

I am sincerely grateful and deeply honoured to accept the G.J. Cooper Scholarship. It is through my Jewish education at the Ottawa Jewish Community School and Torah High, inspirational teachers and community leaders, and work and volunteer experiences at the Soloway Jewish Community Centre which have shaped the leader I am today. This year, while completing my Bachelor of Education degree at Queen's University, I was offered the opportunity to act as the Director of Kingston's Bader-Elkin Talmud Torah Hebrew School. I had to think critically and creatively when faced with school issues such as low-attendance, student motivation and anti-Semitic incidents. To conquer these issues, I came up with an initiative to lift the morale of the community through instilling Jewish pride. I created a pen-pal project between the Bader-Elkin Talmud Torah and the Hebrew School in Dublin, Ireland. Students corresponded with each other and discussed their Jewish traditions at home and Jewish life and events in their communities, while posing questions and learning about each other's communities. My colleagues remarked that this project infused optimism and Jewish pride, connecting Hebrew school students from Canadian and Irish Jewish communities. As part of my final teaching practicum for Teachers College, I had the opportunity to teach at an international school. I chose to complete my practicum at *Instituto Hebreo Dr. Chaim Weitzman* in Santiago, Chile, a Jewish Day School with 1,450 students. The main goal of my practicum was to introduce the students at Instituto Hebreo, to the idea of being a Jew from a different Jewish community, particularly the Ottawa Jewish community. While I was at the school, I was asked to speak to sixty-five Grade 11 students about my experiences with Israel Apartheid Week and the Boycott Divest Sanction (BDS) movement on campus, as the movement is gaining popularity on South American campuses. I created an interactive two-hour presentation, highlighting Canadian student initiatives and projects which combat BDS and celebrate Israel, many of which I have been a part of. Working with international Jewish communities has impacted me as a Jewish leader and educator, though instilling a new sense of pride, coupled with a new perspective on the importance of learning about and connecting Jewish communities. We are one diverse nation, and we have so much to learn from one another.

With a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Linguistics, I had the opportunity to research with a Queen's University Professor of Sociolinguistics. This opportunity has inspired me to further pursue my degree in both Linguistics and Education. I hope to develop my passion for Jewish education and working with various Jewish communities through obtaining a Master's in Education and to continue studying Speech-Language Pathology. I am investing the funds from this scholarship towards completing prerequisites for graduate school. In the future, I hope to work as both a teacher and a speech therapist. I thank the Ottawa Jewish Community for providing me with numerous valuable opportunities to both lead and be led by many incredible Jewish leaders in the community.