

New cemetery consecrated in Edmonton

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

It is rare for a celebration to take place within the gates of a Jewish cemetery. But on Sunday June 4, an estimated 130 members of the Edmonton Jewish community joined in what Chevra Kadisha President David Marcus and Jewish Federation of Edmonton CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright each referred to as a "once in a lifetime" event as a new Jewish cemetery was joyously consecrated on 156 Street at 147 Avenue.

The Edmonton Jewish Cemetery North was born 116 years after the Chevra Kadisha-the "holy society" tasked with the preparation and burial of Jewish deceased—was first established in Alberta's capital city.

One's eye could not help but be drawn to the Israeli and Canadian flags fluttering in the gentle breeze, powerfully symbolizing the fact that this community, while rooted in Jewish tradition and love for the Holy Land, has deep roots in Canada and, specifically, Edmonton, where the local Chevra Kadisha was first established in 1907.

Marcus acknowledged the work of the new cemetery committee, including Past Presidents Rhoda Friedman, Jerry Cooper (of blessed memory), Percy Lerner and Harry Silverman. Kudos went to planning and land use consultant Marshall Hundert-who served as volunteer project manager-and marketing committee members Martin Bankey and Joe Miller.

Marcus thanked Gary Coderre and Debbie Lambert-both recently retired from Connelly-McKinley Funeral Homes-for their many years of assistance to the Chevra.

Further testimony to longstanding relationships with service providers was the presence of other friends from Connelly-McKinley, Ecclesiastical

Calgary Jewish Academy Grade 9 graduates



Congratulations and Mazel Tov to the 2023 CJA Grade 9 Graduating Class and their families. Best wishes in High School! Photo supplied.

Insurance, Edmonton Granite, Legacy Monuments, Mid-City Excavating, and Telsco.

Looking further back in time, Marcus paid tribute to the original founders of the Chevra for their devotion to the sacred duty of honouring the deceased.

"Their commitment to this sacred cause laid the foundation for the work that continues to this day," Marcus said. "The Edmonton Chevra Kadisha has served as a guiding light, bringing solace and support to countless families during their times of grief."

Marcus noted that the new cemetery is a "bridge between the past and present, a link that connects us to our heritage."

"It is a symbol of the resilience of our community, our commitment to honour our past, and our dedication to building a future rooted in compassion, unity and

faith," Marcus added.

Following the Treaty Six land acknowledgement read by Chevra Kadisha Women's President Paula Globerman, Jewish Federation of Edmonton CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright shared greetings on behalf of the organized community.

"Establishing a Jewish cemetery is one of the first priorities for a new Jewish community," said Leavitt-Wright. "The ceremony we are about to participate in is history in the making, something that few Jewish people ever have the opportunity to take part in."

Paying tribute to the volunteers of Chevra Kadisha-in particular the leadership of Marcus and Immediate Past President Rhoda Friedman-

Continued on page 12

JNF Calgary Negev Gala: The Magic, Mystery and Chaos of Israel

By Hannah Silver

talented New York-based cover band New Aviv City, families who have made Aliyah, who come from

In celebration of Israel's 75th birthday, on May 18th, Jewish National Fund (JNF) Calgary's 2023 Negev Gala explored much of what there is to love about our incredible homeland, with the theme "The Magic, Mystery, and Chaos of Israel." Host, comedian and author Joel Chasnoff had Mount Royal University's Bella Concert Hall echoing with laughter. The Chicago-raised, now Israeli citizen shared jokes that hit home and a monologue about being Jewish in the Diaspora, life as an Oleh (immigrant who made Aliyah) and lone soldier in Israel, and interesting insight into the Hebrew language. He shared about the value and strength of kehillah (community) in Israel, in both the good and challenging times, and how strangers show up for and take care of each other.

The magic of Hebrew was highlighted with renditions of classic and hit Israeli songs by the including songs by Arik Einstein, Omer Adam, and various Israeli Eurovision winners and finalists. New Aviv City, who performed alongside local musicians, is part of İsraeli Artists Project, an organization which brings together Israeli and North American Jewish communities through Israeli music, theatre, and culture.

The annual Negev Gala returned in-person for the first time since 2019, continuing a tradition that has been held in Calgary since 1955. JNF Canada's National President, our very own Beth Price, brought warm greetings, and JNF Calgary's Co-Presidents, Chervl Cameron and Chervl Gurevitch, emphasized the necessity of the State of Israel being a haven for immigrants and refugees since its re-establishment, and the importance of helping newcomers transition to life in a new country. They shared about the fundraising project of this year's Negev Gala: the Or Yehuda Family Care Centre. Or Yehuda is a small city just outside Tel Aviv, with a large population of different backgrounds and are challenged with learning a new language, finding work, and adjusting to a new life in Israel. Donations assist in the full renovation of a building, donated by the Or Yehuda municipality, in which volunteers provide support, care, and community programs, including a club for at-risk youth, and the "Chesed Yavneh" project assisting families with professional "emotional support, financial management, education, and training" (JNF Canada).

The band's final songs were accompanied by a projected compilation of landscapes and scenery from across our beautiful homeland, curated by JNF Calgary's Executive Director Elliott Steinberg. This was followed by his closing remarks, recognizing the efforts of JNF's volunteers and generous donors, and then a delicious dessert reception.

Hannah Silver is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

June, 2023

Talented HAA students design winning year book cover

In a remarkable display of creativity and talent, three young students from Halpern Akiva Academy have left an indelible mark on their school's yearbook. Bella Talia Kutnowski from grade 4, along with Chana Shimonov and Shaina Groner from grade 3, have emerged as the winners of the yearbook cover design competition. Their captivating design not only caught the attention of their peers and teachers but also conveyed a profound message about the significance of school events and the memories they create.

The competition at Halpern Akiva Academy was fierce, with numerous outstanding submissions from students across different grade levels. However, Bella, Chana, and Shaina's design stood out from the rest due to its unique perspective and powerful message. They understood the importance of school events in shaping their journey through education, and they managed to encapsulate this sentiment in a simple yet impactful way.

The winning design featured a vibrant collage of photographs depicting various school events that took place throughout the year. From science fairs and talent shows to field trips and Jewish holiday activities, every event was represented, highlighting the diversity and richness of their school experience.

What truly set this design apart was the tagline

that the talented trio crafted: "Making Memories." These two words perfectly captured the essence of their vision. They understood that the events they had chosen to showcase were not just fleeting moments but cherished memories that would stay with them and their peers for a lifetime. The tagline resonated with everyone who saw it, reminding them of the joy, camaraderie, and personal growth experienced during these events.

The yearbook cover design committee was impressed not only by the artistic skill displayed but also by the thoughtfulness behind the

concept. Bella, Chana, and Shaina's design was a testament to their deep appreciation for the role that events play in shaping their educational journey. It served as a reminder to cherish every moment, as it is through these experiences that lifelong friendships are formed, passions are discovered, and personal development flourishes.

The impact of Bella, Chana, and Shaina's yearbook cover design was profound. It resonated with students, parents, and teachers alike, evoking a sense of nostalgia and appreciation for the vibrant community they belong to. As their design graces the cover of the yearbook, it will serve as a visual reminder of the countless memories created, encouraging future students to embrace and cherish their own experiences at Halpern Akiva Academy.

HAA students Bella Talia Kutnowski, Chana Shimonov and Shaina

Groner designed the winning 2022/23 yearbook cover.

The three students have left an enduring mark on their school with their winning yearbook cover design. Their artistic talent, combined with their understanding of the importance of school events, allowed them to create a captivating representation of the memories made at Halpern Akiva Academy. As their design takes its rightful place on the yearbook cover, it will serve as a beautiful reminder of the happiness, growth, and lasting friendships that are the true essence of the school experience.

JNF Calgary Negev Gala celebrated Israel last month



The JNF Calgary Negev Gala featured heartfelt tributes and the hilarious comedy of Joel Chasnoff. Everyone had a great time!



Somerville Memorials Serving Calgary and the surrounding area since 1993

Lorne Tucker Business: (403) 265-0780 Residence: (403) 251-9344 Fax: (403) 269-5181 Email: lornetucker@shaw.ca Visit our showroom at: 7134R Fisher Street. S.E. Calgary, Alberta T2H 0W5

www.somervillememorials.com







8th Annual Martin, Staniloff, & Thal Charity Golf Classic

August 17, 2023

To register and for more information on sponsorships, *www.jfsc.org* or contact Lynn at *lynnt@jfsc.org*, or call 403-692-6395.





happy Canada Day. Celebrating 156 years old.

everyone a very

Visit us at McLeod-Law.com



MOVING? MOVED?

New to the community? Don't miss a single edition!

