rights, according to an artists' statement, with the hope of inspiring visitors to reflect on how, despite the trials of history and oppression, humanity and its ideals are ultimately hopeful and inextinguishable. Installation is expected to take place this fall.

ISRAELI BASKETBALL COACH IN HAMILTON THIS SUMMER

Yinon Rietti recruited as Honey Badgers' assistant coach

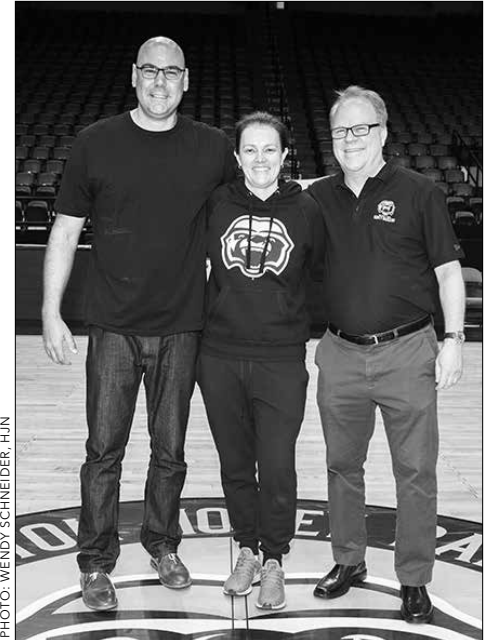
BY **WENDY SCHNEIDER**
THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

WITH BASKETBALL FEVER in the air this summer, Hamilton's newest pro-basketball team is enjoying an exciting inaugural season. The Honey Badgers, one of six teams that make up the newly formed Canadian Elite Basketball league, has an impressive staff that includes head coach and general manager, Chantal Vallée, the first woman in pro basketball history to hold both roles, and assistant coach Yinon Rietti, who has extensive experience coaching pro basketball in both Israel and the United States. Vallée and Rietti met at the University of Windsor, where the former coached the women's basketball team to five back-to-back championships. Rietti was her assistant coach for two of those seasons, and Vallée recruited him as head coach of player development.

A date farmer and farming consultant by profession, Rietti spends most of the year on his moshav in the Arava. Whenever a coaching opportunity comes up, however, he drops everything "to jump back into basketball."

For Rietti, coaching "is not just putting people in the right spot. Coaching is helping people develop. This is my life's calling."

Rietti is equally committed to connecting with the local Jewish community while he's in town — his way of



Hamilton Honey Badgers assistant coach (l to r) Yinon Rietti, head coach Chantal Vallée and club president John Lashway.

strengthening bonds with Israel on a grassroots level. To that end, he offered the JCC complimentary tickets to a Honey Badgers game in early June followed by a free viewing party of a Raptors playoff game, and JCC program director Aimee Wigley is planning on Rietti making an appearance at Camp Kadimah. For more information about upcoming Honey Badgers games on July 6, 21, August 3 and 14, visit honeybadgers.ca.

IN THE COMMUNITY



PHOTO: DORA ANN COHEN ELLISON

Temple students complete pyramid building task as their last challenge to escape Egypt.



PHOTO: MICHELE SCHNEIDER

Kehila Heschel's inter-generational program with Shalom Village.



PHOTO: JUDITH DWORKIN

McMaster Hillel welcomes Rabbi Ben Shefter as its senior Jewish educator beginning in August.

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You can read the history of the Hamilton Jewish community through the pages of this book.” **GUSTAVO RYMBERG** CEO, Hamilton Jewish Federation

FEDERATION HOLDS FIRST “BOOK OF LIFE” SIGNING CEREMONY



Wendy Schneider signs the Goldblatt family page.



Ben and Milli Gould representing the Allen and Milli Gould Family fund.



Gayle Halpern for the Lore and Erwin Jacobs Holocaust Education fund.



Cuppy and Elaine Katz, whose fund supports Jewish education.



Terri Lewis endowed her Lion of Judah annual gift this year.



Bonnie and Dave Loewith sign the Loewith family page.



Lisa Morris, representing the Morris Family Philanthropic Fund.



Susan and Paul Roth opened a new endowment fund this year..



Marisa and Gustavo Rymberg opened a family fund this year.



Allen Wynperle, an early supporter of the Legacy Endowment Fund.

BY **STEVEN BROCK**,
HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WENDY SCHNEIDER AND PAUL ROTH

HONOURING FAMILIES WHO HAVE established endowment funds with the Hamilton Jewish Federation was a highlight of Federation’s annual general meeting held at the Hamilton Spectator auditorium on May 29.

