



ALBERTA

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Summit on antisemitism is a good first step

The Alberta Jewish community was honoured to participate in the National Emergency Summit on Antisemitism on July 21, with the federal government and peer organizational leaders from across Canada.

From Calgary Jewish Federation: Adam Silver (CEO), Jared Shore (Co-President), and Lisa Libin (VP) attended the virtual event and from Jewish Federation of Edmonton: Stacey Levitt Wright (CEO) and Steve Shafir (President) attended.

Their firsthand participation provided them with the opportunity to hear important testimony from diverse members of the Canadian Jewish community, including Calgary's Chaim Katz.

In recent months, there has been a disturbing increase of community-reported hate crimes targeting Jewish communities, neighbourhoods, and synagogues. Irwin Cotler, Canada's Special Envoy for Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism, and Bardish Chagger, Minister of Diversity and Inclusion and Youth, convened the summit to identify ways in which organizations, communities, individuals, and the federal government can work together to increase public awareness, enhance community security, combat misinformation and online hate, and identify new measures necessary to combat antisemitism.

"Jewish communities across Canada are threatened and targeted in their neighborhoods, in the streets, on campuses, and in their communities," stated Special Envoy Cotler. "We have seen torched synagogues, memorials defaced, institutions vandalized, and cemeteries desecrated. Historically, and still today, Jewish people remain one of the most targeted minorities with respect to hate crimes—globally and in Canada. This is further provoked by the incendiary antisemitic hate we see on social media platforms, which incentivize offline violence. This national summit is not a one-time conversation, but an ongoing commitment to the combatting of the scourge of antisemitism which affects us all."

Organized by the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat, the summit brought together diverse Jewish community leaders, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, federal ministers, members of Parliament, and officials from provincial and municipal governments.

"It is unacceptable that Jewish communities and people



Summer Fun at the Calgary JCC

Calgary JCC is operating eight weeks of summer day camp fun for kids at Camp JCC ending on August 27. The staff are well-trained, enthusiastic, and dedicated to providing a safe and fun environment for new and returning campers. To register visit campjcc.ca.

still face violence, hate, and discrimination in our country," stated PM Trudeau. "We reaffirm our commitment to continue to take concrete action to combat antisemitism in all its forms."

The summit provided the opportunity for ministers, policymakers, and program administrators to listen to the concerns of community leaders, better understand the pervasiveness of antisemitism in Canada, and identify concrete steps the government can take to address the issues facing Jewish communities.

Following the summit, the Government of Canada committed to a number of initial actions including to explore potential adjustments to the Security Infrastructure Program, Anti-Racism Action Program, Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program to enhance effectiveness and be more responsive to community needs. These programs will continue to dismantle white supremacist groups, monitor hate groups, and take action to combat hate everywhere, including online.

"Anti-Jewish hatred is a growing and constantly mutating scourge that must be combatted with determination by all Canadians," stated CEO of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs Shimon Koffler Fogel.

"We are pleased that the Government of Canada has demonstrated leadership and has organized this National

Summit on Antisemitism. We will continue to work with our elected officials on advancing the concrete and constructive policy proposals we are presenting related to community security, education, and combating Holocaust denial. While today's summit focused on antisemitism and Jewish lived experience, the lessons learned and measures that will be implemented as a result will be instructive and of value to all at-risk minorities. All Canadians—Jewish and non-Jewish alike—have a role to play in creating the Canada we aspire to live in, one free from hate, racism, and bigotry."

"This was an important step in addressing the disease of antisemitism attacking our society," added Michael Mostyn, B'nai Brith Canada CEO. "It is especially important that the summit is seen as the starting point of a process, that there must be mechanism for follow-up and consideration of further action."

"Racism and hate, including antisemitism, have no place in Canada," stated Minister Chagger. "Nothing can justify the spread of hate online or in any form. While the Government of Canada continues to stand against all forms of hate, systemic racism, and intolerance, we know that Canada is not immune to hate-motivated violence and antisemitism. Today's summit was another important and productive step to building a consciously more inclusive society."

Purchase a Rosh Hashanah holiday greeting in AJNews

(AJNews) - *Alberta Jewish News* is celebrating its CHAI Anniversary. It's been 18 months since the merged rendition of Edmonton Jewish News and Jewish Free Press swept the province, reaching and informing the Jewish communities in both Edmonton and Calgary.

January 2020 proved to be a challenging time to expand; the COVID-19 pandemic hit the province hard the very next month, resulting in major event cancellations and definite hardships for the business community. These have been uncertain times for many people and devastating times for others who have been ill, and lost loved ones.

Still the newspaper has persevered and met its commitments of publishing interesting and relevant community, national and international news on both a print platform, as well as an online weekly "Schmooze," and daily posts on our website, facebook and twitter.

It is more important now than ever that we have a community newspaper to connect us. There was a war in Israel that impacted our families and friends and spilled over into our neighbourhoods. Racism against visible minorities and marginalized groups is high; there are shadow pandemics of domestic violence, opioid abuse and mental health problems as a by-product of COVID. An alarming number of unmarked Indigenous children's graves have been identified at former Residential School sites across western Canada highlighting a racist history that continued into the 1990s and impacts the fabric of Canadian life. Wildfires are burning the west and weather patterns are shifting.

These are ominous times and it is important that we stay connected and focussed on cooperating as a community and working together towards tikkun olam.

Alberta Jewish News is thankful to the business community and to the Jewish organizations for

welcoming us and participating with regular advertising. Without that support we would not be able to publish.

To those individuals and families who'd like to show their appreciation for the newspaper, we ask that you purchase holiday greetings in the newspaper three times a year – Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah and Passover. There are three different sizes available – small for \$36, medium for \$72 and large for \$180 – something to suit any budget. Your participation helps us pay for printing and mailing, so it is very much appreciated.

In the coming weeks, you will be approached to purchase a holiday greeting in the *Alberta Jewish News* – by Sandy Fayerman in Calgary or by someone from the Ancillary Judaic Program at Talmud Torah in Edmonton. Please say yes and book the greeting through them or on our website at albertajewishnews.com/greetings/.

Camp BB Riback: Leadership training and so much more

By Maxine Fischbein

While COVID-19 had threatened to shutter a second consecutive season at Camp BB Riback, camp director Stacy Shaikin and his staff are hard at work to ensure that the secret ingredient of the camp's 65 year success story – youth leading youth – is baked in at the BB-Riback Leadership Training Conference (BBRLTC). The initiative is devoted to developing young leaders while giving them a fun and safe, if altered, camp experience.

The month-long session, which began on July 15, will “reignite a new generation” of camp leaders, says Shaikin, who was thrilled to welcome some 35 campers in grades 6 through 12.

The BBRLTC emphasizes leadership skills including first aid training and CPR certification. Other activities include filmmaking, yoga and mindfulness, and most of the usual outdoors activities the camp has to offer.

Shaikin characterizes participants as “a serious group of minds.” Some are tackling high school credit courses over the summer with the full support of the camp. A few will be earning their physical education credits.

Shaikin is excited to be cultivating the talent he sees in this group and is devoted to ensuring that everyone leaves the session with leadership skills and, just as importantly, memories to last a lifetime.