Send your new address to albertajewishnews@gmail.com





Yeshivah Boys to visit Edmonton

Bezrat Hashem, the Edmonton Jewish community is in for a pleasant surprise this summer. From June 26th to July 17th, Edmonton will be graced by 11 Yeshivah Boys who will dedicate their time to both learning and teaching any member of the Jewish community who wishes to participate.

They will be hosting BBQs every Tuesday evening at Chabad, starting at 7:00 PM (June 27, July 4, and 11). Additionally, there will be a choir event at the Jewish drop-in center on Tuesday, June 27th at 12:30 PM and another one at Canterbury Court on Wednesday, July 5th from 1:30 to 2:15 PM. They will also organize the Mishmor learning program with donuts at B.I, weekly community soccer games, and various evening and learning opportunities throughout the week for people of all ages.

Furthermore, the Yeshivah boys will be visiting people's homes for informal learning sessions and seniors centers to bring music and song to those who are less fortunate.



Eleven Yeshivah Boys will be visiting Edmonton from June 26 to July 7 for a variety of teaching and learning experience. To book a learning session email chabad@shaw.ca.

In addition to their activities in Edmonton, the Yeshivah boys will spend one weekend at Chabad of Saskatoon and another weekend at Chabad of Kelowna to help strengthen Yiddishkeit in those remote communities.

This initiative is sponsored by Chabad of Edmonton, with generous support from both our wonderful community and many generous donors from the states. Anyone interested in participating in any of the learning programs (free of charge) is welcome to call Rabbi Ari at 780-993-1818 or email chabad@shaw.ca

We are all eagerly anticipating this unique program, which is being held for the first time ever, and it is sure to bring much delight to our community.

Find us on Instagram #JewishEdmontonSummer

Talmud Torah Society – 2022-23 Year in Review

By Natalie Soroka, TT Society

It's been a busy year for us, and we wanted to share with you all that we have achieved, beginning with the Summer of 2022, when the Society's board of directors began its activities. They met several times throughout the summer, including a two-day orientation for new board members. The Society also paid for teachers to take iTaLAM (Hebrew language and Jewish heritage) PD sessions both over the summer and into the new school year.

During the month of September, the Society purchased new resources to assist Hebrew Language Arts teacher Bianna Kuksin in developing a curriculum suitable for kindergarten children. The Don & Myrna Silverberg Lunchroom opened to TT students, thanks to a generous donation by Myrna and Don z"l, where Grades 1 to 6 students eat lunch together and recite Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals). Families attended and enjoyed TT Early Learning Centre's welcome event. TT Society's new website was launched, with the Communication Committee's focus on advertising and recruitment to increase enrollment. The Education Committee continued work on increasing the focus on Hebrew in Kindergarten, with the comprehensive and robust iTaLAM program being used schoolwide.

As well in September, the Society funded Hebrew support for the school year, so that Bianna Kuksin could provide support to teachers and students, and Ben Ragosin could work with students benefiting from an increased challenge in Hebrew. The Early Learning Centre (ELC) Committee continued to support the TTELC in its new parent-engagement strategies, policy and procedure development, database enhancement, and Judaic and Hebrew study advancement. AJP@TT (Ancillary Judaic Program) began its 3rd year with morning Tefila (prayer) and after-school Judaic programming.

Throughout the month of October, the Education Committee participated in discussions with Principal Darin Johnson and teachers to explore teaching methods, resources, activities, and best practices used when teaching Hebrew. The committee had one-on-one meetings with Judaic Studies (JS)/Hebrew language Arts (HLA) teachers to discuss the continued Torah site, in alignment with the Society's overall Strategic Plan. The TT Early Learning Committee restructured the leadership of the ELC to better serve children, educators, and parents. Grade 6 students attended the No Stone Left Alone ceremony at Edmonton's Jewish cemetery and placed poppies on the headstones of Jewish veterans.

Beginning in December, the Society's Judaic Consultant, Nurit Reshef, led a teacher discussion on teaching tefilot to the children. Topics included the vision for prayers at TT, determining the goals and learning outcomes for this subject, and highlighting when and how the prayers are taught. The TT student choir performed at the Legislature on December 18 for the annual Hanukkah lighting, and on December 19, CTV Morning News visited TT to record the choir and get a glimpse of our holiday celebrations. Grade 5 students led the Hanukkah assembly where students performed Hanukkah songs and skits, and families beamed with pride. In December, the Society also hired Director, Sacha Brodie, and Lead Educator, Jennie Leonard, to work in the TT Early Learning Centre. The

implementa-tion of the school-wide Hebrew language iTa-LAM program. Students participated in the *Chag Tishrei* Assembly (Rosh

Hashanah, Yom Kippur,

Sukkot and Simchat

Torah), where each grade

performed a song repre-

In November, the

approximately \$3,000

worth of Hebrew books

for the library from

Israel with the assistance

of Karen Hering. The

continued its work on a

strategic plan for the

long-term security con-

cerns of the Talmud

purchased

Committee

senting the holidays.

Society

Security

It's Time to Consolidate Debt



Kathleen Jacob, LIT

We have practical solutions for reducing monthly payments

780-473-6333 MOSES ADVISORY GROUP INC.

Federally licensed to serve Albertans All services can be provided virtually

info@magi-lit.com • proposalpeople.ca

centre ran a Hanukkah event for its families, with a wonderful turnout, great activities, and delicious food.

In the month of January, the Education Committee began developing a detailed document containing the specific vocabulary, grammar, linguistic elements, and themes taught in grades K-2. The intent is to ensure continuity between these grades, as well as identify the expectations for what is taught in Hebrew at each specific grade. In addition, the Education Committee continued discussions with teachers related to prayers and explored a variety of resources, methods, and ideas on how to make prayers a positive and meaningful experience for students. The committee drafted a new Prayer Curriculum Draft (K-6), which includes the Curriculum's Essential Understanding Statements, the Guiding Questions and associated Learning Outcomes.

February was a wonderfully busy month! Nurit Reshef (Judaic Consultant) recruited Hebrew speaking

Continued on page 10

YEG Bagel Loop: Walk/Run/Roll 2023

By Svetlana Pavlenko and Elaine Salkie

On Sunday July 9, the Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre is hosting the Edmonton Bagel Loop: Walk/Run/Roll at Victoria Park, 12030 River Valley Road in NW Edmonton.

Do you know that here in Edmonton there is a place that gives you the opportunity to experience the joys of travel without airport hassle, to sample international cuisine with no concern about if it is kosher, to learn about topics which interest you without worrying about marks and homework?

What do you know about the Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre?

Do you know that the Centre is an amazing place for the intellectually curious who seek to expand their knowledge and keep up to date with what is happening in the world, and for those with young souls who are looking for friendship and companionship?

We host beautiful lunches with the Edmonton Opera, tasty boozy brunches with the Opera Nuova Vocal Arts and special presentations and events with professors from the University of Alberta and other universities, local talented musicians and writers and great professionals from our own community.

Do you know that we not only provide kosher homemade lunches but also take-out frozen food? We are famous for our soups: Moroccan Peanut, Pickle, No-chicken chicken soup with Matza Balls, Lemon-Lentil and many others! Have you tried them all?



Got extra calories eating our lunches or just want to get in shape? We have fitness solutions for you. Choose from a meditative and relaxing yoga class on Mondays at 10:30 a.m., a well-balanced fitness class with Bonnie on Tuesdays at 10:45 a.m. or a dynamic body work fitness with Anna on Thursdays at 11 a.m. Cannot choose? Try them all and feel great!

We are involved with the younger generation.



Students from the UofA organize interesting and fun presentations with discussion at our *Schmooze with Youth at Coffee Time* program. We have one-on-one training sessions ranging from *How to use your smart phones, I-Pads and other gadgets*, to *How to crochet* and many more.

Do you know that every Hannukah we produce more then 4000 latkes, every Purim more then

2000 Hamantaschen and we celebrate all Jewish holidays with pride and joy? Have you ever joined us? Try this year.

For us to implement all our wonderful ideas, our executive director constantly applies for grants and other funding to all level of government, foundations and other funders. You too can be an important part of this financial support system. You can order our beautiful tribute cards which start at \$10 and up and we will be your messenger to send your good wishes to any person anywhere in the world. You can order a Shalom Wall plaque (starts at \$120) - a permanent tribute to you and your loved ones on the Jerusalem Skyline Wall of History at our Centre; you can also sign up to make a monthly donation.

AND you can participate in our upcoming Third Annual Bagel Loop: Walk, Run & Roll. The Centre created this very special event in 2018. We received great support from our amazing community, and we want to invite you to be with us this year. Our seniors will gear up their canes, walkers and wheelchairs to walk a trail around Victoria Park and then enjoy BBQ, games, and special lottery prizes.

