



Memo

To: Jewish Federation of Ottawa Board of Directors
From: Andrea Freedman, President and CEO
Date: October 10, 2023
Re: President's Report

Here is an update on Federation activities since our last full meeting on September 12th, 2023. This will be my final President's report and it has been an honor and privilege – thank you for the opportunity.

DEVELOPMENT

	Campaign 2024	Campaign 2023
Dollars	\$1,944,703	\$4,964,976
Donors	460	1,533

Campaign 2024 is in full swing. Thus far, we are satisfied with the pace of the campaign, with nearly 25% more gifts received than at this time last year, however last year was particularly slow. 13 canvassers have already completed all their canvassing, but almost half of the canvassers have not yet submitted anything, although we know anecdotally that many have started. Our team and chairs have been reaching out and reminding people to not delay in submitting their results as we want to thank donors quickly. We thank the board for leading by example.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Engaging Newcomers, Strategy Update

Last year, under the leadership of Emily Litvack, Federation engaged 9 volunteers as Newcomer Ambassadors. Their role was to provide a warm and personalized welcome for those new to Ottawa or simply new to being involved in Ottawa's Jewish community. Their role was to act as mentors, support systems and connectors. The Newcomer Ambassadors represented the diversity of the community, identify with multiple identities, Jewish affiliations, and reside in various neighbourhoods.

Through their interactions, specific patterns became apparent: a high proportion of newcomers were arriving from Ukraine or are Russian-speaking while others identified as Mizrahi/Sephardi or Israeli, and still others came through the Choose Ottawa initiative and identify as Orthodox. In addition, newcomer families coming from elsewhere in Canada or the US were already subscribers to PJ Library.

In order to better meet the needs of these newcomers, we have now divided the Ambassadors into two groups: PJ Parent Leadership Team and a Newcomer Community Ambassadors Group.

The Newcomer Community Ambassadors Group consists of volunteers who represent the newcomer micro-communities we continue to welcome to Ottawa: Russian-speaking, Israeli, Mizrahi/Sephardi and the Orthodox. They work to create and nurture affinity groups for these micro-communities. Thus far, this strategy has led to positive results in community engagement, including events and gatherings, Shabbat and holiday meals, as well as active participation on social media groups.

The PJ Parent Leadership Team consists of dedicated and active Jewish leaders devoted to being ambassadors for the PJ Library program. These parent leaders also represent a diversity of identities with a goal to expand our reach to young families and help nurture the next generation of community leaders and donors. This team is actively engaged in helping at PJ events, and in developing ideas and strategies to best serve young families in Ottawa.

Program	Details	Engagement
Archives	<p>The Archives gained 3 new volunteers in September, and one of them has written the Archives' latest blogpost on the history of Machzikei synagogue: https://ottawajewisharchives.home.blog/2023/09/28/recalling-our-pioneers-dr-rabbi-stanley-g-weber/</p> <p>Social media reach on Facebook has grown bringing the total page reach to 26,167, an increase of 265.2% from August. There were many posts about local families which generally generate higher engagement.</p>	
Emerging Gen	<p>Sep 27 – Board, Brews and Jews – gathering at a game bar.</p> <p>Oct 3 – Sushi in the Sukkah – partnering with Kehillat Beth Israel in their Sukkah.</p>	<p>16 people</p> <p>Sold out at 45 people</p>
PJ Library	<p>Sept. 9: SJCC Shabbat Shelanu: Shabbat morning program at the JCC. This was the JCC's first family Shabbat program, and attendance was smaller than anticipated.</p> <p>Sept. 19: Babies & Bagels, at home in Barrhaven.</p> <p>Oct. 6: PJ Sukkah Full of Friends with OJCS, in the OJCS Sukkah. To date, 22 families RSVP'd.</p> <p>Coffee dates with PJ families led by PJ Parent Leaders and PJ staff in September</p>	<p>5 families</p> <p>12 families</p> <p>25 families</p> <p>7 families</p>

Newcomers	3 newcomer events were held by Newcomer Ambassadors on Aug. 27, Sept. 3, and Sept. 26. As well, Federation staff held 6 coffee dates with newcomers. Note that August/Sept is usually when most newcomers arrive in Ottawa.	172 people
Volunteer Engagement	Since July, 29 new volunteers were recruited to work on projects in various Jewish organizations including the Ottawa Kosher Food Bank, Jewish Family Services, Israel Connect, the Ottawa Jewish Archives as well as various Federation committees.	29 people

Microgrants

Since July 1, 2023, the Microgrants committee has awarded a total of \$16,482 supporting a total of 9 community initiatives. Since September, we have approved four grants for High Holiday programming.