“The 80s and 90s are so vivid for me,” recalls Shaikin of the years when he was a BB camper and staffer. “I want them to remember these last years together before they go their separate ways. If I could have one more year like that, I'd do it in a heartbeat.”

After studying journalism and building a career with Enmax, Shaikin made his way back to camp as its director in 2018. His wife Nancy – a community paramedic – helps out in the infirmary and their young sons already enjoy being a part of the camp culture.

Shaikin's assistant director, Jordyn Wright – who is also the camp medic – is studying toward a Bachelor of Science degree in microbiology and immunology at McGill

University. Wright, who aspires to become a health care professional, has enjoyed summers at Camp BB-Riback for 12 years. She took an advanced first aid course to qualify as medic and attained her certification as a Red Cross instructor.

“Working as the medic this summer is giving me a unique opportunity to work as a primary healthcare provider and community leader all in one, something that will prepare me for working in healthcare in a way not many people my age will get to do,” says Wright.

Micah Allen, 18, who works closely with Wright on camp COVID-19 protocols and inclusion and mental health initiatives, is studying toward a Bachelor of Science degree in biology at the University of Victoria and also looks forward to a future in health care.

Allen and Wright saw a marvellous opportunity in the “circuit breaker” caused by COVID-19 and have seized the opportunity to deepen the camp's evolving focus on inclusion and mental health.

“We were really fortunate to work with Between Friends to provide our staff with an inclusion training that focused on accessibility. We also worked with Foothills Academy to learn more about ADHD and Learning Disabilities and how to support every camper better,” Allen said.

Prior to the start of the BBRLTC, Allen and Wright told *AJNews* that some of their campers would no doubt face challenges reintegrating into camp life after the protracted isolation caused by the pandemic.

“While we hope to provide them a summer of much-needed normalcy, we also anticipate many will need some more care and love this summer. We were incredibly fortunate to have myself and Micah certified as Camp Mental Health Instructors by Let's Empower, Advocate,



and Do (LEAD), Inc. and all our staff will be certified in Camp Mental Health,” Wright told *AJNews*.

The camp has clearly instilled a healthy respect for team play in both Wright and Allen, who are quick to praise their colleagues. “We are so excited to be a part of this unique summer and grateful for the team we have making it happen: programmers, counsellors, kitchen staff, area specialists, and everyone doing work behind the scenes to keep camp running,” they told *AJNews*.

Shaikin shares their pride in his staff and expressed gratitude for the generous support the camp has had from multiple benefactors.

Michael and Alissia Oshry generously replaced the aging camp office with a better-configured trailer to which decking and a raised roof will be added so that the structure resembles nearby cabins.

While Shaikin had hoped to upgrade the pool area this summer, it proved impossible to access pool liners during the pandemic; at the same time, lumber costs skyrocketed. Significant upgrades to the pool area will happen next season thanks to a generous donation from Lenny and Faigel Shapiro as well as casino proceeds and grants.

Fortunately, much progress had already been made at the waterfront where the Sam Ousher Switzer Charitable Foundation funded a new deck, and dock materials. Volunteers put countless hours into the design and building, including Calgary's Rob Rothstein, Ryan Rabin and Jacob Kelly and Edmonton's Cecil Horwitz.

Continued on page 3

UNVEILING NOTICE

*The unveiling
for the late
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will be held
August 29, 2021 at noon*

*at the Erlton Cemetery
Calgary, AB*

UNVEILING NOTICE

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BI's Outdoor Torah Adventures in YEG

Edmontonians are adjusting to the relaxed health restrictions but are wary of moving forward too quickly.

"We know that people have extremely different levels of comfort when it comes to COVID," explained Beth Israel Synagogue's Shul Director, Moshe Siderson. "There is excitement about moving back to a place where we can be a community in a face-to-face way, but after the need for so much caution for so long, people are understandably still trying to determine how much social closeness they are ready for."

Certainly, after such global devastation it is exceedingly difficult to be confident that it really is safe again to wade out into the waters of social interaction. And with such a spiritual need for togetherness after many months spent in front of chat screens, community leaders and organizers see that proper planning is needed right now just as much as during the height of the global pandemic.

Moshe Siderson and the Beth Israel team have seized this challenge head-on. After a revving success on May 23 for their 'Staycation Long-Weekend Road Trip' scavenger hunt through the history of Jewish Edmonton, and a roaring 'Jews in Canoes' adventure down the North Saskatchewan River on July 4, it became increasingly clear that the community is eager to be active in a non-virtual way.

Well, Siderson and the team have put together a creative, and fun line-up for Summer 2021 that promises to keep Jewish Edmontonians engaged and active. "It is all fun and exciting, but what we have put together is always rooted in Jewish learning," he explained.

Thus far, bi-weekly gatherings in the Beth Israel



Beth Israel hosted 'Jews in Canoes' earlier this month.

parking lot have been a big hit!

"The series is called 'Torah Talks'. We get together outside to learn and share time together. It's BYOB – bring your own beverage," said Siderson with an audible smile. "The Rabbi gives a talk, and we are able to learn together, not in the same way as before COVID, but in a way that we can respect the spectrum of everyone's comfort zones."

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Camp BB Riback

Cont. from page 2

Future plans for the waterfront include an amphitheatre large enough for all campers and staff to participate in Shabbat and Havdalah services and concerts.

Other improvements include a new floor, windows and doors for the camp library, a new stable fence and renovations to the Benjamin cabin, the template for future cabin renovations. A sign of the times, hand sanitizing stations are now prominent around the camp thanks to the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and the Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation.

Shaikin says that Calgarian Adam Girvitz's company –The Exteriors Group – gave the camp an "amazing deal" to reroof two of its most iconic buildings, the *Olam* and the *Chadar*. Girvitz, who went out to the camp to supervise the work, goes way back with Shaikin, who was his Wonder Week counsellor when he first attended camp in 1993.

"Camp is my happy place," Girvitz told *AJNews*. When his company redid the siding and roof of the Benjamin cabin a couple of years back, he found himself on the path from the village to the Chadar and recalled marching up that pathway with fellow campers for breakfast. "It was

the start of many happy days," recalls Girvitz who snapped and framed a photo of the path because the "great memories" remained so strong.

An addition to the camp that similarly tugs at the heartstrings is a bench at the point overlooking the lake. It was gifted by the family of Debbie and Howie Sniderman in honour of their camp romance some 45 years ago – a powerful testimony to the role camping plays in Jewish continuity.

Camp BB Riback has been a family affair for two and even three generations of some Alberta and Saskatchewan families and welcomes children whose families have moved elsewhere but remain connected to the camp.

The camp opened its gates for family camping earlier this summer, welcoming eight families prior to the BBRLTC session; one family hosted a COVID-safe Bar Mitzvah celebration for 25 family members. BBYO is holding a weekend event at the camp in August.

While it was not possible to conduct the usual summer sessions for younger campers, Camp BB Riback has remained a beehive of activity. All the while, strict COVID-19 protocols have ensured the safety of campers and staff.

