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JDD Students are Back in the Classroom



On September 14, our students at the JDD returned to school. A reintegration plan, informed by Public Health Guidelines, Ministry of Education Regulations and our own very high standards, was put in to place. We have ensured that the plan is flexible enough to adapt to inevitable environmental changes and challenges as they emerge, most notably in the event of a presumed

or real COVID-19 diagnoses. The important health and safety measures that have been put in place include physical distancing, hand hygiene, and regular screening of symptoms to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Protocols have been developed for regulating movement inside and outside the building to ensure physical distancing and separation of cohorts. Much of the space has been repurposed and reimagined. Rules have been implemented, such as the mandatory use of PPE by all students and staff in the building at all times.

The health and safety of all the students and staff at the JDD was, and is, the top priority for reopening and remaining open. We're looking forward to a healthy new school year!

Our First Ever Zoom Annual General Meeting



On September 24, we hosted our first ever Zoom AGM. It was a beautiful evening highlighting the extraordinary work of the agency before and during the pandemic. Our guest speaker, Naomi Levine, JF&CS social worker, spoke about her experiences as a staff member during the pandemic. For those unable to attend, we would like to share some of her words that we found to be honest, hopeful and powerful:

"This time period has definitely been an opportunity for growth, for all of us, clients and workers alike. Across the agency, no matter the program or population we work

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with, from the Holocaust Support Program, to Hospice, to Poverty Reduction, or Child Protection, we serve our community, helping clients to break their sense of isolation. This time period has presented a fundamental challenge to all of us, however, as isolation has become a fact of daily life, no matter our life circumstances. This has forced us, as social workers, to live through the same uncomfortable reality as our clients. JF&CS recognizes our predicament, and has done everything it can to support our workers, as we work in isolation from each other. And this ultimately makes all the difference to our clients.

The community has raised funds for clients living below the poverty line to cover extra expenses, ensuring vulnerable clients, who are health compromised, and live alone, can continue to access their basic needs. The support of the community throughout this difficult time has made our shared sense of humanity a palpable reality, as I connect clients with sorely needed resources, and help them break their sense of isolation. I hope that by allowing ourselves to open up to the present moment, pausing in the midst of whatever we are up against, we can all begin to feel more connected, find greater meaning through our struggles, and grow in ways we never expected."

[Click here](#) to view our Annual Report.

900+ Kosher Meals Delivered to Holocaust Survivors



Written by Maria Lindgren from the Bernard Betel Centre

Café Europa, a luncheon program for Holocaust survivors held in partnership between Bernard Betel Centre and JF&CS, was unfortunately put on pause in mid-March due to COVID-19. Since we couldn't meet in person, we still

wanted to connect and support the many participants who take part. Just in time for the High Holidays, we prepared and delivered over 900 kosher meals to 300 Holocaust survivors in the GTA. Alongside the meals, participants received masks and cards made by [iVolunteer](#). iVolunteer families have worked with the Bernard Betel Centre in support of seniors and Holocaust survivors for the last 5 years, so it was a great opportunity for the families to create Rosh Hashanah cards. We know it isn't the same as meeting in person, but the thanks and gratitude we have received, and the joy the Holocaust survivors got from knowing that someone is thinking of them, has made this large undertaking worth it.

NCJWC Provides Back-to-School Support



For the last 10 years, JF&CS has partnered with the [National Council of Jewish Women of Canada- Toronto Chapter \(NCJWC\)](#) has donated 200 knapsacks to JF&CS for clients returning to school in September. These knapsacks were filled with school supplies, lunch bags, and other important school essentials. However, due to the

pandemic, there was much uncertainty as to what school would look like and whether social workers would be able to distribute the knapsacks to clients. It was decided that

for this year, it would be easier for clients to receive gift cards so items can be purchased online if needed and delivered to their homes. Thank you to NCJW for donating 200 - \$50 Walmart gift cards!

Clients were very pleased to receive the gift cards. A client shared their gratitude with the following note:

Daniel was thrilled and filled with joy when he received this incredible donation - this donation was extra special to Daniel and myself. The struggles and challenges we have endured have weighed down on us so it brought me such hope and confidence seeing my son's excitement upon receiving this gift. It will give him confidence for grade 8. Please pass on a big thank you, and appreciation for this donation.

No Silence on Race



JF&CS is proud to align itself with [No Silence on Race](#). No Silence on Race is a newly founded organization that was born out of the necessity for racial equity and inclusivity in Jewish spaces in Canada and is being led by Jews of Colour. As a community organization dedicated to providing services and programs to all individuals, JF&CS is committed to addressing the inequalities faced by people of colour in our community.

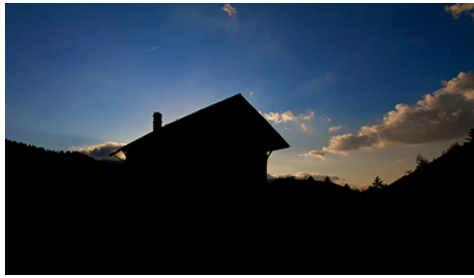
JF&CS' Board President, Sharon List, Executive Director, Brian Prousky and Manager of Family Services, Michael Waxman met with one of the founding members, Sara Yacobi-Harris, where as an agency we committed to their 9 Pillars as guiding principles for how we can continue our anti-oppressive journey and become more welcoming and better-serving of racialized Jews in our community. The 9 Pillars are:

1. Allyship
2. Education
3. Indigenous Education
4. Equity Consultancy
5. Employment
6. Anti-Racism Advisory
7. Jews of Colour Leadership
8. Programming and Partnerships
9. Jews of Colour Voices

We are excited for the agency to participate in this important work under the leadership of Michael Waxman and the Equity and Diversity Committee and look forward to joining other Jewish organizations in committing to addressing the barriers to service and participation in mainstream Jewish life that Jews and other people of Colour have faced.

Helping Clients Find Affordable Homes

During the pandemic, we have been able to form many new and outstanding partnerships and programs to serve vulnerable and at-risk individuals and families. Most recently, we've teamed up with the [Kehilla Residential Programme](#) which will result in a



broad range of clients from our agency and JIAS moving into new and affordable homes, including those struggling with poverty and those escaping abusive relationships.

This project is geared towards individuals who are struggling to maintain their current housing due to limited income and difficult life circumstances. The majority of the referrals have been single parent families who are either facing eviction, are under-housed and/or residing in current housing that is unfit for human habitation.

The homes are spacious, modern, beautiful and entirely brand new! They are below average market rent and Kehilla has been able to offer monthly assistance to eligible applicants. The new monthly rent amount for many of our clients will be decreased significantly from what many are currently paying. A client who had previously shared a bedroom with her daughter in a deplorable basement apartment shared that their new home is perfect and said that "I could not ask for more".

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