

# ALBERTA Jewish NEWS

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October 25, 2023

## Jewish Alberta gathers in grief and solidarity

By Hannah Silver

(AJNews) – A welcome and well needed dose of community as we struggle through these dark and difficult days, both Calgary Jewish Federation and Jewish Federation of Edmonton gathered community on the evening of October 9, in an incredible, overwhelming display of love, support, and solidarity for Israel.

Although the event was organized in just over 24 hours, Beth Tzedec Congregation's sanctuary was full with over 1,000 people in attendance, many of whom wore blue and white or IDF t-shirts, and proudly waved Israeli flags.

A similar gathering took place in Edmonton at Beth Israel Synagogue; community members and allies joined together to mourn and grieve following the heinous Hamas attack on Israel on October 7 where over 1400 people were brutally murdered and more than 200 people were abducted.

The Calgary community heard messages from federal, provincial, and municipal politicians, including powerful words from Shuv Mujumdar, Member of Parliament for Calgary Heritage, Minister Tanya Fir of Arts, Culture, and Status of Women, and Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek. They each reassured us that we are not alone, and all representatives displayed strong allyship. Several prayers were led by members of Calgary's Jewish community, including representatives of local organizations with a focus on supporting Israel. Calgary Jewish Federation's president Lisa Libin emceed the evening, sharing her own thoughts, as well as reading a letter penned by former Calgarian living in Israel, Kinneret Ozeri (Carla Girvitz). Jared Shore, past co-president of Federation and current CIJA board member,



Over 1000 Calgary Jewish community members and allies gathered at Beth Tzedec on Oct. 9 to express solidarity with Israel following the heinous massacre in Israel by Hamas terrorists. Photo Calgary Jewish Federation

eloquently and convincingly inspired us to be proud, active Jews in the face of such hate and terror.

As she poured out her heart, former IDF lone-soldier Hannah Carnat-Gronnerud put it beautifully, "Our joy, our happiness, and our literal survival depends on our strength, not on others' hate. And we have proven to ourselves and to the world that our strength will always survive. It is not a question but the answer."

Federation CEO Adam Silver, who has been working around the clock to ensure the safety of our community, shared a touching message of hope and solidarity. He praised the responsiveness and cooperation of Calgary Police Service (CPS) and shared several ways that we as individuals can help Israel by donating to the Calgary Jewish Federation Israel Emergency Fund, Canadian Magen David Adom, JNF Canada, Canadian Hadassah WIZO, Na'amat Canada, and buying Israel Bonds.

In Edmonton, over 500 community members and allies gathered together in solidarity for Israel at Beth Israel. The gathering was primarily a time for prayer and unity among community members and agencies.

It was not political in nature and although some dignitaries were in attendance, they were not invited to address the crowd. Their presence sent a message of solidarity with the community. "Tonight we gathered as a community at Beth Israel to show unwavering support for Israel. Thank you to all who attended, including rabbis, politicians, dignitaries, and Edmonton Police Service chief of police," stated Jewish Federation of Edmonton on meta.

Former President of Jewish Federation of Edmonton Steven Shafir emceed the event and CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright spoke passionately about the need for solidarity. EPS Chief Dale McFee addressed the gathering, reassuring the Jewish community that they are not in isolation here in Edmonton and that extra security would be provided around the places where Jewish people congregate.

On October 14 the community came together again for an outdoor Havdallah service, with all of the synagogues participating. Again, the atmosphere was somber and unifying and message was for solidarity

*Continued on page 2*

## Book your Chanukah Greeting in Alberta Jewish News

Chanukah is right around the corner and Alberta Jewish News is once again celebrating with two special editions – one for Calgary and one for Edmonton. We're proud to be the newspaper of the Alberta Jewish Community by publishing interesting and relevant original community news on a print platform, as well as our online weekly "Alberta Jewish Schmooze" which goes right into our readers' in-boxes and daily posts on our website and X (formerly known as twitter).

It is more important than ever that we have a community newspaper to connect us and you can show your appreciation by purchasing 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. It also allows us to give generous discounted pricing to our beloved Jewish community organizations to help them advertise their events.

In the coming weeks, you will be approached to purchase a holiday greeting in the Alberta Jewish News – by Sandy Fayerman in Calgary or from the Edmonton chapters of BBYO in Edmonton. Please say yes and book the greeting through them, or by calling the office at 780 421-7966 or sending an email to [albertajewishnews@gmail.com](mailto:albertajewishnews@gmail.com). You can also book online on our website at [albertajewishnews.com/greetings](http://albertajewishnews.com/greetings).



# CJA students extend support to students in Israel

By Joseph Tappenden

In times of hardship, the human spirit shines brightest when it reaches out across borders to offer a helping hand. Recently, students at the Calgary Jewish Academy (CJA) demonstrated the power of compassion and community as they joined hearts and minds with students in schools across Israel. Those in grades 5 & 6 wrote heartfelt letters and created beautiful drawings for Israeli students. It served as a testament to the importance of fostering meaningful connections with our brothers and sisters in Israel.

Our Grade 4 students sent letters of support to one of their new classmate's old school in Israel. The heartwarming response they received from the Grade 4-3 "Alumim" School in Kiryat Uno, Israel, reflects the significance of these connections. Their gratitude and the joy they expressed upon receiving letters from their Canadian peers mirror the power of human connection, transcending the miles that separate them.

The young students of CJA didn't let geographical distance deter them from extending a hand of friendship and support. The letters and drawings they created communicated a universal message of solidarity. These gestures were more than words on paper or strokes of colored pencils; they were



CJA students sent letters of friendship and heartfelt support to schools in Israel.

expressions of empathy and love. The impact of these actions sent ripples of hope and encouragement.

But why is it so crucial to build these relationships? By fostering such connections, CJA students are building bridges of understanding and empathy that will serve them well in their future lives as global citizens. These experiences enrich their education, teaching them that kindness is limitless, and that their actions, no matter how small, can make a significant

difference in the lives of others.

The CJA students' initiative is a beacon of hope. Their support for Israeli students is a reminder that, even in the face of adversity, humanity's capacity for compassion and connection knows no bounds. These young hearts have set an example for us all, proving that we are strongest when we stand together, united in purpose.

## Jewish Alberta

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and safety.

All of the events concluded with the singing of Hatikvah, Israel's national anthem, meaning "The Hope." In a time of so many feelings of despair, let the resilience and humanity of our people in Israel, and the displays of Klal Israel and Ahavat Israel by our community alongside so many others around the world give us strength and hope; the Jewish spirit that has forever sustained us is our secret weapon.

In Calgary, if you or someone you know experiences any form of antisemitic hate and/or needs support, please report it to both the CPS non-emergency line and Calgary Jewish Federation. In Edmonton, please report it to the EPS non-emergency line and Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

Calgary Jewish Federation has joined Jewish Federations of North America and launched The Blue Ribbon Campaign, which symbolizes support and solidarity for the safe return of the hostages taken by Hamas. Wearing a ribbon publicly unites people of all religions, races, nationalities, ethnicities, ages, and generations and demonstrates for the people of Israel that they are not alone, and that good people across the globe are with them and their families during this dark time. Get your ribbon today at the Paperny Family Calgary JCC.

Many in Jewish Alberta are asking how you can help Israel right now. Both Edmonton and Calgary

Federations have set up an Israel Emergency Fund that you can donate to directly. The Jewish Federation system is on the ground in Israel and assessing the immediate needs of the terror victims. This funding will go to Jewish Federations of Canada – UIA, which will disperse the funds accordingly.

In Edmonton: <https://ow.ly/bbc150PVmPr>

In Calgary: [jewishcalgary.crowdfunder.com/c/35645](https://www.jewishcalgary.crowdfunder.com/c/35645)

Hannah Silver is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter. This article was written with files from AJNews in Edmonton.



A sombre solidarity gathering was held at Beth Israel in Edmonton. Photo by Tammy Vineberg

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# Unite in the push for the release of the hostages in Gaza

By AJNews staff

Vivian Silver is a Canadian woman who has spent decades in the peace movement, forging close ties with moderates in Gaza. She is missing, presumed to have been abducted from her Kibbutz Be'eri home when Hamas terrorists invaded on Oct. 7.

Silver, 74, born and raised in Winnipeg, made aliyah in 1974. She moved to Kibbutz Be'eri, near the Gaza Strip with her late husband and two sons, 33 years ago. She is deeply involved in Women Wage Peace, a grassroots effort that united women from diverse Israeli communities to lobby politicians for a diplomatic solution to the middle east conflict.

Silver was on the phone with her sister and texting with her son on the morning of Oct. 7, telling them that Hamas terrorists were at her door and outside her safe room. Then there was screaming and yelling and the phone went dead. She has not been heard from since.

Israeli officials had notified the relatives of 199 people that their loved ones are believed to be hostages in Gaza, an Israel Defense Forces spokesperson said on Oct. 16.

The number marked a sharp revision of the army's previous estimate of the number of Israeli captives, which had grown to 155 in the days after Hamas struck Israel Oct. 7, leaving thousands of people dead, wounded or taken hostage.

The new estimate came as Israel prepared for a ground invasion of Gaza that families of the hostages fear could put their loved ones at further risk.

"We are making valiant efforts to try to understand where the hostages are in Gaza, and we have such information," an Israel Defense Forces spokesman, Daniel Hagari, said at a press conference, according to Times of Israel. "We will not carry out an attack that would endanger our people."

Little information has emerged publicly about the condition, whereabouts or survival of the hostages after an initial flurry of videos released right after

the attack. It was also not clear whether the IDF believed that 199 represented a comprehensive estimate of the number of hostages. The bodies of several hostages, who had been killed, were recovered when the Israeli military led a small incursion into Gaza ahead of the invasion.

The families and supporters of the hostages have formed a well organized operation to keep their loved ones in public view even as Israel shifts into war mode.

They have held press conferences to call attention to the missing, created viral social media videos showcasing the names and information about the hostages and made available posters that volunteers have plastered in public spaces, including in New York City subway stations.

The hostages include women, children and the elderly and have drawn significant attention from international leaders, including President Joe Biden, who spoke with their families, and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who has been moving among Middle East countries trying to broker their release. A diplomatic source told the *Times of Israel* that Qatar was involved in the effort as well but that Israel had so far declined to participate in talks.

"Israel will not hold negotiations with an enemy that we have vowed to wipe from the face of the earth," the head of Israel's National Security Council said, eliciting ire from the families of the missing.

On Oct. 15, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with representatives of the missing for the first time, vowing to do everything possible to bring them home. But a family that has not been part of the collective organizing appeared at the meeting and expressed support for Netanyahu, according to a *Haaretz* report, creating tensions with the others who have accused the prime minister of giving too little attention to their family members' plight.



Since October 20, Hamas has released 4 hostages who had been abducted and held in the Gaza Strip – an American mother and daughter and two elderly Israeli women. Hostage negotiations are reportedly ongoing via Qatar, where Hamas' leadership is based, as Israel readies for a large-scale ground invasion of the Gaza Strip. Thousands of Palestinians have been killed in Israeli airstrikes following Hamas' invasion.

Meanwhile, in a *Globe and Mail* article, Irwin Cotler and Yonah Diamond from the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights state, "While Vivian Silver is silenced, her example should be our guide – the courage to engage in the real work necessary for co-existence. Vivian would have been at the forefront of the campaign to free the hostages. We should be there for her. Vivian stands for everything that a feminist foreign policy should deliver, one that places people, peace, and the planet above violence. There is no clearer path toward peace than seeing the Canadian who embodies these principles, along with all the hostages, released."

Written with files from JTA and Canadian Jewish News.

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# How do we keep the worst days in the last 50 years of Jewish history from tearing us apart?

By Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld

*This piece originally appeared as a letter to the Hebrew College community.*

(JTA) — Like so many others, I spent much of last week searching for language to describe and respond to the new reality in which we find ourselves. As Israeli novelist David Grossman wrote in the *Financial Times*, “I look at people’s faces and see shock. Numbness. Our hearts are weighed down by constant burden. Over and over again we say to each other: it’s a nightmare. A nightmare beyond comparison. No words to describe it. No words to contain it.”

For me, some important language came unexpectedly while I was sitting in shul this past Shabbat morning. Our teacher Rabbi Allan Lehmann was serving as gabbai at our minyan, and as he offered a mi sheberach, a blessing for each person who had been called up to the Torah to recite an aliyah, he concluded with the words, “b’toch she’ar avelei ameinu” — “among all the mourners of our people.”

It was an exquisitely simple and profound gesture of pastoral care. I hadn’t understood until that moment how deeply I needed to be named as a mourner, among all the mourners of our people. I wept with recognition and relief.

Many of you have been reaching out, wondering what to think, what to say, what to do.

Sadly, we know we are only at the beginning of a very long, difficult and uncertain road. A road that will make new demands of all of us as Jewish leaders. Heartbreakingly, it is also a road riddled with the risk of communal rupture and fragmentation — at a time when we so desperately long to come together, to hold one another and to be held, in our shared grief,

fear, and love.