Shaikin says he and his staff can't wait to go "full bore" in the future. They previously welcomed some 260 campers

each summer; Shaikin aims to grow that number to 300.

He envisions moving Wonder Week experiences to the second camp session when camp routines are humming and staff-camper ratios are optimal so that first-time campers have better access to everything the camp has to offer. Shaikin says he will also encourage the parents of kids with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other special needs to consider registering their kids for second session when staffers, including highly-skilled inclusion specialists, are in a better position to ensure their best summer ever.

For now, 28 staff members are devoting 100 percent of their efforts toward giving BBRLTC participants a magical summer as they hone the necessary skills to lead, protect and inspire future campers.

"It's so exciting for us to have campers again this summer," says Jordyn Wright. "The summers I've spent at camp have been so formative for me, and I'm happy we can let kids, who really need it after the last year and a half, have a summer with some normalcy and some of those experiences."

For more information about Camp BB Riback, go to www.campbb.com.

Maxine Fischbein is a local journalism initiative reporter for Alberta Jewish News.

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- The Goldhar Family
Project: The Round Table Youth Club



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elliott.steinberg@jnf.ca
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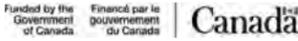
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PUBLISHER: Deborah Shatz

EDITOR: Daniel Moser

PAST PUBLISHERS: Barry Slawsky, David Moser,
Judy Shapiro, Richard Bronstein

For change of address, please send both old and new addresses. We welcome your stories, pictures, artwork and opinions. Please send submissions to our office at the address above.

Next Deadline: August 19, 2021

MP describes the IRSS legacy to Vancouver students

By Pat Johnson, Jewish Independent

(Vancouver) – Jody Wilson-Raybould, Member of Parliament for Vancouver-Granville and a member of the We Wai Kai Nation, told students at Vancouver Talmud Torah Elementary School last month that most of her family members attended residential schools and she spoke of the tragic legacy of that project, which devastated Indigenous communities for generations.

“Residential schools, these institutions, are a very dark part of our history,” she said, speaking directly to students at a ceremony organized to mourn the 215 children whose bodies were recently discovered buried adjacent to a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C. Most of the city’s rabbis were also in attendance.

“They were in existence for over 100 years in Canada, from the 1870s to 1996, when the last one closed in Saskatchewan. The last one closed in British Columbia in 1984,” said Wilson-Raybould of the residential schools.

“These institutions were created by the law of Canada and run by churches. There were 139 residential schools across the country and it’s estimated that 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis children attended the schools, forcibly removed from their homes, compelled to attend, and the purpose of residential schools, as stated by the first prime minister of this country, was to remove the Indian from the child, to get rid of the ‘Indian problem’ in this country.”

She added: “People have asked me, as I know they’ve asked many Indigenous peoples, how do you feel? I feel angry. I feel frustrated. And I feel a deep sense of sadness, because this is not an isolated incident. There will be more that will be revealed and we have to recognize that every

Indigenous person in this country has a connection to residential schools and the harmful legacies that still exist. But I am still optimistic. Optimistic that, through young people like you ... that we can make a change in this country.”

Speaking of her family’s experiences, Wilson-Raybould singled out her grandmother, who she has frequently cited as her hero, and talked of the courage and resilience her grandmother exhibited.

“Most of my relatives went to residential schools,” she said. “My grandmother, Pugladee, was taken away from her home when she was a very young girl and forced to go to the Indian residential school St. Michael’s, in Alert Bay. She faced terrible violence at that school, but she escaped from that school and she made it home and she is the knowledge keeper in my nation.”

Emily Greenberg, Vancouver Talmud Torah head of school, welcomed guests in person and online, expressing empathy for Indigenous Canadians, faced again with the reminder of this country’s past.

“Their wounds have been reopened once again and their suffering renewed,” she said. “Today, our community gathers to grieve with them and open our hearts to their struggles.”

Rabbi Dan Moskovitz of Temple Shalom contrasted the lives of the children buried in Kamloops with the lives and educational experiences of the Talmud Torah students attending the ceremony, who, he said, “are immersed in their own language and culture and traditions” – the very things Canada’s residential school system was designed to extinguish in Indigenous young people.

“Our hearts break today not only for the loss of life,” said Moskovitz. “They break for the loss of childhood, the loss of

innocence, the loss of joy, of play, of family, of heritage that was stolen from those children by the misguided aims of our nation. It was a different era. It was a different time, but if our people, the Jewish people, have learned anything from our history of trauma and persecution, it is these words: that those who do not study history are bound to repeat it. Echoed by the warning of the Jewish people from the Holocaust, from the Shoah – never again – we have learned, and we know in our souls, that the greatest tribute we can offer these children and their families is not words of condolence, but acts of conscience. The purpose of prayer is to lead us to action, to make our prayer real, not in heaven but here on earth.”

Rabbi Jonathan Infeld of Congregation Beth Israel said that “the children who we are remembering today were forced to go to schools and to a specific school that ripped away their culture, attempted to take away from them their language, attempted to take them literally away from their families.” Addressing the students, he emphasized the message Moskovitz shared: “Today, we are remembering children who had the exact opposite of the opportunities that you have.”

Or Shalom’s Rabbi Hannah Dresner expressed the unity of Jewish, Indigenous and all peoples. “We share a destiny as co-inhabitants of this land and because we are of the same holy stuff, the same flesh and blood and the same God-breath,” she said, encouraging members of the Jewish community to “respond not just in our sentiments but through ongoing engagement service and grace.”

Rabbi Andrew Rosenblatt of Congregation Schara Tzedek spoke of the Jewish concept that one who extinguishes even a single life is considered to have

Continued on page 6

Edmonton TT class of 1972 reunion



A Zoom reunion with the Edmonton Talmud Torah Class of 1972, was organized by Robin Marcus in collaboration with Natalie Soroka of the TT Society. Twenty-three turned out to catch up, schmooze, share memories and take a virtual tour of TT at their beautiful west end school.



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Empowering Women

CHW enters a new chapter in its 100-year history

Canadian Hadassah-WIZO(CHW) has entered a new chapter in its 100-year history. CHW recently announced the appointment of Lisa Colt-Kotler as the organization's first CEO. This is a tremendous opportunity for change. Lisa has already spearheaded inventive fundraising strategies, restructured the organization, and introduced modern branding that represents the interconnectedness of Canada and Israel to CHW's mission and vision for the future. Her vision includes creating fresh approaches for philanthropy that generate impact, provide sustainable revenue streams, and fund social enterprises to empower women.

CHW strongly believes that every human being deserves the right to achieve their full potential, while living in safety and security. This summer, due to the recent surge in domestic violence, CHW is launching a campaign that will step up emergency support and services.

COVID-19 isn't the only pandemic to worry about; the worldwide increase in domestic violence has been coined the Shadow Pandemic by the United Nations. Globally, an estimated 200,000 women live with violence and fear. The number of domestic violence complaints in Israel has increased by 800% since the beginning of COVID. CHW's summer campaign, S.O.S – Starting Over Safely, will ensure a safe haven for at-risk adolescents, provide basic necessities needed to help families start over safely, and will empower women to break the cycle of violence.

