



From the desk of the CEO

There are sure signs of spring all around, whether it is pictures of matzo balls in anticipation of Passover, equal daylight hours, or the many people out walking and outdoor socializing again. Our resilience as a people and the power of community has allowed us to get through a challenging time and together we will emerge stronger on the other side of this pandemic.

We recognize that the impacts of COVID19 are deep and that there are many in our community who are newly vulnerable as a result. This is why the COVID relief program was launched last week, with immediate assistance for basic human needs as the first phase. It is with thanks to the collaboration with our synagogues, school directors, and JFS that we are able to provide access to these funds. Further support into the community will be rolled out later this spring as proceeds from the [Film Festival](#) will further enhance this program. Sponsorship of the film festival will allow us to ensure that all have equal access to this free, virtual event and to support further relief to strengthen our community.

In a moment of pure coincidence, a curious thing occurred in the most timely of manners. This morning I received an [article](#) "Resilience isn't enough. We need renaissilience". in his presidential address to the Jewish Funders Network, Andres Spokoiny spoke to the power of community, courage, and humility. His siren call is that **resilience would ensure a return to what he had in place pre COVID19, but that more is needed to ensure vibrant future communities.** *Can we begin to shift the conversations towards "Post Traumatic Growth" rather than discussing our PTSD?*

While none of us know what the emergence from this pandemic will look like, we do know that there is no absolute return to 'normal'. The question is, do we even want what we had before? Are the communal structures and ways of operating bringing us to where we want to be? What will our future success look like? The reason this is so timely and coincidental is that our Strategic Planning committee were discussing these very same questions the night before.

The Jewish Federation of Edmonton will be entering into a community wide strategic planning process in the coming month in order to inform the Board and set strategic priorities for the next 3-5 years. We are now laying the groundwork and in the preparation stage of this effort.

I invite you to begin the discussion, on your walks and at your seder tables. Together we can ensure a communal dialogue so we can create the community that inspires us all.

Stacey