

As the saying goes, "It's been a week." Whether you are one to follow social media, you probably heard of recent events with Ye (Kanye West) spewing antisemitism to his many followers. The influence it has had off the platforms is a concern for all of us. The impact of his statements goes far beyond the shares, likes, and effect of people scrolling through their feeds; in 'real life' it emboldens actors such as the group performing Nazi salutes while hanging a banner in agreement with his words on an overpass over the Los Angeles Freeway. Further consideration is the purchase of Twitter by Elon Musk, and his commitment to 'free speech' with minor oversight on the platform. [This article delves into the details.](#)

Antisemitism is the oldest hatred, pernicious in how it molds to the tone of the day. While we will not eradicate it, we commit the Jewish Federation of Edmonton to addressing it locally and equipping our community to address it and cope with it. We heard your concerns that this is a top priority when we were surveying on our strategic plan. When you bolster the United Jewish Appeal (UJA) campaign, you are supporting our work to focus on antisemitism, whether through advocacy, education, or enabling other work.

In September, we hosted [a workshop](#) for junior high school students and their parents on recognizing and coping with antisemitism, and are now planning for a followup for all teens. We have been called upon by parents whose children, observing inappropriate comments in the classroom by a teacher, were concerned. Through our guidance, their conversations with the principal have now turned into an opportunity. Jenn Magalnick has been invited to speak with the educators to provide training and support. We will continue to offer Holocaust education and the Dianne and Irving Kipnes Holocaust Education Symposium to schools. We also have arranged the opportunity for teachers to attend the [Hamilton #NOMoreAntisemitism conference](#) for free.

REACH Canada is offering a [free, online course](#) on how to combat cyberhate on social media. The program starts on November 13 and lasts for four weeks. Participation requires only two hours a week. If you are on social media, I highly recommend taking this.

With the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism now formally adopted by the Province of Alberta, we have a tool in place to deal with antisemitism as it arises. Our strong relationships with the Hate Crimes Unit at the Edmonton Police Service ensure a responsive approach to incidents that are flagged to them by members of the community, and a responsibility to pursuing legal action where appropriate.

We will organize a focus group in late November with the Alberta government. Its Alberta Hate Crimes Committee is meeting with marginalized populations affected by hate and bias across the province to better understand the prevalence of hatred and prejudice in Alberta.



Last year, Jewish Federation of Edmonton used a grant from the Shine a Light campaign (through Jewish Federations of North America) to involve the community in generating a beautiful mosaic depicting community members' experience of antisemitism. Halted by COVID, we are now taking the Shine a Light on Antisemitism mosaic on tour throughout the city. This week we will launch the tour at the Alberta Legislature Rotunda. We invite you to view the mosaic during November at the Legislature, at the Beth Israel synagogue in December, or at city hall in January. We are developing further resources to educate and inform the public about the issue that will accompany the mosaic as it begins its tour.

This week, I will light my Shabbat candles and thinking about how I can live a Jewish life full of joy and pride in Edmonton. We have many programs and events coming up where we can gather and do this together. You can keep abreast of them through *The Bridge*, our weekly newsletter, and the [online community bulletin board](#) there as well.

I will travel to Israel next Friday, visiting our Partnership2Gether partners, furthering our community connections to our partner region and our friends. I look forward to sharing the experience with you and seeing how we as a community can keep strengthening our ties to Israel.

Shabbat shalom,

*D. Lewitt*

Stacey