After official business was concluded, an inaugural ceremony was held in honour of the first 10 participants in Hamilton’s first Book of Life program. The Book of Life is an ongoing program that recognizes donors who leave a charitable legacy through Federation’s Legacy Endowment

Fund. Among this year’s 10 signatories were Wendy Schneider, representing the Lillian and Marvin Goldblatt Family Fund; Milli and Ben Gould, representing the Allen and Milli Gould Legacy Endowment Fund; Elaine and Cuppy Katz, David and Bonnie Loewith, representing the Loewith Family Legacy Endowment Fund; Gale Halpern, representing the Lore and Erwin Jacobs Holocaust Education Fund; Marisa and Gustavo Rymberg, Lisa Morris, representing the Morris Family Philanthropic Fund, Paul and Susan Roth, Allen Wynperle and Terri

Lewis, who endowed her Lion of Judah gift.

The signing ceremony marked Hamilton’s joining the ranks of a growing number of Jewish communities that similarly recognize donors who contribute to community endowment funds.

“A healthy community endowment fund is a testament to a community’s faith in its future,” said Rymberg, adding that Hamilton’s Legacy Endowment Fund has seen considerable growth over the last year.

“It’s not a question of how much money you give. It’s about giving back to those

organizations that have made a difference in your life.”

Whether it be with a cash donation, a trust, life insurance policy or a bequest, opening a fund with Hamilton Jewish Federation’s Legacy Endowment Fund will help ensure a thriving and sustainable Jewish community.

Hamilton’s Book of Life is on display at JHamilton, and its stories will be uploaded to an online archive. To inquire about participating in next year’s ceremony, please call Gustavo Rymberg at 905-648-0605.

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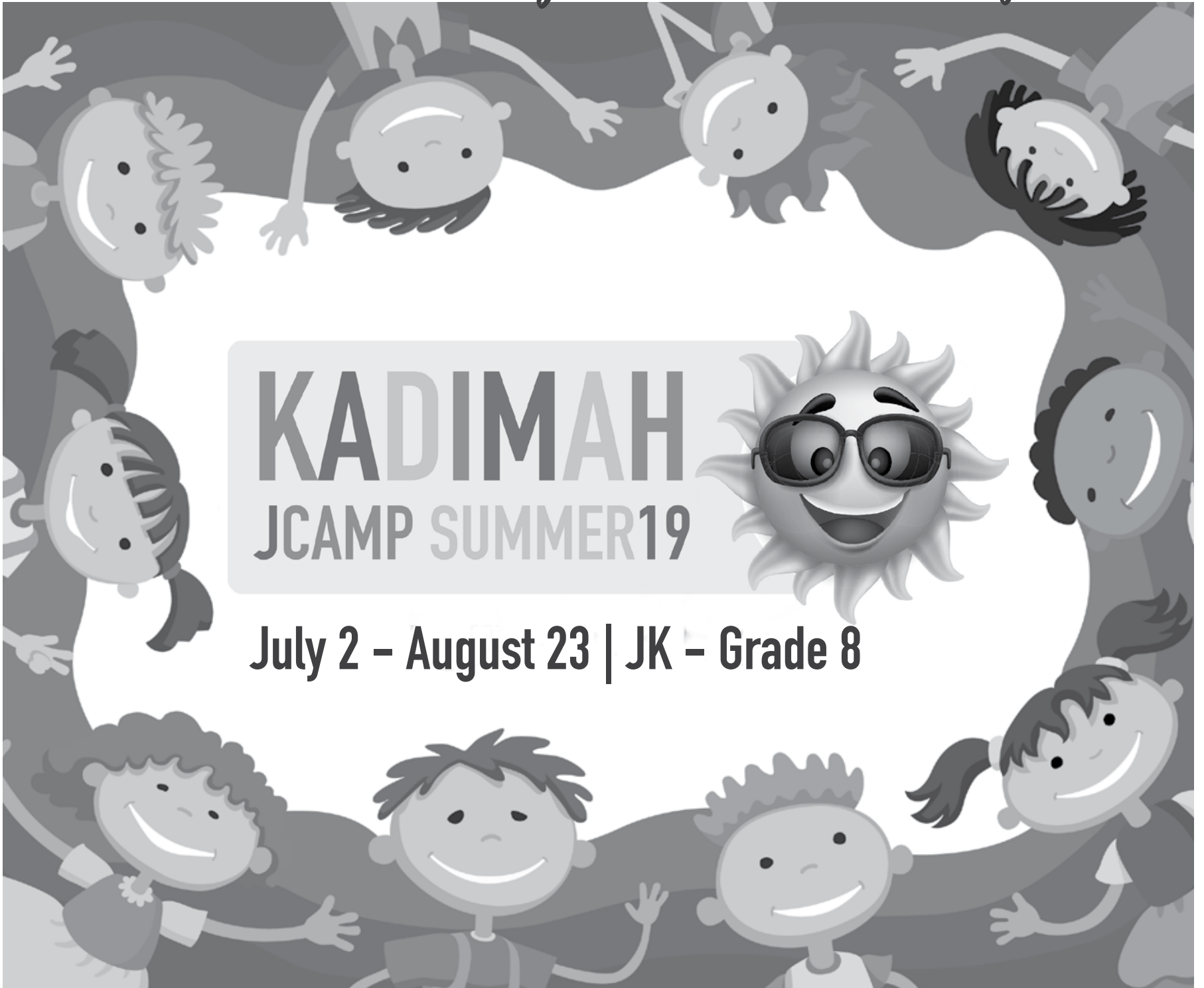