It is a unique "friendraiser – fundraiser" put on BY Seniors FOR Seniors and their Families in support of our Centre. Bring your family, friends and new members.

Gather pledges for your participation: ask your family, friends, doctors, pharmacists, hairdressers, nail specialists, mechanics and favourite shop owners. Pledge forms are available at the office, at jdicseniors.ca and in our Newsletter.

SUPPORT YOUR SENIORS

A fund-raising walk/run/roll for ALL ages

PRIZES & GIVEAWAYS POST RACE MUNCHIES & PICNIC INCLUDED

Registration: Family \$50 | Adults \$20 | Kids over 10 \$15 | Kids under 10 FREE (any 4 members)



BY PHONE: 780-488-4241 www.JDICSENIORS.CA Registration fees are: Family (any 4 members) - \$50, Adult - \$20, Kids over 10 - \$15 and Kids under 10 - Free.

Our oldest participant in 2019 was 94 (he is participating again this year) and the youngest one was one. We are expecting around 200 participants this year.

The preliminary event schedule is: 10 a.m. Registration and morning snacks; 10:30 a.m. Warm-up workshop facilitated by the Centre's Fitness Instructors; 11 a.m. The Walk/Run/Roll starts; and at 12 noon family-friendly international cuisine BBQ and games begin.

Register at jdicseniors.ca and be an active part of our community!

Sixties Scoop: Lisa Wilder shares her journey

By Maxine Fischbein

Lisa Wilder grew up knowing that she had been adopted. Though raised by loving parents, she longed to meet her biological mother, if for no other reason than to thank her for the gift of her life. After a long search beginning when Wilder was 13 years old, she discovered, at the age of 26, that she was one of 20,000 children adopted out during the now-infamous Sixties Scoop, often without the knowledge or consent of their parents.

During a wide-ranging talk on May 31, Wilder shared her journey with a large audience at the Paperny Family JCC.

Wilder—who has lived in Calgary since 2005—has played multiple roles in the Jewish community, notably as a JCC board member, BBYO adult board member, and volunteer at The Calgary Jewish Academy, where her children were educated.

Professionally, Wilder worked for a decade for FAST (Fighting Antisemitism Together), helping to create and disseminate curricula on antisemitism and other human injustices including those perpetrated against Indigenous peoples.

During COVID, Wilder's position evaporated due to funding issues just as the ink dried on her divorce papers. A volunteer at the Calgary Distress Centre (where she works on the crisis and suicide lines, blogs, mentors and coaches), Wilder went back to school, graduating from the Kelowna College of Professional Counselling with a diploma in Applied Psychology and Professional Counselling. Accredited by the Canadian Professional Counselling Association as a Registered Professional Counsellor Candidate, she will soon open her own private practice geared to helping clients overcome adversity and develop resilience. She especially looks forward to focusing upon adoption trauma, helping adopted children process identity issues and embrace their authentic selves.

This is a journey Wilder knows from the inside out. Believing in the transformative power of storytelling, she shares her own story to create more awareness about human rights abuses perpetrated against Indigenous people for generations and, just as importantly, to promote resilience and community building.

"There's been targeted and conscious assimilation aimed at the Indigenous people on a grand scale throughout history, two of the largest and most known being the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop, though we can clearly see it is still happening, from the murdered and missing all the way through to the disproportionate numbers of Indigenous children still being taken into the child welfare system of Canada today," Wilder said.

Wilder provided a brief history of the residential school system established by the Canadian government and run by churches between 1834 and 1996. The goal was to "... assimilate a perceived problem by taking the Indian out of the child," Wilder said.

"The system forcibly removed children from their families for extended periods of time, and forbade them to acknowledge their heritage and culture or speak their language... They were also forbidden to use the



names that they were given and were given either a white name or a number to answer to instead," Wilder added, noting that "...severe physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuses were...the norm."

"Because these children were removed from their families, many students of the residential school system grew up without experiencing a nurturing family life and without gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to raise their own children in a

healthy way," said Wilder. "Even worse, they began modelling the behaviours inflicted upon them, thinking that these behaviours were acceptable."

Generations of abuse and identity suppression and confusion led to intergenerational trauma that continues to plague Indigenous people.

Some 70 percent of children adopted out during the Sixties Scoop were placed in non-Indigenous families.

"I was one of these Sixties Scoop babies," said Wilder, who was born in 1969 and adopted by Sam and Wendy Wilder through the Jewish Child and Family Service. "They had no idea that I'd been put in the adoption system in this immoral way, without my biological mother's consent," Wilder said, noting that her two brothers—also adopted—do not have Indigenous roots.

"Thankfully, I grew up knowing that I was loved and knowing that I had two parents who did everything in their power to give me the privileged life that I have had."

Despite close relationships within her family and community, Wilder said that much of her life "did not make sense" to her. She felt "misaligned."

At 13, she summoned the courage to ask her parents to help her find out information about her birth family. Wilder received vague information and a story about her adoption that made her feel like "a fairy tale princess." She later learned that the story was a nightmare.

Wilder's search for her birth mother was clouded by guilt. She wondered whether she was bad for wanting to know more about her biological family and ungrateful for the great life her parents were giving her.

"The effects of this guilt and shame affected my journey, my relationship with my parents, my relationship with my peers, my relationship with my biological family, but, most of all, it affected the relationship that I had with myself."

Wilder's search had been complicated by the fact that her birth mother had been seeking a son rather than a daughter. It took until 1996 for her to find and begin corresponding with Linda, her biological mother. They met for the first time in 2007 when, at the age of 38, Wilder first learned that she had Indigenous roots



BI B'nai Mitzvah class in YEG



Portfolio Manager Joel Reboh led a "financially responsible tweens" program at TD Callingwood in Edmonton where the B'nai Mitzvah youth learned a brief history of money, how much it would cost to live on their own, and what causes inflation.

and had been a Sixties Scoop baby.

When Linda gave birth to Lisa at the age of 17, she already had a one-and-a-half-year-old boy. Lacking the resources to feed and house them both, she had placed him in what she thought would be temporary foster care.

Linda was one of five siblings whose family's journey was captured in the 1987 documentary *To a Safer Place*.

"In this documentary, a woman goes back to Winnipeg from BC to interview her mother and siblings about the abusive hell that they lived through years before," said Wilder. "When talking to her sister, it's revealed that her sister gave birth to a baby girl that died... This pregnancy was thought to be the result of one of the last and most brutal rapes at the hands of her father, this time leaving her near death underneath the kitchen table."

"I remember watching that documentary," Wilder told her hushed crowd. "I was in Grade 12. What I didn't know at the time was that I was watching the story of my own biological family, and I was that dead baby."

Wilder was not the result of that rape. A DNA test identified two men as possible paternal matches. In a strange twist of fate, Wilder had dated one of their sons during her late teens.

Following Wilder's birth, Linda was told that her

```
Continued on page 15
```





We're looking for volunteers to cover afternoon and evening shifts at the casino.

Kindly contact (403) 255-8688, ext. 1 or info@bethtzedec.ca to learn more about volunteering.



Celebrating Calgary Jewish Academy's French Program

By Joseph Tappenden

The Calgary Jewish Academy is committed to providing a comprehensive education that prepares students for success in a diverse and interconnected world. Among the outstanding programs offered, the French program stands out as an exceptional example of fostering linguistic proficiency and cultural appreciation. Through the dedicated effort of our team, students not only work toward understanding the French language but also excel in other languages, including English and Hebrew.

French language learning is important in today's global society. As one of the most widely spoken languages worldwide, it opens doors to countless opportunities for personal growth, cultural exploration, and even future career prospects. By immersing themselves in the study of French, students at Calgary Jewish Academy demonstrate their understanding of the interconnectedness of languages and cultures, enabling them to become more globally aware citizens.

CJA students' ability to handle the learning of English, Hebrew, and French showcases their exceptional linguistic talent and adaptability. By navigating multiple languages simultaneously, they not only expand their communication skills but also develop a deeper understanding of diverse cultures and perspectives. This proficiency highlights the comprehensive language education provided by the Calgary Jewish Academy

In the month of May, students in grades 3 through 6 at the Calgary Jewish Academy showcased their language learning through French language plays. These performances, carefully crafted or adapted from classic children's stories, serve as engaging tools to facilitate language learning. Each play immerses students in a world of new

vocabulary, grammar, and linguistic structures. The students applied their knowledge in practical settings, reinforcing their language skills both at home and in school.

The final presentation of the French language plays may not fully reflect the months of hard work and dedication invested by the students. Behind the scenes, students diligently practice phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary to bring their assigned roles to life. The incorporation of these linguistic elements into their performances enhances their comprehension and fluency, allowing them to showcase their language skills to their peers, families, and teachers.

