



Memo

To: Jewish Federation of Ottawa Board of Directors
From: Andrea Freedman, President and CEO
Date: September 9, 2020
Re: President's Report

Here is an update to the Board on activities and issues since the July 20 meeting.

National System: Right before the start of the pandemic, the national system (Jewish Federations of Canada-UIA [JFC-UIA] and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs [CIJA]) were notified by the Montreal Federation of a significant financial shortfall that would entail a re-examination of the fair share formula and a reduction in national budgets.

This has promoted a “re-imagining” process. At a recent JFC-UIA board meeting, there was an endorsement of a continuation of the re-imagining discussion. It is too early to determine all the impacts to Ottawa, but they likely will not be insignificant. A few examples: CIJA has historically provided some budgetary offsets for advocacy and campus and these have ceased; Ottawa may need to purchase services for Birthright Israel and March of the Living from the Montreal or Toronto Federations; national funding for Partnership2Gether is unclear, etc. Unfortunately, the preliminary “re-imagining” process included no representation from communities outside of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. Fortunately, this decision has been reversed, and my colleagues from the other communities have requested that I represent them in the process from this point forward. I will keep the board informed as appropriate. Historically, our Board has not been particularly active on the national level and I realize that knowledge may be limited. As some of you may know, I was previously employed by JFC-UIA and if there is interest, I am happy to organize an optional Board session explaining the national system.

DEVELOPMENT

Jewish Federations of North American (JFNA) Human Services Relief Matching Fund

JFNA has introduced a matching fund specifically to promote giving to programs and services in the social services sphere. New gifts, or increases raised between September 1 – December 31 that go directly to human service needs will be matched at 50%, with Ottawa eligible to receive \$60K should we be able to raise \$120K. Most if not all of the programs that our social service agencies have requested future emergency campaign funding for would qualify under the program criteria.

Campaign 2021

Campaign 2021 has just launched. Thanks to the Emergency Campaign we start on a strong foot with \$2,011,733 confirmed from 121 donors.

The mid-campaign event (formely kick-off), chaired by Lyon and Cybele Hamburg has started soliciting sponsorships. Given the nature of the event and the current circumstances, we have significantly revised the budget for the event as well as the sponsorship package but we have already secured \$11,500 toward our \$18K goal. The event will take place on October 26 and features Yid-Life Crisis.

Campaign Events

- The Lions of Judah have been invited to join a Jewish Family Services High Holiday *Tikun Olam* project to help isolated seniors through their Thelma Steinman Seniors Support Services Unit. Volunteer Lions are being asked to pick up care packages from the offices of JFS, and deliver them to seniors between September 21 and 23.
- We continue to take advantage of virtual offerings from JFNA and have actively promoted the following events:
 - The JFNA Community Kvell on September 16th with the stars of Schitts Creek
 - An event on September 13 with Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks on Morality for donors \$25k+

OPERATIONS

OVH

In spite of the challenges of a pandemic, the OVH and SJCC welcome A Dashing Pinch to the restaurant space in the community centre. For now, services will be limited to lunches for Ganon children and curbside pickup for community members.

Campus

Ensuring compliance with public health and provincial requirements for infection control, the Campus team has added custodial hours to the schedule. It should also be noted that owing in part to the CERB, it has been challenging to retain custodial and security staff and there has been a fair amount of turnover.

Security

In collaboration with CIJA and the Ottawa Police, we will be holding our annual High Holiday Security Briefing on September 10 via Zoom. This year our agenda focuses on some topics unique to 2020, including the security challenges faced when holding services outdoors and distinguishing between congregants vs. bad actors when everyone is wearing a mask.

Compliance

All GST has been paid, our payroll is current, source deductions have been made, and all other filings and payments are in compliance.

FEDERATION PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

Community Building

Ottawa Jewish Archives re-opened its doors on Sept. 1, to enable people to undertake in-person research by appointment only. This opening coincides with the SJCC's opening of the Greenberg Families Library, also by appointment only.

A Canadian Rosh Hashanah: A Celebration of Federations, will be held on September 13. 11 Jewish communities across Canada will join together to bring the first nation-wide, online Rosh Hashanah event. The lineup includes well-known performers (e.g. Maccabeats, Henry Winkler, etc.), Shofar blowers from each community and various community members from younger to older sharing what Rosh Hashanah means to them. Approximately 200 Ottawa families have already signed up.