For anyone looking to support the cause locally, CHW Calgary Centre is hosting the CHW Walk on August 16 and August 17 at South Glenmore Park. Donate a minimum of \$18 to join or support the walk by sponsoring a friend. The walk is stroller and pet friendly, and kids under 18 are free. "You have the power to empower! Join us at the walk to empower women and children who need our help," said Irena Karshenbaum, CHW's new Development Officer for Western Canada.

Also, on August 24-25, all donations to the SOS campaign will be matched three more times by a loyal community of donors recognized as "Matching Heroes." That means, during the 24-hour campaign, which kicks off at noon in each city across Canada, every gift is quadrupled. To make a gift, visit www.chwsos.ca



on August 24. Supporters can also enjoy a star studded virtual 90-minute blockbuster telethon beginning at 6:00 p.m. MT right from the campaign website.

Register, fundraise, or sponsor a walker at www.chw.ca/calgarywalk.

For more details, contact Irena at irena@chw.ca or call 403-253-4612.

Adventures *Cont. from page 3*

Siderson described how up to twenty pre-registered congregants set up their fold-out lawn chairs in the parking lot, and basked the beautiful weather and being together, all while learning Torah with Rabbi Clayman.

The 'Torah Talks' presented every other Tuesday are not all that Siderson and the team have brewing this summer. In the spirit of getting outdoors and connecting with Jewish thought through activity, on August 8, Edmontonians can satisfy their pedometers' daily step-count with 'Get Over it: A Bridge to Bridge to Bridge to Bridge Walk.'

"We will have an organized walk over four Edmonton bridges," explained Siderson. "We will meet at the Kinsman Field House Park at noon on August 8. We will meet, greet and pick up EATS and drinks to start you on your way.

"We will be walking over 3 bridges in Edmonton's River Valley, beginning with Edmonton's newest – the Walderdale Bridge. That will also be the first stop for the Torah Talk with Rabbi Claman.

"After each Bridge, your route option could be back to our gathering at the Kinsmen Park or continue to Bridges 2 and 3... and then back to our gathering at the Kinsmen Park. Once we are all back at our gathering spot, there will be fun and games- as we wait for everyone to return; then we will have SUSHI and the 2nd part of Rabbi Claman's Torah Talk."

Approximate walking times are small: 1 hour, medium: 1.5 hours, large: 2 hours and xlarge: includes a loop back on Edmonton's highest bridge: 3 hours. A full trip map will be made available closer to the date of the event.

Another engaging and active adventure orchestrated by Siderson and the team is in the planning stage. "Before Rosh Hashanah we are also planning to either

organize a trip to go berry picking or to the corn maze," he continued. The goal behind all that Siderson envisions for Summer 2021 is to feed the need for Jewish learning through engaging the community in a safe and active way. "By keeping things outside, we know that we can cater to all comfort levels. We are looking forward to moving back inside for services gradually, but who knows when we will be able to share a kiddush lunch again." Siderson pointed out that Beth Israel Synagogue has maintained active and dedicated Jewish worship throughout the pandemic, but he, and his colleague, are eagerly preparing to transition back to 'normal' conditions.

So, don't worry about finding the right Zoom link buried in your email, and stop fretting about whether your webcam is picking up the mess in the background – just visit the Beth Israel website familyshul.org to get outside and get active this summer – both spiritually and physically.



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Shalom Baby welcomes newborns to the community

By Jenna Soroka

Shalom Baby, a program designed to welcome newborns into the Jewish community and support parents of Jewish families across Canada and the United States, is now in Edmonton! This was made possible by a grant recently awarded to the Jewish Federation of Edmonton (JFED) from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation program, PJ Library. This grant will help bring Shalom Baby to life in the Edmonton area as new (and experienced) parents in the community grow their families.

In mid-July of this year, the program's kick-off gathering included food, beverages, and an opportunity for parents with babies, aged 0-2, to support one another and share resources as it relates to the journey of parenthood.

"When you go through a life transition, everything kind of reorganizes on some level," Jennifer Magalnick, Jewish Education and Engagement Specialist for the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, shares. As a mother, Jennifer recognizes the psychological and emotional benefits of connecting with other people going through a similar transition.

In addition to facilitating relationship-building, Shalom Baby Edmonton is designed to connect parents with tools and resources based on their needs with the support of a Parent Connector. This may look like bringing in an expert speaker to talk about navigating postpartum or helping families find a Synagogue that fits their values. Jewish Federation is looking for an enthusiastic parent to fill this part-time role as Parent Connector. If you or someone you know is interested, contact Jennifer at magalj@edjfed.org.

A common element across Shalom Baby programs is a Welcome Gift Bag or Basket which includes contributions shared on behalf of organizations in the local Jewish

community. For instance, as part of Calgary's welcome gift bag, new parents can expect to receive Calgary Jewish Federation's Shalom Baby Resource Guide. "[It] acts as a reference for new parents to re-engage with the community. The Resource Guide provides information on opportunities that they may not have been aware of otherwise, from JCC to synagogues to day cares/day schools, and of course PJ Library and Shalom Baby. The Shalom Baby program itself offers new (and returning) parents the opportunity to connect with each other to share the "joys and oys" of parenting," explains Calgary's Jewish Federation Emerging Gen Coordinator, Danielle Braitman.

If you are in Calgary and have not already received a Shalom Baby Gift Bag, email Braitman at dbraitman@jewishcalgary.org or call 403-444-314.

In Edmonton, the gift basket is currently being organized and will feature items from Jewish organizations, a PJ library baby book and helpful resources. Edmonton parents with new babies can look forward to receiving their welcome gift upon joining the program, sometime in the fall.

Shalom Baby Edmonton's framework is organic in nature, with the intention of growing a support network for Jewish parents. It focuses on the interests of



Edmonton's new Shalom Baby group.

the group to foster meaningful support through this transformative lifestage. Families of all types are invited to experience this new opportunity in Shalom Baby's nurturing environment.

Grandparents and other family members are encouraged to contact the Jewish Federation of Edmonton with information about new additions to their families.

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton is excited to help empower parents with babies aged 0-2 moving forward thanks to the financial support of the PJ Library grant.

You can participate in Shalom Baby's next Edmonton gathering on August 16 by connecting with Jennifer Magalnick at magalj@edjfed.org.

Jenna Soroka is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Alberta Jewish News.

IRSS legacy *Cont. from page 4*

destroyed an entire world. "Today, we remember, at a minimum, the destruction of 215 worlds," he said. "A significant portion of these children died while trying to escape to reunite with their families. They died of exposure in the cold, the frost, simply trying to do one thing that every human being would... simply trying to return to

their own families."

Carrie Plotkin, a Grade 5 student, read the poem "You hold me up," by Monique Gray Smith. "It was written to encourage us young people, our care providers and our educators to talk about reconciliation and the importance of the connections children make with our friends, classmates and families," she said.

Rabbi Shlomo Gabay of Beth Hamidrash read a 1936 poem from Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Carlebach of Hamburg, Germany. Cantor Yaacov Orzech sang Psalm 23.

