

## Chanukah Programming

# 2026 IMPACT REPORT

### Drive for Dreidels Spreads Chanukah Joy Across Our Community

More than 25 years ago, Bonnie Lawrence Shear and two of her sons, Bob Cooper and Josh Cooper, approached Jewish Family and Child Service with the idea of launching a campaign ensuring that children receive a brand new toy for Chanukah. From that vision, Drive for Dreidels was created and has since grown into a community tradition.

This past Chanukah, JF&CS donors, community partners, and volunteers came together to ensure that children and teens had a gift or gift card to open during the holiday. For many families, the financial stress of making Chanukah special was eased, allowing them to celebrate with greater joy and peace of mind.

#### From the Families We Serve:

"I cannot begin to express my gratitude and appreciation for the amazing and super generous holiday gifts. The last few months have been extremely challenging for my children in ways no child should ever have to experience.

The love and care behind each of their gifts made such a huge difference to their holiday this year. They were so full of joy and excitement. It was so touching to see them radiate happiness.

We thank you so so much for your generosity! May you continue being in a position of helping others, and spreading joy and kindness wherever you go. Wishing you a year of love, happiness, and good news."

— A JF&CS Client



Thanks to generous donations from individuals, daycares, schools, and community partners, families were invited to "shop" for toys. Parents and grandparents alike were able to choose from an array of fabulous toys and share in the holiday joy. Dedicated volunteers sorted the toys and set up the Chanukah shop.

Year after year, Drive for Dreidels helps transform Chanukah into a season of joy, celebration, and belonging.



Thank you to everyone who made this Chanukah initiative possible including:

Beth Radom Synagogue, B'Nai Shalom V'Tikvah,  
Canadian Young Judea, First Foundations Jewish  
Community Preschools, Party Rock, Prosserman JCC  
Daycare and Preschool, Schwartz/Reisman Daycare  
and Preschool, Temple Sinai Nursery School and  
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

## Standing Together with Care and Courage – Café Europa

JF&CS, in partnership with The Bernard Betel Centre, offers Survivors a place to gather for a hot kosher lunch and entertainment. The Café Europa program offers many of our Survivors the opportunity to leave the loneliness of their homes to have a social gathering.

This spirit of togetherness was reflected during a particularly meaningful Chanukah gathering at Café Europa just days after a disturbing and distressing incident that occurred at a nearby Toronto seniors' complex impacting Jewish residents, many of whom are Holocaust survivors.

Participants gathered together to enjoy a hot kosher lunch with latkes and sufganiyot, and Chanukah music. Each participant left with a gift bag packed by JF&CS volunteers and staff filled with Chanukah candles, dreidels, cookies and chocolate.



## Chanukah in a Time of Healing at SickKids Hospital

This Chanukah, Jewish Family and Child Service brought moments of joy, comfort, and connection to children, youth, and families receiving care at SickKids Hospital.

This meaningful new initiative was launched by our Staff Chaplain and Director of Family Services, in partnership with SickKids Hospital's Jewish Inclusion Group. JF&CS delivered toys, chocolate gelt, and cookies for Jewish children. Throughout Chanukah, JF&CS staff and members of the Board of Directors volunteered each evening to lead Menorah lightings and recite brachot (prayers), creating moments of warmth, tradition, and hope during a challenging time for families.

Thanks to your generosity, families facing extraordinary challenges were reminded that their community was standing beside them. These small supports helped preserve a sense of normalcy for families during long and difficult days.



## The Power of Partnerships

"Partnering with organizations like SickKids Hospital allows us to extend care beyond our walls and meet families where they are, especially during the holidays. Together, we are creating moments of connection, comfort, and Jewish tradition when they are needed most."

— Hannah Wasserman, JF&CS  
Director of Development and Communications

## Thank You Donors!

Your generosity and support have been truly overwhelming and deeply appreciated by the many individuals and families whose lives you touched. Thank you for making this Chanukah possible and bringing joy to so many. We can't wait for next year!

