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Supporting Each Other to Support Our Community



On October 7, JF&CS staff and community partners gathered at the Lodzer Centre to commemorate the emotional and challenging first anniversary of the terrorist attack on Israel. Coming together to support each other during this difficult time was incredibly healing, as we shared hugs, words of encouragement, heartfelt music, and comfort food.

We are grateful to have shared this space with some important allies who stand with the Jewish community. Solomon Owoo, CEO of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS), joined us to express his

support and gratitude to JF&CS staff for their steadfast dedication to the community. We were also privileged to be joined by Pastor Terry from the Slavic Evangelical Baptist Church, who not only offered heartfelt words of respect and admiration but also came on behalf of his church who generously sponsored the event. It was extremely meaningful to be surrounded by the broader community, creating a sense of unity and a reminder that we are not alone.

To provide emotional and spiritual comfort, we were visited by Suki, the therapy dog, and moved to tears by the incredible voice of 16-year-old Loren Aranov who sang inspirational songs of unity, resilience and hope in English and Hebrew. The well-being of our staff and the community we support remains a top priority, and we are so thankful to have been able to offer care for each other. It is with this collective strength that we continue to build a resilient community where hope, dignity, diversity and humanity thrive.

Flash Mob Fun at Café Europa

Our Café Europa program, in partnership with the Bernard Betel Centre, brings Holocaust survivors together to socialize, eat a hot kosher lunch, and enjoy music and dancing together. As a special surprise for the attendees, Bernard Betel Centre and JF&CS staff and volunteers performed a fun flash mob dance at the get-together on November 18.

With the goal of uniting Survivors and people of all ages in a choreographed dance to Preston Pablo's "Flowers Need the Rain," the flash mob elicited the smiles and laughter of everyone in the room. Even those who didn't learn the dance moves still had a fantastic time grooving along to the music.

In-Person Appointment Resources

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Join the Monthly Mitzvah Makers!

JF&CS' monthly giving program.
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The flash mob was also coordinated to help promote the Bernard Betel Centre's inaugural Gala for Lifetime Achievement Award for Artistic Excellence. The gala on December 12 will celebrate the extraordinary artwork of Honouree B.R. Schwartz and support the Bernard Betel Centre's Meals on Wheels program for vulnerable seniors and Holocaust survivors. To learn more about the gala and to purchase your ticket, please [click here](#).

Sukkot Recap – Celebrating All Over the City



JF&CS is proud to observe the Jewish holidays at our various offices across the GTA. Last month, we celebrated Sukkot, the seven-day Jewish holiday that honours the harvest. It is a joyous time when we gather in Sukkahs (temporary shelters) and share meals together.

At our Central office, we gathered in the Sukkah with Rabbi Mordechai Chemel, Manager of Chaplaincy Services. He shared some of the history of the holiday and demonstrated how to properly wave the lulav and etrog. JF&CS staff shared snacks and smiles on a beautiful autumn afternoon.

Downtown, the gardeners from our Dawne's Garden program gathered at the Kiever Shul in Kensington Market to celebrate the High Holidays and the harvest. Throughout the spring and summer, participants learned how to tend a garden. Come Sukkot, they harvested their carefully-tended crops, such as butternut squash, leeks, and carrots, to make hearty soups and a vibrant salad.

Rabbi Chemel also made a stop at the Jerome D. Diamond Adolescent Centre (JDD) as well, where the students sat in a Sukkah built in the backyard, shook the lulav and etrog, learned the deeper meaning of the holiday and ate delicious kosher treats!

JF&CS is Here for Our Community Every Step of the Way



Over the last year, JF&CS has been very busy making connections and developing new initiatives that serve newcomers to Canada who have been impacted by the war in the Middle East. At our York Region branch, One Open Door, some of our partner Jewish agencies work with us in one office, making collaboration more seamless. We have come together with JIAS, JVS, Vaughan JCC and a few of the local Jewish community organizations to support each

other's groups, job fairs, and community-building opportunities specifically focused on these newly arrived Israelis.

At the most recent job fair organized by JIAS and JVS, held at the Prosserman JCC, JF&CS staff spoke to almost 100 different individuals and families seeking immediate assistance. Some brought resumes, looking for assistance in finding work through JVS, and others wanted to know about JF&CS and how we support the Jewish community. At the JF&CS table, they were met with smiles by our language specialists, who were able to address some of their initial questions. This collaborative approach to community outreach allows

newcomers to access information about various community resources in a safe, culturally sensitive and language-appropriate venue.

JF&CS social workers are also running groups for these newcomers, providing them with much-needed emotional support. Participants have all expressed how incredible the group experience has been. They were grateful for the safe space to share their experiences of immigration, in their own language and with staff who understood and appreciated the traumatic events which led many to seek refuge in Canada. "Someone thought about what I needed before I even knew I needed it," one participant shared. They described returning home after the group feeling energized and transformed, being more available to support their children and partners, sustaining them and helping them see things in a new light. As the first 10-week group concluded, many of the women shared their plans to continue meeting socially, expanding and creating an informal network of mutual support of their own. "I know that we were the first group of this kind, but it was a dream come true, and I'm already jealous of those who will experience it next time."

To learn more about how JF&CS strengthens our community, [click here](#).

#bethelight With Drive for Dreidels



Last year, JF&CS was able to brighten the lives of hundreds of children and youth during our Chanukah gift drive, [Drive For Dreidels](#). Thanks to the support and generosity of our community, we were able to deliver toys and gift cards to families facing financial hardships during the holiday season.

This year, we will also bring the miracle of Chanukah to Israeli families who find themselves away from their homes and the people they love. When you light your menorah this

year, you will know that your generous support ensures that we can respond quickly to our community members when they need us most. Be the light for so many children and families in our community this Chanukah.

If you wish to donate brand new toys or gift cards, please contact us directly or [click here to support Drive For Dreidels](#).

Don't Forget Your Chanukah Cards!



Chanukah is a month away! Don't forget to send your loved ones a Chanukah tribute card to wish them a Chag Sameach.

Chanukah can be a stressful time for parents who cannot afford to buy gifts. Your generosity will allow us to purchase toys and gift cards on behalf of these parents. Donations made through the purchase of JF&CS Chanukah cards support our Drive for Dreidels initiative.

Order your tribute cards today by [clicking here](#).