The 215 bodies were discovered using ground-penetrating radar. (An additional 751 unmarked

graves have since been discovered near a former Residential "School" in Saskatchewan and 182 unmarked graves have been found near a former Residential "School" near Cranbrook, BC.) The Truth and Reconciliation Commission estimated that 4,100 children died at residential schools from abuse, neglect, diseases and accidents. Many were never repatriated to their families and communities and, in many cases, deaths were sloppily recorded using just a given name or a surname and sometimes even completely anonymously. Advocates are calling on the government to commit to identifying more remains and to releasing archival documentation on the schools that has remained sealed.

This article was originally published by the Jewish Independent in Vancouver.

The Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON PJ Library Alberta

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EDMONTON TALMUD TORAH SOCIETY
תלמוד תורה בנגד חולם

Community Update - July 2021

The Talmud Torah Society would like to extend its thanks to all parents, partners, volunteers and community members who attended our June Annual General Meeting.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our newly elected board members:

- Megan Mandel (new)
- Noga Vaisblat (new)
- Doug Kondor (returning)
- Sharon Marcus (returning)

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who volunteered their time to the Society this past year – board members, committee members, parent council, school volunteers, community partners, and anyone else who took the time to support the Talmud Torah School and ELC student and family experience. Community (קהילה) and Inclusivity (הכללה) are central to our Society and we wish to recognize everyone who has supported us in living those values this year.

We will be taking a short hiatus from our strategic planning community updates as we orient our new board, finalize our strategic plan, and begin planning for the new school year. Our finalized strategic plan is expected to be shared shortly thereafter.

The Talmud Torah Society Board

Missed some info? See all our strategic plan updates at:
<https://talmudtorahsociety.com/about-us/planning-for-the-future/>

community calendar

Want to know what's going on in Jewish Calgary? Check out the Community Calendar at jewishcalgary.org

Have an event? Click on "Suggest an Event" to add it to the calendar

Pomegranate NEWS, VIEWS AND SCHMOOZE WITH THE CALGARY JEWISH COMMUNITY



A MESSAGE FROM JORDAN BALABAN AND JARED SHORE

As we complete the first year of our term as co-presidents of Calgary Jewish Federation, it is a critical time to look back, take stock of Calgary Jewish Federation's achievements, and plan our year ahead for Jewish Calgary.

As we embarked on our presidency, our commitment to our donors, our volunteers, our Federation team, and our Calgary Jewish Community was twofold: to facilitate and encourage broader engagement and participation within our own community, and to ensure that the time, resources, and dollars that our community members dedicate to Federation continue to be both valued, and responsibly managed.

Sadly, one of the sources of increased engagement has been the antisemitism that our global Jewish community,

including here in Alberta, has experienced. While we are not in the business of running fear campaigns, we have aimed to inform our entire community of the work that Federation has been doing to combat antisemitism in our midst, and have had over 200 people sign up for our action alerts over the last three months.

Community members, there is much to be proud of for what we have accomplished over the past year. There is even more to be excited about in the coming year. Renewed talks about a community campus are at the forefront of our excitement.

Survivors. We will welcome renowned author, Yossi Klein Halevi to our UJA campaign kickoff this fall.

And we are there to support our children and youth to celebrate and grow their Jewish identities even when it is difficult to do just that. We are there to ensure that there are no barriers to Jewish life in Calgary whether that be reflected in our Integrated Bursary Program, our support for special needs learning supports at our community schools, our support for Jewish seniors, or our advocacy work.

B'Shalom,

Jordan Balaban Co-President Calgary Jewish Federation

Jared Shore Co-President Calgary Jewish Federation

Building an inclusive community is a priority. Contact us and we will make every effort to meet your needs.

UJA 2021 CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

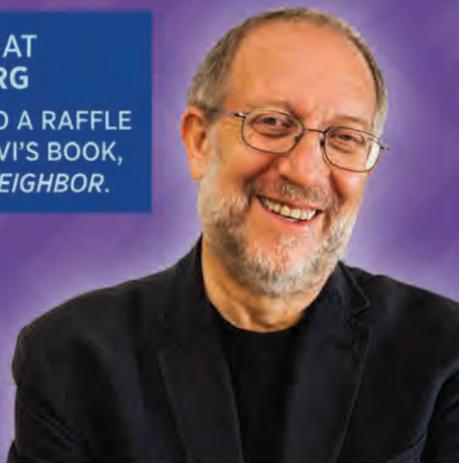
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Yossi Klein Halevi is a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. He is a leading expert on the Middle East, frequent op-ed contributor, New York Times best-selling author, and a popular lecturer on Israeli affairs.

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Calgary Jewish Federation has launched the PJ Library® Legacy Fund in partnership with The Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF) ensuring families will have the gift of books for generations to come.

For the next two years, HGF is offering a 25% match for cash legacy gifts to support PJ Library Calgary in perpetuity. There is no minimum amount to participate.

For more information, please contact:

Kathie Wainer PJ Library Calgary Manager 403-537-8592 kwainer@jewishcalgary.org
Diana Kalef Director of Development 403-444-3154 dkalef@jewishcalgary.org



NICE JEWISH PETS Calendar

ARE YOU A DOG OR CAT PERSON?

Get the best of both worlds with JAC's pawsitively adorable Nice Jewish Pets Calendar! For only \$25 (includes an \$18 tax receipt), you can admire the furry girls and boys of Calgary's Jewish community while supporting Jewish infrastructure and programming.



ACTION ALERT banner with icons and text: Join our ACTION ALERT team at jewishcalgary.org. There are times we must mobilize community activists toward a strategic outcome, and we invite you to join us.

Empowering Women

Empowering women as community leaders

By Stacey Leavitt Wright



Stacey Leavitt Wright

Since I was a teenager, I have always believed that we create the community we want to live in. For this reason I have always felt compelled to volunteer in the Jewish community. Ensuring that my children could have a strong, supportive Jewish community has also been a primary motivation for my volunteer activities. Now, more than ever, we need young, Jewish women to get involved in leadership positions and community

building so that the continuity and growth is brought to the next generation.

It has been a true honour to get to know our seasoned and senior volunteers but we have relied on them for many years. I hope to continue to work alongside them for many

more years, however, it is time to start mentoring younger community members as many are eager to pass the torch of community forward. Our strategic planning process is intended to give us the focus we need to engage new volunteers in areas that are meaningful to them while ensuring that the community needs are met.

Emerging from the pandemic many of us are re-evaluating personal priorities; trying to sort out where we want to expend philanthropic and volunteer efforts. Academic studies show that women are more likely to lead through inspiration, aligning people with meaning and purpose, than men are. I raise this point because, as your CEO, I endeavour to find volunteer roles that are meaningful to each and every one of you. I also endeavour to lead from a place that is tied to strong Jewish values including tikkun olam and klal Yisrael.

One need only look around our community agencies to see that there are many bright, capable women in leadership positions. From Executive Directors to Board Presidents, it has been gratifying for me to build professional relationships in this network of women and seek opportunities of collaboration for the betterment of the community.

