



Memo

To: Jewish Federation of Ottawa Board of Directors
From: Sarah Beutel, Interim President and CEO
Date: November 27, 2023
Re: President's Report

Here is an update on Federation activities since our last board meeting on November 7.

DEVELOPMENT

Life and Legacy

The team secured a new LOI. This means that we now have 2 of the 4 required as the year-four minimum. Sharon and her team continue to work hard stewarding existing donors, helping them to formalize as well as securing new donors.

OJCF held a year-3 Life and Legacy (LL) celebration on November 16th. The JFO team personally reached out to invite our donors, and we also invited JFO top donors who hadn't signed up for LL, as well as JFO legacy society members who had donated prior to the life and legacy program. The successful event had 65 attendees, of which 8 were JFO LL donors, and 11 were non-LL donors.

Emergency Campaign

We have raised about \$3.315M to date. This is only slightly higher than our last report in part because one larger donor expressed some confusion about their initial verbal pledge and suggested it now needed to be split between the Annual Campaign and Emergency efforts, which caused us to adjust that emergency gift downward.

Annual Campaign

	Campaign 2024 – Nov 20	Campaign 2024 – Oct 30	Campaign 2023
Dollars	\$ 3,730,116	\$ 3,153,259	\$4,964,976
Donors	991	828	1533

COMMUNITY BUILDING

With the departure of Emily Litvack who was coordinating Young Family programming, we are making changes to the division of roles within the Community Building Team related to the work of engaging young adults. I am pleased to let you know that going forward, Michael Reznik will take over the coordination of the PJ Library

program and continue to coordinate various young adult initiatives including the Ben Gurion Society and the EG Campaign. (This new structure reflects a similar approach to how we engaged young adults in the past, when we had a Director of EG).

We have launched a search for a new team member of the Community Building Team who will oversee various initiatives and projects (including newcomers, volunteers and some young adult micro-communities), a new Community Engagement Specialist.

Program	Details	Engagement
Ottawa Jewish Archives	Nov. 23, the archivist will be giving a presentation for the Osgoode Museum over zoom on the history of Ottawa Jewish cemetery in Osgoode.	20+ people
Community Gathering	Rally on Parliament Hill, Dec. 4 - JFO is working with CIJA, other Federations and community volunteers to bring Jewish Canada to Parliament Hill in support of Israel, the hostages and to call out antisemitism.	5,000+ expected
Young Adults	Nov. 23, Challah Baking for Young Adults – In response to a request for fun events with Jewish content, the event is in collaboration with Glebe Shul.	TBC
PJ Library	<p>Nov. 15: PJ Parent Support Group with Psychologist Jamie Brooks. Support for parents with strategies to cope and support children during this difficult time. Discussions focused on the impacts of the war and antisemitism.</p> <p>Nov. 25: PJ Musical Havdallah in partnership with Congregation Beit Tikvah of Ottawa.</p> <p>Nov. 26: 1st session of PJ Our Way in partnership with Greenberg Families Library. For tweens.</p> <p>Nov. 29: Babies & Bagels at PJ parent's home in Stittsville.</p> <p>Continuous touchpoints by text, phone, in person with families to provide support and listen.</p>	<p>15 families</p> <p>15 families, TBC</p> <p>17 TBC</p>
Chanukah	<p>Tues Dec. 12, Chanukah at the Sens in partnership with OTC.</p> <p>Dec. 10, PJ Library Chanukah Party in partnership with the SJCC's Ganon Preschool.</p>	

	Dec. 10, Young Adult Chanukah Ball at Kehillat Beth Israel	
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Grants and Allocations

Round 20 of the Innovative Capacity Building Fund is now open with \$30,000 available in funding, and a request for applications has been sent to community organizations. To date, a total of \$533,056 dollars has been awarded through this Fund to 25 local organizations.

Microgrants

Since July 2023, the microGRANTS committee has allocated funding to 17 initiatives, awarding a total of \$30,810.

Given the current crisis in Israel, and the rise in antisemitism locally, the committee supports the need for immediate grassroots community initiatives to address the war in Israel, solidarity, and rising antisemitism. For this reason, we have adjusted the criteria to **include immediate asks for funding for Israel/Advocacy related events** (removing the 4-week in advance criterion for these specific events) **with a 2-3 business day turn around for review**. The criteria of these events include Community events in Solidarity with Israel (vigils, rallies, marches, campaigns etc.); Combating Antisemitism (talks, workshops, teachings etc.); Promoting the Hostages safe return (advocacy related initiatives).

