



Dear <<First Name>>,

Back in the day, there was a New York Telephone commercial that had a catchy tag line: "We're all connected, New York Telephone." The ads were often sweetly sappy as they highlighted connecting with old friends and family. For the past few months, this jingle has popped into my head on various occasions both wondering if we are really all connected and assuring myself that we are in some positive way. Mostly I have felt that we all need to deepen our connections and build understanding and support while longing for New York Telephone to have been right in its

assertion that we are indeed all connected.

As we continue to experience mounting antisemitism, I certainly see that the past several years are inextricably connected with the long-term impact of Jewish hatred. The BDS movement that delegitimizes Israel's right to exist, anti-Zionism, tropes of Jewish power and control, global conspiracy of world domination or being blamed for the ills of the world all find their roots in age old antisemitism. It simply does not matter if the antisemitism is coming from progressive circles and relates to demonizing Israel or conservative ones that trade in conspiracy theories of Jewish power, the impact is the same growing hatred, violence and fear. We all worry about what the future will bring because history has shown us what happens when hate runs rampant.

Talking and writing about this though is simply not enough, nor can the Jewish community confront antisemitism on its own. We need allies – friends, neighbors and those who know that Jew hatred is wrong – whether they know a Jew, or not because we are all connected. I like to believe that most thinking folks know that blaming any group for the ills of society is inaccurate and dangerous.

It is heartening to know that we do have allies, across our community, country and the world. In Rochester, many local companies support the work of our Jewish Federation. These businesses, our corporate sponsors, ensure that we are able to meet our mission of building and protecting a strong and vibrant Jewish community. We are extremely grateful for their support that help us thrive. [Please take note of these businesses.](#) We are truly grateful for their partnership and our success is intrinsically tied to their support. I hope you remember our corporate sponsors with your patronage.

Sunday night marks the first night of Chanukah. This festival of lights, which commemorates our fight to survive as a people, is the perfect opportunity for our community to come together and show its support, during these very dark days.

Again this year Federation is participating in the national Shine A Light on Antisemitism efforts that are happening locally and across the United States, over the Chanukah holiday. As we look for ways to brighten our dark days, when our Rochester community shows up for us, this brings light to everyone.

There are several opportunities for us to display our Jewish pride while encouraging the entire community to show its support through the Shine A Light project.

Shine A Light includes a variety of programs and resources about antisemitism that are [available on the Federation website](#) that you can share widely.

Once again, Federation is collaborating with Roc Against Antisemitism on the Blue Light Project. From Chanukah until Yom HaShoah we are asking all community members to replace their outside light bulbs with blue ones to show solidarity and support of the Jewish community. This year businesses across the city are also supporting this effort and going blue. We deeply appreciate the company Kovalsy Carr who has donated the blue light bulbs since the inception of this project. Please click here for details about the blue light project. [Blue Light FAQ](#). And more on this important grassroots effort. [The Blue Light Project](#).

As you drive around this holiday season, please take note of the blue lights across our community!

On Monday evening, in partnership with ROCCU (Rochester Clergy and Community United) we are hosting a community-wide [Shine A Light on Antisemitism Candle Lighting](#) at Brighton Town Hall at 5:15 PM. This event is for the entire community and is a wonderful opportunity for all of our friends and neighbors to light candles together and show support of the Jewish community.

New York Telephone was right. We are all connected, more than ever, for better and for worse. We cannot succeed as a community when the forces of hate and antisemitism fiercely try to pull us apart. If we make the effort to learn, grow and understand each other, if we make the time to show-up and lend support, we only serve to strengthen each other and our community in totality. At a time when it feels like the world is more disconnected than ever, let's remember that we have more in common than we do in difference and let's shine brightly so that we all thrive.

I look forward to seeing you at the many Chanukah events across our community including the Chanukah party at the JCC, Chabad menorah lightings, synagogue Chanukah parties and so much more!

I wish you a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy Chanukah.

Shabbat shalom –



Meredith
CEO



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