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Can you believe summer is almost upon us? Though it doesn't exactly feel that way, given the weather of late, we are on a countdown at JHamilton to Camp Kadimah! Both Jennifer Laszlo and Aimee Wiglee are hard at work, hiring new staff, communicating with returning staff and getting a plethora of programs planned out. This season, we are trying to expand upon our tried and true methods, to listen to all feedback and to bring a little extra magic.

One of Kadimah's new initiatives is bringing program professionals to camp, as well as venturing out into the wider world during day trips. This summer, we are hoping to offer some truly innovative and intriguing programs that will leave our campers clamouring for more.

We want Kadimah to be an enriching, completely immersive experience that offers our campers a chance to make memories that will last a lifetime.

Of course, this includes a strong Judaica program. Aimee and Hamilton's Israeli shlichah, Adi, have created several Israel-themed sessions that can be enjoyed every Friday. The summer will be made up of eight different tailor-made activities created just for Kadimah. Your children won't want to miss a moment!

If you haven't yet registered for camp, the good news is there's still time! Contact aimee@hamiltonjcc.com for more information.



The Hamilton JCC is a beneficiary agency of the Hamilton Jewish Federation
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ALLOCATIONS REPORT | TOGETHER CAMPAIGN 2019

Assisting the vulnerable

31.75%

\$483,054

Strengthening Jewish Identity

32.85%

\$499,654

Community Development

22.88%

\$348,154

Supporting Israel

12.50%

\$190,154

\$1,521,016

Beth Tikvah	\$15,600
Jewish Social Services	\$222,300
Hamilton Hebrew Academy	\$170,000
Kehila Community Day School	\$50,000
Anshe Sholom Afternoon School	\$25,000
Beth Jacob Afternoon School	\$25,000
Beth Jacob Anshe Sholom Joint Program	\$1,000
Hamilton Hebrew High	\$10,000
Adraba Community High School	\$20,000
Shuttle Service	\$8,000
Hamilton Jewish Community Centre	\$135,000
Camp Kadimah	\$10,000
Vaad Ha Kashrut	\$8,500
Shalom Village	\$15,000
Administration and Campaign	\$415,596
Programming	\$172,688
Hamilton Jewish News	\$35,000
Designated gifts	\$45,000
UIA NCR	\$137,332

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CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS!



Laura Wolfson receives the CeCe Schreiber Volunteer Leadership Award from CeCe Schreiber.



Jacki Levin presents Cindy and Lowell Richter with the Presidents' Award.



Donna Vine is presented with Beth Jacob Synagogue's Shem Tov award by Maureen Price.



Jonathan Sapir is presented with the HHA Shem Tov award by Rabbi Yaakov Morel.



Hazel Boon presents Joyce Dain with the Jewish Genealogical Society's Shem Tov award.



Haim Goldstein is presented with the JNF Shem Tov award by David Loewith.



Alice Mendelson is presented with Federation's Shem Tov award by CEO Gustavo Rymberg.



Shlomo-Eli Schweitzer is presented with the Adas Israel Shem Tov award by Stan Katz.



Annette and John Richardson are presented with Na'amat's Shem Tov award by Ronit Mesterman.



Michael Freeman is presented with a Shem Tov award by Sha'arei Beth El's Mark Steiman.



Max Librach is presented with the McMaster Hillel Shem Tov award by Judith Dworkin.



Jason Waxman is presented with the Jewish Community Centre Shem Tov award by Lowell Richter.



Renee Guder presents Marilyn Foreman with Shalom Village's Shem Tov award.



Haim Goldstein receives a Temple Anshe Sholom Shem Tov award from Steve Arnold.