Latest Grants:

Ben Shillow & volunteers	#BringThemHome Billboard Campaign	\$2,500.00
CBB & OJCS	Shira Event	\$997.50
Chabad of Wellington West	Public Menorah Lighting	\$2,000.00

Supplementary School Tuition Incentive Program

To date **65 students** are enrolled in the supplementary school tuition incentive program. We are delighted to see the numbers rising and have surpassed our final goal of a 20% increase (attrition is not accounted for and will only be assessed in year 3).

Hillel Ottawa Update

Student Engagement: Staff have been active on social media and in one-on-one meetings responding to threats on campus that have been identified by students. Hillel has continued to offer free and immediate access to mental health support to students in collaboration with JFS. In collaboration with the Max & Tessie Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies at Carleton University, Hillel hosts students with daily open hours. The space is always supervised by a faculty member or Hillel staff.

Events:

Nov 8 - Kol Yisrael course – 12 students
 Nov 9 - JLSA and JMSA pub night – 20 students
 Nov 10 - Kol Yisrael course and Shabbat dinner – 14 students
 Nov 13 - Professor from TMU spoke about the Holocaust.
 Nov 14 - Book Club Meetup – 7 students

Nov 17 – Hillel Staff met with Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Diplomat at the Israeli Embassy.

Nov 23 - Discussion & Support, weekly: Carleton

Nov 24 - Shabbat dinner

Upcoming Events:

Nov 29 - Bassem Eid guest speaker

Nov 30 - Discussion & Support: Carleton

Nov 30 – AllyU: Student/Professor Mentorship launch party

Dec 5-7 – Hillel International Global Assembly attended by Hillel staff

Dec 7 - Discussion & Support: Carleton

Dec 4-8 - Hillel House open, exam study time

Fundraising: Hillel has received \$953.00 from 6 donors over the past month. A first-time donor to Jewish Federation of Ottawa sponsored Hillel's Shabbat dinner on November 24. The Hillel staff and the Advisory Board are continuously working to identify more potential sources of grants and donations.

Advocacy: Hillel Ottawa's Israel Learning Program, a 6-week training course for student leaders, concluded on Nov 22 with a visit by a diplomat from Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Hillel staff have had in-person meetings with professional leadership at both University of Ottawa and Carleton University to discuss antisemitic incidents on campus. Hillel staff have also been quoted in local school paper news articles.

Marketing: Hillel has expanded its reach on social media through marketing all events and programming on Instagram to 1,207 followers (up from 1,148 followers in October), and Facebook remains at 1,300 followers.

OPERATIONS

Security

We continue to seek out grant opportunities to further enhance our security on Campus, including applications for both the new round of SIP (Security Infrastructure Program) funding federally, and a provincial emergency planning grant.

Facilities

Interviews are underway for a new Facilities Director, following Liam's departure in early November.

Talent Management

While staff camaraderie activities have taken a bit of a pause during this period of heightened tensions, we are looking to resume these activities shortly.

We are planning our staff Holiday party (in conjunction with the SJCC team) for **Wednesday, December 13th, from 12-2 pm**. As always, Board members are encouraged to attend, should your schedules permit.

COMMUNICATION

Communication update: Oct.31 – Nov.20, 2023

Eblasts overview

In the last period, there have been more than 38K individual messages over a short reporting period. The open rate remains at 64%. The short period doesn't allow for comparison to the last period, but we have increased our communications since Oct. 7 and the outbreak of war.

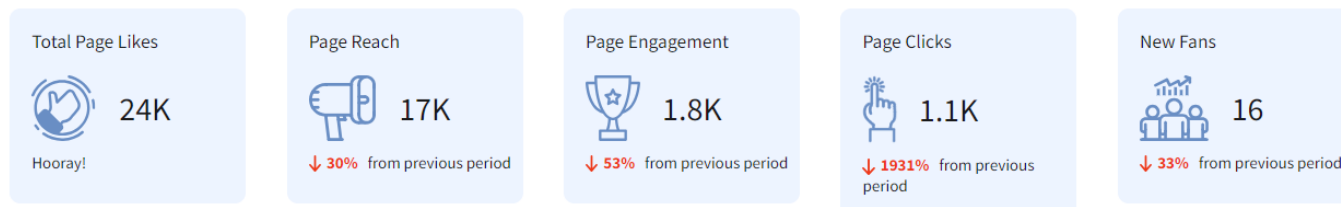
Highlights include:

- **Ottawa Stands with Israel:** This new communications vehicle has been going out weekly and shares resources and info on various initiatives supporting Israel. Three were sent in the last period covering more than 20 initiatives. Open rates and engagement are excellent.
- **Shabbat Greetings:** With the increase in the need to share information with the community, we have been very strategic in using the Shabbat greetings to update people with important materials from the impact of their gifts in Israel to community initiatives. Sarah Beutel's first message as interim CEO was very well-received and provided detailed insight into how Federation is helping in Israel. Special thanks to Karen Palayew and Michael Polowin for their Shabbat messages, both of which were well-received.
- **Thank you to donors:** A direct, personalized email was sent to all donors to the Israel Appeal, and included a detailed accounting of how and where their gift went to help people in Israel. 78% of all recipients engaged with the message.
- **Community Update:** To ensure all Federation's work was understood by the community, we sent a dedicated eblast outlining the multiple efforts we are making to support our community through this challenging time. The message was well received and had a 69% open rate.