I have no road map for this moment, and I am wary of anyone who says they do. But I want to share some thoughts on what I believe this terribly dark hour for our people asks of us.

**Allow yourself to be at a loss for words.** The speechlessness that we feel in the face of what we have witnessed is a sign of humanity and of humility. Honor it, protect it, do not rush past it.

**Listen to the moral voice within you that knows there is no context, no intellectual contortion that can possibly justify Hamas’ acts of horror.** These are acts that deserve nothing but our unequivocal condemnation. I have asked myself, again and again and again over the course of the last week, why this seems so hard for some good people to do (I’m not even talking about the shocking celebration of these acts in some quarters). There are many answers to this question, some more sinister than others. I recommend that you listen to the very powerful Shabbat sermons given on this topic by Rabbi Sharon Brous and Rabbi Angela Warnick Buchdahl.

For some, blaming the actions of Hamas on Israeli occupation is a way of trying to hold onto a world that makes sense, a world in which all hate flows from hurt, a world in which we can somehow keep horror at bay. I understand this impulse, but I believe its impact — blaming victims of unbearable cruelty for their own suffering, for the sake of preserving our own ideological

## Havdalah Service in the Park



An outdoor Havdalah service was held in Edmonton. Everyone lit candles in memory of the 1,400 people killed and the 220 people still held hostage by Hamas. Photo Jewish Federation of Edmonton.

and moral comfort and convenience — is insidious.

**Let yourself be uncertain about what Israel should do next in this impossibly painful and frightening moment.** We are already being bombarded with requests to sign petitions, make statements and participate in protests. Many of us understandably feel a growing sense of urgency as conditions worsen in Gaza and we fear an even more severe humanitarian crisis. I trust that every member of this community longs desperately to do what is possible to prevent further suffering and the death of innocent civilians, both Palestinian and Israeli. I hear the same longing from my Israeli friends and family as well. Let us be very, very humble as we share ideas about how best to do so. Beware of facile answers.

**Do not equate concern for Palestinian suffering and the loss of innocent Palestinian lives with betrayal of the Jewish people.** Let us not allow the inhumanity of Hamas to strip us of our basic humanity. Here I share the powerful words of my

*Continued on page 15*

Even in times of war and terror, it is important to support members of our community in positive and life-affirming activities.

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# Hug someone, it's our super power!

By Jay Cairns

It will be three years since my parents, Bobby and Sharon Cairns z"l passed away, November 21 and December 2, 2020 respectively. Not a day goes by that I don't think about them and try to honour their memory through simple things, some small and easy, some larger and more difficult. We are blessed to have mechanisms in Judaism that are designed to help with processing life cycle events such as losing a loved one. Shiva is 7 days, followed by the 30 days (shloshim), and usually 11 months later the family unveils the headstone which completes the official cycle of mourning. Yahrzeit is the next opportunity (ritualistically speaking) to connect with loved ones - my comment after having experienced a few now would be that these opportunities are in a public space (by virtue of a minyan I suppose), and therefore the level of connection can be strained.

Memories are left for us, the living - and it is important to me to keep their memory alive. There are a number of ways to keep a loved one's memory alive; historical photos, written, oral history and storytelling.

Beyond that, what opportunities exist to honour our loved ones? Charity. Not everyone has the capacity or interest in parting with large sums of money and that's fine, but consider doing something in honour of a loved one and keep their memory alive. Sponsor a kiddish, send a card, and or support a Jewish organization in their name.

The world has become a very confusing, ever changing place, but the one thing that remains and endures is love.

Over the last three years, I've had a lot of questions about what it means to be part of a community. Why it's important and why we ought to continue putting time and energy into Jewish continuity. We're part of a global community that is complex and simple at the same time - we're all Jews. Recent events have reminded us of this fact.

I'm grateful for the interactions I have had with community members over the last three years about grief and depression, personal stories that reminded and humbled - that my brother and I were not the first (or the only ones) to face tragedy. The collective body of shared experiences, and shared stories has been both comforting and therapeutic. I came to the conclusion that community is family.

Perhaps more accurately...extended family, and like any family it comes with a lot of different personalities that don't always agree about the particulars, but share in the broad strokes. The broadest of which is the value of life. Hug the ones you love, love hard because



Bobby and Sharon Cairns OBM

that is our super power that gives us the strength to build resilience and overcome. Hug the ones you love for all those who can't.

Jay Cairns is the Executive Director of JNF Edmonton Region.

# Adi Vital-Kaploun: One of 1400 people murdered by Hamas on Oct. 7

By Lila Sarick, Canadian Jewish News



Adi Vital-Kaploun z"l

Adi Vital-Kaploun, 33, was a devoted mother of two young children, with a successful career in cybersecurity when she was murdered at her home by Hamas terrorists on Kibbutz Holit on October 7.

A Canadian citizen, with deep ties to an extended family in Ottawa, Vital-Kaploun

was raised in Israel, Jewish Federation of Ottawa CEO Andrea Freedman said at a brief press conference on Oct. 11.

She is one of eight Canadian citizens who were

brutally murdered in Israel on October 7. One of 1400 people massacred that day.

"Adi brought love, laughter and a sense of purpose to her parents and siblings, the one always leading the way in a very close family," Freedman said in a statement she read on behalf of the family. "Her children are miraculously home safe, but she is not. She was murdered by terrorists in her home, just for being Jewish."

"Adi was an amazing woman with so many talents. She expressed herself through her dance, playing saxophone and was an amazing basketball player. Adi was driven from a young age on a path to success in everything she set her mind to, having recently completing her master's after completing a degree in chemical engineering," the family's statement said.

In an interview on Israeli television's Channel 12, Avital Aladjem described how she was hiding in a closet in her house on the kibbutz and texting with her neighbour, Vital-Kaploun, when the terrorists entered

her home and killed a man Aladjem had been hiding with.

Aladjem was dragged out of her hiding place and the terrorists then brought Vital-Kaploun's two children, Eshel, 4 months old, and 4-year-old Negev to her and started to march the three of them toward Gaza. Negev had been shot in the foot and one of the terrorists was carrying him, she said.


Once the three captives crossed into Gaza, the terrorists left them and Aladjem turned around and carried the children back to the kibbutz, hiding behind a sand dune at one point to avoid other Hamas forces.

The children were safely reunited with their father, but Aladjem said she never saw their mother, Adi.

"Adi's family was willing to have me share their story so that you can have a face of one of those families who are in pain, who are shattered, all because of the terrorist entity Hamas," Freedman said.

"We hear 1,400 Israelis were brutally murdered and we don't know any of their names. We have trouble seeing their faces. We have trouble remembering that all of these people murdered were somebody's child, they were somebody's mother, they were somebody's father. They have friends and family who are in deep,

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# Deborah Lyons is Canada's new special envoy on combatting antisemitism

By John Longhurst, Canadian Jewish News

Deborah Lyons has been named the new Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism, succeeding international human rights champion Irwin Cotler.

The announcement was made Oct. 16 by Karina Gould, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, together with Ya'ara Saks, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health and Kamal Khera, Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities.

Lyons is a career diplomat who served as the Canadian Ambassador to Israel from 2016-2020.

Until last year, she was the Secretary-General of the United Nations' Special Representative to Afghanistan. She previously served as Canada's Ambassador to Afghanistan from 2013-2016, prior to that she was Deputy Ambassador to the United States from 2010-2013.

The announcement "holds particular significance today as Canadians come to terms with the brutal attack by Hamas against Israel a week ago," said Gould. adding the government of Canada "stands shoulder to shoulder" with the Jewish community at this time.

Cotler, 83, a former justice minister and international human rights lawyer, held the inaugural special envoy role for three years, although it was initially intended to be a one-year appointment.

He approached Lyons about 18 months ago to see if she would succeed him.

Lyons said at a press conference announcing the appointment that at first, she felt the assignment was "too big, too incredible."

But "it didn't take me very long before my own heart and soul convinced me that this is exactly what I

should be taking on."

Lyons takes on the role less than two weeks after an unprecedented attack by Hamas on Israel that killed 1,400 people, including eight Canadians. Thousands were wounded and more than 150 others, including children and the elderly, were kidnapped as hostages into Gaza.

"We meet in the shadow of Oct. 7, one of the worst days, if not the worst day in Jewish history since the Holocaust. A day of mass atrocity, whose scale and scope of pure evil is almost unfathomable. A day of mass atrocity anchored in antisemitism" Cotler said.

"All of this took place against the backdrop of a resurgent global antisemitism, which we may not have been fully appreciative of, which was itself mutating and metastasizing over time... That's what played itself on Oct. 7."

Cotler and his family were in Jerusalem the day of the attacks, sheltering in a bomb shelter. They had gone to Israel to celebrate his son's wedding the week before.

Since Oct. 7, there have been rallies around the world, including in Canada, celebrating the attacks and glorifying violence, Cotler said.

Lyons is the best candidate to take over as envoy, he said. "She has been on the front lines. She has seen up close what mass atrocity is all about in Afghanistan."

Lyons agreed that she assumes the post at "a critical time."



Ambassador Deborah Lyons is succeeding Irwin Cotler as special envoy on antisemitism and Holocaust remembrance. (Credit: John Longhurst)

"I could not have imagined the brutality of the Hamas attack on Israelis, nor the antisemitism across the globe that followed these horrific attacks," she said. "Jews in Canada and around the world are in intense mourning and Canadians are with you in this period of agonizing grief."

In assuming the role of Special Envoy, she said she intended to promote "extensive efforts" on antisemitism education, including in the universities.

She will also work with governments and corporations to address online hate. As well, her office will research and collect data "so no one can tell me this [antisemitism] isn't real," she said.

Lyons said she is motivated by the example of Canada's Holocaust survivors.

"I want to acknowledge all Holocaust survivors, they continue to instruct us, because those brave and those determined people, they came out of the darkness to build a better world."

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Calgary delegates at the 20th Na'amat Triennial Convention held in Calgary on Oct. 13. Photo Na'amat Canada Calgary.

## Na'amat Canada 'gets inspired' in Calgary

By Maxine Fischbein, LJI Reporter

Delegates to the 20th Na'amat Triennial Convention gathered in Calgary on October 13 in the wake of vicious terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas against innocent Israeli men, women and children in Southern Israel, beginning on October 7.

Despite the grief and anger reverberating throughout the Jewish world following the deadliest pogrom against the Jewish people since the Shoah, some 68 Na'amat members forged ahead, steeled by their resolve to continue doing the work Na'amat (formerly Pioneer Women) has been doing since 1925 when the organization was first established in the Holy Land: *Empowering women and children.*

Na'amat USA President Jan Gurvitch and National Fundraising Chair Susan Miller's attendance at the convention exemplified the warm cross-border relationships that have led to joint programming and fundraising efforts in support of Na'amat projects.

The convention theme - *Get Inspired* - was reflected in a stellar lineup of local speakers including Calgary Mayor Jyoti Gondek, who once again expressed her strong support for the people of Israel and the local Jewish community. Other keynote speakers included Dr. Robbie Babins-Wagner, CEO of Calgary Counselling Centre (Mental Health in Uncertain Times); Deborah Yedlin, CEO of the Calgary Chamber of Commerce (Breaking the Glass Ceiling); the Honourable Ronald D. Gitter, founder and board member of the Dignity Forum (Antisemitism and Human Rights Nationally and Globally); and Michal Lavi, owner and creative director of Park by Sidewalk Citizen and Sidewalk Citizen Bakery and award-winning independent filmmaker, who spoke about her vision for building community through a unique fusion of cuisine and cultural engagement.

Unable to travel to Calgary due to the attacks on Israel, Na'amat Israel President Hagit Pe'er and Shirli Shavit, Director of the International Department for Na'amat Israel, delivered moving online presentations. A Shabbat morning talk by Pe'er was interrupted when an air raid siren forced her to take cover in a bomb shelter.

Despite the crisis, Na'amat leaders and members rightfully celebrated achievements made during the presidency of Hamilton pediatrician Dr. Sandi Siegel, whose three-year term as Na'amat Canada president proved challenging due to the isolation caused by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Despite the fact that the organization's fundraising and social activities were forced online throughout most of her presidency, Siegel proudly reported that Na'amat Canada nonetheless managed to disburse a remarkable \$2.3 million dollars in support of projects in Israel.


Additional charitable dollars raised by Na'amat Canada supported women and children here in Canada through a number of initiatives including educational scholarships and *School Supplies for Kids*, a program that helps children and youth fleeing domestic violence together with their mothers. Originally launched in Calgary by local Na'amat President Stephanie Sacks some 25 years ago, the program has since been adopted by Na'amat chapters in other Canadian centres.

It was a point of pride for incoming Na'amat Canada President Susan Inhaber that programming planned by National Convention Chair Doris Wexler-Charow and Local Convention Chair Stephanie Sacks were infused with western hospitality while providing insight into local culture and history. Josie Nepinak—an Anishinabe woman from treaty four who is an advocate for indigenous women and families impacted by domestic violence—spoke about the history of residential schools and the impact on her life. The session was followed by drum songs by mother and daughter duo Chantal Chagnon and Cheryle Chagnon-Greyeyes. Saturday evening featured line dancing by and with The Chinook Country Line Dancers.

