I am writing this message having just returned from Jewish Federations of Canada-United Israel Appeal (JFC-UIA) national board meetings in Montreal. During these meetings volunteer and professional colleagues gathered to wrestle with difficult topics while dreaming of, and planning for, a Jewish Canada of which we can all be proud. As we discussed central issues of Canadian Jewish life – developing young leadership, combating anti-Semitism, supporting Jewish life from Halifax to Victoria, and more – it became apparent that we are so much more than a network of Jewish communities. Rather, we are one large Jewish community that spans across the breadth of our great country. We are 400,000 strong, and while we might have geographically specific challenges and opportunities, success in one location amounts to success in others.

Many in our community might not be aware of Calgary Jewish Federation’s role in the broader JFC-UIA framework, or Calgary’s connections to the national, Israel, or overseas picture. As a network of Federated (those with Federations) and unFederated cities and regions (those without Federations), JFC-UIA thrives through the support of individual communities contributing to the strength of the whole, both in leadership and through financial support. To ensure equity and representation across Canada, each community is allocated a share of JFC-UIA board positions proportioned on Jewish-population size and annual UJA campaign success. In Calgary’s case, our board’s president sits as a voting member of the JFC-UIA board, and presents Calgary’s voice to the national scene, while also acting in the best interests of the system as a whole. When the system is functioning well, it is a remarkable experience of which to be a part.

The components of system include: JFC-UIA, our Canada-wide Federation and regional communities network and home base for Israel experience programs and March of the Living; CIJA, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, acting as our advocacy and community security partner; JDC, the Joint Distribution Committee, working in 70 countries to alleviate hunger and hardship, rescue Jews in danger, create lasting connections to Jewish life, and provide immediate relief for victims of natural and man-made disasters; and JAFI, the Jewish Agency for Israel, ensuring that every Jewish person feels an unbreakable bond to one another and to Israel no matter where they are in the world. Together, all of these components provide a comprehensive approach to building national and worldwide Jewish pride, from supporting our vulnerable, to empowering our next generation of leaders, to keeping issues of community security and government/interfaith relationships at the fore, to maintaining a connection between Israel and diaspora Jewry, and to acting as Or L’Goyim (a light unto the nations).

It is inspiring to see all Canadian Jewish communities come together around one table, no matter how big or small, focused on strengthening not only the individual parts, but leveraging those parts for a very strong whole – creating a true coast to coast Jewish community. It is comforting to know that Jewish Calgary’s voice is important to the system and that we are heard and valued by our peers and colleagues. At a time where many challenges are in front of us but, so too are many opportunities, it remains incredibly important that we are part of a collaborative network in which Everyone Counts!

If you would like to learn more about any part of our national system, or discuss Calgary’s role within it, I would be pleased to chat with you. Please contact me at asilver@jewishcalgary.org.

B’Shalom

Adam Silver
CEO, Calgary Jewish Federation
LIFE & LEGACY™ is an endowment program designed to help you create permanent legacy gifts, demonstrating your belief in the continuity of Jewish life in Calgary for generations to come.

Mazal Tov to our agency partners:
- Akiva Academy
- Beth Tzedec Congregation
- Calgary JCC
- Calgary Jewish Federation
- Camp BB Riback
- House of Jacob Mikveh Israel
- Jewish Family Service Calgary
- Jewish Historical Society of Southern Alberta
- Temple B’nai Tikvah
- The Calgary Jewish Academy

I found a fruitful world, because my ancestors planted it for me. Likewise, I am planting for future generations. – Talmud, Tannit 23a

To learn more about how to create your Jewish legacy, contact Diana Kalef at 403-444-3154 or dkalef@jewishcalgary.org.