Social media

Facebook: We saw a dip in reach and engagement. This happens from time to time and usually means we need to revisit how we are advertising and promoting our posts. We will put new ads behind strategic messages.

Nov.



Oct.



Instagram: Like Facebook, there was less engagement, but we still saw an increase in followers. We will need to consider our posts and sharing as well as ads.

Sept.



Oct.



Advocacy update

Community volunteer advocates

We now have more than **70 people registered as advocates**. The group is actively writing letters and reaching out to political leaders with key messaging. The advocacy teams send frequent action items to the group to make sure we remain on target and engaged.

Advocacy events

Federation held a Community Safety & Security Webinar, “Know Your Rights,” with 415 registrants. Federation staff transcribed the webinar and [summarized the info here](#).

Federation team is working with other Federations (Toronto and Montreal), CIJA, and a community grassroots group to organize a rally for Israel on Dec. 4 on Parliament Hill.

Community Relations

Federation staff are holding ongoing meetings with allies and is sharing community concerns regarding antisemitism. They have opened dialogue with the Diversity director at OCSB (Catholic school board) and have a follow-up meeting this week.

Campus Advocacy

There is a lot of unrest and concern at Carleton U where students feel harassed and unsafe. Federation staff are working with school leadership to improve the situation. Ottawa U environment is more stable at the moment.

High schools

There have been ongoing walkouts with students holding pro-Palestinian protests. Schools have been good at keeping protests off school property and speaking to students regarding harmful chants. There was one incident last week of a swastika at a school protest. This was reported to the police.

University advocacy

Federation staff have continued working with Jewish and ally professors, as well as Hillel and Jewish students at Ottawa and Carleton Universities. They are also working with Jewish professors at Algonquin College regarding anti-Jewish messaging from their union.

On Nov 3 staff met with Carleton University leadership and faculty, the Hillel director, and two students.

While the administrators seem to appreciate the danger, they continue to put up bureaucratic obstacles to real progress.

At Ottawa University, Federation staff have sent the Provost, along with leadership and faculty, and the Hillel Director, a follow up letter regarding the Nov 1 meeting, requesting an update on actions by the university since, and requesting a next meeting.

Hillel Ottawa is bringing in Palestinian peace activist Bassem Eid to speak at a special event Wednesday, November 29. (Please register by .)

School board

Federation staff met to discuss proposals to improve school climate with a volunteer school's advisor along with Jewish educators, principals, OCDSB Jewish Equity Coach and two community Rabbis (one of whom does in school workshops on tolerance with a Muslim colleague)

Federation staff have since met with the OCDSB equity superintendent and a principal.

The school situation is deteriorating with harassment of Jewish students of all ages in the name of Palestinian activism.

Politics

Federation staff met with an MPP, who has offered to co-sign, with other Ottawa community leaders, an open letter to the community asking for solidarity against antisemitism. Federation sent a first draft. The MPP has also offered to co-author a policy letter to Premier Ford and the relevant ministers on the most important actions in support of our community. Federation staff are consulting CIJA and drafting the letter.

Federation staff met with an Ottawa Councillor R and a member of the municipal staff of equity team. They discussed municipal anti-hate work through community groups, which is unfortunately still in early stage and slow-going. They also discussed ways to introduce antisemitism training and resources through municipal staff/ boards/ agencies, as well as through OPS and council. This effort may come up against internal resistance. Federation staff met with a new advisor/ aide to the mayor.

Community advocates

Federation staff and lay leaders will be speaking at a Dec 6 special event for 'middle age' professionals to encourage networking and coordinating advocacy efforts in their respective fields (consulting, medical, public service). The event is being organized by community volunteers and featuring the Israeli ambassador.

Media

Federation leadership and staff have undertaken several media interviews and have been successful in keeping our talking points about the rise in antisemitism at the forefront.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-string-of-ottawa-events-linked-to-antisemitism-alarms-local-jewish/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/rabbi-hate-crime-ottawa-1.7021358>

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/as-war-rages-in-gaza-strip-hate-crimes-also-escalate-in-ottawa>

Federation staff also had an interview with CTV Ottawa relating to an Ottawa medical resident suspended pending investigation for antisemitic posts.

Communications and Community Relations Committee (CCRC) update

The Committee met on Nov. 8 and discussed ideas for letter writers and issues on campus.