Values based leadership is often thought of as a feminine leadership style and this has influenced my leadership through the pandemic over the last six months. We established a Covid Relief Fund via fundraising and seeking grants in order to be able to support the newly vulnerable in our community and to strengthen our beneficiaries as we emerge from the pandemic. We reinstated PJ library and PJ Our way programs this spring to bring children together from across the community and connected them with an Israeli Shlichah (counsellor) to bring the connection to Israel a step forward. After a year of hibernation we knew that people were thirsty for opportunities to reconnect, and so we established a summer series of events to appeal to a broad audience. With a large number of pregnant women 'swelling our ranks' we developed a new Shalom Baby program to connect and support the parents. None of this could have happened without the efforts of our community volunteers, and for that we are grateful. This is in addition to our many other events and programs that are a source of pride for all of us, including the Edmonton Jewish Film

Continued on page 10

To pee or not to pee, is that your question?

By Sari Uretsky

Vagina.

Now that most of the men have left, those interested can have a conversation. An important conversation about Women's Health. When was the last time you talked about your vagina? Or labia or perineum? Do you even know what these things are and where they are located? What about a prolapse? What is that and where does it happen? Why do some women have pain "down there" when they pee or have sex? Is that normal after childbirth? What about those leaks when you cough, laugh or jump up and down? What about urges to void constantly throughout the day? Women very rarely talk about these things. I think we need to. We should be more open and speak about the concerns we have, instead of trying to just live with them. 54% of incontinent women report the loss of confidence and 45% report the loss of intimacy. 5 out of 10 women do not seek help. There are things women can do

to address the issues mentioned above and many of these are non-invasive, non-surgical options.

Have you ever been pregnant? Do you have children? If so, you likely have a weakened pelvic floor. Research shows that pregnancy, not just delivery, can disrupt the pelvic floor. The pelvic floor consists of muscles that act like a sling making up the bottom part of your core. It is responsible for keeping our bladder and bowel from leaking, holding in the pelvic organs, supporting the low back and pelvis and maintaining optimal sexual function. During a vaginal delivery, the pelvic floor muscles are stretched up to 4X their normal length! These muscles may be torn or cut during the delivery as well, which repairs with scar tissue. This scar tissue can be hypersensitive or painful and extremely tight causing a great deal of discomfort. Unfortunately, you are not in the clear if you have had a C-section. Due to the weight of the growing uterus directly down on the muscles and due to hormonal changes, pelvic floor muscle dysfunction will likely occur. There is also an incision made through the lower abdomen during a C-section and therefore scar tissue forms here too.

Many women experience bladder and/or bowel dysfunction after pregnancy and many women will experience it later in life, even if they have never had a biological pregnancy. A weak pelvic floor can lead to stress incontinence. This is when you leak urine during an activity that increases your inter-abdominal pressure, like coughing, sneezing, laughing, jumping or lifting. How many times have you heard people say "Oh, I can't do that because I'll pee my pants!" It is NOT NORMAL to lose control of your bladder regularly or on occasion, but it is COMMON. Thankfully, there are strengthening and endurance exercises to

help you get better control of your pelvic floor.

Sometimes an over-active bladder is the issue. You might have urgency with or without incontinence. This is when you have a strong urge to void often or all the time. It is normal to go to the washroom every 3-4 hours and once at night. If you are going more often than this, there is likely a problem with either urge or frequency or both. A physiotherapist trained in pelvic health can teach you strategies to increase the time between bathroom visits and calm urgency.

Pain can be associated with the pelvic floor in many different ways. It may be painful to urinate, have a bowel movement, insert a tampon or some experience pain prior to, during or after sexual intercourse. Some people cannot relax their pelvic floor and thus feel discomfort all the time. Being able to control your pelvic floor muscles also means being able to relax them. Stretches, scar massage, exercises, positions of relief and even IMS (intramuscular stimulation) can be very helpful in reducing tightness and learning how to relax.

Now if there happen to be any men left reading, men's pelvic health is also extremely important. Men can have pain, urgency, frequency and incontinence too. These are not strictly female issues. In fact, most men require pelvic physiotherapy after prostate surgery. Exercises, education and pelvic training are all effective means to improve and resolve issues in both male and female patients.

I could go on and on about the different issues people face with their pelvic floor but the two most important things to understand is that you are not alone and there is help! Start talking to your friends about the things you are experiencing. Speak to your family doctor or better yet, gynecologist. Find a pelvic health trained physiotherapist you trust, to work with you to help resolve these issues. There are so many things you can do to make your life better and to feel more confident. Feel Better. Move Better. Be Better.

Sari Uretsky, BScPT, CAFCI, IMS is a Physiotherapist - Women's Health Specialist. Contact her at uretskyphysiotherapy.com.

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Sari Uretsky Leung
BScPT, CAFCI, IMS

from the Sources

Beyond an (Eye-)Shadow of a Doubt

by Eliezer Segal

In the Bible and in subsequent Jewish and Christian traditions, the name Jezebel provokes very unfavourable associations. A native of Phoenicia, she continued to promote the pagan cults of Baal and Asherah during her reign as consort of the Israelite king Ahab (earning her an honoured status among some feminists as the alleged champion of a primordial goddess cult). She abused her authority by orchestrating the judicial murder of Naboth in order to confiscate his vineyard.

After Ahab's death, the prophet Elisha appointed the commander Jehu to wrest the monarchy from that ignominious dynasty. After eliminating the heirs to the throne, Jehu proceeded to confront Jezebel in Jezreel. The deposed queen greeted the upstart with proud defiance. Jehu ordered that she be tossed disgracefully out the window and her mutilated corpse abandoned to the dogs in fulfillment of a curse by the prophet Elijah.

In describing Jezebel's preparations for receiving Jehu, the scriptural account inserts an intriguing detail: "She coloured her eyes, and arranged her hair." The laconic formulation does not explain exactly how Jezebel went about colouring her eyes, or what her purpose was in doing so. What the Hebrew text actually says is that she applied to her eyes something called "pukh." The oldest interpreters seem quite certain when it comes to identifying the substance in question. The ancient Greek translation employs a verb "estimisato," derived from the noun "stimmi." This substance, known in Latin as "stibium" (stibnite), is identified as antimony, an element that was commonly used to lend a black or dark blue tinge to the eyelids.

The medieval exegete and grammarian Rabbi David Kimhi of Narbonne equated *pukh* with *kahol*, a cosmetic well-known in rabbinic literature (the architects of modern Hebrew adopted it as the term for the colour "blue"). Crossword puzzle aficionados may recognize the word "kohl" as a synonym for eye-liner. Like many such terms in the cosmetic lexicon, this Semitic word entered European languages through the agency of Arabic traders who controlled much of the international commerce in those items during medieval times.

So what was Jezebel's objective in prettying herself up for the confrontation with her nemesis Jehu? Gersonides' preferred hypothesis was that, through her insistence on being elegantly groomed at her public appearances, Jezebel was proudly asserting her majesty as Israel's legitimate sovereign—as was borne out

in her subsequent diatribe against Jehu.

