

FEDERATION FOCUS

YOUR JEWISH COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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Welcome to Federation Focus, the quarterly supplement about your Jewish Federation, its partner agencies and their impact on Jewish life. Federation Focus keeps you informed about and connected with important issues in our community, ensuring that everyone knows where to find a helping hand and where to extend one.

\$8.7 Million Provides Jewish Connection to Thousands



At FEDtalks last year, Federation Annual Campaign chair, Alex Cristall, cast a vision for our community: one in which it is easier to live a Jewish life. Together, our Jewish community made huge strides toward achieving that by surpassing our goal and raising \$8.7 million, including \$850,000 in targeted funding.

Challenges of Living Jewishly in Greater Vancouver

For Jews living both in Metro Vancouver and in outlying cities, the struggle to connect to Jewish life is real. In emerging Jewish communities, little to no Jewish communal infrastructure exists. Many families want to maintain ties to Jewish life and are eager to connect—for example, through services for seniors, cultural programming, or Jewish education for their children—but these services are just too far away.

At the same time, Vancouver's painfully high cost of living forces many to make difficult choices about the programs and services they can participate in.

Campaign Dollars Help Strengthen Jewish Connections

As the local Jewish community's primary fundraising initiative, the Federation Annual Campaign supports vital programs and services delivered by 35 partner agencies locally and globally. A strong campaign means that our partners can continue to rely on stable, predictable funding to support their work.

This effort requires the participation of

everyone in our community, and under Cristall's leadership, nearly 500 donors took advantage of a gift-enhancing incentive and were inspired to give for the first time or to renew their giving. A strong and growing donor base establishes a solid foundation for the continued sustainability of programs and services that touch the lives of thousands of community members.

A large portion of the money raised in this year's Federation Annual Campaign will enable Jewish Federation and our partners to address the issues of affordability and accessibility of Jewish life.

In the emerging Jewish communities outside of Vancouver, Jewish Federation is focused on extending our reach and that of our partners to develop and deliver grassroots Jewish programming. Our Connect Me In initiative is active in areas from Squamish to Abbotsford.



The strong campaign achievement means we can make an impact on the issues of affordability and accessibility of Jewish life, which affect people across our community. — Alex Cristall

In Vancouver, our focus is on keeping the cost of Jewish programs and services low, and on funding more robust subsidies for those who need additional help.

Importance of Giving

Overall, our community generated an unprecedented \$18.6 million this year through Jewish Federation. This includes a record \$8.8 million in contributions to Jewish Community Foundation endowment funds and \$1.1 million in targeted funding to support specific projects, along with the \$8.7 million Annual Campaign total.

"At its heart, Jewish life is about community," said Cristall, "and this year's campaign reflected that. We could not have achieved this incredible result without the support of our nearly 3,000 donors. I would like to extend a huge thank-you to everyone who donated."



SAVE THE DATE FOR
FEDtalks
our Annual Campaign kick-off event featuring five dynamic speakers addressing topics you'll be talking about all year.
SUNDAY, SEPT 16, 2018
Vancouver Playhouse | 600 Hamilton Street | #YVRFedTalks

Record Number of Local Students Participate on March of the Living



Two local participants at Majdanek extermination camp.

Photo credit: Jennifer Freedman

A record 23 local Jewish high school students marched from Auschwitz to Birkenau with thousands of their international peers on the 2018 March of the Living. The two-week trip to Poland and Israel gives participants firsthand exposure to Jewish history and prepares them to become lifelong advocates in the Jewish community. Perhaps most importantly, this experience makes them witnesses to the events and impact of the Holocaust. Jewish Federation is proud to have supported their journey.

Karen James, Jewish Federation Board chair, joined the delegation in Poland for the first leg their trip. "On Yom HaShoah, I joined the students and thousands of their peers from around the world to march three kilometres from Auschwitz to Birkenau. It was not an easy experience for any of us, but it was one of the most powerful of my life, and surely of theirs." "I was inspired by their courage, commitment and leadership," James continues. "By participating on March of the Living, every single one of them has committed to becoming a witness, knowing there will come a day in their lifetime when a new generation of witnesses is needed." Committee chair, Charlotte Katzen, is responsible for engaging so many students

this year and for working tirelessly to prepare them for the experience. She served as a chaperone on the trip along with Susan Siklos, and spent months prior to the trip leading preparatory sessions with the participants, involving local survivors.