Sephardi Association of Ottawa	High Holiday Services/Rosh Hashanah Jewish Unity Event	\$2,500
Kass Wener, Chava Feibush & Genvironment	Sukkahfest	\$2,500
Chabad of Kanata	Sukkot Programming for Russian & Israeli community	\$1,500
Ottawa Torah Centre	Young Family Fall Festival	\$2,500

"A Place for Everyone" Supplementary School Tuition Incentive Program

To date, there are a total of 32 registered families, and 23 anticipated families participating in the two-year supplementary school tuition incentive program. We are well on our way to reaching the goal of 58 new families (representing a 20% increase in supplementary school enrollment by 2025). Notably, three of the five schools have delayed their official start date until after the chagim, and final numbers for this term will be available in late October.

Hillel Ottawa Update

Student Engagement: Staff have been meeting with student leaders and students on campus as they begin to get students involved. They have also met with faculty of uOttawa and plan to meet with Carleton University, as well.

Events:

- Sept 12 – Candy Apple Creations & Rosh Hashanah Trivia – 25 students
- Sept 15 - Rosh Hashanah Beyond with Temple Israel – 20 students
- Sept 21 – JNF Breakfast for Israel – Hillel Ottawa table of 10 students
- Sept 21 – Movie Night (Adam Sandler's You Are So Not Invited to My Bat Mitzvah) – 15 students
- Sept 28 – Sukkah Building – 6 students
- Sept 29 – Sukkah Decorating – 10 students

Upcoming Events:

- Oct 2 - Stand with Us - Snacks & Stories in the Sukkah
- Oct 3 - Book Club in the Sukkah
- Oct 4 - BBQ in the Sukkah with CSN
- Oct 5 – Grad Student Night in the Sukkah
- Oct 6 - Algonquin Club Expo
- Oct 10 – Jews and Brews for Grads
- Oct 13 - Bagel brunch at Carleton in Boardroom of Zelikovitz Centre for Jewish Studies
- Oct 15 - Hillel Face It Fight It Welcome Event with CIJA
- Oct 16-17 - CIJA Face It Fight It Conference

Fundraising: Hillel Ottawa received a grant from Hillel International's Israel Action and Addressing Antisemitism Program to run an event to combat the viewing of the film Israelism on Carleton campus put on by the Department of Political Sciences. The Hillel staff are getting goods donated for the Hillel House and have found a donor to fund home improvements. 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, will commence October 12. Seven students have registered for this course that will be taught by a leader in the Ottawa Jewish community.
- Hillel Staff will be attending the Hillel International: Israel Masterclass conference taking place in Toronto October 10-12.
- Hillel Staff and 15 students will be attending the CIJA: Face It, Fight It conference in Ottawa from October 16-17.

Marketing: An email newsletter wishing all a Shana Tova and highlighting upcoming events and programming was sent out to a list of 480 recipients. Hillel has expanded its reach on social media through marketing all events and programming on Instagram (1,148 followers) and Facebook (1,300 followers).

OPERATIONS

High Holidays Security

As previously reported, Ottawa Police Services has changed their policy and this year allowed synagogues to request Paid Duty officers to supplement their security plans for the High Holidays. Four synagogues availed themselves of this opportunity. Due to how Paid Duty is structured, making it available does not necessarily mean it will get filled (as off-duty officers "sign up" for these assignments.) All requested coverage for Rosh Hashana was fulfilled. Unfortunately, for Yom Kippur, two of the synagogues had their duty cancelled for Kol Nidre due to lack of officers signing up for the duty.

OPS were highly communicative throughout, both with Federation as well as the impacted synagogues.