According to another possibility suggested by Gersonides, Jezebel was hoping to arouse Jehu's compassion to spare her life. In a slight variation on that theme, Rabbi Meir Malbim supposed that she was hoping to elicit sympathy from one of the army officers who might be persuaded to protect her against the usurper. Rashi wrote that she was enhancing her physical charms as a means of seducing the new king to marry her and thereby perpetuating her hold on the throne. (As that old Frankie Laine song put it, "If ever a pair of eyes \ promised paradise \ it was you, Jezebel.")

In keeping with the traditional stereotyping of Jezebel as an archetype of heathen depravity, Don Isaac Abravanel remarked that the application of eye shadow is the mark of a harlot. This claim is consistent with other passages in the Bible in which similar actions are stigmatized as licentious behaviour. Thus, in Jeremiah's vision of the fall of Jerusalem, he scornfully depicts a personification of the rejected city tarding herself up in a futile attempt to entice her former paramours. "Though thou broaden thy eyes with *pukh*, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life." Ezekiel employed similar imagery, addressing Jerusalem as the wanton Oholibah who "bathed, painted your eyes, and donned your finery" to receive her companions. The Hebrew verb used here for painting eyes is "*kahal*."

In contrast to the prophets' negative stance towards eye make-up, the sages of the Talmud had more favourable things to say about the practice. Rabbis Yosé and Yohanan touted it as a cure for an ailment referred to as "the daughter of the king," which commentators understood as a demon that afflicts the eyes. The treatment also inhibits tearing and even enhances the growth of eyelashes.

At the end of the book of Job, the long-suffering hero is recompensed with the birth of a new daughter. The girl is named "Keren Happukh." Rashi explained that the name alluded to the horn-shaped container used for eye-shadow. Rabbi David Altschuler in his *Metzudat*

David commentary associated it with the metallic gleam of antimony.

The Talmud reports that in the land of Israel it was customary to praise a bride for being as graceful as a gazelle even though her charms are not enhanced by eye-shadow [*kehal*], rouge or braided hair. As Rashi remarked, the point is not necessarily that she has no recourse to beauty aids, but rather that her intrinsic beauty does not really require synthetic embellishment. In this connection, Rabbi Jacob Reischer adduced the words of Proverbs: "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."

The talmudic passage goes on to relate that the same praises that were addressed to brides were also sung to Rabbi Zera at his rabbinic ordination.

Now it is quite obvious that Rabbi Zera was not being commended for going without mascara, and that the attribution of these qualities to him was intended metaphorically, as an appreciation of the genuineness of his scholarship and piety. According to Rabbi Samuel Edels (Maharsha), Rabbi Zera had no need for metaphoric eye-shadow because his character was authentically modest and decent, and his admirable qualities could shine through without any deceptive veneer.

Maharsha contrasted him to pretenders who project outward images of righteous saintliness—like men who always keep their gazes lowered ostentatiously as if to avoid glancing at women.

It remains an open question whether those sanctimonious frauds could have resisted the enticements of queen Jezebel's darkly exotic eyes.

Eliezer Segal is a local journalism initiative reporter for Alberta Jewish News.

'From the Sources' by Eliezer Segal is sponsored by the Zeisler Families of Edmonton, Calgary and New York City

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Eva Falla

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contact roxanned@jfsc.org.



Welcome Kristen Joffe Chair, JFSC Board of Directors

JFSC welcomes Kristen Joffe as the new Chair of the Board of Directors.

Kristen brings expertise in positioning JFSC for emerging trends, best practices, community investment sector expectations and has experience in fundraising and volunteer engagement strategies. She received the 2019 United Way of Calgary and Area's Power of One Award and was recognized in Avenue Magazine's 2010 Top 40 Under 40.

Max Feldman, past Chair is retiring from the JFSC Board having served as Board Chair, Governance Committee Chair, and member of the Finance Committee. Max was instrumental in ensuring the overall high quality of Board governance and organizational structure.

Max will be greatly missed and we wish him well.

Volunteer Opportunity - JFSC Board of Directors

JFSC is committed to ensuring exceptional governance with Directors contributing to the oversight and continued development of an accredited, inclusive Agency with demonstrated service excellence and a solid reputation for being responsive to Community needs.

Seeking new JFSC Board Directors with expertise in:

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Marketing & Communications - BA, BComm or Diploma in Communications, Public Relations and/or Marketing, 5 years experience

Contact boardchair@jfsc.org
For more information www.jfsc.org



Empowering Women

Na'amat empowers women locally and in Israel

By Lesley Machon

Bonds of sisterhood between women are birthplaces of generative potential within a society. Connection, belonging, and acceptance fosters collaboration, and helps each woman experience the safety needed to show up in the world. In true community, we are each essential, which means we can show up authentically without risking isolation. Cultivating intentional spaces where women can gather to witness and support one another is foundational for flourishing and changemaking within families and cultures.

The paradox central to both relationships and self-expression is this: we do not become ourselves, on our own. This is an acknowledgement of the way human beings are both exquisitely unique, and inextricably connected. We grow as individuals, in the presence of others.

In its simplest terms, empowerment is about choice, and voice. As Viktor Frankl famously said, "Everything can be taken from a (wo)man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

For many women, especially those experiencing violence or oppression, empowerment means access to resources so they can make a true choice. For ourselves and women across the globe, empowerment also means cultivating inner resources, such as the capacity to act in alignment with our convictions, and the confidence to take up space, speak our truth, occupy positions of influence and leadership, and claim our rights.

Shrinking and silencing ourselves are protective mechanisms and survival strategies, so in order to claim a seat at the proverbial table, women need to feel intrinsically safe. Being in community with other women is such a crucial part of empowerment, because belonging creates safety. Each member of the collective holds up a mirror for others, reflecting back courage and support.

Na'amat is the largest women's movement in Israel,

with thousands of members globally and chapters in nine other countries including Canada. The organization focuses on supporting children and families by championing human rights, and connecting and empowering Jewish women.

In Israel, Na'amat runs daycare centres, technological high schools, youth villages, university scholarships, women's shelters and family violence prevention centres, trauma and abuse counselling, as well as legal aid bureaus (25 locations), women's rights centres (5 locations) and women's wellness and empowerment centres (2 locations).

In Canada, Na'amat's programs supply women and children fleeing domestic violence with toiletries, clothes, and school supplies. They also offer bursaries for post-secondary education, and organize events for our beloved elders, hosting concerts, luncheons, and Chanukah celebrations in seniors' residences.

In addition to advocacy, volunteer and leadership opportunities, local members also gather to bond and form relationships with each other. Groups in each city meet monthly to build connection and share space in whatever format the group decides. This can look like anything from potlucks, to game nights, to craft projects, yoga, cooking classes, movie nights, exercise classes, or hosting guest speakers. Women also gather to plan fundraising projects which help raise money for Na'amat's local and international programs.

Na'amat has groups across Canada, including an active community of Jewish women in both Calgary and Edmonton.

The local chapters of Na'amat are an excellent place for



Calgary Na'amat members at a planning session bbq.

women to connect, engage in meaningful work, and support their Jewish communities both locally and abroad. From leadership seminars and travel opportunities to building a network of heart-centred women, many expansive empowerment opportunities exist inside this organization. Plus, it's a fun place to be—members take on one major fundraising project a year, and alternate planning gatherings with monthly time together cultivating intentional connections: creating together, and sharing stories, tears, tea, and laughter.