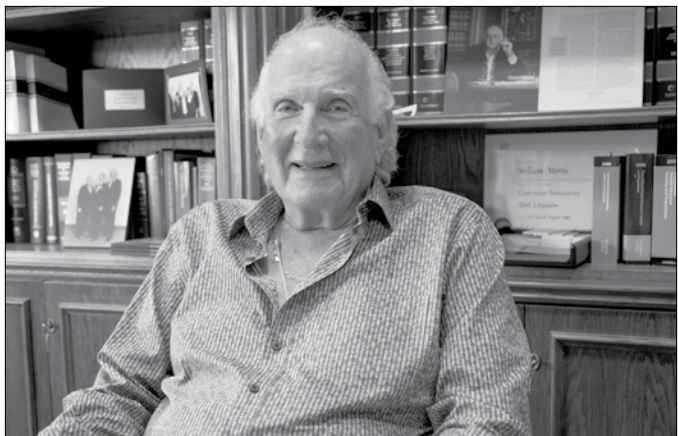
JSS executive director Alexis Wenzowski presents Barbara Abraham with a Shem Tov award.



Mike Dressler is presented with Yoav Farkash's Shem Tov award by Kehila's Anita Bernstein.

Our community is so much more than a sum of our parts. This was more than evident at the Hamilton Jewish Federation's AGM held on May 29 at the Hamilton Spectator auditorium, where a spirit of unity and community pride reigned supreme. As volunteers from across the community spectrum were called up to receive their Shem Tov award, their efforts were recognized by generous and heartfelt applause in a room filled with smiling faces. The Hamilton Jewish Federation presented its most prestigious volunteer awards to Laura Wolfson, who received the CeCe Schreiber Volunteer Leadership Award, and Cindy and Lowell Richter, who were honoured with the Presidents' Award. Mazal Tov to all the volunteers for demonstrating a model of selfless giving that is an inspiration to us all.

“For those of us who loved him ... it feels as if a giant redwood has fallen in our forest, leaving a gaping hole in the canopy.” **DERMOT NOLAN** Colleague



Bill Morris in his office, circa 2004.

BILL MORRIS: LARGER THAN LIFE

BY **DERMOT NOLAN**, SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON JEWISH NEWS

GIANT. TOWERING. Larger than Life.

These are some of the words people find when they are trying to describe someone really extraordinary.

They are good words. Colourful. Extravagant. Evocative. They conjure up an ineluctable image. They are strong and powerful, but sometimes they can be over-the-top, or, as with all words at times of profound loss, simply inadequate.

But for our friend and colleague Bill Morris, they are supremely apt. In fact, Bill is the only man I have ever known to whom they can be applied unreservedly – literally and figuratively.

And still, they are inadequate. Warm. Generous. Reliable. Engaging – and engaged. Outrageous – and outraged. Courageous. Relentless. Righteous. Funny. Original. Irrepressible. Decent.

Those are some other words.

He was ours. And he loved being ours. Apart from his beloved family and Jewish community, he loved nothing more than the Hamilton bar – and he bestrode it like a colossus.

Law Association president. Medical Legal Society founding member and president. Legal Aid Committee founder and director. Ontario Trial Lawyers' Association, founding member and director. Lawyers' legacy for Children, founding supporter and major benefactor. People Against the Insurance Nightmare (P.A.I.N.), founding supporter and co-chair.

I will never forget Bill roaring into the Ontario Legislature to teach a legislative committee a lesson in justice on behalf of P.A.I.N. They called his three-person delegation “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.” There was never any doubt about who was the Lion.

He was fearless, outspoken, intimidating and passionate. He was never afraid to get his hands dirty – or his boots – deep in

the trenches for the little guy. He ran a virtual plaintiff-litigator college out of his office and in the courtroom. Its graduates became some of Hamilton's finest lawyers and paralegals.

He was a trailblazer, an innovator and a Champions' League trial lawyer. If there is a heaven, after the big win that was his life, he is surely there making a vigorous argument for costs.

Hopefully, he will be able to start smoking again. There was a time when it seemed his ever-present cigar would never go out – always big and expensive and always a few spares in his pocket for special friends. It was a permanent appendage, abandoned only temporarily in the wall-mounted ashtrays beside the courtroom doors as he made his case inside – to be faithfully resurrected whenever there was a break in the proceedings.

But one of the most impressive things I ever saw him do was to quit cold-turkey when his doctors told him to. The vaporous love affair was over – stopped cold by the iron will of Big Bill.

He could be imperious and dismissive; impatient and over-bearing. But he was really a big teddy-bear—and an absolute marshmallow when it came to his children and grandchildren. He had a heart of gold—and was an easy mark for a worthy cause—especially if it involved children, young people, the marginalized — or Israel. His citizen involvement beyond the profession was prodigious, especially through B'nai Brith.