The outstanding achievements of students in the French program at the Calgary Jewish Academy

exemplify the importance of language learning and cultural appreciation. By learning English, Hebrew, and French, CJA students not only expand their linguistic horizons but also cultivate a deep respect for diverse languages and cultures. The French language plays serve as a testament to their hard work and dedication, providing an opportunity for them to apply their language skills in a creative and engaging manner. Through these endeavors, the Calgary Jewish Academy continues to foster a community of lifelong learners equipped with the necessary tools to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world. A big thank you to our French teacher, Madame France, for her hard work in ensuring students make the most out of their French language learning.

Edmonton Folk Fest brings Jewish Roots to the hill

By Paula E. Kirman, LJI Reporter

The Edmonton Folk Music Festival returns to Gallagher Park from August 10-13.

As always, the lineup for "the hill" features a broad range of musical artists and styles. The 58 artists include Ukrainian ensemble DakhaBrakha, Canadian indie pop singer/songwriter Feist, and American indie folk band Fleet Foxes.

The Brother Brothers, consisting of identical Jewish twins Adam and David Moss, will be bringing their Appalachian folk and bluegrass inspired harmonies and arrangements. The brothers, who were born and raised in Peoria, Illinois and were based in Brooklyn, New York for a time, have been compared to The Everly Brothers, but have a unique sound incorporating a variety of instruments and folk styles.

Other sibling acts at this year's Folk Fest include The Bros. Landreth, The Secret Sisters, and Australia's The Teskey Brothers who are playing the Saturday night main stage.

Local music fans may recognize the name AV and the Inner City. The band is led by Ann Vriend (AV), a singer/songwriter whose experiences and observations living in the McCauley neighbourhood influence her

UNVUC

songs. Maria Dunn, another Edmonton-based artist. is known for writing powerful songs that tell stories about history and social justice.

Once again, Rhea March will present the "School of Song," a group of talented, emerging performers from the Edmonton area. This year's group includes Jed and the Valentine, Kaeley Jade, Mari Rosehill, and Sammy Volkov, who has an interesting Jewish connection: his paternal grandmother was adopted by a Jewish family in pre-war Odesa. Her name was Tamara, and Volkov explains that "her adoptive father was taken away to a camp during the war. She saw him taken away. Tamara and her adoptive mother escaped (the adoptive mother was not Jewish which is why they let them go). She was forever haunted and couldn't talk about it." The song "Blue Star" on Volkov's album Be Alright (available on all platforms) is written about Tamara.

The Sunday night main stage will feature two performers with Jewish backgrounds. Gregory Alan Isakov is originally from South Africa, but now lives in Colorado and traverses the worlds of indie-rock and folk. Closing the festival will be California's Ben Harper, whose acoustic slide guitar prowess and souldriven songs have gained an international audience and three Grammy Awards. Harper, whose late father





The Brother Brothers will be live at the Edmonton Folk Festival.

was African-American and whose mother is Jewish of Russian-Lithuanian heritage, last played the Folk Fest in 2014 with the legendary blues harmonica player Charlie Musselwhite.

For more information about artists and ticket sales, visit: edmontonfolkfest.org





The unveiling for Isaac Moses Rotstein z"l will be held on Sunday July 2, 2023 at 11:30 am at the Chevra Kadisha Cemetery 37th Street SW on HWY 22X

The unveiling for Morris Blitt z''l will be held on Sunday July 23, 2023 at 11:00 am at **Beth Tzedec Memorial Park** 122 Shalom Way SE Calgary

dishes

at the Calgary Farmers Market

Everyone is welcome! from Dora & Danny Korduner

403-667-7567 • 510 77 Ave SE Calgary



ADAM SINGER, M.A., LL.B. Divorce & Family Law

🖀 (403) 476-0153

asinger@wilcraft.com

www.wilcraft.com



650, 211 - 11 Avenue SW, Calgary, AB, T2R 0C6

WILSON LAYCRAFT





Genesis Edmonton and Hillel Edmonton hosted a fantastic event at VISH with two Israeli visitors from The Jewish Agency for Israel. This program consisted of dinner and a discussion about Israel. Over 30 young adults registered and everyone enjoyed engaging in meaningful conversation over dinner. Photos: Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

Jewish Federation of Edmonton launches Microgrant Program

By Jenna Soroka, LJI Reporter

How do we create a more engaged and connected Jewish community? We need opportunities for people to turn their innovative project ideas into realities.

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton is providing an opportunity for this exact purpose. They are offering financial support for new and original programs in the Jewish community through the Jewish Experience Microgrant program.

The main goals of the program are to build affinity and Jewish identity, inspire Jewish opportunities for engagement (cultural, social, recreational, religious), and increase Jewish communal reach across Edmonton. Jacqueline Medalye, Associate Director, Next Generation Leadership and Advocacy for the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, along with a committee of five volunteers, will be reviewing applications on an ongoing basis. You must be a United Jewish Appeal (UJA) member to apply, which can be fulfilled through a minimum \$18 contribution to the campaign. The funding amount is up to \$1800 per program, and you can apply up to three times per program idea.

It is important to note that this program is designed for individuals, not organizations. However, Jacqueline Medalye encourages people to partner with organizations if it makes sense with their vision for a one-off event or program.

Although this microgrant is new to Edmonton's Jewish Federation, it has proven to be successful getting new programs up and running in other Federation cities, such as Ottawa, Vancouver, and across North America. For the first year running this program in Edmonton, the Federation is looking to fund around 10 programs, with the hopes of allocating more funds in the future to make it grow.

"What ideas are out there that people might have that we haven't thought of?" Jacqueline commented. She acknowledged that the Jewish Federation cannot come up with every program possibility. They understand the value of lay leaders and volunteers developing their own ideas from the ground up. Therefore, having ordinary people, particularly young adults, come together to enhance our community is a core focus behind this microgrant program.

The first step is to create a proposal for your idea, ensure it meets the grant criteria, and then begin preparing a budget. Starting something new can feel daunting though, but don't let that stop you from sharing your plan. The Jewish Federation of Edmonton is there to

help you succeed. Reach out to Jacqueline at jmedalye@edjfed.org toget you started on the right foot.

The criterion for approval includes one or more of the following: The initiative engages new people in Jewish life; The initiative is meaningful and impactful for participants; The initiative is relevant and enjoyable for participants. The initiative fills a gap or appeals to an under-served population; The initiative builds on synergies and collaborative partnerships in the community; There is a clear action plan and budget.

With these criteria in mind, the project possibilities are wide-ranging. The Jewish Federation of Ottawa's website shows a listing of Microgrant distributions from 2019-2022 that demonstrate the countless ideas that you can create. From a Kosher BBQ Cook-Off, paint night, wellness weekend, beer tasting event, to a drag show - the sky is the limit.

You can also donate to the Jewish Federation of Edmonton's United Jewish Appeal campaign at jewishedmonton.org/your-uja. Your gift will help support the next generation of Edmonton Jewish leaders through opportunities such as the Jewish Experience Microgrant.

Do you already have an idea brewing? Are there questions that you need answers to? Head on over to the Edmonton Jewish Federation office on June 28th from 4:30-5:30pm for the Jewish Experience Microgrant program launch party. Please RSVP Jacqueline at jmedalye@edjfed.org to reserve your spot.



Love Israel? Come join the community in showcesing larcel at this year's Heritage Festival

New location! New content! Volunteer opportunities available!

Call for applications

Jewish experience microgrants for all Up to \$1,800 available

Microgrant launch party Wednesday, **June 28** 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. at #100, 10220 · **156 Street**

More information at:





August 6 - 7

info@edjfed.org for more information

Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON

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

A MESSAGE FROM LISA LIBIN

I is hard to believe this is the final *Pom* before summer. To say my first term as president has flown by is a definite understatement. As I look back on the last year, I am proud of all the things our community has accomplished and am so excited for what is still to come. Like any year, there have been big wins as well as big challenges, and for all of these I am grateful for the amazing Federation staff, my fellow board members, and you -our community- who have always lent your ears, voice, and support. For this final *Pom*, I thought it would be appropriate to go through some highlights of what our amazing community has accomplished this year:

We have officially announced plans for the **Calgary Jewish Community Campus** with some major donors already rising to the challenge of our \$40 million capital goal. We are excited to host our community this Fall for a townhall discuss the Campus plans as we need all our community members to step up and support this once in a lifetime endeavour.

Antisemitism is, and continues to be, on the rise. We see an increase in incidents in Calgary and area schools at all levels. Calgary Jewish Federation (CJF) continues to work closely with Calgary Police, RCMP, schools and all other relevant parties to ensure the safety and security of our community. We are also working with all levels of government to ensure education and fighting antisemitism and is a key priority for all.