Powerful Program Builds Jewish Identity

March of the Living brings several thousand Jewish students from 52 countries together in Poland to study the history of the Holocaust and to examine the roots of prejudice, intolerance and hatred.

After a week in Poland, participants fly to Israel, noting the contrast of our past suffering with the hope of our future. On Yom



Enjoying a moment in Tzfat.

Photo credit: Jennifer Freedman

Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day, the trip culminates with a final march, this time to the Old City in Jerusalem.

Now that they have returned home, participants are reconnecting with the survivors they got to know during their preparations. Students will share their reflections on their experience, both within their group and with our greater community.

Supporting Young People

Participating on March of the Living is a meaningful experience, but the cost is high. Jewish Federation is able to support our students thanks to the generosity of donors to the Federation Annual Campaign. We offset the cost by \$2,000 for each local participant, and offer scholarships to families who need additional help. Jewish Federation also provides support through staff resources, program leader training and participant education.



Our full local delegation of 23 participants, two chaperones and Jewish Federation's Board chair, Karen James (far left).

Photo credit: Jennifer Freedman

New Micro-Grant Program Supports Grassroots Initiatives in the Regional Communities

When Jewish Federation engaged stakeholders in consultation before establishing our 2020 Strategic Priorities, we heard from many community members that they want to see more flexibility in funding options and more opportunities to access funding outside the formal allocations cycle of the Federation Annual Campaign. As a result, Jewish Federation has introduced a variety of grant programs to support innovative, grassroots initiatives throughout our community.

One such initiative dovetails with another of our 2020 priorities, which is to foster engagement with community members living outside of Vancouver in the regional communities. We established the Connect Me In micro-grant program to enable grassroots groups in the regional communities to develop programs specifically designed to meet their needs. Two recent grant requests focused on offering six-week part-time Jewish education programs; one in Langley and one in Squamish.

Though it may seem surprising that there is such demand for Jewish programming in areas that are relatively far from Vancouver, Connect Me In programs are consistently well attended and community members are eager for more.

Seventeen children registered for the Hebrew school program in Langley and 11 in Squamish. Offered over six sessions, each program was designed to foster a love of Jewish culture and religion, Hebrew language acquisition, celebration of Israel, and an appreciation of Jewish art and music.

Another program we support with a Connect Me In micro-grant is *Mamatefet* (מאמתפת), a grassroots, volunteer-led non-profit organization supporting Israeli moms, moms-to-be, and moms in crisis in Vancouver, *b'Ivrit* (in Hebrew). *Mamatefet* was formed to provide support to women, by women who have lived through similar transitions of immigration and motherhood.

The group pairs *otfot* — Israeli mothers, many of whom remember feeling isolated in a new culture, a different language,

and without the support of family — with *ne'etafot* — recipients of home-delivered meals, hospital and home visits and other support.

About one-third of *ne'etafot* live outside of Vancouver in the regional communities, and a Connect Me In micro-grant will support three upcoming programs to connect women who are otherwise unable to participate in *Mamatefet* programs located far from where they live.

Jewish Federation has also provided Connect Me In micro-grants to Limmud Vancouver to provide transportation to bring participants from the regional communities to attend their event, and to The Bayit to support their Lag B'omer celebrations.

To learn more about Connect Me In micro-grants, contact Orly Naim, Jewish Federation's manager, community development, at 604-561-2787.

Students in class at the Squamish Hebrew school.



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Meeting Changing Community Needs

Karen James, Jewish Federation's Board chair, believes that meeting changing community needs requires transforming the ways in which funds are generated, and providing multiple pathways for partner agencies to access support.

"Diversifying the ways in which Jewish Federation generates funds is a key factor in being able to address growing and evolving community needs. Jewish Federation is adapting to changing philanthropic trends and working proactively with donors to meet these needs. At the same time, we continue to deliver a strong Annual Campaign that benefits thousands of people, and that is great news for our community," said James.

You can see the impact of successful campaigns from past years throughout our community and in our partnership region in Israel. From the hiring of a local director of security, to new Jewish school programs in Langley and Squamish, to inclusive activities for children with and without disabilities in Kiryat Shmona, to events that welcome newcomers to Vancouver, your support enables community members throughout the world to establish and strengthen their connection to Jewish life.