The weekend was capped off by heartwarming tributes to and by newly-minted Na'amat National President Susan Inhaber on Sunday, October 15 at a gala banquet where she was feted by family, life-long friends, former colleagues, and fellow volunteers. Most have worked shoulder to shoulder with Inhaber professionally or on behalf of Na'amat Canada and Beth Tzedec Congregation, where Inhaber currently serves as the Commissioner of the National Minyan League and frequently leads weekday prayer services.

The closing banquet featured a performance by Calgary comedy duo Yenta and Shmenta (AKA Joy Feldman and Linda Gutman); music by Zeev Berger and the Schmoozers; and Israeli dancing led by Edmontonian Robin Marcus.

*Continued on page 21*



World Jewish Restitution Organization  
**WJRO**  
ארגון תשלום נכסיהם היהודים

Announcement by the  
**World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO)**


— regarding —

**Compensation for Immovable Private Property in Lithuania Program**

**ATTENTION LITHUANIAN JEWISH PROPERTY OWNERS AND HEIRS**

Lithuanian Jews whose property was nationalized or otherwise illegally expropriated during the Holocaust and/or communist rule, or certain heirs, may be eligible for a one-time symbolic payment made by the Good Will Foundation on behalf of the Republic of Lithuania.


The exact amount to be distributed to each individual will be determined when the total number of approved applicants is known.



**Geros valios fondas**  
**Good Will Foundation**  
קרן רצון טוב

**Completed applications must be received by**

**— December 31st, 2023 —**



For additional details, criteria, and application forms, please visit:  
[gvf.lt/en/payments](https://gvf.lt/en/payments)

WJRO is not involved in the implementation, administration, or application processing of these payments. For information or assistance please contact the Good Will Foundation directly.

# Talmud Torah is resilient and strong

By Natalie Soroka, Talmud Torah Society

The week of October 9 was a difficult one at Edmonton Talmud Torah School. The devastation in Israel spread far and wide, and TT families and staff struggled to comprehend and cope. A lot of planning and coordination took place over the weekend to ensure the safety of our children. TT Society president Noga Vaisblat and principal Darin Johnson, in collaboration with Stacey Leavitt-Wright of Jewish Federation of Edmonton, kept in constant contact and worked tirelessly to keep families informed on school and security matters.

Monday morning, security protocols were already in place. Edmonton Public Schools provided TT with onsite security, and Jewish Federation of Edmonton, through a grant, provided an additional layer of security through a private security company. Stacey worked tirelessly to advocate for us and provide us with this next level of security. The Edmonton Police Service stepped up to not only provide an onsite police vehicle, but by Friday morning, Staff Sergeant Greg Scott was onsite the entire day providing additional security and comfort to our families. Talmud Torah Society's Security Committee called out to our families, and a strong contingent of parents committed themselves each morning and afternoon to patrol the school grounds. Thanks to Doug Kondor, Chair, and his committee, for their efforts on behalf of the Society and its families.

That first week, rather than the usual process of waiting outside for the school bell for the start of the day, students immediately entered the school and waited in the hallway for classes to begin. Out of

an abundance of caution, all students, including those in the Early Learning Centre, were kept inside the entire week.

As you are well aware, Friday, October 13, 2023 was a particularly emotional and unsettling day for so many around the world, including our families, and many kept their children home. Teachers and staff in both K-6 and the ELC pulled together, supported each other and created a comfortable and fun learning environment for children who did attend. It was a small but mighty group. In K-6, teachers decided to combine classrooms. Division 1 (K-6) and Division 2 (4-6) learned together, making for a unique and enjoyable day for all students. Sacha Brodie, ELC Director and Jennie, ELC Lead Educator, worked just as hard rearranging and combining classrooms, and moving educators around based on the reduced number of children.

Our K-6 students were involved in some very meaningful art activities. While some cut out doves of peace and wrote messages of hope, others wrote heartfelt words of support and cards to Israeli soldiers. These messages of hope and the cards will be sent on to Israel via the iTalam organization that provides us with our Hebrew and Judaic curriculum. In addition, Division 2 students created a Japanese form of art (Notan) using symbols like a Star of David, Torah, etc., to represent the dark days and the light we hope for. At another time during the school day, our older students teamed up with younger students for buddy reading in the library. Different grades also had the unique opportunity to experience gym time together, which they loved. During music class Moreh Ben introduced the younger students to the drums and their faces lit up when they realized how many different sounds could be made using their hands. The older students were excited to learn the basics of playing the ukulele.

Towards the end of the day, everyone gathered in the music room for a school-wide Shabbat celebration. Moreh Ben played the piano and Moreh Ari accompanied him on the guitar, while the students sang their hearts out to many wonderful Shabbat songs, and songs in Hebrew and English about hope and peace, including Kol



Messages of hope and friendship.



Jewish Federation of Edmonton CEO Stacey Leavitt-Wright with EPS Staff Sergeant Greg Scott and Talmud Torah Principal Darin Johnson. Photo supplied.

Ha'Olam Kulo (The World Is a Very Narrow Bridge). Accompanied by their teachers, their young voices filled the room and hearts of all those present. It was an incredibly heartwarming and special experience. Partway through, one student commented out loud that he really wished that everyone worldwide could learn to get along and live together.

Talmud Torah Society's Education chair, Michelle Huberman, attended and was very moved by the Shabbat service. "I was never so proud of the teachers as they sat among the children, their arms around some of them supporting and singing and making them feel safe and comforted," she commented.

The start of the next week saw a significant increase in enrollment, with the kids once again getting into a routine, while security remained heightened. Our teachers are always amazing, but they have been rock stars through this challenging time. Along with Principal Johnson, who went above and beyond, TT staff, ELC staff, and Society staff were there for each other and the TT family. Together with our community partners, we remain resilient and strong. Am Israel Chai.

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WITH  
ISRAEL**

EDMONTON TALMUD TORAH SOCIETY  
תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND GENERAL MEETING OF THE FEDERATION**

The Annual General Meeting of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, The Jewish Community Centre of Edmonton, and The Edmonton Jewish Community Charitable Foundation

Will be held on Wednesday, December 6, 2023  
Commencing at 7 p.m.

Beth Shalom Synagogue  
11916 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta

For the purpose of:

1. Reviewing the financial results for the fiscal year just ended.
2. Receiving an update on past activity.
3. Elections of slates of Directors for the organizations.
4. Amendment to the Society's bylaws.
5. To approve the purchase and acquire lands and buildings for the purpose of a Jewish Community Centre.

On behalf of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton, the Nominating Committee and Board of Directors propose the following slate for election to the Board of Directors:

Benaron Gleiberman – Three-year term  
Ellery Lew – Three-year term  
Lisa Miller – Three-year term  
Annika Zepp – Three-year term

Additional nominations must be made by three nominating Members and include the signature of the proposed nominee, who must also be a Member. Additional nominations may be made in writing and delivered to the Chief Executive Officer (in person) up to and including November 23, 2023. Please note that the bylaws do not allow for nominations from the floor. All nominations are as set out above.

Any Member who would like to add any additional business to be conducted at the Annual General Meeting may do so in writing to the Chief Executive Officer up to and including November 23, 2023. Any request must be endorsed by signature of 20 Members.



Check out our community calendar at [jewishedmonton.org](http://jewishedmonton.org)

# The Hub

Your bridge to Jewish Edmonton



## A MESSAGE FROM CEO STACEY LEAVITT-WRIGHT

October 7 will forever be etched in my brain. It is the 'where were you moment' of our time, referred to by many as the Israeli 9-11. As we move from shock to grief to rage and back again, one thing is clear: 'Never Again' is now. 'Never Again' means that we do not stand silent while the world blames the Jews and blames Israel for an unprovoked, heinous terror attack.

'Never Again' means that we continue to tell the horrific stories to our community as details emerge, which also includes our non-Jewish friends, colleagues and elected officials. 'Never Again' means that we are here to ensure that Israel – our ancestral homeland – be supported and strengthened as it emerges from this nightmare. And, 'Never Again' means

that we unite as a community and support one another as we move forward here in Edmonton.

In addition to our UJA campaign to support our local community, we have an Israel Emergency Fund that will be pooled with funds collected by Federations across Canada. While ensuring that immediate trauma needs are addressed, our partners in Israel are able to determine where funds are most needed, without duplicating efforts.

Jewish Federation has been the convener for many events and programs. I am heartened as we witness people at all ages and stages lean into community. You are joining our programs and efforts, uniting across ages and denominations.

You are stepping up to our advocacy efforts, lending your voices and expertise. I hope this only continues.

It has been said that timing is everything. I want to thank the Board and the Facilities and Space Committee for their hard work, and for taking a courageous step of making an offer on a building, subject to numerous conditions, one of which is the approval of our membership. A community town hall will take place on November 14th with more information, and the purchase will only be finalized pending a UJA member vote at our AGM on December 6th, 2023. While it may seem out of place to discuss exciting news, perhaps it is the beacon of hope that our community needs.

Reach out to us on social media or by emailing [info@edjfed.org](mailto:info@edjfed.org).

### Community Town Hall

Learn about plans for a Jewish community centre

Tuesday, November 14  
7 p.m.  
Location TBA  
Register at [jewishedmonton.org](http://jewishedmonton.org)



### Kristallnacht

COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9  
7 P.M.  
BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE

*Through their eyes*  
Presentation by Francie Cyngiser  
Video testimony of Holocaust survivor Sydney Cyngiser z"l



### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12 REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY

Edmonton Jewish Cemetery  
7622-101 Avenue  
10:30 a.m.



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## I Believe...

Please join us in supporting the 2023/24 UJA campaign to sustain thriving and secure Jewish life in Edmonton, Israel, and around the world.



Josh Raizman  
Co-Chair, United Jewish Appeal Campaign  
Clinical Biochemist  
UJA donor



Farrel Shadlyn, KC  
Co-Chair, United Jewish Appeal Campaign +  
Lawyer +  
UJA donor



# HAA and CHW Joint Games Night: Fun with philanthropy

In a heartwarming display of community solidarity, Halpern Akiva Academy (HAA) and Canadian Hadassah-WIZO (CHW) recently joined hands to organize a Games Night. This event not only brought together the school's parents and community members, but also exemplified the spirit of giving back and making a difference in the lives of those in need. All funds raised during the Games Night were directed towards CHW's emergency campaign, primarily aiding the current situation in Israel.

The Games Night took place at the school's cutting-edge STEAM lab, which was transformed into an awesome board game cafe. This was done by the talented Morah Nechama, director of programming for HAA, who took the initiative to create a warm and inviting space for the event. In collaboration with Malka Deena Lewis, the Development Coordinator of Western Canada for CHW, they both ensured the event's success.

Dorothy Hanson, CHW Calgary Centre President, addressed the attendees and provided insights into the importance of CHW and the remarkable impact it has on the lives of women and children in Israel. Her words resonated deeply with the audience, emphasizing the critical nature of the ongoing emergency campaign and the need for support from the community for Israel.

Mrs. Caitlyn Cameron, principal of HAA, when expressing her appreciation for the event, explained that the initial idea had stemmed from Mrs. Kizhakke Vendekkan, the school's dedicated Daycare Director.

"Mrs. V is extremely dedicated to Halpern Akiva Academy and the greater Jewish community of Calgary. She is always thinking of ways for us to make a greater impact," reflected Rabbi Kutnowski, Head of Judaic Studies at HAA. The event was a testament to the school's commitment to fostering a sense of social responsibility in the community, exhibiting the values of compassion and philanthropy.

The Games Night was well-attended, with a diverse group of parents and community members coming together to support the cause. The atmosphere was joyful, filled with enthusiasm and a shared commitment to making a difference.

One of the highlights of the evening was the assortment of games available for everyone to enjoy. From classic board games to modern favorites, there was something for everyone. Guests also savored an array of delectable Kosher refreshments that added to the cafe-vibe of the evening. The decor was carefully selected to match the theme and created an inviting ambiance that brought warmth to the event.

One of the most significant accomplishments of the evening was the impressive fundraising result. Over one thousand dollars were raised for CHW's emergency campaign, a testament to the generosity and commitment of the HAA community and their love of Israel. Every dollar contributed will go a long way in providing much-needed support to those affected by the ongoing situation in Israel.



HAA and CHW joined together for a fun games night - in the spirit of community, philanthropy and solidarity.

The Games Night at Halpern Akiva Academy was not only a fun and engaging event but also a powerful reminder of the impact that a united community can have on the lives of those in need. It showcased the school's dedication to instilling values of compassion and philanthropy in its students, as well as its commitment to fostering a sense of social responsibility. Through this remarkable collaboration with CHW, HAA has not only entertained and brought joy to its community, but has also made a meaningful contribution to a crucial needs Israel faces currently.



