



From the desk of the CEO

This week we welcomed and oriented 6 new Board members at our Board orientation and retreat and began to plan for the year ahead. While we would have preferred a session in person, meeting on Zoom allowed us to welcome a special guest. **Mark Wilf, Jewish Federations of North America Board Chair (also known as the Minnesota Vikings Football team owner)** joined to thank us for the work of our Federation in a challenging time and shared some of his journey with us *“My identity as a philanthropist and a Jewish leader isn’t separate from my identity as a professional. I bring the same Jewish values to everything I do.”* You can read his remarks [here](#).

One role of a Federation board member is to be an ambassador to and from the community. The day after our retreat a new board member was approached by someone who told her *“how grateful and appreciative she was of the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and the Free Loan Society, “without whom she would have lost her house...”* While I do not know who she is (as this program is anonymous) with her permission I am posting this story. The free loan society is here to assist, and particularly now Covid 19 has exacerbated situations for many. [Learn more about the Free Loan Society here](#).

On Jan 27, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, all Albertans are welcome to a privately sponsored event through the Calgary Jewish Federation with preeminent professor and historian Deborah Lipstadt. I encourage you to register and remain informed about the nuances around the issue of Anti-Semitism. You can register through the EPL or via the link provided in the JFED. I had the privilege of hearing her speak this fall about this issue on campuses, and a speaker of this calibre is a wonderful opportunity for all of us. The Holocaust Education Committee is planning for the months ahead to ensure we have relevant local programs as well, despite restrictions that may still remain in place.

Steve Shafir and I met with our colleagues in Calgary and CIJA staff to discuss matters important to both our communities and how we can advocate for the vigilance against extremism and hate groups in Alberta. If speaking out on behalf of the community is important to you, we welcome your involvement on the advocacy committee.

Tal Toubiana continues to liaise with national security partners which allows our community to stay ahead of emerging situations.

Whether you are looking forward to a haircut, tattoo, or small outdoor gathering come Monday when restrictions are eased I wish you a peaceful weekend and a Shabbat Shalom.