"I got involved with Na'amat 36 years ago as a newcomer," says Stephanie Sacks, president of Na'amat Calgary. "The organization gifted me with purpose and passion at a time in my life when I was feeling quite lost." Her smile is audible as she recounts the lifelong bonds formed with many inspirational women over the years.

"We accomplish a lot for a small group here in Calgary," Sacks beams, detailing the group's work to support domestic shelters, and their bursary at Bow Valley College. COVID posed its challenges by restricting the number of volunteers, and turning monthly meetings and fundraising events virtual, but Sacks expresses pride in the program's adaptability. She also emphasized the importance of supporting women who experienced violence during the

Continued on page 11

Empowering women

Cont. from page 8

Festival and our upcoming Heritage Days.

This past year has seen a rise in antisemitism of alarming proportions. Global in scope and evident across all political spectrums, the pernicious nature of this "Jewhated" has been a concern to many of us. The proliferation of antisemitism in many forms on social media is alarming and will require a multi-pronged approach, both from the grassroots and at the policy levels.

While combatting antisemitism has united us in recent months, I feel that it should not be allowed to define us or

make us hide our identities. Now, more than ever, we need to live proud and public Jewish lives. I hope you will join me in doing so, as the strength of our community will determine the strength and quality of our recovery. Step into a volunteer role with the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and help create the community that you want to see as we move forward.

Stacey Leavitt Wright is CEO of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

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Mazel Tov
 to Double Bubbe
 Miriam Milavsky

on the birth of her great grandson

Beckett Hanson Melatsky.

Empowering Women

Supporting our young women to be their 'Best Selves'

By Britnee Contessa

It was during a jog on Father's Day of 2019 when I decided that I was going to start my business as a female youth advocate. Following university, my professional background largely centered around female youth work. Working with young women is something that comes naturally to me and it is something that I am passionate about. I knew that I wanted to continue to help female youth to be their best selves, to instill in them the self-esteem and confidence that my mother instilled in me. She passed away when I was 13, yet she continues to be a daily source of strength and inspiration. I also knew that I was no longer meant to be an employee. Just like that, Femmepowered was born!

When Covid-19 made its appearance in Canada, I had just been preparing myself to conduct in-school workshops for female youth, ages 12-17. Of course, that was no longer an option due to public health restrictions. With this in mind, I began to reconfigure my services. I decided that individual consulting would be better aligned with my skill set, rather than facilitating in group

settings given the circumstances. I still hope to provide group sessions in the future.

I am certain that many people thought I was a bit too optimistic when I officially launched my services in Summer 2020. However, these services are needed now more than ever. Our youth have been experiencing significant developmental changes, all while navigating a pandemic. At a time when they are discovering their identities and building their social circles, they have been forced into isolation. In-school supports have been cut drastically, and many youth are struggling inwardly. Parents are juggling endless responsibilities while trying to provide the best possible care for their children. As a mother, I understand that some days can feel heavy and unbearable, especially with regards to our children. We question whether we are doing enough, and if our kids are safe, both physically and mentally. As such, I assist the parents just as much as I assist the youth.

Though I work with women of all ages, I am exceptionally passionate about youth. At present, I offer 'Your Best Self- Teen' for young women who are requiring extra support. My aim is to work with clients to set goals, to build self-esteem, to develop leadership skills, and to ultimately guide them on their unique journeys to their best selves. My clients feel heard, supported, and worthwhile, and their parents feel relieved knowing that there is an extra person rooting for their daughters' success. I truly believe that there is no limit to what a girl can achieve when she has the right team behind her. The world is slowly recognizing this, and I am so honoured to be part of this time in history.



Women's advocate Britnee Contessa.

During initial sessions, I spend much of the time getting to know my clients. Developing a trusting relationship is key to building success. Together, we identify areas of struggle, but we also focus heavily on individual strengths. The amount of sessions that a client requires is completely up to her and often depends on the issues at hand. I often tell my clients that they are in the driver's seat; I am simply a compassionate navigation tool to help them along their way. I cannot emphasize enough how much I love what I do!

For more information about me and my services, I invite you to visit my website at www.femmepowereddyeg.com. I am always happy to answer any questions!

Na'amat *Cont. from page 10*

pandemic. "Police calls reporting domestic abuse increased by 27% in Calgary over the course of 2019 with all the lockdowns, so it was really important that we kept up the work we do in this city."

Na'amat Calgary recently completed a successful Na'am 'Arts' online auction and they are now preparing for the Schools Supplies for Kids program. Donations can be made to shawcharityclassic.com/participating-charities/naamat/.

Na'amat Edmonton has three chapters: Aviva (Barbara Wiseman, president) Tikvah (Maya Feldman, president), and Chevra (Yuliya Massarsky and Caitlin Bar-Nur, co-presidents). The president of Na'amat Canada Edmonton is Darlene Bushewsky and the group welcomes new members and those just curious.

"Na'amat Edmonton is where lifelong friendships have been formed and support networks have been built," she explained. "As a third generation member of Na'amat Canada Edmonton, I am proud to continue the tradition of joining together to be part of the fabric that makes up our community."

"When you join Na'amat, you will enjoy a fun and lively social environment while helping to fundraise in support of important programs and social services. Our members are daughters, mothers, aunts, grandmothers, and girlfriends who are active within both the Jewish community and the city at large."

Recent programs in Edmonton have been modified because of COVID health measures but they include postsecondary education bursaries for single mothers and other women, supporting Seniors cultural programs, a zoom hammentaschen workshop, virtual prenatal series and a joint Kabbalat Shabbat with Temple Beth Ora. Na'amat Edmonton has held programs in support of Basically Babies (basicallybabies.org), Kids's Kottage (kidskottage.ca)- donations of baby items, financial support and hands-on volunteering in support of mothers in need who are referred by a variety of local social services organizations. Much-loved traditions within the community are Na'amat Edmonton's annual Sukkah Hop, and Hammentaschen baking for seniors.

A nice synergy has been developing between Na'amat Calgary and Na'amat Edmonton, aided in large part by the

need of both organizations to pivot to online activities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has blurred borders somewhat, easing endeavours such as a Western Leadership Seminar that took place via Zoom earlier this year, bringing Na'amat members in Vancouver, Edmonton, and Calgary together in shared activities.

Human connection is at the heart of our desire for belonging and purpose, and many of us are emerging from this pandemic-induced period of isolation yearning for a broader support network. One layer beneath that, women supporting women is the undercurrent of profound social change—within ourselves, between each other, and inside our families and communities. Na'amat offers opportunities for Jewish women of all ages to develop leadership skills, engage in community building, forge lasting bonds with other women, and do community service both locally and in Israel.

To find out more and get involved with this community of changemaking women visit naamat.com/calgary and naamat.com/edmonton.

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This month's update from Edmonton Talmud Torah School



The Edmonton Talmud Torah Early Learning Centre and Out of School Care programs are all a buzz this summer! Students have been celebrating birthdays, watering our plants, and enjoying the warm weather.

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