A well-attended, fun games night was held by Halpern Akiva Academy and Canadian Hadassah-WIZO Calgary with proceeds going to CHW's Emergency Campaign.

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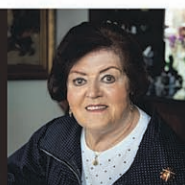
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WE STAND WITH ISRAEL

# Calgary Temple B'nai Tikvah is going solar



By David Kelly

Calgary's Temple B'nai Tikvah is going solar with the first solar power system on a Synagogue in Western Canada. Just in time for Hanukkah, the festival of lights, Temple B'nai Tikvah is taking advantage of Alberta's abundant sunshine to produce electricity for the building.

David Kelly

SkyFire Energy Inc is excited to be installing this system. Temple B'nai Tikvah will be the proud host of a 25.935 kW array. The solar system consists of 57 - 455 W solar modules on the roof of the sanctuary coupled to 2 SolarEdge 11.4 kW inverters. The solar array will supply the synagogue with a portion of their electricity and export to the Alberta grid when all the energy generated is not being used by the building.

SolarEdge is an Israeli company with headquarters in Herzliya, just North of Tel Aviv. SkyFire Energy is an employee owned solar company with offices in Calgary, Edmonton and the Okanagan.

The system is being funded by the Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative, Alberta Ecotrust and a grant received from Adamah: Jewish Climate Leadership Coalition. The array will be the first community owned solar project funded by BVGEC in Calgary. BVGEC, based in Canmore, will own the solar system and will sell the energy it produces to Temple B'nai Tikvah under a PPA or Power Purchase Agreement. The PPA has a 25 year contract but the solar system should have a 30-40 year life and Temple B'nai Tikvah will continue to benefit from the energy produces. This is the 4th project financed by BVGEC. Alberta has a great solar resource and solar power can provide low cost reliable electricity to buildings, homes and businesses.

"Temple B'nai Tikvah is thrilled to be one of Calgary's first religious institutions to install solar panels," said Rabbi Mark Glickman. "Ever since God told Adam and Eve to till and tend the Garden of Eden, we Jews have embraced the importance of taking good care of our natural world. Being good stewards of the environment is hugely important to us, and at this time of growing threats to our climate and to the natural world, it is more important than ever that we take concrete steps to preserve the world that God gave us. Of course, this is only one small step. We hope that it will help inspire owners of homes and public buildings throughout our community and beyond to

take similar steps, and we look forward to taking further steps in the future to help protect and care for the earth."

Stay tuned for a Switching on the Solar System event at Temple B'nai Tikvah. Installation of the system starts the week of Oct 23, 2023.

"Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative is excited to be working with SkyFire Energy and Temple B'nai Tikvah on our first Calgary installation. BVGEC believes in community leadership through installation of community based renewable energy developments," noted Jeff Roberts, BVGEC. "These small solar installations, while seemingly insignificant, contribute to the social and cultural changes which are required to enable and support the "energy transition."

SkyFire would like to thank both Temple B'nai Tikvah ([templebnaitikvah.org](http://templebnaitikvah.org)) and Bow Valley Green Energy Cooperative ([bvgreenenergy.org](http://bvgreenenergy.org)) for the opportunity to provide our solar expertise for this project and we hope we can expand the system in the future. Solar is part of Alberta's energy and SkyFire works to bring the magic of solar to the world for a stronger, healthier and more sustainable global community.

For more information visit [skyfireenergy.com](http://skyfireenergy.com), [albertaecotrust.com](http://albertaecotrust.com) and [Adamah.org](http://Adamah.org).

*David Kelly is founder and CEO of SkyFire Energy and a member of the congregation at Temple B'nai Tikvah. He has been installing solar in Western Canada since 2001.*

## Deborah Lyons

Cont. from page 6

The same spirit will be necessary to rebuild after the atrocity of the attacks in Israel, she said.

Lyons said it was her 15 years abroad, representing Canada, that motivated her to take on the role.

Other countries look to Canada as a model of a diverse society and she was alarmed to see the spread of "cancerous hate speech."

"When I left another country that I love,

Afghanistan, what frightened me most was what was happening in our country," she said. "I said, when I come back home, I will work on bringing Canadians together."

She delivered a special charge to Canada's faith and spiritual leaders to unite Canadians. She also asked the media to "challenge the seeds of misinformation" and "shine a light in the darkness and hold it high."

Under the watch of Cotler, the federal government expanded its commitment to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and committed \$85 million in 2022 for programs to fight antisemitism,

along with funding for new Holocaust museums in Toronto and Montreal, and also made the Special Envoy post permanent, with a budget of over \$5 million for five years.

The announcement was made at the start of a two-day national conference sponsored by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs on antisemitism.

*With files from Ellin Bessner.*

*This article was reprinted from Canadian Jewish News.*

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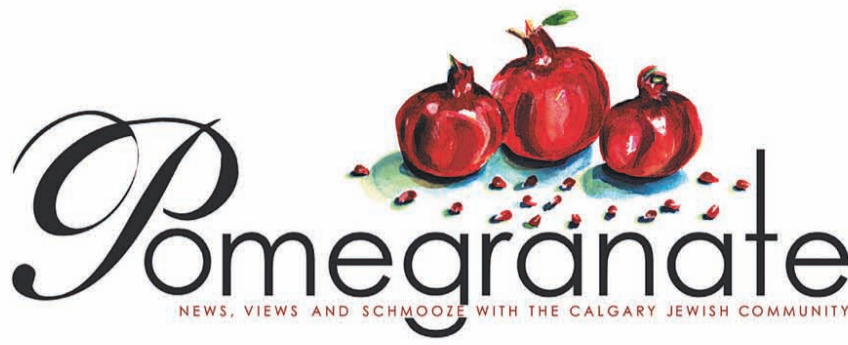
community calendar

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



jewishcalgary.org



A MESSAGE FROM ADAM SILVER AND HANNAH SILVER

ADAM: Last week, eighteen Calgarians joined almost 1,000 others in Ottawa for Antisemitism: Face IT, Fight IT! The conference, organized and hosted by CIJA, JFC-UIA, and all Jewish Federations across Canada had been planned for some time, but was forced to pivot and reconstruct itself after the Hamas terror attacks of October 7, 2023 and the aftermath as Israel began its defense efforts.

The Calgary delegation included university Hillel students, board members, community relations committee members, other volunteer leaders, and staff, all of whom engaged in the broad content, participating in conversations with peers from across Canada. Our Calgary members were active in conversations, and proudly and effectively represented our community. We were very fortunate to have this group attend.

While there were many highlights of the conference, three stood out to me:

- Being an active part of the most significant advocacy day ever at Parliament Hill, with 133 community engagement meetings with politicians occurring within a three-hour period (I met the new Speaker of the House, Greg Fergus).
- Celebrating the Honourable Irwin Cotler as he retires from his role as Canada's Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism, with a featured introduction by Noah Lew.

Participating in the conference alongside my daughter and Co-Chair of Calgary Hillel, Hannah. It was meaningful to engage in this work with the next generation of my family, and a special opportunity to learn and strategize together.

It was also very encouraging to see Hillel students from coast to coast, as well as hundreds of high school students from Toronto and Montreal, join the conference and dedicate themselves to standing up and being proud Jews. Though we have much work to do and many challenges to overcome, our future is bright.

HANNAH: This conference could not have come at a more urgent and necessary time. Despite protesters gathering outside of the venue, this was an opportunity to collectively create some light during these very dark weeks. It was especially meaningful to engage with over 125 Jewish and allied students from campuses across Canada, all sharing strength and support, hearing from passionate, powerful speakers, and making our voices heard alongside community members.

Our Calgary student group had the honour to meet and share a word with Professor Irwin Cotler, a great inspiration to us all. On Monday morning, the whole student delegation watched as former ambassador Deborah Lyons assumed her role as Canada's second Special Envoy

on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism. We were proud to witness the passing of the torch. Throughout the conference we gained energy, valuable tools, made connections, and friends. We returned to Calgary feeling empowered, supported, and determined. At the end of the day, we know our history and we know who we are; we value life, we are resilient, and together we are so very strong.

ADAM AND HANNAH: Combatting antisemitism is not a one conference effort. It is a day by day, everyday battle. Sharing this experience together, and knowing we are not alone - that there are others in our community, across Canada, and around the world, Jewish and non-Jewish allies, who will be there with us, is reassuring and energizing. Finding our voices, sharing our concerns with politicians and decision makers, and standing together is the only way we will make a difference. We hope all of Jewish Calgary will stand tall and proud, and will continue to shine. It's moments like this during which we summon the strength and resilience of our community. Am Echad!

B'Shalom,

Adam Silver  
CEO - CJF

Hannah Silver  
Co-President - Hillel

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

**HOST A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR FOR SHABBAT**

**Invite a Holocaust survivor to your home for Shabbat.**

Enjoy a meal together and spend time with one of our Calgary survivors. Families are responsible for providing transportation to and from their home, as well as for the meal itself. For information about this on-going program contact Marnie Bondar or Dahlia Libin at [holocaustedu@jewishcalgary.org](mailto:holocaustedu@jewishcalgary.org).

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**It's Moments Like This**

All events on this page are made possible by your gifts to Calgary Jewish Federation's annual UJA Campaign.

**It's Moments Like This.** Calgary Jewish Federation has been providing support in every type of Jewish moment – in times of crisis and in times of calm, we are building community and changing lives.

Your support is vital. Without it, we could not continue to be there, day in and day out, ensuring moments that are not only life-changing but life-saving.

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# SUPER SUNDAY

**NOVEMBER 26**

12:00 - 8:00PM  
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# How parents can help kids deal with a flood of pain on Social Media

By David Bryfman, Samantha Vinokor-Meinrath

(JTA) — “Teenagers wake up in the morning. They get dressed, brush their teeth, and check their social media. But this technology is not just what they do, it is who they are.”

David wrote those sentences back in 2009. Now, almost 15 years later, this more true than ever for teens and tweens. Particularly with the catalyst of the pandemic, their lives often take place and connections are built through screens.

Since Oct. 7, as social media filled up with unspeakable images of the Hamas attack on Israel, countless articles quoted educational leaders urging parents to delete social media applications from their children’s devices. But offering parents one solution right now — to delete apps and try and prevent their children from seeing these images — is way too simplistic and perhaps even misguided.

The goal of that advice is to spare children from viewing the horrific images, emanating from Hamas, designed to instill fear in Israelis and all Jews around the world.

We support efforts to curtail the viewing and dissemination of these distressing posts; we now know that many of the videos are deliberately infected with falsehoods and malware to further intensify the terror, and we all need to safeguard our mental health and that of our loved ones. And we will be the first to recognize our own shortcomings as parents, especially in these challenging times.

So yes: As parents, our natural instinct is to protect our children. But as parents, and as a broader community, we can, and must do better than just telling people to look away from social media.

There has been violence and evil on these platforms before this week, and there will continue to be despicable content forevermore. Any Jewish educator involved with teaching the Holocaust has learned to navigate this.

Social media is also home to tremendous acts of kindness, philanthropy, compassion and goodwill. There are bonds and friendships formed and maintained on social media — and the distinction between virtual relationships and so-called “in-person” relationships is very blurry for tweens and teens. Many of our young people find social media, and the opportunity to express their authentic selves to

their communities, to be a relief and a joy in a world that can be very lonely. To wholly disconnect children from social media is also to disconnect them from many of these positive attributes.

Parents at the very least should consider that the short-term need to protect their child might set up a confrontation that could pull them apart — at a moment when children may look to them for love, support and guidance.

Perhaps there is a middle ground. First, if parents gave permission to a child to install an app, they can also be responsible for ensuring the app is used in the right manner — much like parents will prepare a child to take public transportation for the first time or drive a car. The rules parents outline for social media also do not have to be static, and can change as rapidly as our understanding of the evolving situation changes.

Second, if parents believe they have the power of persuasion or coercion to delete social media from their child’s devices, parents also have the wherewithal to have a conversation with them. Talk about Israel right now, the power of social media and the pain and confusion of distressing videos.

And finally, if parents want to raise children who connect with their Israeli brothers and sisters beyond images of violence and vulnerability, they should give their children an affirming Jewish education (this might come across as a shameless plug for Jewish education — it is). We make no distinction between settings — day schools, congregational schools, Jewish summer camps, youth movements, or any other setting where Jewish learning takes place. It is not enough to be a parent who reacts when fearful; parents must also be proactive and give children the competencies and confidence to be able to take pride in their Jewish being — in good times and in bad.

### CJA Shabbat Celebration

**On Friday October 13, CJA students of all ages came together as a community in a heartwarming Shabbat celebration. Through joyful songs, new melodies, and heartfelt prayers, they created a deeply meaningful and unforgettable experience, making the most of their day at school.**

A Jewish identity that is formed in reaction to hatred is not sustainable. It is natural that in moments when there is distress amongst the Jewish people, we will awaken to the depths of our innate bonds, and those instincts are beautiful. But without the building blocks of Jewish identity and joy to sustain our children throughout their lifelong Jewish journeys, affinity in moments of tragedy will not be enough.

