



The Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON

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The texts I get from friends these days are all beginning with, “How is your house? Are you all healthy?” With numbers of Omicron cases as high as they are, it is no surprise that it is touching so many in our community as well. We are beyond the sourdough baking phase of the pandemic, and keen to put this behind us.

If your ability to cope with the strains of the pandemic is reaching its tether, I encourage you to contact the counsellors at Jewish Family Services or seek pastoral care with one of our local rabbis. Whether your strain is physical, financial, or mental health related, there is support available. Our community is here for another and will see each other through this challenging stage.

We continue to offer programming for families and kids, connect post-secondary students through Hillel, welcome newcomers, and plan for spring events and programs. If you have not yet registered for the *History of Jew Hate: A virtual conversation with Ben Freeman* partnered event with Calgary Federation and both Calgary and Edmonton libraries, you can do so [here](#). Ben is a highly sought-after speaker and will be a formidable experience.

While it may be hard to imagine a point when a few hundred of us will gather to schmooze, laugh, and celebrate, those times will come again. We have online events to educate and engage one another in the meantime.

This past week saw the launch of our Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic art project with Mayor Amarjeet Sohi and artist Lewis Lavoie. Once we can safely meet anew, we are eager to tour this through our community buildings so that you can have the chance to examine it in person. In the meantime, please visit our [website for the interactive experience](#) and the [Reel Mensch video](#) that tells the story of the project.

This coming weekend marks the festival of Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of fruit trees. Not only is Tu B'Shevat a time to raise awareness about and care for the environment, we celebrate it as a symbol of renewed growth and flowering in the Land of Israel. While our deep freeze has not brought flowering trees, I hope a fresh start to 2022 has brought you restored energy for the seeds of a thriving, engaged, connected, and caring Jewish Edmonton that we can grow together.

Whether you are planting trees through the Jewish National Fund, taking part in the Beth Israel Synagogue fruit seder, the Shabbat Shirah hike in Laurier Park with Temple Beth Ora or their movie and meet up with a congregation in Israel, our PJ Library hot chocolate story time or the PJ Our Way crafts and Kahoot events, Jewish Edmonton is full of opportunities for all to enjoy in celebration of Tu B'Shevat.

Shabbat Shalom,

D. Lewitt

Stacey