



# The Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON

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I will confess that lately I have had little time to read, however one book that is on my list is *People Love Dead Jews* by Dara Horn. I had the pleasure of hearing her in conversation with Bari Weiss last month, and again yesterday on CBC's [The Current with Matt Galloway](#) regarding Holocaust comparisons with anti-vaxxers. A question that Matt posed was how do you teach your children about antisemitism? What do you tell them?

I thought back to this past spring, when my own teens took the antisemitism they were facing as upsetting but unsurprising. Dara responded, "antisemitism appeals to people who fear responsibility". This approach struck a chord with me, as it opens many more conversations about what it means to take responsibility on a personal, communal, and societal level.

Judaism is a tradition based on literacy, critical inquiry, and community obligation (think of a minyan, the requirement of 10 adults in order to hold prayers) and a commandment to take responsibility and contribute to the community. For us at the Jewish Federation, this is à propos, as we welcome new board members and thank those who have taken this responsibility to heart and given so much of themselves to the community and to our Federation board.

Matt's question—and Dara's answer—were that much more timely considering the recent debacle with the Toronto District School Board. If you have not followed the news, trustee Alexandra Lulka called out (via social media) anti-Jewish teaching materials distributed in classrooms in May, and there was a recommendation to censure her. The vote on whether to censure her was shot down on Wednesday night. I hope you acted by signing the petition to the school board circulated by our advocacy partner, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. Our national community is a small community and we need to be there for one another.

Speaking of support, the Shine a Light on Antisemitism initiative was glowing across social media during Chanukah. Federations in the United States and Canada banded together to demonstrate how important it is to raise awareness about this cause. How our community stepped forward in Edmonton to show support for the mosaic tile project touched me. I appreciate how Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, Councillors Jennifer Rice and Sarah Hamilton, Senator Paula Simons and MLA Lorne Dach took time out of their busy schedules to make a tile and listen to concerns about antisemitism.

Rabbi Zolly Claman delivered a D'var Torah at our annual general meeting in which he asked a question, "What would you do if someone or something inspired you?" (and by taking small actions, you will internally inspire yourself to do more). What inspiration are you looking for in order to engage with our community as a program participant, volunteer, or leader? What small actions are you willing to start with? I have every confidence that we can help find that place for you, and our strategic plan is where we will start. You can see the presentation delivered by

Doug Wolch and myself [here](#). We look forward to sharing more of this work with you in January as we continue to roll it out.

We will have many opportunities in the new year to volunteer with Holocaust education outreach, with planning of community events and celebrations, and more. In the meantime, we have an exciting event planned for December 19 welcoming Bonnie Stern in conversation with Larry Harris who will teach us to make babka! [You can register here](#).

Shabbat Shalom,

*D. Lewitt*

Stacey