PJ Library Pollinator Kits, July 26. In partnership with Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs and the Upper Ottawa Valley Beekeepers Association, PJ families were able to pick up a pollinator kit replete with fun activities about native pollinators, along with Jewish source sheets on what our tradition has to say about the role of pollinators and the various mitzvot about caring for our earth. Feedback from many of the 32 families that participated was very positive.

PJ Library Games Contest with CBB, August 20-27. Families were invited to participate in virtual craft making and games, and submit their most creative craft to win a prize. Unfortunately, this was not a popular initiative and only one family participated. Despite the challenge of finding meaningful ways to engage PJ families at this time, efforts continue to find creative COVID-friendly initiatives!

PJ Library Rosh Hashanah Greeting Cards: Families registered to receive a card-making kit in the mail. They had the option to send the cards to another PJ family or their friends or to send to seniors living in isolation. In partnership with JFS, local seniors were identified, and we are proud that the majority of PJ families chose to send their Rosh Hashanah greetings to seniors in our community. Over 30 families participated in this activity.

Federation's Fund for Innovative Capacity Building granted \$10,000 to day-schools (\$6K to OJCS and \$4K to TDS) for professional development to help to prepare teachers and administrators to meet the unique challenges of the coming school year. The regular round of this Fund usually takes place in April but did not go ahead due to the pandemic. Instead, only schools were invited to apply for funding for professional development. Note that supplementary schools were able to undertake PD using strategic funding granted earlier this year.

Jewish Jumpstart has invited participating families to apply for the second year of the program to receive a 50% discount on their synagogue or SJCC membership. 75% of Jewish Jumpstart participants had indicated in a recent survey that they would renew for year two. Families will be offered the option to receive the membership subsidy this year, or to defer the subsidy for one year due to the unique challenges of participating this year (particularly challenging with SJCC memberships).

Hillel Ottawa

Hillel's new staff team (Sasha Kathron, Director; Einat Livni, Student Life Coordinator; Shaked Karabelnicoff, Advocacy Coordinator) are working to meet the unique needs of students on campus this year. The decision was taken to NOT hold in-person gatherings to ensure the health and safety of students, except for in-person physically distanced coffee dates. Staff along with the Hillel Advisory Board will revisit this monthly to decide if it is safe to proceed with in-person programming.

August 13-14 – **Hillel and IOC (Israel on Campus)** Student Executive Teams met to reconnect and plan for the coming year. There are eight student leaders on each of the 2 Executive teams.

August 26: **Student executive team** bonding night.

September 4: **Carleton International Student Welcoming Event**, Hillel Ottawa ran virtual icebreakers during the event, as well as promoted Hillel and IOC to new international students.

September 8: **"Hillel at home, A conversation with Maya Vander"**, Hillel International virtual event. Maya Vander is a very popular star of the Netflix series, Selling Sunset – students know who she is!

September 10: **Hillel Ottawa and IOC Kickoff** event, Virtual Trivia night

September 13-14: **Maccabee Task Force** on-line conference. One day will be dedicated to bringing Israel advocacy staff together, and one day was for IOC student leadership to share best practices, gain knowledge and skills in Israel advocacy.

COMMUNICATION:

Community Messages

We have maintained weekly Friday Shabbat messages and have been strategic by including all updates and important links.

Special directed messages, called **Reports from the Field**, have been sent to donors to the Emergency Campaign. This effort will be ongoing to ensure donors stay connected and aware of their impact. The first report had a 75% open rate, highlighting the effectiveness of this messaging and stewardship campaign.

Social media

The Federation's **Facebook** presence continues to do well to connect the community, with both group pages gaining members:

- **Emerging Generation**, with 157 members. (up by 20 members since July)
- **Jewish Ottawa Helps**, with 1,254 members. (This page is slowing down and more work needs to be done to redirect the content.)

Overall **Facebook** followers continue to increase with 24,949 followers and an engagement rate that fluctuates at 12K people.

Instagram is slowly closing in on a thousand followers with 956 and twitter is steady at 1,682.