For those of us who loved him and labored in his shade, it feels as if a giant redwood has fallen in our forest, leaving a gaping hole in the canopy.

But, as Leonard Cohen taught us, “That's how the light gets in.”

Never to be extinguished. Never to be duplicated.

Our Bill.

This piece was previously published in the Hamilton Law Association Journal.

On behalf of B'nai Brith Canada, we would like to extend our deepest condolences over the loss of

William Morris z"l

As a former National President of B'nai Brith Canada, Bill devoted much of his life to preserving the values and traditions that our community holds dear, and we will forever be grateful for his efforts.

May his memory be a blessing.



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JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICES OFFERS A WIDE VARIETY OF NEW PROGRAMS



BY **ALEXIS WENZOWSKI**
JEWISH SOCIAL SERVICES

HAMILTON JEWISH SOCIAL Services (“JSS” as it is fondly called by many) is in its 90th year of operation, and will be celebrating its birthday later on in 2019 (stay tuned). Throughout the last 90 years, JSS has been a caring, supportive place for the most vulnerable in Hamilton’s Jewish community. For many, JSS has provided a safe place – and a sense of home – during the most difficult times.

As with any agency, the challenge for JSS is to remain relevant and responsive in our changing world. Recently, we conducted a community-wide survey that looked at needs. The results were not surprising. The survey indicated the following five priority areas: poverty, mental health, seniors, children and youth, and family issues. What was really apparent was that JSS needs to be the place to support people as they navigate life. In response to our findings, JSS has initiated a series of new programs.

Career Workshops

JSS is offering monthly career workshops at JHamilton on topics that include building a resume, interview skills, job search strategies, and more. In September, we will launch a job search club.

Caregiver Group

Jewish Social Services is offering group sessions for caregivers, open to anyone in the community who is caring for a loved one. The sessions will feature self-care education and practice, debrief and discussion and take place at 30 King St. E. in Dundas.

Mental Health First Aid

This fall, the JSS plans to run a mental health first aid course in conjunction with the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The course aims to not only reduce the stigma of mental health, but also to offer

the general public real and tangible ways to support individuals suffering from various mental health concerns, like anxiety, stress, depression, and more. It should be an informative two days!

Legacy Project

A new Hand to Hand Legacy Project geared towards individuals interested in creating a legacy they can pass down to future generations is keeping in line with JSS’s focus on using the arts for therapeutic benefit and community building.

Public Education Workshops

Beginning in June, JSS will offer a series of workshops on a variety of topics including dementia, children’s mental health, poverty in the Jewish community, raising children with special needs, and internet safety for families. Our first workshop, An Overview of Dementia, will take place on Tuesday, June 18, from 2 to 4 p.m. at Jewish Social Services on 30 King St. E. in Dundas.

You can register for any of the workshops by calling 905-627-9922, ext 21 or by emailing jss1@gmail.com.

As the next few months progress, JSS will be unveiling more exciting programs, which will be advertised on Federation eblasts as well as at hamiltonjss.com or our Facebook page.

JSS is looking for people to become more involved with the agency – either by donating skills, volunteering time, donating to the Kosher food bank, or to help fundraise. Share your ideas with us! We are always looking for new ways to increase community involvement.

Every little bit matters. Your support ensures that JSS remains a community gem and that everyone has access to this little place with a big heart.

PJ LIBRARY LAUNCHES “CARING KITS” SOCIAL ACTION PROGRAM



BY **AIMEE WIGLEY**
JCC FAMILY PROGRAMS

AS THE PJ LIBRARY professional for Hamilton Jewish Federation, I work directly with this amazing organization, that offers so much more than just books. Our network of professionals is in close contact, sharing program ideas, inspiration and stories of what works and what doesn’t. Recently I had the opportunity to pitch our community as a participant in a new initiative, called Caring Kits. These are comprised of a list of necessities, primarily hygiene products, to be handed out to the less advantaged in the wider Hamilton community by a nominated organization. These kits really can make such a huge

difference and I’m thrilled to announce that we were chosen! We will soon be receiving supplies sent to us directly from PJ Library, free of charge. The organizations I have chosen to donate to are the Jewish Social Services, Out of the Cold, and the Hamilton Police Force.

This is where you come in!

