A MESSAGE FROM ADAM

A little over a year ago, I wrote one of my first Pomegranate articles, mainly reflecting on my first few weeks as CEO of Calgary Jewish Federation, and all of the potential I saw in Jewish Calgary. A year later, I can truly say that we, collectively, continue to build a strong, vibrant Jewish community; a community that possesses infrastructure well beyond many cities with larger Jewish populations, has an annual campaign that remains at the top of per capita giving in Jewish North America, has volunteers who are second to none, and has a generation of amazing children who will assure the Jewish future.

In the same article last year, I also highlighted the three key areas I envisioned as the underpinnings of our strong community and which I intended to develop and cultivate: Energy, Engagement, and Leadership. I had little idea at the time of writing the article that the political and economic climates, provincially and nationally, would change so dramatically over the course of the year, and that the underpinnings I had highlighted would become even more important for our success as a community.

Energy – It’s difficult to avoid lethargy or friction when one is concerned about family, employment, friends, and the general state of Canada and the world. Now, more than ever, it is critical to maintain a high level of constructive energy, and our community’s volunteer and professional leadership have been pouring their souls into all they do. Our UJA annual campaign volunteers worked tirelessly to ensure that every potential donor had an opportunity to support our community, and our generous donors continued to support the campaign, even in difficult financial times. At a time when the energy could have been sucked right out of community, instead we are seeing rejuvenated commitment to not only weather the storm, but to make sure we are poised to excel once the storm has passed.

Engagement – During difficult times, people tend to either hunker down and isolate themselves, or rise to the occasion and immerse themselves in community. Participation levels in PJ Library®, JAC (Young Adults), and campaign events were higher than prior years. More people donated to the 2015 UJA campaign. School enrollment and JCC course registration went up. In some cases, like Jewish Family Service Calgary, increased engagement is bittersweet – it means that more people are likely experiencing family or financial challenges, but it also demonstrates that those same people trust JFSC and feel comfortable reaching out for help.

Leadership – The key to good program offerings and to viable organizations is strong and diverse leadership. Jewish Calgary has some of the best lay and professional leadership in North America. Our organizations, congregations, and Jewish communal agencies are populated with talented and committed volunteer leaders, not only on their boards, but on their committees, task force groups and beyond. As well, the diverse and impressive professional leadership that exists in the city is second to none. To continue that course, a focal point of 2016 will be to recruit new leadership, and to support the development of both new and current leaders so that they possess the necessary toolkit to best serve Jewish Calgary for years to come.

Finally, in last year’s POM article I concluded by referencing Tu B’Shevat, which is quickly approaching, and it’s appropriate for me to do so once again. During Tu B’Shevat, our tradition offers an opportunity to appreciate all that we have and all of the wonder in the natural world. We are encouraged to sample many different fruits, in order to understand and appreciate the abundance available to us. This year, as we appreciate what we have, we recognize that now, and for the foreseeable future, the socio-political and economic climates will prove challenging for many in our community. Just as a deeply rooted and well-nurtured tree can sustain harsh weather, so too will our well-supported and caring community weather difficult times. A community is like a fruit tree – growing with nurture and love, and yielding wonderful, nutritious fruit in the form of friends, family, belonging, and meaning. May we all enjoy the fruits of our communal labour, and continue to plant seeds for those who come next.

B’Shalom,

Adam Silver, CEO

Calgary Jewish Federation and Calgary JCC
Our youngest community members celebrated Chanukah with a Shalom Baby Playgroup party. This group meets twice a month, giving young parents a place to socialize and their children a new stimulating environment. For information, contact Katie at 403-537-8592 or kwainer@jewishcalgary.org.

Next Shalom Baby dates are January 28 and February 11
Next Tot Shabbat dates are February 5 and 19

A TRADITION OF SUMMER FUN
AN AMAZING SUMMER AND LIFE-LONG FRIENDSHIPS

One Happy Camper provides grants of up to $1,000 to children attending Jewish overnight camp for the first time.*

Visit OneHappyCamper.org to find your camp and apply.

For information, contact Judy Shapiro at 403-444-3153 or jshapiro@jewishcalgary.org

*Some conditions apply

2015 UJA CAMPAIGN

Although it wasn’t yet Chanukah, the gelt was flying (both the real kind and the fun kind) at JAC’s Gold & Black Gala on December 5. Everyone was dressed up and looking sharp as they rolled the dice, double-downed and rouletted their way to doing a great mitzvah raising funds for our community through Federation’s United Jewish Appeal campaign. Amazing raffle prizes, 50/50, and delicious hors d’oeuvres rounded out a great evening of gambling for a good cause. Kol Hakavod to the Gala chairs, Danielle Braitman, Jaclyn Switzer and Aliya Tafber.

It’s not too late to donate

www.jewishcalgary.org/ways-to-give
403-444-3154

Akiva Students Support UJA

UJA staff went to Akiva Academy in November to speak to the Junior High Students about the importance of tzedakah and the role that UJA plays in our community and around the world. Each student was given a Pushka (tzedakah box) and was challenged to raise as much as they could before winter break. The students began collecting right away and their campaign really heated up over Chanukah. Kol Hakavod to Akiva Academy students for their enthusiastic embrace of the mitzvah of tzedakah.
February is Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month

Alvin Law

Sunday February 7
7:00pm • Calgary JCC
Register at www.jewishcalgary.org

There is no charge for this event, but please contact Karina Szulc at karinas@jewishcalgary.org or 403-389-6994 to let her know if you are planning to attend or for more information.

Free Event

Please bring cans of food for Miriam's Well Food Bank