Through our generous UJA donors, 40 families and 98 students received bursaries through our **Integrated Bursary Program** providing them Jewish education and experiences. Just a reminder that CJF continues to be a recipient of *Shaw Birdies for Kids* meaning that up to 50 per cent of your UJA donation made before August 31 will be matched by Shaw! Our Holocaust and Human Rights: Remembrance and Education department has become a wellestablished leader in Holocaust education in Alberta and beyond. This year, over 6,400 students and 89 schools took part in various educational programs and initiatives. This department ensures that our community has meaningful *Yom HaShoah*, *Kristallnacht*, and Holocaust Remembrance Day commemorations, while maintaining strong connections with our survivor community.

We continue to raise (and exceed) the bar in positioning Jewish Calgary for the future. Calgary Jewish Federation is excited to have completed four years of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's **LIFE & LEGACY**[®] program. Combined with our agency partners, we have already raised an estimated \$18,372,341 from 248 donors.

I am personally pleased to see the commitment and involvement from so many young families, young professionals, and post-secondary students and the growth potential from these groups. We currently support more than 650 families who are subscribed to PJ Library[®] and PJ Our Way[®] offering the gift of free books; through our active Hillel community on two local university campuses, post-secondary students remain engaged in Jewish life and regularly take part in leadership, advocacy, and service opportunities; JAC (Jewish Adult Calgary) continues to engage adults post-grad to 40 through recreation, leadership, and service opportunities, whether it be through Drinks After Work or the new WhatsApp group which was started this year. Other highlights include partnering with PJ Library Calgary for A Killer Shabbat: A Murder Mystery, JAC Chanukah Party - Vodka and Latkes, and The Great JAC Hamantaschen Bake to celebrate Purim with synagogues.

CJF's **Kesher** –an inclusion initiative which has served Jewish adults with disabilities and their families for over a decade– has thrived over the past year with the introduction of new programs such as *Kesher Lunch Club*, A Taste of Judaism – Food for the Soul, Wellness for All, and Unique Jewels, alongside annual events such as Jewish Disabilities Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) and International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD).

Our **Coast-to-Coast Partnership2Gether** group supports the Etzba HaGalil region in Israel. Over the last year, we have been able to fund renovations and the equipping of community centres in the region, which in turn give space to social service programs as well as supporting individuals with disabilities. Calgary students met their peers in the region through The Calgary Jewish Academy Israel Experience as we well as the 2023 March of the Living.

There is still so much to do. With transforming economic times, changes in government and relationships, continued anti-Jewish and anti-Israel rhetoric, and other major challenges coming our way, 2023/2024 will be a pivotal year for our community. I am confident the strength and passion our community has shown –and will continue to show– will ensure the coming year is even more successful than this one. Thank you again for all you have done and continue to do!

I look forward to seeing all of you on September 10 at our official UJA campaign kick-off and wish everyone a wonderful summer! *B'Shalom*,

Ain

Lisa Libin, President, Calgary Jewish Federation

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



Are you or your child starting post-secondary school in the fall? Make sure you learn about Calgary Hillel! Enjoy amazing programming throughout the school year that will keep you engaged in Jewish life, foster leadership skills, and make lifelong friends! Follow us on Instagram (@calgaryhillel) to keep up-to-date on our events. Welcome to your Jewish home away from home – we can't wait to meet you!

QUESTIONS? Email Hannah: hgiesinger@jewishcalgary.org





Jewish Federation

The **strength** of a people. The **power** of community.

Calaary

SUNDAY, JULY 16 10AM - 12PM • SOUTH GLENMORE SPLASH PARK JOIN PJ LIBRARY® FOR A FUN MORNING WITH FRIENDS! YOU BRING THE SUNSCREEN AND WE'LL BRING THE TREATS!

> FOR INFORMATION CONTACT SYDNEY TRUAX: STRUAX@JEWISHCALGARY.ORG • 403-537-8592

C



IT'S AN EXCITING TIME FOR OUR JEWISH COMMUNITY!

We are pleased to share with our community an exciting message from The Calgary Jewish Community Campus Committee, Beth Tzedec Congregation, and The Calgary Jewish Academy.

FOR MORE SCAN QR CODE OR GO TO JEWISHCALGARY.ORG

CALGARY JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS COMMITTEE







It's Moments Like This



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Kick off the **UJA 2023 Campaign** at 10:00AM with a **5kn walk or run** along the reservoir starting from the Paperny Famiy JCC.



Then meet us back at the JCC field at 11:30AM for a **lively concert**, games, food, and more!

Come together to celebrate our community and all that Jewish Calgary has to offer! Join us for a super-fun **community concert** at 11:30 AM with



TITLE SPONSOR: THE BALABAN FAMILY



PJ Library



A PJ LIBRARY® PRODUCTION IN SUPPORT OF UJA

FEATURING OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM YOUNG TO YOUNG AT HEART!



Calgary Jewish Federation The strength of a people. The power of community.

he strength of a people.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT SYDNEY TRUAX 403-537-8592 • STRUAX@JEWISHCALGARY.ORG

TT Society Cont. from page 3

volunteers and set up a Hebrew enrichment program for high achievers and Hebrew speaking students. Yifat Bear-Miller (Edmonton's JNF Shlicha/Emissary) visited TT to provide programming to K-6 students centered around Israel and the holiday of *Tu B'Shevat*, and the Society funded the teacher-led *Tu B'Shevat* Seder for K-6 students. JNF Edmonton's Director, Jay Cairns, worked with Grade 6 students, and provided a leadership opportunity to sell trees for Israel. The students really motivated families this year, which resulted in just about 248 trees for Israel in honour of *Tu B'Shevat*. Jay also provided tomato seeds and soil for each class so students could plant one for themselves.

To round out the month of February, TT had an amazing drama production! Through collaborative efforts, Trickster Theatre was brought to Talmud Torah School. K-6 students participated in a week-long artist in residency program centered around seven Jewish values. With support from families and community members, as well as a generous grant from the Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation (EJCCF), the residency became a reality.

During the month of March, the Society provided funds for additional teacher support. This assistance largely focused on literacy and provided smaller groupings for part of the day in Division 1. The Society applied for and received a \$1,000 grant from Jewish Federation of Edmonton to purchase new Siddurim that helped to offset the cost of \$5,000 required to purchase a new school set. After three long years of modified Purim events, the students excitedly participated in both the Purim assembly and Purim carnival. Grade 5 students led the assembly, while Grade 6 students performed a Megillah skit. At the end of March, Kindergarten & Kinderarts hosted a collaborative and well-attended open house.

ELC staff and the Society met in April to discuss Hebrew/Judaic programing in the ELC. Next fall, in addition to the regular Hebrew/Judaic programming, each ELC room will receive ongoing, targeted, theme based Hebrew/Judaic content delivered by Hebrew speaking educators. The Communication Committee's new brochure, *Creating Brighter Minds Through Education, Community and Culture*, was published in both web and print formats, and highlights the benefits and successes of TT. We had a wonderful mezuzah ceremony in April, where JNF Edmonton and E.D. Jay Cairns gifted a new mezuzah to TT.

April also saw TT Out of School Care educators prepare a Passover Seder for their students. The ELC and K-6 teachers immersed students in the Passover story and symbolism. Students learned about and participated in meaningful discussions around Yom Hazikaron, while Grade 5 and 6 students performed at the Alberta Legislature in honour of Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day). Grade 6 students led the Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel's birthday) assembly, and students participated in an all-school blue and white parade and performed songs. Lastly, our TT choir performed at Jewish Federation of Edmonton's Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration.

In May, our Grade 6 students participated in a Shabbaton weekend that included meaningful Judaic programming and fun bonding activities, while K-6 and TT Early Learning & Out of School Care students learned about and participated in a variety of *Lag B'Omer* activities.

The Grade 2 Torah Ora ceremony on June 9 was a lovely event led by teacher Bianna Kuksin. Students performed beautifully and were honoured to receive their very own Chumash (Torah prayer book). New board members were voted in at Talmud Torah Society's Annual General Meeting on June 20. The 2023-24 board of directors will meet soon to vote in the Executive members, and will work throughout the summer to prepare programming and initiatives for the new school year. Teacher Robin Marcus organized the Grade 1 Siddur celebration on June 21, which showcased the prayers students have learned throughout the year. They were excited to receive their





Creating Brighter Minds Through Education, Community & Culture very own Siddur, and you could see the pride on students and families' faces alike!

To round out the month of June, there will be the Grade 6 promotion ceremony with students looking forward to celebrating their elementary graduation. In addition, K-6 classes will come together in multiaged groups to compete in the annual Maccabi Games/Sports Day event on June 23, featuring a variety of fun, but physically challenging activities. One of the highlights of the day is a dunk tank, where students are given the opportunity to dunk the teachers. This is the culmination of a month-long fitness month organized by school council.