If you’re interested in performing a mitzvah, helping to aid the vulnerable, please get in touch. When the supplies arrive, I’m going to be offering an afternoon where we can assemble these Caring Kits together. Additionally, if you wish to donate any non-perishable snacks, band-aids, sunscreen, socks, etc. all would be gratefully received! For more information, email aimee@hamiltonjcc.com or visit our new website at hamiltonjcc.com

A NEW FACE AT BETH JACOB

BY **RABBI HILLEL LAVERY-YISRAELI**,
BETH JACOB SYNAGOGUE

BETH JACOB WELCOMES Shira Kates, who will be taking on the role of synagogue manager. In mid-May I interviewed Kates for the purpose of introducing her to HJN readers. I began by asking her for her thoughts on the qualities that make a community great.

“A great community realizes it can learn from every individual, not just the biggest, the loudest and the richest,” said Kates. “The strongest communities are the ones that have equal space for kids, seniors, people on fixed incomes, etc., to engage and contribute.”

Kates plans on being an active congregant. “Being a part of a community is so crucial for our development and well-being. You need a place where you feel you belong and feel safe to explore who you are and how you relate to others, within a supportive network.”

In terms of shuls trying to adapt to the expectations of post-millennials, Kates said she didn’t think much has changed



Shira Kates is Beth Jacob’s new executive director.

since her parents’ generations.

“Technology may impact the way we connect, but the goals are the same: we all just want to be around nice, relatable people whom we can trust.”

Kates recently moved to Hamilton from Toronto, and looks forward to meeting the community. You can reach her at shira@bethjacobsynagogue.ca or by calling 905-522-1351.

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“This class brings joy into my life.” **SHIRLEY LEVINE** Walkercise participant

THESE WALKERS ARE FOR DANCING

Shalom Village’s newest exercise program is a hit with residents

BY **MAUREEN BERGART**
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

WALKERCISE IS a new dance form offered to the residents of Shalom Village taught by Marmie Wolfson.

Wolfson began dancing when she was four years old, and has studied ballet, jazz, tap and baton, and she loves to share her knowledge. She had already been teaching a tap dance class at Shalom Village when wellness coordinator, Vanessa Pazzi, asked if Wolfson could put together an exercise and stretching program for residents. Wolfson began searching Facebook for ideas and came across a page featuring people using walkers as aids in a dance and movement program. “I can do that,” she thought to herself, and that’s how the idea for Walkercise was born.

After getting approval and support from both Pazzi and Shalom Village Volunteer Coordinator, Debbie Ginsberg, Wolfson began advertising her program. Five people showed up at her first class, which took place in April. Within a month, it more than doubled.

The class begins with slow walks forward



PHOTO BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, HJN

and back to the music of “Sunny Side of the Street.” Then students progress to movement in a circular direction. Next is leg lifting and tapping movements from side to side. The students are reminded to always hold on to their walkers for balance and stability.

Wolfson calls out the moves, “Bring your arms up, 2 – 3 – 4; separate your fingers. Which way are we facing?”

Participant Shirley Levine affirmed how much she enjoys the activity.

“This class brings joy into my life,” she said. “Marmie is a wonderful lady and Shalom Village is lucky to have her.”

“I love to do it. I love coming here and being with everyone,” said Kathy Laurence.

Why participate in Walkercise? The answer is simple. The movement is fun. It builds strength, coordination and memory,

Marmie Wolfson leads a “Walkercise” class

and is a good cardio workout. Anyone can do it and Wolfson is very encouraging. There is even one participant who is dancing from her wheelchair. It’s invigorating to watch.

Walkercise is a great alternative to the gym. Wolfson models how her students can lift their legs and do side kicks. As the students progress, she will introduce “relevé”, the ballet exercise of rising up on one’s toes. They will also learn to saucily stick out their “derriers” in that sassy movement as they get into the groove.

The program continues to attract new enthusiasts. “This is the first time I’ve joined. It’s absolutely incredible,” said Ruth Vine.

“It’s a great idea. I’d like to get up and boogie,” said Sylvia Cawker. “I just wish we could dance in our bare feet!”

Laughing along with the group and enjoying himself thoroughly is Jim Kennelly, the group’s very own Billy Elliott.

Shalom Village’s Walkercise program meets weekly on Wednesdays, usually from 2:30 - 3 p.m. in Samuels in SVToo. Contact Vanessa Pazzi at (905) 529-1613 ext 274 to confirm each week.

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The myth that ‘this’ does not happen among Jews might increase feelings of shame, self-blame, and pressure to remain silent.” **MIRIAM SAGER**



PHYLLIS SHRAGGE

“ I can advise my children on any number of subjects without risking being accused of the worst crime imaginable: telling your children what to do.

