



From the Desk of the CEO

With our days getting a little longer we can finally say we are over the darkest days of winter. This extra bit of light and more tolerable temperatures bring hope that the worst might be behind us. How timely as the seniors among us are beginning to receive vaccinations, their zoom smiles as they share the news of their needles and appointments are the contagious element I want to receive! While many relied on children and grandchildren to navigate appointment bookings, I was heartened to hear how JFS staff were also busy arranging appointments for our most vulnerable.

This past week we joined our friends in Ottawa who honored Black History Month as they hosted I am Jewish: Honouring Black Jewish Voices, a very interesting and inspiring event featuring stories, speakers and even rapper Nissim Black. You can still catch the event using the [link here](#) until March 1.

If you are enrolled in PJ library or PJ Our Way you would have received an email from the Grinspoon Foundation offering get together grants for virtual programs with friends. Visit our [Facebook page](#) or Tag us [@JewishEdmonton](#) on Instagram to inspire others with your ideas and fun as we usher out winter together!

The kids aren't the only ones having the fun, the young adults at Hillel had a pre purim event and on February 28 will join partner Hillels from across Canada to hear from 3 Paralympic athletes who served in the IDF. If you know a university age student who may want to join they can still [register here](#).

There are two online programs coming up that I want to highlight and share with you. Forward Focus: A virtual mission to Israel offered by Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) is a 4 part series focusing on religious diversity in Israel. You can learn more further in the e-weekly or [register here](#). Our Jewish Speakers Series continues on March 7 with Rachel Sharansky Danziger, "Couches and Tents, Lessons from the Struggle for Soviet Jewry." Rachel's father, Natan Sharansky, started the struggle to fight for his right to immigrate to Israel that allowed Rachel to be born in Jerusalem. I am sure that Rachel will have many interesting insights to share with us.

In Israel today the airport remains closed – however- in the midst of a pandemic, hundreds of immigrants from Ethiopia are being welcomed into Israel as part of a family reunification program with their relatives who made Aliyah decades ago. I can not imagine the joy and relief when they are in one another's arms again after decades apart. The Jewish Federations have long championed Ethiopian Aliyah and our overseas contributions make this landmark moment as well as their continued absorption possible. You can read more about it [here](#).

I hope you had a joyful Purim and wish you all a peaceful weekend.

Shabbat Shalom