What a year it has been! Wishing everyone a rejuvenating summer, and looking forward to seeing you all back on September 5.



A fast, full service, friendly & convenient registry centre.

Oliver Square • 11648 104 Ave PH 780.408.2000



Get Inspired.

We Offer Educational Excellence, Jewish Identity, Inclusivity, Safe Space, Stewardship, Trust & Transparency

> Contact us for a Tour: 780-481-3377 nataliesoroka@talmudtorahsociety.com

www.osreg.ca

Licensing, Registrations & Renewals All classes of written & road tests Drivers' Abstracts Name Searches & NUANS Commissioners for Oath Corporate Registrations & Searches Vital Statistics Certificates & Registrations Personal Property Lien Searches & Registrations **And many other services for Public & Professional**

"Licensed to please."

Authorized Registry Agent

EJFF 2023 wraps up a successful festival experience

By Jenna Soroka

From May 7 to May 18, the 27th annual Edmonton Jewish Film Festival (EJFF) brought people together for a culturally rich film experience. Tickets were free of charge to the general public which was made possible "thanks to the generosity of our sponsors," said Stacey Leavitt-Wright, CEO of the Edmonton Jewish Federation.

The films were presented as a hybrid model once again, giving movie-lovers the option to watch inperson as well as virtually. Rebecca Asbell, Executive Committee member of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, expressed that, based on people's feedback, this approach was appreciated. "It was nice to see familiar and new faces take part in this beloved community event," Stacey noted, and was encouraged by the increase in attendance this year.

The Stanley A. Milner Library hosted the in-person screenings this year, but ticket holders could also enjoy an evening out at the Metro Cinema thanks to the EJFF's special event sponsor, NorthwestFest, as part of their annual film festival.

The EJFF lineup included feature films: Rose, Karaoke, Exodus 91, Only In Theatres, The Conspiracy, Schächten, Cinema Sabaya, Upheaval: The Journey of Menachem Begin, On This happy Note, Farewell Mister Hafffmann, along with several short films.

For the film Schächten, EJFF hosted a special talk over Zoom with Thomas Roth, director of the drama. People gathered online to reflect on the stories and history presented in the film to deepen their cinematic experience. Another special event that enhanced the EJFF experience for audience members was the Young at Heart choir performance that kicked off

the opening show.

Countless hours are poured into this event to ensure it runs smoothly. Federation staff, including but not limited to, Susan Schiffman, EJFF Coordinator, and Tammy Vineberg, Associate Director, Marketing, and Communications, work hard to ensure the festival is a success. This year, the Film Festival Committee, chaired by Sam Koplowicz, helped curate the mix of films from what started as over 80 possible titles. The selected feature films were carefully chosen by this committee after hours of review, rating, and deliberation. The films featured a range of dramas and documentaries, with a few Israeli stories that appropriately coincided with the State of Israel's 75th anniversary.

The EJFF acts as a main fundraiser for the Jewish Federation of Edmonton's bridge-building partnership program, Partnership2Gether (P2G). This year, proceeds will support a meaningful, volunteer-led Israeli/Arab youth exchange program between Metula and nearby Arab towns. Projects like these encourage a brighter future for generations to come, and the continued support for the EJFF through sponsors, advertisers, and donors helps the P2G initiative succeed.

The festival program featured many well wishes and support from local leaders, illustrating the importance of the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival in our community and beyond. "Our Jewish community contributes to the cultural fabric of Edmonton by sharing its vibrant stories, traditions, and histories," shared Mayor Sohi in his message to EJFF attendees.

The Edmonton Jewish Film Festival has been a meaningful addition to the Edmonton community for 27 years. It continues to create a space for storytelling



through film by Jewish artists around the world and opens conversations that explore the beauty and complexities of Jewish culture and identity.

In addition to the support from this year's attendees, the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival was made possible thanks to this year's major sponsors: Jewish Federation of Edmonton, Edmonton Community Foundation, Edmonton Public Library, and Edmonton Arts Council.

Did you miss some of the films? Go to jewishedmonton.org to learn more about this year's features and the positive impact your support of the EJFF has on the Partnership2Gether program.

Jenna Soroka is a Local Journalism *Initiative Reporter.*



PJ Library Edmonton enjoyed Shabbat in the park with author Debby Waldman and Israeli visitors Gilad and Lilach from the Jewish Agency for Israel. Photos: Jewish Federation of Edmonton.





Contact EJCCF: 780-487-0585 ext. 203 ejccfoundation@gmail.com Contact ECF: 780-426-0015 donorservices@ecfoundation.org

www.starkmanrealty.com

starkmanrealty@rogers.com

An independent broker member

Cont. from page 1

Page 12

Leavitt-Wright described the work of Chevra volunteers as "unsung."

"These volunteers perform the ultimate mitzvah of honouring our deceased and comforting the bereaved according to traditions that emphasize humility and anonymity. Chesed Shel Emet, the one true act of loving kindness, is done for those who can never repay the mitzvah," added Leavitt-Wright.

"What you may not know is that the Chevra Kadisha... is entirely volunteer-run in Edmonton, reflecting the wide range of observance and affiliations across our community.

Deputy Mayor Keren Tang brought greetings on behalf of Mayor Amarjeet Sohi and City Council, presenting a commemorative certificate signed by all.

Other dignitaries in attendance included Senator Paula Simons; Edmonton MPs Kelly McCauley and Randy Boissonnault; Alberta MLAs Lorne Dach and Nathan Ip; Edmonton City Councillors Karen Principe and Tim Cartmell; Edmonton Police Service Chief Dale McFee, Deputy Chief Devin Laforce, and Chief Administrative Officer Justin Krikler, himself an active member of the Jewish community.

"Edmonton's Jewish community has made significant contributions to our city, and this space will forever be a reminder of the impact you have made on our prosperity, inclusion and diversity," said Tang, later adding, "May this space be filled with blessings, peace and eternal memory.'

Chevra Kadisha Secretary Barry Goldberg provided insight into the consecration rituals that followed.

"We walk the cemetery perimeter seven times, setting its physical demarcation and representing the physical act of separation," he said. "Psalms are recited to acknowledge our frailty, our weakness and our dependence on our almighty. Charity redeems death and links the cemetery to the living community."

Following Goldberg's remarks, Rabbi Guy Tal (Beth Israel), Rabbi Steven Schwarzman (Beth Shalom), Rabbi Ari Drelich (Chabad-Lubavitch), and Rabbah Gila Caine (Temple Beth Ora), and members of the Chevra Kadisha paused for the recitation of Tehilim (Psalms) as they led attendees around the perimeter of the cemetery, beginning, as is customary, in the southeast corner. Following each circuit, tzedakahcharity—was pledged by the Chevra to provide for tzorchei tzibur-community needs.

Marcus invited individuals and families to multiply the mitzvah by similarly supporting any or all of the selected charitable organizations: Jewish Family Services, Edmonton Talmud Torah, National Council of Jewish Women, Hadassah-WIZO, the local Synagogue of one's choice, Chabad (in support of kosher meals for incarcerated Jews), and Jewish Federation.

The Chevra Kadisha was born in 1907 when Abraham Cristall purchased land for a Jewish cemetery on the south side of the North Saskatchewan River, on 101 Avenue. The original cemetery, approximately six acres in size, has more than 2,200 graves. Though that cemetery is nearly full, burials will





On June 4 th Edmonton community gathered to recognize the ongoing efforts of the local Chevra Kadisha in consecrating a new Jewish cemetery. Community leaders and rabbis led a procession seven times circling the perimeter of the new site.

continue, with plots reserved mainly for the spouses of individuals already interred there.

In an interview late last year, former Chevra treasurer Bill Dolman speculated that funerals at Edmonton's original Jewish cemetery could continue for as many as three to four decades.

Burials will commence at the new cemetery following the installation of grade beams, hopefully sometime in July, Marcus told AJNews. Beautiful landscaping of the first of three sections is a prelude to further planned development.

"Currently we are fundraising for a new chapel and workshop as well as additional equipment," Marcus said, adding that named sponsorship of the cemetery is one of many philanthropic opportunities.

The new cemetery is geographically closer to neighbourhoods where the vast majority of Edmonton Jews now live. Former Chevra leaders Shim Laskin and Shelby Smordin, both of blessed memory, played major roles in securing the land during the mid-1990s. The new cemetery totals 30 acres, sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the Edmonton Jewish community for an estimated 200 years.

That is a powerful affirmation that the Edmonton Jewish community intends to pass its traditions from generation to generation, honouring the dead and embracing life as proud and engaged Jews and Edmontonians.

