A MESSAGE FROM YANKAI

I am honored and humbled to take on the responsibilities of President of Calgary Jewish Federation. A big thank you and kudos haven’t been enough to express my gratitude to professor Bruce Lieb and the sitting board members for their leadership and efforts in building our community and ensuring Calgary is a great place to live a Jewish life. Thanks to you all for placing your trust in me and I look forward to working with everyone to make sure Calgary’s Jewish community stays strong and vibrant for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

Our community faces many challenges stemming from a long-lasting recession. We need to be innovative and tenacious to deliver the programs and services to our most vulnerable community members, and maintain the vibrancy of our community. We must be doubly committed to fundraising which makes all that possible. From my experience on the Federation board, I am confident that our professional staff and many volunteers will rise to the occasion.

I believe the key to the long-term success of Calgary’s Jewish community is to work together to increase the opportunities for our members to have positive and meaningful Jewish experiences to help anchor Judaism as a key component of our personal and communal identities. My vision for the community is simple: More Jews doing more Jewish things together.

Thank you to Harvey and Wynne Tal for chairing the 2017 UJA campaign. This year’s campaign slogan is Everyone Counts, which can be interpreted in two meaningful ways.

Firstly, the membership of our community is diverse, with a large variety of material and spiritual needs. Everyone needs count, and as such, Federation, alongside our partner agencies and the other organizations in the community, must work as hand as possible for the benefit of everyone.

Secondly, our community can only be great if everyone comes together to help build it. We are counting on everyone to stand up and be counted, as volunteers and as donors.

A story is told of a small village with only ten Jews, each of whom dutifully came to synagogue every single day to make sure they never missed making minyan. One day, a new Jew moved into town to the excitement of all – with eleven they were sure to have an extra person make a minyan. But what they found was that it had now become impossible to make a minyan, and only a handful would show up to each service. Why? Where each member of the community had known for sure that they were needed, they did their utmost to rise to answer the call and be counted. Now that there were eleven, each day a few would assume they were not needed because the others could pick up the slack.

We are fortunate to live in a thriving Jewish community with all sorts of activities and commemorations, social and spiritual organizations and institutions like shuls, schools and pools.

It’s a little too easy to take for granted that we can enjoy all this but leave the planning and paying for others, if just this once. If everyone had this attitude, we would have nothing to show for our effort, coming up short in our goals to care for our community’s diverse needs.

With Rosh Hodesh fast approaching, we say that our good deeds should be as potential as the seeds of a pomegranate. Please give generously to Federation’s UJA campaign, and may we all be blessed with a very sweet New Year!

Wishing you a Shana Tova U’metuchah!

Yankai Engel
President, Calgary Jewish Federation.
The phrase “looks can be deceiving” is a personal favourite for Miriam. She was born with a developmental disability that includes limited motor skills, which means people who don’t know her see her disability rather than the vibrant and talented young woman she is.

While Miriam’s days are full of fulfilling activities, the thing she felt was missing from her life was a Jewish connection. She went to Synagogue on holidays, and had Friday night dinner with her parents, but she wanted to meet other Jews and to feel a part of the whole Jewish community.

Miriam’s parents inquired about Federation’s Inclusion programs, including Kesher, a social club for Jewish adults with disabilities. The Kesher group meets twice a month for fun, stimulating and meaningful social and cultural activities. It was there that Miriam met Sharon, a volunteer with the Kesher program. They shared an interest in crafts and music and became fast friends. Her Kesher experience led Miriam to a meaningful volunteer opportunity within the Jewish community.

Inclusion is not only about providing opportunities like these, but also about making sure that our community is welcoming. It’s about demonstrating that in Jewish Calgary, everyone counts.

Donations to Federation’s UJA campaign can be your way of saying we all count. Please give generously.

#icount
#everyonecounts

SAVE THE DATE

JAC GALA
IN SUPPORT OF FEDERATION’S
2017 UJA CAMPAIGN

SAT, DEC. 2

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FUN MONEY CASINO | LOTS OF RAFFLE PRIZES

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