I LEARNED FROM THE BEST, OR MY MOTHER, MYSELF

CLICK. THE LINK is highlighted. Another click. The link is sent. How easy it is to send my adult children a news story supporting my view on anything and everything. In a flash, I can send the American Pediatric Society’s guidelines on screen time. Hey — I believe this is valuable information that would benefit my grandchildren. Or I can send a link to a story praising Canada’s Food Guide or maybe a link to a piece about young adults needing measles booster shots. With this approach, I can advise my children on any number of subjects without risking being accused of the worst crime imaginable: telling your children what to do.

I learned this technique early on, from an expert, my mother. And I have turned into my mother. Sure, she sent news stories the old fashioned way by clipping stories from the newspaper, popping them into an envelope and sending them off in the mail. Yes, my way may be more efficient, but the end result is the same. By sending my grown children documentation supporting my perspective on an issue, I am validating my stance. That’s not so terrible, is it? I’m not telling my children what to do. Am I? No, I’m just providing my children with facts.

When I reflect on the fat envelopes full of newspaper clippings that turned up in my mailbox at least monthly, I remember my mixed feelings. On one hand, I appreciated my mother’s good intentions. I know she must have been frustrated living in Winnipeg while I, a mother of five children, lived so far away in Hamilton. She wanted to be there for me, especially since my husband was a busy surgeon with long hours.

Regular phone calls and occasional visits to Hamilton were fine, but in my mother’s eyes, not enough. She wanted me to benefit from her expertise, from what she learned over the years as a mother. So from her point of view, newspaper articles were the answer. I can imagine my mother scouring the Winnipeg Free Press or the now defunct Winnipeg Tribune and discovering a story that was relevant to me. It might be about the benefits of breast feeding or the importance of exercise for a young mother. I can imagine her saying, “Aha!” out loud, rushing to find her scissors in the kitchen junk drawer, racing back to the living room and snipping out the article.

And yet, when I received the envelopes of newspaper clippings in the mail, I felt a bit of resentment. Did my mother doubt my ability to handle my life without her input? Why did she insist on sending me those annoying clippings? When I look back on those days, I wish I had been more appreciative. Now, I would give anything to receive an envelope full of newspaper clippings, but it is not to be.

My mother died in 2008 at the age of 99 ½. She had a wonderful life, full of love, travel and adventures. I think, though, that one of her greatest joys was discovering experts who agreed with her about the way her kids should be doing things. She knew she was right. Now she had the proof.

Are my kids annoyed when I send links to news stories? I wasn’t fooled by my mother’s tactics. I suspect my kids are on to me too. Will I stop doing it? Not on your life.

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



MIRIAM SAGER

“ Jewish women, like women of other vulnerable minorities, might feel torn between loyalty to their community and their own needs for safety.

DESTIGMATIZING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

WHENEVER I HEAR a Jewish name in a report of accusations of unprincipled or illegal behaviour, I cringe — Woody Allen, Madoff, Katsav, Weinstein, Michael Cohen. The list goes on, and is more often than not related to one of three headline-making topics: power, money, and sexual violence.

Not that I am surprised: as an Israeli who volunteered and worked at the Jerusalem sexual assault centre, it was clear that in Israel, as just about everywhere else, most perpetrators of sexual violence are known to their victims. We needed separate services for Orthodox women and for Arab women, but each group of women and girls (and some boys and men) experienced sexual violence at the hands of mostly men of the same group.

I believe the initial high level of denial that “it (rape, child sexual abuse, etc.) doesn’t happen here,” was based on the myth that Jews are different, but it’s obvious to me that, like others, Jews live in hierarchical structures that breed corruption and abuse.

Then there are the twin myths that Jewish men are more gentle than others, and that Jewish women are bossy and dominant. True, each culture has its own flavour of male domination and sexism, but having seen sexual, physical and emotional violence perpetrated by Jewish men, I know that we are not all that special. The shelters for women in Israel are as full as they are here in Canada, although here Jewish women don’t often turn to such public services.

And why not? Certainly, some can afford to seek private help, but for Jewish survivors the myth that “this” does not happen

among Jews might increase feelings of shame, self-blame, and pressure to remain silent and not seek help or recourse.

Another reason is the anti-Semitism that is out there. We fear that the bad behaviour of one of us will reflect on all of us and will feed into anti-Semitic stereotypes and hate. Those who would consider seeking criminal justice, may not trust our legal authorities to provide fair treatment to Jews. Although I condemn these men’s behaviours, I do not want them to fall into the hands of hostile public opinion, authorities and prisons. Handing a Jew over to outside authorities has even been prohibited by Jewish law.

Jewish women, like women of other vulnerable minorities, might feel torn between loyalty to their community and their own needs for safety, accountability, and healing. And having been trained, as women, to care for others at the expense of their own wellbeing, they often choose to remain silent. Either way, it is a tough choice. No survivor should be shamed or blamed for what happened, nor for their ways of coping with what no one should have to live through.

