



# The Jewish Federation OF EDMONTON

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When I woke up yesterday, the snowfall from the day before had stopped and the sun was shining. Some might say this was auspicious. It was the first in person community gathering we have hosted since 2019, with a commemoration of Yom Hashoah at the Alberta Legislature grounds by the Holocaust Monument. Faced with rising antisemitism and Holocaust distortion and denial, this ceremony is an important part of the work that we do at the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. It is an opportunity for us as a community to mourn together, to remember collectively and to pray, to honour our own survivors and their families, and for outreach with the greater community. Past president Steve Shafir offered moving remarks and Senator Paula Simons gave a chilling, cautionary tale. [Watch the video of the ceremony.](#)

The Holocaust Education committee, chaired by Colin Muscat and supported by Jenn Magalnick, organized the ceremony. I want to offer a big thank you and yasher koach to them and all who gave guidance on this event. Special thank you to Talmud Torah Society for continuing to partner with us and ensuring the students could take part as well.

This is a busy time of year for our community, as next week we follow suit with two more of what we refer to as the “Yoms”. Yom HaZikaron is our opportunity to mourn the soldiers, who have died or were injured in service to the State of Israel, and the victims of terror. Whether you know someone personally who has been touched by this tragedy or not, we can all take a moment of silence to honour the sacrifice made for the State of Israel. This ceremony will take place at Beth Shalom Synagogue at 8 p.m. on May 3, and be livestreamed.

Last but not least is the third Yom, Yom Haatzmaut, a celebration of Israel on her 74th birthday. Israel is the only Jewish state. Alongside the Jewish citizens, it provides a home of religious freedom to many faiths, including Muslims, Druze, and Christians. Having recently returned from Israel, my Jewish pride was strengthened and now I have feelings of optimism and resilience. I hope that the special ceremony planned by volunteers Keren Scheinman and Osnat Wine does the same for you and the celebration planned by the committee under the guidance of Meirav Or fills you with joy.

As our friend and community leader Jared Shore recently said, “The sequence of Yoms is our modern-day reminder of where hate can lead and our reminder that we must be strong and determined in the face of it. For the final piece of never forgetting, is celebrating exactly who we are.”

Today is the culmination of National Volunteer Week. The majority of our work at the Federation is supported daily by our passionate volunteers. Thank you to each one of you, too many to name, who support our programs and community.

I hope to see you at our Yoms and at our upcoming Edmonton Jewish Film Festival, whether at the theatre or in our Zoom talks. You can register for these events on our website at [www.jewishedmonton.org](http://www.jewishedmonton.org).

Shabbat Shalom,

*D. Lewitt*

Stacey