



Dear <<First Name>>,

"It is always darkest before the dawn" – Tom Fuller

As we celebrate Chanukah, during a particularly dark time in our modern Jewish history, this holiday is a reminder of the importance of bringing light, hope, and inspiration to our world.

One of the most beautiful aspects of Chanukah is that each night, as we light a new candle, our Chanukah menorah shines brighter, bringing more light into our lives. And, as we retell the story of Chanukah, we are reminded of the necessity to be brave in the face of dire circumstances and never to lose hope, even when things seem most bleak.

Each of us, like a brightly burning Chanukah candle, holds a spark of light and hope. Individually, our light may feel lonely and unseen in the darkness, but as we come together in community, the multitude of our lights amplify each other, making us shine brighter together.

This is truly the beauty of community. Together we are a plethora of light that represents a multitude of differences: politically, religiously, culturally, demographically, and personally. Respecting those differences and letting our lights shine together is what makes us stronger and more radiant. We need each other to shine our brightest light.

While in mathematical terms the whole is equal to the sum of its parts, in communal terms, when we come together, we are far greater. Examples abound of times and programs when our community has gathered, showcasing the beauty of a shared communal experience. We remember those moments

when it felt so good and important to be together. That was how I felt when we participated with 300,000 people at the Israel rally in Washington several weeks ago with our large delegation from Rochester and at our vigils in the wake of Pittsburgh and October 7. It is how our Levine Summit to End Hate felt last fall with a diverse array of community members. Just this week we felt the power of community when our rock-star volunteers came to the Federation office to assemble, pack, and deliver 150 Chanukah care packages for college students at the University of Rochester, RIT, Nazareth, and SUNY Geneseo.



I really could write pages of examples about how our most significant communal moments happen together and I am certain you recall similar experiences, too. We think of moments of great joy and times of sorrow spent in community. This is why, despite our differences, we must support each other and spread each other's shared light rather than diminish and extinguish each other. We must default to kindness and understanding recognizing the best in each other. The holiday of Chanukah continues to remind us that together the Jewish people triumph in times of darkness when we come together, despite our differences, and confront our challenges respectfully and in community.

I am so proud that our Federation is at the forefront of building and protecting community, just like in the ancient time of the Maccabees. We are serving on the front lines of Jewish life, ensuring our safety and security, supporting Israel, fighting antisemitism, developing relationships with allies, and building a brighter future for all. We do this in good times and bad. Day in and day out, on

your behalf. This is why we are able to respond in any given moment to critical needs while serving our community in the ways we have all grown to expect.

Just like the lights on our Chanukah menorah that shine brighter each night, our Federation's work is magnified and amplified by each of our thousands of donors. We accomplish so much more together than any of us can individually. **This is why our [annual campaign](#) is so critical.** Together, our collective impact is far-reaching, addressing the most pressing needs in our Jewish world, in Rochester, Israel, and around the globe. Our collective giving is far greater than the sum of each gift.

With your support, we will continue to advocate, build, serve, and protect our community as we honor the diversity of people and opinions in our community. We can only do this together. If you have not already supported the annual campaign, please consider [making your pledge today](#). Your contribution truly makes a difference.

I thank each of you for being a light in our community and an inspiration to our Federation leadership so that we continue this important hard work from which we all benefit every day. We will continue to respond to every emerging need while maintaining and expanding the services and programs we offer you.

As you light your Chanukah menorah, and it grows brighter each night, please think about our community and how we are so much stronger and brighter together. I hope that you will continue to support our communal efforts so that we can continue to shine together.

Happy Chanukah and Shabbat Shalom.



Meredith



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