A MESSAGE FROM ADAM

S halom friends,

Connection: the feeling of a direct and special relationship between things or people. Many of you are familiar with the meaningful connections we in Jewish Calgary share with Jewish communities across Canada and with our extended Israeli family in Etzah Hagalil. The closeness of these connections was never more evident than in the last few weeks.

On February 11, our Partnership2Gether (P2G) family was united in concern for the welfare of our Israeli friends, as an incident involving Iran and Syria resulted in alarms sounding throughout our partner region of Etzah Hagalil. Immediately, people involved in the partnership shared thoughts of concern, of worry, and of support with our Israeli counterparts. We imagined ways we might help and we prayed for quiet. This incident alone is a spotlight on deficiencies in emergency medical services in the area, and on challenges in fortifying homes and schools to government-prescribed levels – challenges the Partnership may help address. Overall, the scenario reminded the Canadian partners in P2G just how exposed our extended Israeli family is, and that we cannot assume that the peaceful quest that existed for the most part over the last number of years will remain. We have been reassured that all is currently fine and relatively back to normal, but that anxiety remains high. And that preparations continue to be made for the next incursion or safety issue. While we are so far away physically, our Israeli friends told us that our support and connection helps keep morale high in Etzah Hagalil.

The equally strong connection among Canadian Jews was evident earlier in February when Westerners gathered to focus on engagement and continuity. On February 5, along with partner communities from Edmonton and Vancouver, Calgary Jewish Federation gathered a number of its major philanthropic contributors at an event hosted in Palm Springs, California.

Over 50 people gathered at the home of Edmonton hosts Pam and David Mergulians to meet one another, share stories of meaning and impact, and to hear remarks from Richard Sandler, volunteer Chair of Jewish Federations of North America. The mood was uplifting, the conversations insightful, and the bond was unquestionable. The coming together of key supporters from different communities and the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue highlighted the connection we, in Calgary, have with our Grant-to-Grant partners elsewhere in Canada.

Richard Sandler, having seen many communities in North America and Israel, shared his observations of trends and challenges for the Jewish future. His thoughts focused on reaching young adults and the next generations in different, more meaningful ways, on engaging in civil discourse with one another, especially when opinions differ, and on grappling with divergent views of Israel. The ensuing dialogue, celebration of successes, and commitment to future action reflected the strong sense of connection among those Canadian leaders. If the feelings of this group of committed philanthropists reflects the general Jewish population, the future of Canadian Jewry is promising.

Connections. We are connected as Jewish Calgary, as part of a Grant-to-Grant family, and as part of a broader Canadian-Israeli partnership. May we all feel the comfort of connection: of supporting and being supported, of celebrating current successes, and of aspiring to stronger community.

R’shalom,

Adam Silver
Chief Executive Officer
Calgary Jewish Federation.