



SNAP (Special Needs Advisory Project) report

SNAP (Special Needs Advisory Project) a committee of the Hamilton Jewish Federation, is committed to supporting individuals with special needs by promoting equity, inclusion, and opportunities within the Hamilton Jewish Community. This committee includes a broad spectrum of professionals from the Hamilton Jewish Community. Members of SNAP are representatives from religious life, recreation, education, social services, the disability sector, Federation, persons with lived experience, and advocates.

Activities in the 2019-2020 year focused on:

1. Reviewing SNAP programs since its formation in order to identify current community needs and adapt its activities to meet these needs
2. Increasing community awareness of the SNAP mandate and its goals through a presence on the Federation website, articles in the Hamilton Jewish News and collaboration with community organizations
3. Launching the Inclusion Project which aims to assist Jewish organizations to increase accessibility and inclusion in their physical space and programming. Two seminars were held which provided education and strategies for organizations to begin an internal accessibility review in order to identify existing programs and future needs.
4. Providing an introductory training workshop to community leaders on the identification of individuals with mental health needs and community resources available to support these individuals
5. Providing suggestions for organizing programs which welcome individuals with special needs such as Tips for an Inclusive Purim
6. Partnering with the Down Syndrome Association to explore the special relationship between individuals with special needs and their siblings. At a gathering at JHamilton, over 60 participants viewed the Israeli movie My Hero Brother and shared their personal experiences.
7. Collaborating with the McMaster Medical Association and Na'amat Hamilton in screening the movie The Gender Lady. Over 125 attendees viewed the documentary about the career of Dr May Cohen who had a tremendous impact on services focused on woman's health in Hamilton and throughout Canada
8. Providing a limited number of bursaries for Psychoeducational Assessments to students with special learning needs within the Jewish Community. These highly specialized reports developed through standardized testing by a Registered Psychologist provide the formal diagnoses and recommendations required for the development of the IEP (Individualized Education Plan).

Two projects, which were planned but have been postponed due to the Covid outbreak include;

9. Dress for Success event for individuals returning to the work force – in partnership with HJFS, Na'amat, Beth Jacob Synagogue, Adas Israel Synagogue and Temple Anshe Sholom
10. Hiring a “Special Needs Consultant” for Camp Kadima to support and train staff to work with very high needs children

Do you know a family who could benefit from the support of the SNAP committee?

Please contact us at the Hamilton Jewish Federation or snap@jewishhamilton.org

Anita Bernstein, Chair