Federation Board Retreat

Federation's Board Retreat was held on September 26th, with great participation. Many thanks to everyone who

participated, especially to those who led sessions or activities, and gratitude as well to Gowling WLG for once again hosting us.

FINANCE

System Changes

During the past six months, the finance team is involved in a number of complex database transitions – SJCC, Foundation and hosting for Federation. The SJCC transition was the most complex one for the finance team as the SJCC transitioned from Unison to a solution of Amelia/Dynamics combination. The SJCC is pleased with the new system, but it did take a lot of effort from all and particularly from the finance team, including IT and payroll.

Cash Management

In order to take advantage of the increase in interest rates, we have been focusing efforts on stricter cash management and being able to take advantage of using term deposits to increase interest revenues without additional risk, leading to significant gains for Federation.

Audit

The finance team is currently in the middle of the Federation audit and thus far, all seems to be progressing smoothly.

COMMUNICATION

Communication update: Aug. 23, 2023 – Oct. 2, 2023

Eblasts overview

In the last period, there have been more than 50K individual messages. The open rate remains reasonably high at 60%. Highlights include:

Campaign launch plus Gift in Action: In early September, we launched the Campaign, sharing top priorities, a video, and a gift in action highlighting the Jewish Journeys grant, with an open rate of 64%. The click rate (the number of people who visited the video or donation link) was 5%. This shows how follow-up is needed and how the reach of email to get people to take action is limited.

Targeted emails: Several smaller targeted messages were sent to wish donors well for Rosh Hashanah. These include greetings sent to Monthly Mitzvah donors and Legacy donors, which were well-received and led to conversations and connections.

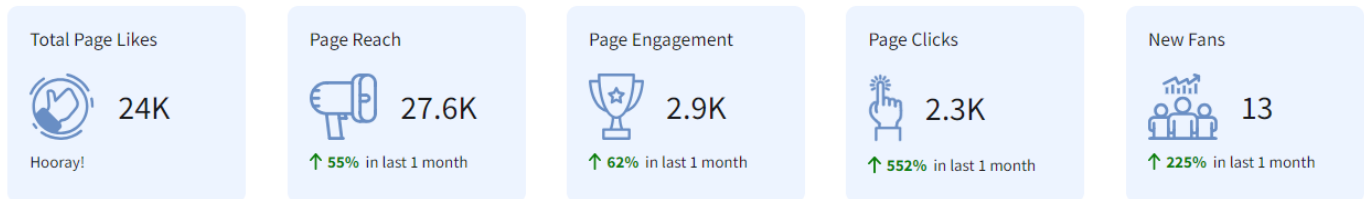
Rosh Hashanah message to donors: An email describing details of the campaign as well as calling for donations was sent to past donors. The open rate was 64%.

E-Bulletin: The top stories in the latest E-Bulletins were the Rosh Hashanah recipe story, the intro to the Campaign with Gary Viner and Evelyn Silverman, how the Jewish Journey grant helps the vulnerable, and the #Cheesepotting story about Ottawa Kosher Foodies. Open rates are around 55%.

Social media

There was a positive increase in engagement due in part to paid ads and an increase in overall activity.

Federation Facebook: With more effort and paid ads, we saw more engagement in the last month compared to the last month.



Instagram: We are seeing some increase in on Instagram – with website clicks being an excellent sign of people reading and engaging directly with posts.



Advocacy update

Community Relations

Jodi Green is actively engaging community groups and has sent out her first monthly update to the groups, sharing news about the high holidays as well as the CIJA conference.

On the political and school advocacy front

David Sachs, along with Andrea, met with Pino Buffone, the Director of Education at the OCDSB. The meeting was positive with Dr. Buffone being very receptive to listening and taking action on Jewish Ottawa EDI concerns.

David also met with Brian Kom, the Jewish equity coach, and ensured he is attending the Face It Fight It conference on Oct. 16-17. Other school officials, including Pino, will be attending.

David is set to meet with councillors Laine Johnson, David Hill (meeting will include Rabbi Blum, who is in his riding), and Stephanie Plante.

CIJA's Face It Fight It, Oct. 16-17

There are now more than 146 Ottawans registered.

Both myself and board chair Karen Palayew had separate and positive meetings with Iddo Moed, Israel's Ambassador-Designate to Canada.