



From the Desk of the Ceo

We are currently in the middle of the Omer, the seven weeks of **counting** the days between the second day of Passover and the beginning of Shavuot, linking the Exodus from Egypt with the giving of the Torah. The metaphors are ripe as we eagerly count the days to our first or even second vaccine, the days when we can safely see restrictions ease and hug our friends and family again.

Counting 25 years, the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival launches May 2. Counting the days until it begins has provided me with something to look forward to, just when I thought I had exhausted every show on Netflix! All kidding aside, the Film Festival committee has ensured a varied, compelling and engaging lineup of films and speakers to enhance the events. The shorts will be available all week and are a great excuse for a bowl of popcorn with your children or a midafternoon break! Supporting the film festival not only ensures a robust festival, it provides the funds for covid relief to individuals and organizations in our community.

In his Shabbat Message last week, Doug Wolch, Strategic Planning Chair, informed you about our Strategic Planning process to set priorities for the next 3-5 years. **Your opinions more than count**- we need to hear from you to help shape our future directions! Focus groups with the Board and Community leaders have started and we will be launching our survey later in May.

Making sure your voice counts

Invitations to participate in the 2021 Census are now arriving in the mail. The Government of Canada uses census information to plan important community services, such as employment programs, public transit, schools, hospitals, and more.

The last census underreported Jewish Canadians by a *large* margin, impeding our Jewish Federation of Edmonton's ability to address important issues we all care about, such as antisemitism, security, housing, healthcare, and fighting poverty.

One in every four census questionnaires is the long-form version and includes questions about ethnicity (Question 23) and religion (Question 30). So that the perspectives of Jewish Canadians are reflected in public policy, and to ensure we receive our fair share of programs and services, it is important for Jewish Canadians to be recognized by the Government of Canada as a thriving, growing, and engaged community.

If it is important to *you* to be counted as Jewish then **write "Jewish" in responding to Question 23, Question 30, or both!** For Question 23, which pertains to ethnicity, **you can include multiple answers** – for example, "Russian" and "Jewish" or "Moroccan" and "Jewish."

The Census is easy to fill out and is completely confidential. Make sure that your household is counted! Visit www.becounted.ca for more information.

Wishing you a Shabbat Shalom and a safe Lag Baomer,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D. Lewitt".