

WHAT AN EMOTIONALLY-CHARGED AGM!



Our Annual General Meeting was held on September 17th and was a truly touching event. It started with The Just-Us League (our current and former foster kids and kids-in-care) selling kosher candy apples they had made themselves the night before. The apples were such a hit that the youth made almost \$600 which was then matched by not one, but two generous community donors! The Just-Us League chose to donate all of the proceeds back to support the good work of JF&CS.



Our guest speaker was just as inspirational as she bravely shared her story with the capacity-filled room. There were very few dry eyes as she spoke about leaving an emotionally and verbally abusive marriage and living in poverty in order to ensure her son grew up in a safe environment. She courageously spoke about how Jewish Family & Child had 'saved her life' and how she could not imagine where she and her son might be today if not for our services.



Morris Zbar, UJA Federation President and CEO followed as Keynote Speaker and dedicated his words of praise not only to the work of our agency, but to our Executive Director, Richard Cummings, as Richard will be retiring at the end of this year. The emotions continued to surface as Richard acknowledged the many ways JF&CS has made an impact on his life both as a former Board President and as the Executive Director.

Board President, Alan Levine completed his two year term and passed the gavel to our new President, Merle Rosenhek who spoke passionately about what this honour means to her. All in all it was a excellent event and if you were not able to attend

and would like to read the Annual Report, [please click here](#).

SPEAK UP FOR KIDS!



John Moore, Troy, Chana, Police Chief Saunders and executives from Toronto's children's aid societies and Boost.

On October 8, JF&CS joined Catholic Children's Aid Society, Children's Aid Society of Toronto, Native Child & Family Services, Boost Child & Youth Advocacy Centre and Toronto Police Services for **Speak Up for Kids** - an event aimed at making the public aware of the duty to report and protect children and youth from abuse and neglect.

Two former youth in care, Troy (from Toronto CAS) and [Chana \(from JF&CS\)](#) performed spoken word pieces to support a public

awareness campaign to remind Torontonians that everyone has a role to play in protecting children and youth from abuse and neglect. John Moore from Newstalk 1010 hosted the launch and announced that his radio station along with several others in the city, will air public services announcements about this important topic over the following weeks. If you would like to learn more about Child Abuse Prevention Month and your legal duty to report, [like the Facebook page](#) today.

CELEBRATING 100 AMAZING YEARS!

Jerome Diamond served as Executive Director and Director of Clinical Treatment at Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) from 1959-1980. [In honour of his upcoming 100th birthday, Mr. Diamond's family members have asked the community to donate to The Jerome D. Diamond Adolescent Centre](#) - dedicated to providing hope and help to youth with educational, emotional and/or behavioural challenges. The JDD was founded in 1974 by Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) and is provided in partnership with the Toronto District School Board. The JDD provides services to up to 34 students per academic year. Counselling services are provided to students and their parents and other family members. Over the past four decades, the JDD has helped hundreds of young people turn around their challenging lives and rejoin the mainstream with newfound competence and skills.

THANK YOU, SPOKESPEOPLE!



On Sunday September 20, The Spokespeople Ride raised more than \$11,000 for JF&CS!

The Spokespeople are a group of Toronto friends that include, Joy Shuchat (JF&CS Board Member) and Penny Littman (JF&CS staff) who have been cycling in and around Toronto for many years. Twelve years ago, the group decided to designate their annual 40km fall ride as a charity fundraiser and to date over \$80,000 has been raised for many worthwhile causes. JF&CS is proud to have been this year's recipient.

IN CHANA'S OWN WORDS - HER SPOKEN WORD PIECE 'HOME'

"It was when he asked me, 'where is home?' that I broke. Five houses, five schools and seven years later I still have yet to find this place. I consistently compose myself as someone who knows where home is but I walk on the road because being safe doesn't feel safe. I've been afraid that my anger will burn my shelter down. Worried that the blood of my past will scar the walls like they have on my skin. I've been scared that the floor boards will collapse any second because nobody ever bothered to invest in the foundation. I see my gravestone in the cemetery for the lost children. For the children who have destroyed parts of themselves in order to make living bearable. For the children who associate touch with pain, so embrace hugs with hate. For the children who don't know how to keep because they've never been kept.

Home is like the moon, it will always be there. You can see its many different shapes and sizes, when it's dark and scary outside, it protects you but even if you climb the most unbelievably scary mountain to get closer to it, you'll discover that it is physiologically beyond you. I remember all of the houses I've lived in, but when I look at the moon, I remember the homes. I found home in her sarcastic comments, his Jamaican roots. I remember the conversations we had - discovering that our minds are bigger than ourselves. I carry on my shoulders our talks, because they keep me grounded. I remember my first home where you showed someone how much you loved them by keeping their twisted secrets safe. Where you played hide and seek with your emotions because feelings became a game you didn't want to play. Where life became a stage, a coerced act, where you never acted happy or sad, just disengaged.

I've since learnt how to capture my audience, how to embrace the scene but on some days I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders and wish gravity didn't keep me down. Sometimes I wonder when will my body succumb to the toxic train of thought that pollutes my air. You see, it clouds my vision, it stops me from seeing the moon. It reminds me that I am but a nomad, a wanderer - sometimes I get lost so I can find myself. Sometimes a single question can force you to go down memory lane, remind you about the most beautifully disastrous place you were forced to watch be destroyed, re-built, and destroyed. Home.



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