



# The Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON

100, 10220-156 St. Edmonton, AB T5P 2R1 (780) 487-0585 [www.jewishedmonton.org](http://www.jewishedmonton.org)

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton held a board meeting with representatives from organizations across the community this week. While we could not gather in person as hoped, it was a pleasure to see familiar faces and discuss common concerns. It provided an opportunity to discover about what is happening in our community. One event that was discussed was the Bissell Centre Thanksgiving lunch. Yasher Koach to the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada (NCJWC) and Beth Israel Synagogue for organizing, which we were so pleased to sponsor again this year.

Apart from the camaraderie and banter, I appreciated how we could all share information and ideas as we continue to cope with the fourth wave of the pandemic. Our synagogues and agencies are resilient and supportive as we all weather through this challenging time.

With so much uncertainty about resuming activities and travel, it is easy to get mired in worry and despair. I encourage you to check in with friends and relatives about their mental health, as we need to watch out for one another's physical health. You can take a self-assessment on the [Canadian Mental Health Association website](#) and find further tools as well.

We are fortunate to have a professional team at Jewish Family Services who continue to provide counselling services and other resources. Please contact them if you or a loved one need support.

Did you know that the COVID-19 relief fund established last winter is still available for people who need grocery gift cards and emergency funds? Individuals and families who are struggling from the effects of the pandemic can apply for these funds. Please contact Jewish Family Services or your rabbi if you require this aid. The Jewish Free Loan Society provides an interest free loan and a confidential program. We are proud to fund this initiative. You can make an inquiry at [jewishfreeloan@edjfed.org](mailto:jewishfreeloan@edjfed.org) if you think this might be of help to you.

As I was preparing this message, eager to share the actions of our federal government regarding Holocaust remembrance and combatting antisemitism, I came across a news article from Texas. Perhaps you read it as well? A school administrator advised teachers that if they have a book about the Holocaust in their classroom, they should also have a book with an "opposing" perspective. This perspective is supposed to combat "widely debated and controversial issues". While this deplorable action took place in the United States, it is a proof that we all need to be vigilant about antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

I'm encouraged that steps will continue to be taken to fight against antisemitism and Holocaust denial in Canada. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made an important announcement this week at the Malmo International Forum. The federal government will make permanent the role of the Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism. The Hon. Irwin Cotler has filled this role and both the Federations and Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) have been advocating this as a permanent position. We discussed this issue with federal election candidates. We are further heartened by the commitment to expand education materials, online harm legislation, and support for the International Holocaust Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism. You can read more about it in [this press release](#). NCJWC is hosting Cotler as a keynote on Sunday morning and you can [tune in here](#).

Shabbat shalom and I hope you have a moment to enjoy the beautiful colors of fall.

*D. Lewitt*

Stacey