To make your tax deductible charitable contribution to the Chevra Kadisha, community members can contact Vice President Jeff Rubin at 780-909-3065 or make online donations at edmontonjewishcemetery.ca. To explore the possibility of becoming a Chevra volunteer, please contact Chevra Kadisha President David Marcus, or speak to any of the Chevra leadership cited in this article.



Rabbis Guy Tal and Steven Schwarzman and Rabbah Gila Caine.



Ken Soroka, David Marcus and Lewis Wasel.





TTEN Suite 2500, 10303 Jasper Avenue Edmonton Alberta Canada Edmonton Alberta Canada T5J 3N6



Barristers & Solicitors

T: 780.428.0501 F:780.429.2559 E-mail:lawyers@wittenlaw.com Web:www.wittenlaw.com



To advertise your business or event contact Dan 780-421-7966 or email albertajewishnews@shaw.ca

Fanny Wedro honoured by University of Calgary

By Valerie Sobel

"Don't think that standing here before you is a 95year-old woman. In front of you is a 14-year-old girl whose life was taken away, who was left with no parents, no grandparents, no relatives, no one. Yet I had to go out into the world. And let me tell you...it's a wonderful world!"

These were the opening words of an address by Holocaust survivor, Fania (Fanny) Wedro, to the University of Calgary graduating class of 2023. The lucky 1200-strong audience comprised of university leadership, honorees, students, their parents and friends, listened in pin-drop silence to the beautiful and wise woman at the microphone. Fania delivered an 8-minute speech to inspire the graduating students to not only "spread light into the world" but to "cherish and respect their country." A long standing ovation followed. Ten minutes prior, the jam-packed Jack Simpson Gymnasium watched as the University of Calgary Chancellor, John Cornish, awarded Fania Wedro an Honorary Doctorate Degree of Laws.

She was only 14 years old in Koretz, Ukraine/ Poland, when the Nazis and their collaborators shot her mother along with most of the 5000-strong Jewish population of that town, quickly burying them in mass graves. "She's 16!" her mother fibbed just before her imminent death when a Nazi officer inquired about Fania's age. This was Chaya Elman's last attempt to save her daughter and it worked; Fania was selected for manual labour to shovel dirt over the mass graves where her own mother's body lay lifeless.

In months and years to come, Fania managed to escape a fire-engulfed ghetto, took refuge in empty graves, and hid in a forest, cold and sick with no food or water.

Immigrating to Edmonton in 1948 as a domestic servant, Fania worked as a maid for a number of years. She married and raised two children. With her husband, fellow Holocaust survivor, Leo Wedro z"l, Fania went on to own drug stores and, eventually,

the Cascade Inn in the city of Banff. Together with her beloved Leo, Fania became a notable builder of Alberta, taking immense pride in contributing to and driving various Canadian projects and causes. The couple became one of western Canada's leading entrepreneurs and established the Wedro Holocaust Foundation in Calgary.

Today, Fania Wedro funds the efforts of Father Patrick Desbois (France) in uncovering mass graves, where roughly 1.8M Ukranian/Polish Jews anonymously fell to their death in the Holocaust by nazi bullets. Fania has been a key-note speaker at the annual Holocaust Symposiums at Mount Royal University for the last 41 years. She is also the founding member and philanthropist behind Magen David Adom Canada (Calgary Chapter), raising funds for Israel's only blood bank and emergency services.

As a natural leader and a tireless Holocaust educator, Fania led multiple groups of high school students and adults on "March of The Living" missions through Europe's death camps. She last led the mission when she was 86 years young.

In awarding Fania Wedro the Honorary Doctorate Degree in Laws, the President of the University of Calgary, Dr. Ed McCauley, thanked Fania for her dedication in promoting Holocaust education. "A leading philanthropist and speaker, Fania has given back to the community with a lifetime of volunteerism, speaking to schools, community groups and government officials about her horrific Holocaust experience," he remarked. (Fania's entire June 2nd, 2023 convocation address and the awarding ceremony can be viewed at 1:30:30 mark here: https://www.ucalgary.ca/graduation/convocation/cerem ony-day/convocation-livestream-and-videos)

Fania Wedro, who speaks seven languages fluently, quotes Pushkin poetry perfectly, and offers encyclopedic insights into Judaism, history and current events, often laments about her lack of formal education. Busy dodging bullets and camp deportations to survive the greatest tragedy in human



Fania Wedro addressed the 2023 University of Calgary graduating students and was awarded honourary Doctorate of Laws and **Doctorate of History.**

history, at 95, she finally received the honour long overdue. Dr. Fania Wedro was nominated to receive the honorary doctorate by two independent entries - the first in the history of University of Calgary. With her usual humbleness, Fania comments, "I don't know what I did to deserve this."

We congratulate Dr. Fanny Wedro on a life of resilience, purpose, contribution and devotion to Holocaust education. We share her joy and commend her for her unwavering commitment to Israel and Jewish causes as she gets ready to celebrate her 96th birthday.





www.trellis.org/better-together

SUPPORTING HEART AND LUNG HEALTH

Your gift to CHW will help us save lives and provide hope for critically ill children and their families. When you make a generous gift to our annual campaign, you support healing and help transform the lives of thousands of children, women, and families in Israel.

BREATHELIFEGIVELOVE.CA







Publication Mail Agreement No. 40050628 Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: #206, 8944 182 Street, Edmonton AB T5T 2E3 E-mail: albertajewishnews@gmail.com Tel: (780) 421-7966

Volume 34, Number 06, June 21, 2023

PUBLISHER: Deborah Shatz **EDITOR:** Daniel Moser PAST PUBLISHERS: Barry Slawsky, David Moser, Judy Shapiro, Richard Bronstein

albertajewishnews.com

Subscriptions in Canada: \$37.80 per year Subscriptions outside Canada: \$72 USD per year

Funded by the Government of Canada Binancé par le gouvernement du Canada Canada



All rights reserved. No part of this newspaper may be reproduced without written permission from the publisher. The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Editor, Alberta Jewish News is published by 320754 Alberta Ltd.

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: July 21, 2023



As our society becomes more sensitive to animal suffering, fur coats are no longer the conspicuous status symbol that they once were. Nonetheless, the quest for fur-bearing animals was one of the principal motives for European colonization of America from the seventeenth century, and it continued to be a mainstay of the Canadian economy until well into the nineteenth century. The heated rivalry between France and England over control of the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries was motivated largely by the concern with maintaining access to the abundant stores of fur-bearing animals in the interior regions.

In that early era of North American settlement, there were scarcely any openly Jewish residents in France itself; and the 1627 charter that established the colony of New France explicitly excluded all non-Catholics.

The situation changed crucially in 1763 with the British victory in the Seven Years' War and the transformation of Quebec into a British colony. Many European Jews were attracted by the prospect of migration to the New World where they would enjoy civil rights and opportunities to exercise their entrepreneurial skills. In fact, they would be allowed greater rights in America than in England, where non-Christians were still subject to onerous restrictions.

A noted example of this pioneering breed was German-born Ezekiel Solomon (or: Solomons) who settled in Montreal in the latter eighteenth century and was a partner in the prominent firm of Gershon Levy & Company who were a major player in the fur trade. The firm was perhaps the first, following the British conquest of New France, to establish trading stations in strategic centres of the Great Lakes area formerly under French rule. The consortium controlled almost half the regional market, and they evidently had ambitions to cast their net as far west as Manitoba and "la mer du Quest." However, their fortunes took a fatal turn with the outbreak of an uprising by the Native Tribes under Chief Pontiac who had been allied with the French and wanted to drive out the British. At Michilimackinac, Michigan, Solomon was captured by Chippewa warriors and eventually ransomed. His merchandise and property were completely lost and he was forced into bankruptcy.

For much of his career, Ezekiel would spend most of his days in Montreal, and occupy his Michigan residence for only a few months each summer.

The rugged temperament that was necessary for life on the frontier also came into play in Solomon's dealings in the urban setting, as we may infer from an incident in 1775 when a marble bust of King George III, donated by His Majesty himself and exhibited prominently in Place des Armes, was vandalized. The numerous religious, ethnic and political factions were quick to accuse each other of the treasonous deed. An individual by the name of Sieur Le Pailleur cast the blame on the Jews, provoking a fistfight at which Solomon was arrested for knocking down his opponent.

What kind of Jew was Ezekiel Solomon? What role did his religion play in his life?

Attempts to answer these questions reveal extreme contradictions. On the one hand, Solomon and his fellow Jewish fur traders were all listed as active members of Montreal's orthodox Shearith Israel (Spanish and Portuguese) synagogue. He was in fact one of the synagogue's founders, organizing a subscription for its establishment and soliciting donations from abroad for the purchase of Torah scrolls. In 1778 the synagogue honoured him as "hatan Torah" on Simhat Torah.