Neither deleting apps nor sending children to a place of Jewish education absolves parents of their ultimate responsibility. The strength of all Jewish parents in the world combined cannot prevent these insidious images from entering a child’s device — even if it is stopped now, it is only a matter of time. Parents must learn and know and talk to their children, answer their questions, and be there for them and hug them, and talk to them about all of the good and the evil in this world.

Please protect your children. Also please help them acquire the tools that they need not just to weather these extremely dark days, but to thrive on the other side of this war.

*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.*

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# Fear, worry and uncertainty: The pathway to anxiety

By Roxanne Droppo

For many of us, fear, worry and uncertainty over current world events have provoked feelings of destabilization and have exacerbated our anxiety. Anxiety has become the leading mental health issue around the world, and has no boundaries, does not discriminate, and can cause feelings of physical and emotional distress (heart beating out of your chest, sleep disruption, worry and general panic).

As humans, we have the ability to envision a future. This is the source of anxiety – it thrives on uncertainty, and the world is full of uncertainty these days. Anxiety is unique in that it can be triggered by events in the real world: war, food insecurity, homelessness, relationship conflict, a rent increase, or it can be generated internally, through thoughts of real or imagined threats to our safety or well being. Living with anxiety can be overwhelming, affecting our daily lives, consciously and unconsciously.

Conscious anxiety anchors the protective biological response to danger that boosts heartbeat and breathing, pumping oxygenated blood to our muscles as our bodies prepare for fight or flight. The fight-or-flight reaction is a physiological reaction that occurs in response to a perceived harmful event, attack, or threat to survival. Subconscious anxiety can exist without us being fully aware of it. It often manifests as a persistent feeling of nervousness and discomfort, which isn't connected to anything specific or identifiable.

It's important to recognize that many of us worry from time to time. Experiencing anxiety is normal and a certain amount of anxiety can even be helpful. It can spur us on, help us stay alert, make us aware of risks and motivate us to solve problems.

Too much anxiety, however, can be problematic in our daily lives, when the systems underlying our anxiety responses become dysregulated, and we overreact or react to the wrong situations. The severity of symptoms and a person's ability to cope with everyday worries or anxious moments, can create a pathway for anxiety to dig in and set the structure for future coping mechanisms.

Anxiety as a mental health issue is becoming more prevalent, with 33% of Canadians over the age of 18

identifying with an anxiety disorder, and 61% of teens aged 13 to 18, reporting that they have experienced an anxiety episode in the past year. Consistent anxiety levies a toll on our physical and mental health, increasing levels of the stress hormone cortisol, raising blood pressure, which contributes over time to heart problems, stroke and kidney disease. For individuals struggling with emotional stress, intrusive thoughts, panic attacks, self-consciousness and fear of rejection, depression and substance abuse are very real risks.

What can we do? We all use a variety of strategies to adjust our emotions, often without thinking about it. Some key strategies:

**Be physically active** - spend time in nature, get some sunshine. Physical exercise is a powerful stress reducer. Develop a daily routine that incorporates physical movement.

**Learn stress management and relaxation techniques:** breathing exercises, mindfulness training, meditation and yoga can be powerful ways to cope with anxiety. A five senses exercise (see the link to our JFSC video below), is an easy and effective way to disrupt your anxious and worrying thoughts and bring you into the present moment.

**Avoid alcohol and stimulants** – alcohol, caffeine and nicotine can all worsen anxiety.

**Make sleep a priority** – sleep is critical for our bodies to repair themselves. Build in healthy patterns for sleep by creating a bedtime routine that includes avoiding screens for at least two hours before bedtime.

**Eat Properly** – incorporate a healthy diet that includes vegetables, fruits and whole grains. New research is showing that excess sugar and processed food may be contributing to anxiety issues.

**Socialize** – humans are social beings, and isolation is detrimental to our health. Even when we do not want to see people, sometimes that's the best thing we can do for ourselves.

Other ways to manage anxiety include therapy, medication and support groups. Remember, you are not alone. If your anxiety is too much for you to cope with, contact your health care provider.

Watch JFSC's video that was initially created for older adults but is relevant for everyone – Tips and

## Simchat Torah at CJA



CJA students were invited to the bimah and paraded through the school with a Torah in hand. It was truly a heartwarming experience.

Tools for Managing Anxiety and Depression  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7-smzCGjdo>

If you or someone you care about is in imminent crisis, please call 911.

### In Calgary Call:

JFSC Mental Health Phone Line 403-287-3511 (intake, office hours)

Distress Centre Calgary 403-266-4357 - 24-hours  
Access Mental Health (403) 943-1500 - 8am-5pm  
Monday to Friday

### In Edmonton call:

JFSE 780-454-1194 – office hours

Distress Centre Edmonton 780-482-4357

Access Mental Health Edmonton 780-424-2424 – 24-hours

For more resources, go to the JFSC website at [www.jfsc.org](http://www.jfsc.org) or call 403-287-3510.

Roxanne Droppo, MA, RSW, is Executive Director of Jewish Family Services Calgary.

## Worst days *Cont. from page 4*

colleague, Rabbi Shawn Ruby, an Orthodox rabbi who lives in Zichron Yaakov. We've been friends and part of the Bronfman Youth Fellowship community together for the last 30 years. Last Monday he wrote these words to the Bronfman listserve (shared here with his permission):

I live in Israel. I have a child in the IDF. I am attending the funeral tomorrow morning of a young man whom I have known since he was a child who was killed on the first day of fighting. I am in unbearable pain. That said, I have no problem with people raising concern, mourning, sadness or horror about the loss of life in Gaza alongside with that on our side. The human tragedy there is overwhelming. Recognizing that does not diminish from the Jewish/Israeli tragedy ... For all of us reacting one way or the other to each other, let's take a breath, and exercise some compassion and forgiveness for those of us who are reacting to a horrifying situation by being more unwilling to hear the other side than usual. Let's not let the worst days in the last 50 years of Jewish history fragment us.

Yes. Let's not let the worst days in the last 50 years of Jewish history fragment us.

Those of us living on this side of the ocean are not living through what they are living through there, but we are feeling our own grief, fear, loneliness and pain. Let us learn from their example. As my friend and colleague, Rabbi Mishael Zion, wrote to his community in Jerusalem: "Seek to be in the company of others who can support you and share their warmth with you. In addition, seek to give and act in support of others. ... Allow yourself to experience every emotion that arises, but try not to dwell on it too much. Instead, focus on actions and activities that are aimed at doing good and are spiritually uplifting."

Every day, I hear stories from friends and students and alumni in Israel about the ordinary and

extraordinary ways in which people are caring for each other — through daily acts of kindness, concrete expressions of chesed. I am inspired and in awe.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Medi

## Edmonton community packs lunch and essential items for the Bissell Centre

The Edmonton Jewish Community came together to donate and package 250 lunch bags for Edmonton's vulnerable inner-city residents at The Bissell Centre. Photo supplied.

(AJNews) – The Edmonton Jewish Community came together to donate and package 250 lunch bags for Edmonton's vulnerable inner-city residents at The Bissell Centre.

The lunch was held on October 22, co-ordinated by Beth Israel Synagogue together with the generous support of Edmonton Community donors and volunteers, as well as Jewish Community Organizations including NCJWC Edmonton, Jewish Federation of Edmonton, Hillel, Na'amat Canada Edmonton, JNF Edmonton, Temple Beth Ora, Talmud Torah Society, Alberta Jewish Pipeline, Jewish Family Services, Beth Shalom and the Jewish Drop in Centre.

In addition to food, donations of essential items such as socks and gloves were distributed to individuals and families in great need.

This year the volunteers greatly appreciated assistance from the enthusiastic and highly efficient Jewish Youth Volunteer Connect team (Jewish Federation of Edmonton), led by Mira Campbell.

The next Jewish Community lunch for the Inner City Pastoral Ministry at the Bissell Centre, co-



The Edmonton Jewish Community donated and packed 250 lunch bags for vulnerable inner-city residents at The Bissell Centre.

ordinated by Beth Shalom, is scheduled for Dec. 24.

Today Raba to all the volunteers and donors for helping make a difference!

## Canada's political leaders reiterate their support for Israel at the antisemitism conference in Ottawa

By John Longhurst, Canadian Jewish News

When planning the two-day 'Antisemitism: Face It, Fight It' conference in Ottawa, organizers with the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs knew they wanted leaders of Canada's federal political parties to speak.

After the Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas, those invitations became even more important.

The attack killed over 1,400 Israelis and injured thousands. Close to 200 people, including children and the elderly, are believed to have been kidnapped and taken to Gaza.

Delegates to the conference heard leaders of Canada's political parties pledge to support Israel and condemn Hamas, as the conference wrapped up on Oct. 17.

First to speak was Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who began his remarks by condemning the attack and calling for the immediate release of all the hostages.

"The hearts of all Canadians are broken," he said, adding his government "deeply cares" for those who are missing and is in close touch with the hostages' families.

The Canadian government is also working as quickly and safely as possible to evacuate Canadians in the region impacted by the fighting, he said, noting

that 12 flights from Israel have taken out over 1,300 people.

"We will not stop being there for affected Canadians," he stated.

Israel, he added, has a right to defend itself, and Canada "will always be a friend to Israel, defend its rights, including its right to exist."

He decried the "unimaginable acts" of indiscriminate killing of Israelis by Hamas, adding that the terrorist organization "doesn't represent Palestinians or their legitimate aspirations for a better future." Hamas, he said, only stands for "more suffering for Israel and Palestinians."

Noting he has heard stories of Canadian Jews who are worried about wearing yarmulkes or star of David necklaces, Trudeau said the RCMP is working to keep the Jewish community safe.

"You are not alone," he said. "The work of fighting hate is the work of all of us, all Canadians, especially non-Jewish Canadians... We all need to stand up and step up."

He concluded his remarks by saying "this too shall pass... we will get through this together, my friends."

Trudeau was followed by Pierre Poilievre, leader of the Conservative Party, who said Jews in Canada "have friends who are with you through thick and thin and onward to triumph."

He went on to condemn Hamas, who he said had the goal of maximizing the "bloodshed of Israelis, Palestinians and Muslims as well."

Iran, he said, was behind the attack because it wanted to disrupt negotiations between Israel and Arab countries in the region. "They were worried the talks could lead to peace and stability in the Middle East," he stated.



CIJA's national chair, Gail Adelson-Marcovitz, welcomes Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to the podium at a conference on antisemitism in Ottawa, Oct. 17, 2023. (Credit: John Longhurst)

That, he said, would be "Iran's worst nightmare" since it would end the "unending supply of suffering and resentment" that fuels conflict in the region.

While saying he grieved equally for innocent Israeli and Palestinians killed and wounded by the fighting, Poilievre said there is "no equivalence between terrorists that seek to maximize the deaths of innocent civilians and the state of Israel that seeks to protect them."

Canada must ensure there is the minimum loss of life and suffering of the Palestinian people, and that safe zones should be created in Gaza along with a humanitarian corridor for food, medicine and water.

Poilievre called for a comprehensive review of Canadian aid to Palestinians to "make sure it reaches people in need, not terrorists."

In his remarks, Jagmeet Singh, leader of New Democratic Party, also condemned the attacks, adding he has heard the pain of Jewish Canadians who "are deeply afraid... I want to acknowledge that."

He also grieved for Palestinians killed and injured by the fighting, he said, and called for the upholding of international law to protect civilians in Gaza.

Celebrations of the attack in Canada are "never justified," Singh stated, adding "we must all do what we can to tackle the rise in hate." This includes, he said, doing more to secure places of worship and tackling online hate.

"In these dark times, we must treat each other well," he said.

Singh called for an immediate ceasefire—acknowledging that "not everyone will agree with me."

The evening ended with an expression of gratitude for Irwin Cotler, the outgoing Special Envoy for Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism.

A crowd of pro-Palestine protesters was outside the convention centre's main exit at the end of the evening, requiring conference participants to leave by another door.

This article was originally published by Canadian Jewish News.

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# It is time for Chesbon Nefesh



By Rabbah Gila Caine

Rabbah Gila Caine

Ever since Hamas's terror attack on Oct. 7, many conversations I've had with people here in Edmonton, but also in other spaces in the Jewish world, have circled around a strange silence. It's no secret I'm situated on the political left (some would say centre-left) and most of the people and organisations I work with, my frame of reference if you'd like, span the spaces left of centre. And most Jews in those spaces heard a strange silence starting that Shabbat morning. A hesitance by some people to call or write and ask how we are doing. A reluctance to call out Hamas's atrocity for what it was, in clear words. On the progressive Left we saw many "social justice" activists cheering on acts of rape, abduction and murder, all in the name of "liberation."

Are these champions of humanity actually blaming the victims? You can read about this in numerous articles from around the Jewish English speaking world, so I won't reiterate.