Getting help does not necessarily mean washing dirty laundry in public: confidential help is available. But individual help and even ending stigmas within the community are not enough. To end sexual violence, we must also continue to work to remove anti-Semitism, racism, and all other “isms” that compound the isolation and vulnerability of women, children, and other marginalized people.

Miriam Sager works at the Hamilton Sexual Assault Centre, and leads support groups.

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THE COUNTRY OF THE FUTURE

Crypto-Jewish customs
abound in Catholic Brazil

BY **BEN SHRAGGE**
SPECIAL TO THE HJN

GREAT COUNTRIES have poetic titles. Japan is the Land of the Rising Sun, America is the Land of Opportunity, and Brazil is the Country of the Future. (Canada, less inspiringly, is the Great White North.)

I've always wanted to visit the Country of the Future, partly out of vague dissatisfaction with my country of the present. Brazil, to me, was Canada's great South American other. Canada has snowstorms and tundra; Brazil has rainstorms and jungle. Canada is boring and orderly; Brazil is lively and chaotic. Canada has multicultural solitudes; Brazil is an integrated samba. Generalizations, sure, but I'd have to see to know. So this winter (or as they call it in the Southern Hemisphere, summer) I saw.

I stayed with two separate Brazilian friends in separate Brazilian states whom I'd met in separate countries. That two unrelated Brazilian friends would invite me to their homes is a tribute to the warmth and hospitality of the Brazilian people. I came during Carnival, a six-day stretch of communal celebrations only possibly ever matched in North America on V-Day.

We should all, if once, be part of a Brazilian crowd before we die. Put away your phone (really, put it away: it might get stolen), lose your inhibitions, go with the flow or literally get lost. I was moving as a mass through Sao Paulo's old downtown as the band played atop a flatbed truck. Vendors sold drinks and meats and cotton candy while the costumed and the shirtless danced and chanted down Bolsonaro. The music had just finished when a cry rang out, "Chuva!" (Rain!), and everyone ran.

Rain in Brazil is torrential. So when the chuva came down, we fled for the shelter of a nearby subway station. The door was barred to prevent a stampede, and a crowd gathered beneath the awning. Soaking wet couples



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN SHRAGGE

Ben Shragge enjoying the view of Rio de Janeiro from the top of Sugarloaf Mountain.

made out. The daring pushed against the door. Then a rancid smell, a friend cried "Tear gas!" and everyone ran, again.

Here, the police don't issue warnings. Tear gas is a first resort. You feel alive in Brazil, but also alive to danger. Military Police carry machine guns at tourist sites. Gated buildings, barbed wire, and concrete walls are signs of security that point to deeper insecurity. But I approached my surroundings as an extended exercise in mindfulness; and anyway, I'm from Hamilton. What can a Rio slum show me that I haven't seen on the roof of Jackson Square?

Ah, Rio: I'm not one for natural beauty, but the view of the city at sunset from Sugarloaf Mountain—with its beaches, shantytowns, mountains, and jungle—makes you briefly reconsider the notion of a Creator. Even the multinational multitudes snapping infinite selfies couldn't detract

from the genuine awe in the air. My trip to Brazil was decidedly not a pilgrimage, but I did feel that God may have rested here, for a minute, on that seventh day.

Religiously, Brazil is a Catholic country, but Pentecostal "Assemblies of God" dot up around the cathedrals. A particularly ambitious tribe of Evangelicals even built a replica of King Solomon's Temple in Sao Paulo. The popularity of Israel-identifying Protestantism might have something to do with an unexpected sight for me: Stars of David in Brazil's northeast.

The state of Alagoas isn't known for its Jews, but I noticed a number of locals wearing Magen David necklaces. My Brazilian friend thought they were Evangelicals, but I spotted the Star on wooden tchotchkes sold at a market too. Nearby Recife boasts the oldest synagogue in the Americas, and during Portugal's Inquisition, thousands

of outwardly Catholic crypto-Jews moved to Brazil seeking greater freedom. Maybe their descendants are showing off a heritage that only Evangelicals are currently appealing to. An open-minded Chabad rabbi could found a spiritual empire here.

As for me, I interpret the Biblical verse "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you" as a commandment to travel. Not to be a tourist, but to immerse yourself among the nations. Partly just to feel more alive (though the Sages do say "Choose life"), but also because doing so is a reminder that cultural norms aren't natural laws, that our way of life isn't the only way to live, that nothing human is alien to me. Every country is a Country of the Future if it shows us these truths, though Brazil, of course, gets the title.



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