On the other hand, in 1769 he married Marie Elizabeth Louise Dubois, a Roman Catholic, in a ceremony held at an Anglican church. Their six children were all given Catholic baptism. The spouses continued to practice and support their respective religious traditions, and Dubois was actively involved in the family trade. Some records assign her a name "Okimabinesikoue," which might suggest Indigenous ancestry.

When their young son died in 1778, Ezekiel petitioned Shearith Israel to allow his burial in their cemetery, in spite of his being a baptized, uncircumcised child of a Christian mother. The request was granted.

A different picture emerges from Solomon's life on the Great Lakes frontier. The crude house that he inhabited seasonally at Fort Michilimackinac from

Frontier, fur, and a fistfight

1765 to 1781 has been subjected to intensive archeological excavation, owing to its historic importance as the residence of Michigan's first known Jewish resident. The cellar storehouse that was discovered there provided glimpses into the daily lives of traders on the frontier, but very little information about any spiritual or ritual dimensions. The absence of identifiable Jewish artifacts can perhaps be explained on the premise that their owner would not have abandoned them when vacating the residence.

Adherence to a traditional Jewish religious regimen is often more accurately measured by the food that is consumed. In the present instance, the remains indicated little difference between the menus at Solomon's house and those of his Christian neighbours, including pig, beaver and hare. It has been suggested that a decline in his consumption of pork during the later, more affluent years of his life might indicate an inner desire to return to his ancestral tradition once his situation became more secure.

Such were the ambiguities and contradictions that marked the lives of those Jewish pioneers as they planted their roots in North American soil.

The medieval "Book of the Pious" tells a curious tale of a Jew whose good and bad deeds were weighed by the heavenly authorities. It turned out that his sins outweighed his virtues, which would have blocked his acceptance into the next world. However, a sympathetic angel insisted that they load the man up with animal pelts until the additional burden tipped the scales in the direction of his admission to paradise.

It was explained that those furs had earned him credit when he had offered them in payment for the Jewish community's taxes.

Perhaps a similar arrangement could be negotiated for the likes of a certain flawed Canadian fur trader.

Eliezer Segal is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.

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

CMDA hosts spectacular gala event in Calgary



A wonderful Canadian Magen David Adom Gala was held last month in Calgary honouring two exceptional philanthropists Lenny Shapiro and Fanny Wedro with Kavod Awards for their generous contributions to CMDA and saving lives in Israel. (Photos courtesy CMDA).

Sixties Scoop Cont. from page 5

baby was not going to make it and that if she signed a form, the burial would be paid for. "Given her situation, she didn't think twice before signing that form," Wilder added.

Meanwhile, again without her knowledge, Linda's son was made a permanent ward of the province Manitoba and eventually sent to Victoria, BC where he was adopted by a former foster family. "He wasn't found again until August 30, 2019," Wilder said.

Sadly, Linda passed away last month. "I find myself missing her very much," Wilder said. "She endured more than most over her lifetime, yet still managed to keep love and faith in the forefront. She had the most beautiful, gentle and kind heart, always forgiving those around her.'

Wilder says that her biological sisters continue to feel the effects of intergenerational trauma, including living for decades in the shadow of their absent brother, for whom the entire family continued to search.

Fortunately, Wilder "caught a break" in 2019.

She had been googling a man with the name thought to be her brother's when, almost unbelievably, he popped up in a photograph alongside her mother's best friend's son-in-law. Wilder chose to pursue the fortuitous lead.

It created "quite a bit of chaos," she said, because up until then, her brother David had not known that he was adopted. Like Lisa, David reunited with and embraced his biological family. Both of them shared their stories in the recently published anthology Silence to Strength: Writings and Reflections on the Sixties Scoop.

"I've finally been able to uncover many of the whys of why I am who I am," Wilder said, adding that she is finally comfortable in her own skin. "My healing comes from learning and growing and finding ways to incorporate the traditions that resonate from the heritage I grew up in with those that resonate from my Indigenous roots."

"But this learning journey also comes with challenges," adds Wilder. "And at times I feel I have to work extra hard to prove myself and my intentions when seeking this knowledge within the Indigenous community that I long to be able to explore more fully and freely.

Wilder says she feels privileged to have grown up hearing the first-hand accounts of Holocaust survivors and is grateful to have developed a strong understanding of genocide, ethnic cleansing and hate.

In the midst of that darkness, her instinct draws her toward light. "I have seen the power in the sharing of stories," she explains. "Sharing brings on healing and transformation, shifting experiences of childhood trauma into teachable moments of resilience. And the sharing of stories somehow seems to inspire the sharing of more stories, bringing on more communal and intergenerational healing as well as that extra

Halpern Akiva Academy honours its staff members



Halpern Akiva Academy honoured their staff members at a recent gala. Each staff member was given an award thanking them for their dedication and passion for Jewish education, the school and their students.

boost of strength that we get when we realize we are not alone on our human journeys."

If we are not alone, we are often siloed. Wilder has often asked family and others with whom she shares a bond why they chose to move to Canada. They invariably reply, "Because nothing like that could ever happen here.'

But it has, says Wilder, adding that Indigenous Canadians have been subjected to genocide for more than a century and a half.

"It's still not uncommon for me to hear people say, 'They just need to get over it.' Now as a Jew, I would never think that the Holocaust is something that should just be gotten over, and I bet most of you feel the same way. So why on earth would we expect another culture to stuff their own experience of genocide away?"

Citing numerous restrictions imposed on Indigenous people beginning with the Indian Act of 1876, Wilder said, "I couldn't help but see some of the similarities to the experiences of the Jewish people leading up to the Holocaust."

"Many non-Indigenous Canadians also don't really understand all the issues that face the Indigenous population or why they still require attention and discussion and action," said Wilder, adding that her goal is "...to move that needle of awareness.

"Similar to the Holocaust, what happened with the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop and their aftermath was unimaginable, horrifying and completely misguided, but what we do with it is where the good can present. Of course it's essential that this history is never forgotten, making sure that these dark moments never reoccur. But it's equally essential to focus on the resilience, that light that always manages to creep in from out of the dark when we are ready and we choose to allow it to.'

Wilder does not claim to be Indigenous because she has not lived an Indigenous life; she chooses her words carefully to avoid any hint of such a claim. Nevertheless, she now understands that some of the things she did as a child came from "blood memory."

She recalls taking bay leaves into her bedroom at the age of 12 because they were dry. When she has having a bad day, she would light candles and pull the smoke from the leaves over herself. "I didn't realize what I was doing was smudging," Wilder said, a practice she now engages in daily and with intention.

Her aunt, who studied psychology and later created her own modality called Indigenous Focussing Oriented Therapy, took Wilder under her wing. She has now completed five of seven modules and looks forward to incorporating the therapy in her practice.

Growing up, Wilder's mother used to tell her she was "a sucker for the underdog." Wilder describes that altruism a little differently, saying that when she looks at others, she sees them in all their potential. She chalks it up to blood memory of the "knowing of all my relations" that "... nobody is supposed to be ahead of somebody or behind somebody else... We are all meant to sit beside one another in circle, because we're all equally important."

It is time, says Wilder, for people to come together rather than focussing only on their own experiences. Instead of expending energy on blame, she chooses to focus on "beauty and interconnectedness." When smudging, she brings the smoke over and around her, asking for it to clear her vision and allow her eyes to see not just what they want to see, but how things are.

"I ask that smoke to come and open up my third eye and bring out my intuition so that I can actually plug in to other people. I ask for that smoke to come up over my ears and open them up so that I'm not listening with the purpose of finding an answer, but instead listening to hear what someone is saying to me."

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter.



Our best wishes to the community for a Happy Canada Day

EDMONTON'S PREMIER ROOFERS

Re-Roofing Licensed - 5M Liability WCB - Free Estimates - Seniors Discounts 780-257-6526

Sign up for the Alberta Jewish Schmooze e-news today!

Keep up to date on a weekly basis delivered right to your inbox.

Visit **albertajewishnews.com** to sign up

Volf Willow

DENTAL Dr. Brian Banks, Dr. Yolande Desrosiers & Associates

We are a professional, caring team which provides quality, individualized care for your whole family. We are always accepting new patients, and are dedicated to creating generations of healthy, beautiful smiles.

6851 170st. NW, Edmonton, AB, T5T 4W5 • 780 444 6133 • wolfwillowdental.com

We follow the Current 2023 Alberta Dental Association Fee Guide.

🕇 Wolf Willow Dental 🚺 @wolfwillowdental





FROM YOUR CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