I think that for many of us this tore apart hard earned layers of trust, and revived ghosts from previous generations. I think many of us felt betrayed. Many of us felt very alone.

True, this is only one part of the story. Like many of my friends, I was also deeply touched by the kind words and emotional support I received from non-Jewish friends, clergy, and random people in shops. Each hand reaching out was like a bit of thread mending that tear I felt, and I am extremely grateful. I know we are not alone, and I know there are many good people who are partners in the work of healing our world.

But, this is also a time of *chesbon nefesh*, an accounting of our soul, as we ask ourselves: Who are our friends? How do we continue working towards a more just and peaceful world, while making sure we are not being lured into antisemitic spaces and self hate.

It is probably time to go back to reviving a Jewish Left, one that drinks more clearly from Jewish worldviews and ethical practices.

In preparation for that I wrote a *kavanah*, an intention to help us focus our mind and spirit as we navigate this difficult time (the *kavanah* was written

in Heb. but I'm sharing the Eng. translation).

May Hashem give our leaders the right thoughts and words and return the captives back home, may we find healing and friendship and know peace in our days.

**Kavanah for working towards a new Jewish Left** (Eng. translation)

Blessed are You Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, You separate light from darkness and open the eye of the blind to see light from light, light before light, white fire in black fire illuminating our world with shadows.

Adonai Tzeva'ot, El Shaddai, blessed are you for raising my soul from deep mists and opening my spirit-eyes to observe and divide: between lover and foe, between those who work for peace and those using our pain to entertain their pitiful spirit.

I accept and agree to remove myself from the company of bad friends and shallow answers, and to hold fast to those who recognise the image of God/dess concealed in each person.

I thank you Eternal one, for seeds of compassion you have planted in us, and for Truth springing up from the Earth.

Blessed are you Adonai, Creator of Lights.

*Rabbah Gila Caine is the spiritual leader at Temple Beth Ora, Edmonton's Reform Jewish Congregation.*

# How to talk to kids about what's happening in Israel

By Sivan Zakai

(Kveller) – My heart breaks with each update from Israel. Like so many others, I am worried sick about the human beings — and especially the children — who have been killed and taken hostage in this terrible tragedy. As a parent, it's tempting to turn to my own children, who are mercifully protected from the terrors of Hamas, and avert their eyes from the terrifying events unfolding in Israel and Gaza. But as a social scientist who studies how American Jewish children and teenagers learn, think and feel about Israel, I know that our children desperately want guidance about how to make sense of the most difficult moments of contemporary Jewish life.

That's why, despite my heavy heart, I've been speaking with my children about the recent events unfolding in Israel and Gaza. I'm offering you the language I've used with my kids — language that you can adapt to your own voice, your children and your political bent — as an example of how to begin this difficult discussion. Each of these conversation starters — different for early childhood, elementary, middle and high school students — are built upon the same principles: a belief that every child deserves an explanation of the current moment that is, at once, age-appropriate and honest, and an acknowledgement that every child needs adult guidance about what information is appropriate and trustworthy. For more tips on having healthy parent-child dialogue about difficult current events in Israel, check out a previous article that I co-wrote with my son.

**For preschoolers:**

I want to let you know that I'm feeling sad today because of a war happening far away in Israel. I wanted to tell you this because if you see me feeling sad today, I want you to know that it's not because of anything that you did. It's because of the war. And even though we are safe, I'm still feeling sad, and a lot of other adults are probably also feeling sad. At any time, you can share with me your ideas and feelings, and you can ask me any questions you have. Is there anything you want to ask me or tell me?

**For elementary schoolers:**

I want to share with you some very sad news. There is a war happening right now between Israel and its neighbor Gaza. Unfortunately, some people have been injured and some people have died in this war, and you'll probably see that a lot of adults in our community are worried about the war. I wanted you to hear this sad news directly from me, because I want to let you know that you can ask me any questions and share with me any feelings you may have about it.

I also want to make sure that you know to come to me, instead of to Google, if you want to know more about this war — and it's totally fine if you don't want to know more. It can be really hard to tell what information online is trustworthy and what information online is appropriate for kids your age, so I'd like to be your source for any information you want to know. I don't promise that I'll know the answers to all of your questions, but I do promise that I will think seriously with you about your questions. Is there anything you want to ask me or tell me?

**For middle schoolers:**

I want to talk with you about some very difficult news. Hamas, which is a militant group from Israel's neighbor Gaza, has attacked dozens of towns and army bases in Israel. Many Israelis have died, more have



JFED Associate Director Jenn Magalnick was a special guest during read-in week at Edmonton Talmud Torah. Photo by JFED

been injured and some were taken hostage. Many Palestinians, who live in Gaza, have also been killed and injured as Israel has responded. I'm pretty upset about this news and worried about what will happen in Israel and in Gaza in the coming days, and you'll probably see a lot of other members of our community who are also sad or anxious. I wanted you to hear this very difficult news directly from me, because I want to let you know that you can ask me any questions and share with me any feelings you may have about it.

I also want to help you learn more about unfolding

*Continued on page 23*

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# Ottawa evacuates nearly 1600 Canadians from Tel Aviv

By AJNews staff

Following the Hamas massacre of over 1400 people in Southern Israel on October 7, and the ensuing war in the region, Air Canada and other airlines temporarily cancelled flights to and from Tel Aviv - up to and including October 31, 2023.

On October 10 Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly addressed Canadians who were stranded in Israel and said the government had plans to conduct an evacuation using aircraft from the Canadian Armed Forces, and that it was working on additional options for people who are unable to reach the airport in Tel Aviv.

She said in a statement posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, that the flights would be available to Canadian citizens and permanent residents, along with their spouses and their children.

"I know that this situation has been difficult. Many of you want to return home to your family and have no way to do so safely," Joly's stated.

"We will help you."

The first Canadian Armed Forces flight out of Tel Aviv brought roughly 130 passengers to Athens, Greece on Oct. 12.

As of our print date, Canada has helped nearly 1,600 Canadians and their family members leave Israel via the Ben Gurion Airport.

The Canadian Armed Forces says because of reduced demand, these shuttles have slowed from two flights per day to one, seeing one of the two Airbus CC-150 Polaris taken off duty.

The last planned Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) evacuation flight from Israel left on October 23. Canada has so far helped about 1,600 Canadian citizens, permanent residents and eligible family members leave Israel, along with a number of foreign nationals. There have been 19 such "assisted departure" flights out of Tel Aviv since October 12, says Global Affairs Canada.

"The situation on the ground is volatile," said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He said the federal

government is "working on additional options" to help Canadians who cannot reach the airport in Tel Aviv, including those trapped in Gaza.

Trudeau condemned the coordinated and deadly actions by Hamas, including the taking of hostages, and reiterated support for Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international law.

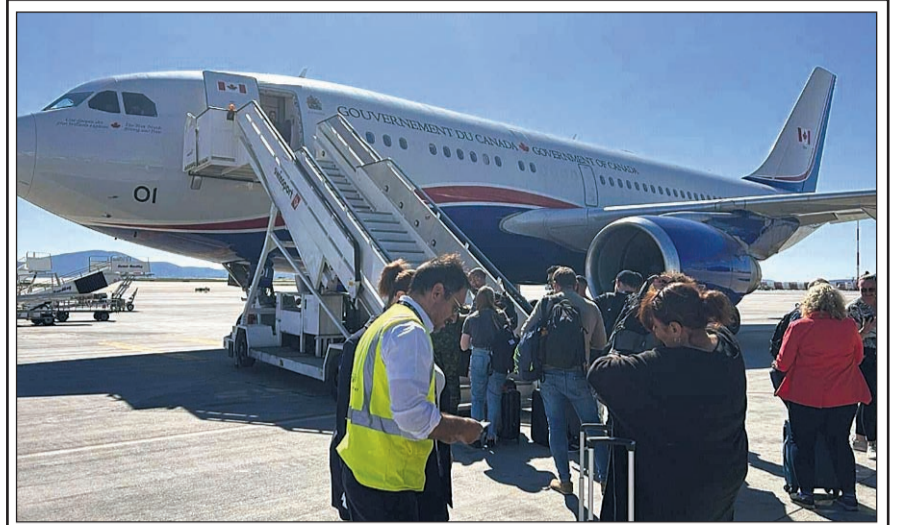
"Hamas is a terrorist organization that has brutally murdered innocent civilians, that has chosen to invade Israel, that has chosen to cause just horrific devastation," he said.

"Hamas' decision to take hostages, to take innocent hostages, and use them as pawns in a game of terror is absolutely unconscionable. And all of us must stand strongly against these horrific acts."

Trudeau also announced the federal government will be providing \$10 million in humanitarian aid to address "urgent needs" in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, where at least 2,600 people have been killed on all sides since the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas. A government statement said the money will help provide water, food, emergency medical assistance, protection services and "other life-saving assistance."

"We continue to look for ways to support civilians — both Palestinian and Israelis — and ensure that as many civilians as possible are kept safe during this terrible conflict," Trudeau told reporters.

Air Canada flights to Israel continue to be suspended. "We are monitoring this dynamic situation very closely and will resume operations to Tel Aviv when the situation stabilizes," stated a release on the



Nearly 1600 Canadians were evacuated by CAF from Tel Aviv to Athens.

operated two special flights on October 13 and 14 from Athens to bring Canadians and permanent residents home from Israel. Through the arrangement, the Government of Canada operated military flights from Tel Aviv to transport people to Athens, where they connected with Air Canada's special flights back to Toronto.

"Although safety considerations are unfortunately preventing us from operating our regular flights to Tel Aviv at present, we are supporting the Government of Canada in bringing Canadians home safely from Israel through these special repatriation flights," said Michael Rousseau, President and Chief Executive at Air Canada.

"We continue to monitor the terrible events in Israel very closely and extend to its people our deepest condolences. We have flown to Israel since 1995 and it is a very important part of our network. Air Canada is committed to resuming commercial operations as soon as the situation stabilizes. I thank all employees involved across Air Canada for their tireless efforts in organizing these special flights."

"We are deeply grateful for Air Canada's assistance in helping to bring Canadians home. We will continue to work around the clock to support Canadians and for those in the region who need assistance, please contact Global Affairs at [sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)," said Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"We know that this situation is difficult, and we've been working to find solutions to get Canadians home safely. I'd like to thank Air Canada, their pilots, crew members, and everyone involved in this effort. We'll continue to be there for Canadians and their loved ones who need help," said Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Transport and Quebec Lieutenant.

Canadians abroad should contact Global Affairs Canada for more information.

Air Canada website. "There is a goodwill policy in place to enable passengers flying to/from Tel Aviv to make changes to their travel, including options for a refund. Air Canada's normal schedule is 10 weekly flights from Canada to Tel Aviv from both Toronto (daily) and Montreal (3 times weekly)."

In coordination with the Government of Canada, Air Canada




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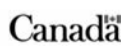
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**Next Deadline: November 17, 2023**

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# Inbal Lieberman – a Woman of Valour

By Joe Spier

*“A woman of valour who can find? For her price is far above rubies.” (Proverbs 31:10)*

In the 1973 Yom Kippur War one lone Israeli tank commander was credited with slowing the Syrian advance into the Golan Heights to give the IDF sufficient time to bring reinforcements to the front and eventually push the Syrians back behind the 1967 ceasefire line. Israel is again at war and another hero is emerging. Her name is Inbal Lieberman.

Nir Am is a Kibbutz located in Southern Israel less than a kilometer from Sderot and a stone’s throw from Gaza. A vantage point nearby offers excellent views of the Gaza Strip. The Kibbutz was founded in 1943 by immigrants from central and eastern Europe. Over the years the kibbutz has also absorbed immigrants from Argentina, France and South Africa. Today its population is about 600. The economy of Nir Am is diverse, field crops, citrus groves, dairy cattle, as well as a factory for the making of fine cutlery. In addition, the Kibbutz has developed a tourist industry including a resort, a water museum and a pub.

Kibbutz Nir Am is no stranger to terrorism. Since as early as 2008, when a mortar fired from Gaza fell on the Kibbutz’s factory killing one and wounding four, the Kibbutz has been subject to sporadic rocket and mortar fire coming from Gaza.

Like every other Kibbutz and settlement, Nir Am has a Security Coordinator who heads a Security Team with responsibility for the safety of the Kibbutz in both routine and emergency situations right up until Israel Defense Forces or police forces can be mobilized. The safety of the Kibbutz rests significantly on the shoulders of the Security Coordinator.

Inbal Lieberman, was born and raised on the Kibbutz. The 25-year-old had served in IDF combat units and pursued her studies at the Women’s Leadership School. In December 2022, Inbal was appointed the Kibbutz’s Security Coordinator having succeeded her uncle, Ami Rabin in that role. Inbal broke the glass ceiling in that regard, becoming the first female Security Coordinator to ever be appointed by a Kibbutz. She also became the youngest person ever appointed to the position. When accepting the appointment Inbal was told by the head of the Regional Council, “I hope you won’t have much to do.” That would prove to be prophetically wrong.

