

A new mom walks into a room filled with babies and other Jewish mothers. She sets down the baby carrier that is holding her newborn and a friendly face greets her. She's introduced to others in the room and makes connections. This mom leaves the Shalom Baby program smiling because she's made new friends who are experiencing the same path.

This is one example of collaboration in Jewish Edmonton. I have noticed the word collaboration popping into my conversations more and more. Whether we are seeking to build and work towards new initiatives, or we are being asked to join our efforts or expertise with other agencies, we are fast learning how crucial it is that we all work together to the betterment of Jewish Edmonton.

By collaborating with external funders, such as the Grinspoon Foundation, we can bring Shalom Baby into our community as an organized program. With 28 subscribers, parents and babies are gathering for the first birthday party this weekend. Some are new to the community, some are fresh to parenthood, and some are recent to joining in community programs. We are excited to welcome more babies and families this coming year in partnership with our local partners.

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton focuses on building relationships that lead to collaboration. There are examples we see often. By working with our local synagogues, we have provided celebrations and programs over the last few months, whether for Yom Hazikaron, Yom Haatzmaut, or Pride Shabbat. As we enter more programming in the coming months, we plan to explore more opportunities to bring the community together.

Jewish Family Services has helped us continue to implement the integrated bursary program in an anonymous and dignified manner. This partnership has been instrumental. We look forward to sharing communication expertise with them as well. Their additional workshops supporting survivors of genocide is a wonderful addition to the "When we were seeds" exhibit. This exhibit features portraits of Holocaust survivors and residential school survivors, which we are collaborating with the Edmonton Public Library to showcase this fall.

By meeting regularly with security representatives of each agency and our Edmonton Police Service, we ensure that the safety and security needs of our community are being met. We will also have the national security advisor from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs lead back to school and back to shul training towards the end of the summer.

I applaud every volunteer, every agency president, member of the board, and even those who take the time to support and enjoy the many programs and opportunities in our community. If there is one thing I have learned over time, no one person can do it all on their own. The initial step to creating a community is to show up. However, the



whole is so much more than the sum of its part when we gather in the spirit of collaboration.

Shabbat Shalom,

*D. Lewitt*

Stacey