



The Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON

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When my husband and I moved to Edmonton from Montreal about six years ago, we quickly discovered what a special place Jewish Edmonton is. On arriving, we did not know a soul. I had the name of one person to look up, but her connection to us was pretty distant—a friend of a friend of one of my colleagues at the Jewish Public Library in Montreal. I called her, even though it was a long shot.

Her welcome could not have been warmer. She brought us into her world like long-lost cousins. She invited us to a dinner party, which led to another dinner and another. She fixed me up with some walking buddies to hike the river valley. They, in turn, introduced me to others. By the time Rosh Hashanah rolled around, our network was so big and welcoming that we had to turn down holiday invitations because we could not be in two places at once.

Now, fast forward six years, and this community is not only our social world but also my professional world. In my work, every day, the same kindness, generosity and cohesion I observed as a newcomer drive the success of our United Jewish Appeal (UJA) campaign. I see this in our network of over 60 canvassers, many of them busy professionals, who devote hours of their time to raise funds for UJA, year after year. We take it for granted that this is normal, yet when I speak to my counterparts in other, larger, Jewish Federations, they are envious. They have difficulty recruiting canvassers and have to get by with much smaller teams.

And then, of course, there are our donors. Their generosity and commitment are truly extraordinary. Every day, I have the good fortune to speak to people on the phone who want to help. This year, with the pandemic raging and the economy slow, our donors have been incredible, with many of them increasing their gifts significantly. When donors call to make pledges, they always ask how the campaign is going and often offer extra help. Last week, I received a note from a long-time donor. She wrote to thank me, the staff and the UJA team for our hard work, while it was she who had made a major gift. In our community, the thanks go not only to the givers but also to the askers. Our community has a true understanding of the meaning of Tzedakah.

It is thanks to this caring and deep understanding of the power of giving that the UJA team has secured 460 gifts and raised over \$720,000 to date. And, we are not done yet. Canvassers will continue to call donors in the coming weeks to ensure that we raise enough funds to meet community-wide needs.

I give my deepest thanks, on behalf of the UJA team, to all the kind and generous donors who have made gifts to the 2021/2022 UJA campaign.

If you have not yet made a gift, you can do so at jewishedmonton.org, or by calling me at 780-487 0585, ext. 206.

Shabbat Shalom,

Susan