Saturday, October 7, 6:30 in the morning, Inbal Lieberman was about to encounter the test of a lifetime. The rocket alarm goes off in Nir Am. Nothing new, the residents of the kibbutz are used to this. They run for the shelters. Inbal also goes into the shelter. Then she hears both rocket noises and other noises from outside, ones different from those heard during a usual rocket attack, more like explosions in the distance erupting from the ground not from the air.

Inbal realized that something extraordinary and dangerous was going on.

Inbal springs into action. She collects her Security Team, 12 in number, leaves the security of the shelter, opens the armory and distributes weapons to her team.

The electricity in the Kibbutz had earlier gone off due to the rockets. Inbal’s first order was not to restore the power so as to prevent the gate in the Kibbutz’s security fence from being opened.

In 2014, the Israeli military had engaged in Operation Protective Edge, with the stated aim of staunching rocket fire from Gaza. At that time, in order to enhance the security of the Israeli communities near Gaza, including Nir Am, the Israel Defense Ministry built security fences surrounding each community.

Inbal’s first act was to go house to house to ensure that all the Kibbutz members were safely in bomb shelters or safe rooms. Inbal was then told to put her group on standby but she disobeyed and made a decision not to wait. She sprang into action. That decision would ultimately save Nir Am and its inhabitants. Inbal was among the first in Israel to recognize the looming threat posed by Hamas terrorists.

Inbal deployed her group in strategic positions within the Kibbutz where they stood guard and waited for the inevitable terrorist attack. When it began and for the next three long hours Inbal and her team fought waves of terrorists who came within meters of the Kibbutz.

At some point during the battle, Inbal phoned her father, said she was hungry and asked for a sandwich. The call was perhaps made in jest to relieve the tension of the battle. In any event, her father left his safe room for the kitchen, cooked an omelette sandwich and at the height of the battle brought it to her.

Inbal and her team were able to repel the many terrorists who attacked Nir Am. At no time during the fierce gun battle was any terrorist able to breach the Kibbutz’s security fence. The battle ended after three hours when an Israeli army force arrived and stormed the terrorists.

Most media have reported that during the firefight, Inbal and her crew killed 25 terrorists. Haaretz takes issue claiming that social media has inflated the numbers. The newspaper writes that only one terrorist had been killed and one wounded. However, it does not matter if 25 terrorists were killed or only one was

## CJA: Simchat Torah at BTZ



On Oct. 5 students and staff at CJA celebrated Simchat Torah together at Beth Tzedec. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together, dance with the Torah as a school community.

killed. What matters is that during the terrorist assault not one member of Kibbutz Nir Am was killed, not one wounded, not one abducted, no one.

As a result of the extraordinary heroism against heavy odds displayed by Inbal and her team, Kibbutz Nir Am and all of its members were saved. Nir Am was among the very few communities that terrorists attempted to enter but were completely repelled without harm.

Kibbutz Nir Am, as of the time of completion of this writing (October 16) is still in a war zone, as are all Israeli communities proximate to the Gaza border. Nir Am, now occupied by the IDF, is nearly completely evacuated by its residents. Inbal has taken her family to Tel Aviv where they are staying at a hotel designated for the evacuees. Hearing of her heroics, Tel Aviv mayor, Ron Huldai took the opportunity to meet Inbal and extend his personal commendation, following which he posted on his Facebook page, “Inbal is a heroine. Her story which is being published everywhere leaves no one indifferent – for her coolness, courage and bravery. Thanks to Inbal dozens of lives have been saved. Thanks to her, Kibbutz Nir Am was saved.”

But Inbal Lieberman is uneasy and uncomfortable wearing the crown of heroism. She refuses to give interviews and she is badly shaken as messages continue to come to her of friends in neighbouring communities who were massacred, taken as hostages or are missing. All she says is that she is not a hero and she wasn’t there by herself.

Inbal Lieberman is in every sense of the word a Woman of Valour, an Eishet Chayil.

Joe Spier is a Calgary-based retired lawyer and sometime writer with a keen interest in Jewish issues and history.

## Adi Vital-Kaploun

Cont. from page 5

deep mourning today.”

It was further reported in an Oct. 12 CBC article that in the early moments that Hamas militants were storming onto their kibbutz, Vital-Kaploun texted to her father and her husband to stay where they were, and not to come to them.

It was an act that “certainly saved their lives,” said her cousin-in-law, Aaron Smith, in an interview with CBC Radio’s *Ottawa Morning*.

“And however she was able to convince the terrorists that murdered her to take her kids to her neighbour — she saved their lives as well. She’s a hero.”

Four other Canadians were massacred that night. Ben Mizrahi, 22, of Vancouver, Alexandre Look, 33, of Montreal and Shir Georgy, 22, were murdered while attending the Supernova music festival in the south of Israel. Over 260 people were killed at the concert.

Netta Epstein, 21, was also murdered that night. He was hiding in a safe room in Kfar Aza with his girlfriend when terrorists invaded their home and threw a grenade at the couple. Without hesitation, Netta jumped to shield his loved one with his own body. He saved her life and sacrificed his.

A sixth Canadian, Vivian Silver, originally from Winnipeg, is missing from her home on Kibbutz Be’eri, which was invaded and destroyed by Hamas fighters on Oct. 7. Silver, 74, has spent decades as a peace

activist in Israel. It is believed that Silver is one of over 200 people that were abducted by Hamas that night and are currently being held hostage in Gaza.

This article was reprinted from *Canadian Jewish News* on October 11 with files from CBC.

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# Jewish NHL Players to watch in the 23/24 season

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) — When it comes to Jews and sports, baseball often reigns supreme — both in terms of Jewish fan interest and the number of high-profile Jewish professional players.

But as some Jewish sports fans may recognize, the NHL has long had a large roster of Jewish players that seems to grow each year.

With the latest hockey season underway, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency has collected all the Jewish hockey players to watch this season.

Read on for their stories, plus those of the free agents and minor leaguers who could see playing time this year.

## Zach Hyman, Edmonton Oilers left winger

On the ice, Zach Hyman scored a career-best 36 goals and tallied a whopping 47 assists last season. Off the ice, he is among the more vocal Jewish athletes in all of professional sports. The Toronto native attended a Jewish high school, represented Canada in the 2013 Maccabiah Games and has said he wears No. 18 because of its symbolic meaning in Judaism. “I’m Jewish, and in Judaism, 18 is a lucky number; it’s chai, which means ‘life’ in Hebrew,” he told *The Athletic* in 2021. Hyman has also been involved in the Jewish community in Edmonton, where he lit a giant menorah at a local Hanukkah event in 2021, and has spoken out against antisemitism.

## Jakob Chychrun, Ottawa Senators defenseman

Jakob Chychrun hails from a hockey family — his father played eight seasons in the NHL and his uncle is Chicago Blackhawks head coach Luke Richardson. The 25-year-old Boca Raton native is in his eighth season in the league and his first full season with the Ottawa Senators, who traded for him in March. Chychrun scored nine goals with a career-high 24 assists last season, despite missing considerable time with an injury. The former No. 16 overall pick was born to a Jewish mother and has Ukrainian heritage. He told *NHL.com* that he grew up celebrating Hanukkah and Christmas.

Adam Fox, New York Rangers defenseman

At just 25, Fox is already an alternate captain for the Rangers, after earning two All-Star team selections and the 2021 Norris Trophy for the league’s best defender in his first four seasons. Fox grew up in Long Island’s Jewish community, where he attended a Conservative synagogue and had a hockey-themed bar mitzvah. “There are a lot Jewish residents on Long Island, so it’s cool for me to represent that community,” Fox told *JTA* last year. “And, you know, there’s not

many Jewish athletes. So to be one of the few and have people who come from where I come from look up to me... I think it’s definitely pretty special.”

## Cole Guttman, Chicago Blackhawks center

After a solid collegiate career with the University of Denver, where he captained his team to the 2022 NCAA Championship, Cole Guttman is in his first full season in the NHL. The 24-year-old, whose family hails from Hungary and moved to Canada in 1951 from a German displaced persons camp, made his debut last season, appearing in 14 games for the Chicago Blackhawks. Guttman missed the majority of last season after undergoing shoulder surgery in March. Guttman told *NHL.com* he’s ready for a comeback season.

## Jack Hughes, New Jersey Devils center

At 22 years old, Jack Hughes is already one of the NHL’s best players. The No. 1 pick in the 2019 NHL Entry Draft, Hughes is a two-time NHL All-Star, and last season he set a Devils franchise record with 99 points. Hughes was also the runner-up for the Lady Byng Memorial Trophy, an award recognizing the player exhibiting the best “sportsmanship and gentlemanly conduct combined with a high standard of playing ability.” Hughes had a bar mitzvah and celebrated Passover growing up with his hockey dynasty family. Hughes’ mother, Ellen Weinberg-Hughes, is Jewish and was herself an accomplished hockey player.

## Luke Hughes, New Jersey Devils defenseman

Luke Hughes, the youngest Hughes brother, made his debut toward the end of last season, appearing in two regular season games with the Devils and three postseason games. Hughes, 20, was a star player at the University of Michigan, where he set several program records. He was selected fourth overall in the 2021 NHL Entry Draft.

## Quinn Hughes, Vancouver Canucks defenseman

The eldest of the Hughes brothers, Quinn Hughes is a Canucks captain in his sixth season with the team. The 24-year-old also enjoyed a standout collegiate career at Michigan and was drafted by Vancouver with the seventh overall pick in 2018 — though he would return to Michigan for one more year. Hughes has earned at least 60 assists each of the past two seasons, and last month he was named the 15th captain in team history, making him the youngest current captain in the NHL.

## Luke Kunin, San Jose Sharks center

Luke Kunin is in his second season with the San Jose Sharks, for whom he appeared in only 31 games last season before tearing his ACL. Kunin, 25, had played in all 82 games the previous year with Nashville, scoring 13 goals with nine assists. He’s a Missouri native.

## Devon Levi, Buffalo Sabres goaltender

Already a star goalie for Team Canada, Devon Levi is in his first full season in the NHL. The 21-year-old is a native of the Montreal suburb Dollard-des-Ormeaux, which has a sizable Jewish population, and he attended a Modern Orthodox school. Levi won the Mike Richter Award for the best goalie in NCAA men’s Division I hockey the past two years, becoming the first player to win the award multiple times. After his



Adam Fox, Jack Hughes, Zach Hyman, Devon Levi and Jason Zucker. (Getty Images; Design by Mollie Suss)

stellar career at Northeastern University, Levi debuted for Buffalo last season, appearing in seven games.

## Jake Walman, Detroit Red Wings defenseman

Jake Walman is in his fifth season in the NHL and his third with Detroit. In 63 games for the Red Wings last year, the Toronto native tallied 18 points (nine goals and nine assists), punctuated by a game-winning goal in overtime that sealed a 5-4 comeback victory for Detroit in a game in which the team trailed 4-0. The 27-year-old is Jewish and has dual American-Canadian citizenship.

## Jason Zucker, Arizona Coyotes left winger

Now in his 13th year in the league and his first in Arizona, Jason Zucker is one of the more experienced Jewish players in the NHL. The 31-year-old California native enjoyed a bounceback season last year with the Pittsburgh Penguins, scoring 27 goals with 21 assists. It was his best offensive output since the 2018-2019 season, when he also won the league’s King Clancy Memorial Trophy recognizing his humanitarian efforts for raising \$1 million for a Minnesota children’s hospital. Zucker has a Hebrew tattoo on his left forearm and though he never had a bar mitzvah, he celebrated Jewish holidays with his family, telling the Penguins website that he “would do virtual menorah lighting with my family back while I was out of town playing juniors or college.”

## Other players to keep an eye on

There are a number of Jewish players currently on minor league rosters of NHL teams. Some of them already have NHL experience, and all of them have a chance to see playing time this season.

Andrew Cristall is an 18-year-old drafted by Washington in 2023. He said “It definitely means a lot” to be the lone Jewish draftee of his class. Jason Demers is a 35-year-old Olympian with 700 career games in the NHL across 13 years and five teams. He’s currently a free agent. Mark Friedman is a 27-year-old defender who was traded from the Pittsburgh Penguins to the Vancouver Canucks. Friedman has 65 games of NHL experience across five seasons.

Josh Ho-Sang is a 27-year-old Olympian with 53 games of NHL experience who is currently a free agent. Ho-Sang is the son of a Jamaican father of Chinese and African descent and a Chilean mother of Russian-Jewish and Swedish heritage. He has said he “always celebrated the Jewish holidays like Hanukkah and the High Holidays with family and friends.”

Yaniv Perets is a 23-year-old goalie playing for a team in the ECHL professional league. His contract is owned by the Carolina Hurricanes. Chase Priskie is a 27-year-old defenseman with the Washington Capitals. Priskie made his NHL debut for his hometown Florida Panthers in 2021 and grew up in a Jewish home. Max Sasson is a 23-year-old center also playing for the Canucks’ minor-league affiliate. Ozzy Wiesblatt is a 21-year-old right winger playing for the San Jose Sharks’ minor-league affiliate.

In the Professional Women’s Hockey League, there are two known Jewish players: goaltenders Aerin Frankel, 24, who plays for Boston, and Abigail Levy, 23, who plays for New York.



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**Please note that a portion of this month's  
proceeds will be donated to an Emergency Relief  
Fund for Israel on behalf of Alberta Jewish News.**



Calgary Mayor Gondek with VP Vivian Reisler and Convention Chair Doris Wexler-Charnaw; Newly installed Na'amat Canada President Susan Inhaber with Past President Dr. Sandi Siegel; the Edmonton Na'amat delegation. Photos courtesy of Na'amat Calgary.

### Na'amat *Cont. from page 7*

Well before the October 7 attacks on Israel, Inhaber had chosen the Na'amat daycare in Sderot as the focus of a special president's fund. Only one kilometre from the border with Gaza, Sderot is frequently a target of rockets launched from Gaza. Inhaber stated that when the air raid sirens sound, residents of Sderot have a mere 15 seconds to reach their bomb shelters. During her installation, Inhaber shared the news that residents of Sderot were in the process of evacuating.

As Shirli Shavit had told convention delegates in an online presentation a day earlier, the social services needs of Israeli citizens will rise due to the severe trauma caused by the October attacks and hostage takings. Historically, Na'amat has played critical roles in providing a range of services in support of at-risk women and children through their networks of daycare centres, domestic abuse shelters and the like. The organization and its supporters are now being called upon to redouble their efforts.

In her first address as national president, Inhaber

paid tribute to Sandi Siegel, Na'amat Canada Executive Vice President Vivian Reisler and National Admin Person Pam Segal, and leaders and members she has been privileged to work with. Surrounded by her family, she took particular joy in the presence of her three-month-old grandson.

A member of Na'amat since 2000, Inhaber steadily rose through the ranks of the organization. She looks forward to leading the Freda Sohmer National Leadership Seminar in Israel this spring, when participants will have the opportunity to hone their skills while visiting the various institutions supported by Na'amat Canada.

In the meantime, Inhaber is laser focussed on the goals she has set for her presidency: increasing awareness about Na'amat's work in Israel and Canada, with a particular emphasis here in Western Canada; building the organization's donor base; and encouraging legacy giving. Inhaber said that she is also devoted to increasing Na'amat's social media presence

During the convention plenum, Na'amat Canada members voted to continue raising funds in support of

one of its most cherished projects, the Kanot Youth Village. The construction there of a junior high school wing will be the organization's main focus during the next three years.

"...Being able to visit and see the students learn and teach and blossom will be a highlight for me," Inhaber said, while urging Na'amat faithful to also "Watch for an exciting new refurbishment project at the Rhodie Blanshay Benaroch Children's Centre at our Glickman Centre for family violence prevention."

The words Am Israel Chai were proudly declared frequently throughout the National Convention and will continue to be the rallying cry of some 400 Na'amat members across Canada led by Inhaber, the first-ever national president west of Winnipeg.

B'hatzlacha Susan!

To join Na'amat Canada or make a donation in support of any of its worthwhile projects, including Susan Inhaber's President's Fund for the Sderot Daycare Centre, go to [www.naamat.com](http://www.naamat.com).

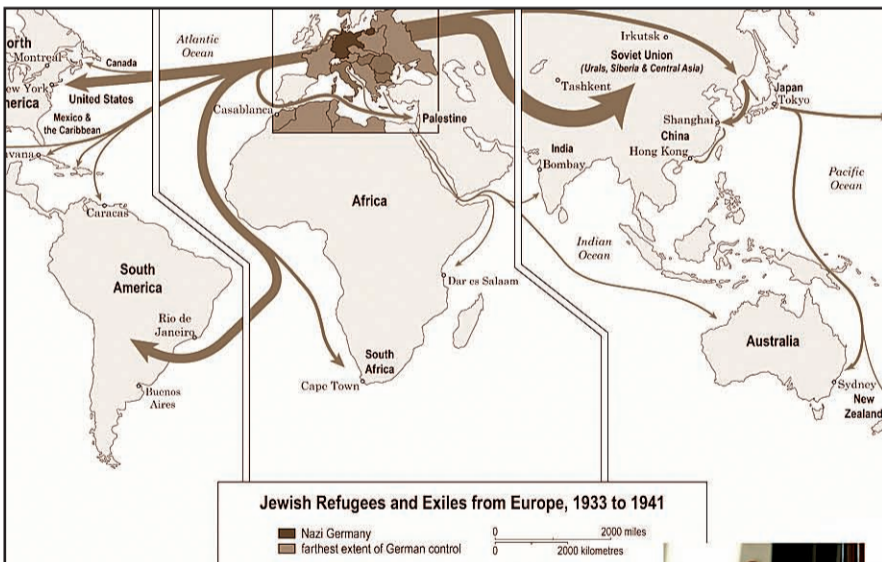


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**SPEAKER** Photo credit: Michael Rajzman  
**Doris L. Bergen**  
Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Professor of Holocaust Studies in the Department of History and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto

This talk explores the global dimensions of the Holocaust from multiple angles. Jewish victims' accounts told of a world of misery, German perpetrators dreamed of world domination, and the war and genocide they unleashed sent refugees all over the globe, where they encountered Indigenous peoples, colonizers and colonized, and competing systems of power. The conviction that the Holocaust has universal meaning is widely shared, but agreement on just what it means remains contested.

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from the

# Sources

by Eliezer Segal

## Need for the needy

I have long been bothered by the passage in Deuteronomy that declares “the poor shall never cease out of the land.” Back in the days when my youthful idealism was more uncompromising, I really did expect that Jewish tradition, if implemented fully, should produce a utopian society that entirely eradicates poverty, hunger, homelessness and exploitation.

And indeed the Torah is not lacking in texts that seem to promote a very radical economic program. This is not confined to its repeated exhortations to donate generously to the poor and not to abandon the widows, orphans and strangers.. There are specific regulations about cancellation of debts, restoration of ancestral property to families who were pressured to sell it, and generous severance packages for those unfortunates who are forced into personal servitude. In light of all this, one might legitimately imagine that a Torah-based society would ultimately stamp out poverty altogether.

To further complicate the matter, another verse seems to envision the exact opposite scenario: “There shall be no poor among you.”

An intriguing solution to this contradiction was suggested many years ago by a Muslim imam of my acquaintance who allowed me—I was still at an early stage of my career—to benefit from his community’s charity [zakat] fund earmarked for the Muslim poor. When I protested that I did not really qualify as “poor,” he argued that the definition of poverty might have to be revised in the context of Canadian affluence. Indeed, perhaps poverty should be defined in relation to the general economic level of the society.

The sixteenth-century preacher Rabbi Ephraim Solomon Luntschitz did actually understand that poverty can be eliminated (allowing for some rare exceptions) in the land of Israel if the society governs itself in accordance with the divine plan. However, in diaspora communities (whose disobedience is demonstrated by the very fact of their failure to return to their homeland), poverty will indeed persist. It was in this context (explained Rabbi Ephraim), that the Torah was admonishing the residents of the holy land to give priority to the needs of their own

community and not be overly considerate in distributing charity to poor Jews from abroad. This is quite a remarkable opinion, coming from somebody who often criticized the stinginess of the wealthy in his own diaspora community.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch in nineteenth-century Germany took a similar approach, asserting that economic imbalances are the natural byproduct of human diversity, but that the divine laws that govern Jewish society in our homeland can eliminate or minimize them.

A midrash cited by Rashi said that the Torah is placing two options before us: if Israel carries out God’s will by implementing the social measures set out in the Torah (especially the amnesty on debts in the sabbatical and jubilee years), then there will be no poor among us, and hence no need to observe the laws of charity. If however, the nation does not live up to those ideals, then poverty will remain a fixture of communal life that will have to be dealt with through philanthropy or by regulating the treatment of debtors. As pointed out by Ibn Ezra and Bahya, in a society that is completely equitable and affluent, nobody will need to borrow, and hence the laws regulating the treatment of debtors would become irrelevant.

According to the twelfth-century French commentator Rabbi Joseph Bekhor-Shor, the Torah’s assertion that “there shall be no poor among you” was not a categorical prediction, but only a general observation; (and our ancient sages recognized that such generalizations often have exceptions). What the Torah meant is that you should not automatically assume that particular poor persons are being penalized for their moral or religious failings. Quite the contrary—perhaps this homeless beggar is really a righteous saint who is being allowed to serve out the penalty for his few sins in his lifetime, so that he may enter the next world with a completely clean slate. Don’t try to second-guess the Creator’s plans, but just fulfill your obligation to treat the poor compassionately.

An extraordinary story appears in the Christian Gospels: A woman carrying a precious alabaster vial of

expensive perfume burst into a dinner in which Jesus was participating, shattered the container and poured its contents onto his head. The observers were indignant at her wastefulness, protesting that the price of the perfume could have been used for the support of the poor. But Jesus retorted that they should leave her alone, “for you will always have the poor with you, and you can help them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me.”

Jesus then insisted that “wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.” And yet this episode (which seems central to their claim that Jesus was “the anointed one [Mashiah]”) is almost never quoted by Christian writers. That might have something to do with how it conflicts with the widespread (but questionable) image of Jesus as a champion of the poor.

In one of his novels, S. Y. Agnon wrote about a city in which all the Jews were affluent, so there were no poor persons upon whom to bestow charity. When Rabbi Anshel, a needy vagrant, passed through there, they rejoiced because he provided them with an occasion to perform a cherished mitzvah; and upon his departure, they felt deprived of the opportunity. Therefore they established a “Rabbi Anshel fund.” They all hung charity boxes in their homes for Rabbi Anshel, who would return every year to collect his donations.

If we ever do achieve an ideal society in which everybody can live in comfortable affluence, I might consent to forgo the privilege of performing that particular precept.

In any case, I expect that there will always be a few impecunious scholars and newspaper columnists around, who would benefit from the community’s generosity.

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

## Café Europa Luncheon brings people together for Sukkot and socials



On October 4, 139 attendees, including 85 Holocaust Survivors, enjoyed the third Café Europa luncheon at the Carriage House in Calgary. Hosted by JFSC, Café Europa is a program through Claims Conference, for Holocaust Survivors to come together

and socialize. Connecting Holocaust survivors to cultural and social supports is part of the Claims Conference Program run through JFSC and many other agencies across the world.

Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapides spoke about Sukkot

and delivered blessings over the food. Everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch and were treated to the music of “David Hirschman and the Band”, and the klezmer music that they played for this special occasion.

## This month's update from Edmonton Talmud Torah School



It has been a very busy month at Talmud Torah School - celebrating Sukkot and Simchat Torah and sending messages of support to our friends and families in Israel.

### How to talk *Cont. from page 17*

events, if you want to know more — and it's totally fine if you don't want to. If you do want to know more, I wanted to warn you that there are a lot of very disturbing pictures and videos circulating online, and it's really important that you're turning to appropriate news sources. I'm happy to be one of those sources, but if you're going to search online, I'd like to request that you get your information only from a source that I think generally has pretty accurate and trustworthy (though sometimes difficult) information: [insert your trusted news source]. Is there anything you want to ask me or tell me?

**For high schoolers:**

I want to speak with you about some very difficult news. Hamas, a militant group in Gaza, launched an attack on dozens of towns and army bases in Israel, and Israel has declared an all-out war in response. The scale of these attacks is really unprecedented: Hundreds of Israelis have been killed, thousands injured and an unknown number have also been taken hostage. Many Palestinians have also been killed and injured in Israel's retaliatory strikes on Gaza. I'm pretty upset about this news and worried about what will happen in Israel and in Gaza in the coming days, as are many others in our community. I wanted you to hear this very difficult news directly from me, because I want to let you know that you can ask me any questions and share with me any feelings you may have about it.

Whether or not you want to, you're likely to see things about this situation online and on social media, and I'd like to request that you use the same rules that I use for myself in online spaces at this difficult time: You can read as many (or as few) newspaper articles as you'd like about the current situation, but it's best to avoid watching violent videos that are circulating online. This decision — to read and not to watch — will help us stay informed and make decisions in the coming days about how we can show support for people affected by this war while also helping us maintain our own mental health in a really difficult time. Is there anything you want to ask me or tell me?

As difficult as it may be to speak about the current situation, your children deserve to know about the unfolding tragedy in Israel. Research has shown that

*watching* traumatizing events on repeat can be very unhealthy for children, but *talking* to children about troubling current events doesn't make kids more traumatized. It actually helps them cope with living in a world in which troubling current events occur. Help your children learn to navigate the shards of our broken world; the first step is a conversation.

*Sivan Zakai, Ph.D., a mother of elementary-, middle-, and high-school-age children, is the Sara S. Lee Associate Professor of Jewish Education at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Her book, My Second-Favorite Country: How American Jewish Children Think about Israel, won the 2022 National Jewish Book Award in Education and Jewish Identity.*



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