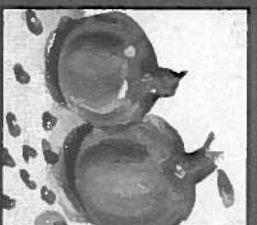


JEWISH free press



When small steps lead to big things

By **Richard Bronstein**
The Jewish Free Press

It would take a directory to list all the programs that connect the Calgary Jewish community to Israel. From venerable old institutions such as Jewish National Fund and Hadassah (now CHW), to newer entities such as Beit Halochem and Birthright. There are literally dozens of ways Calgary Jews can support and connect with Israel.

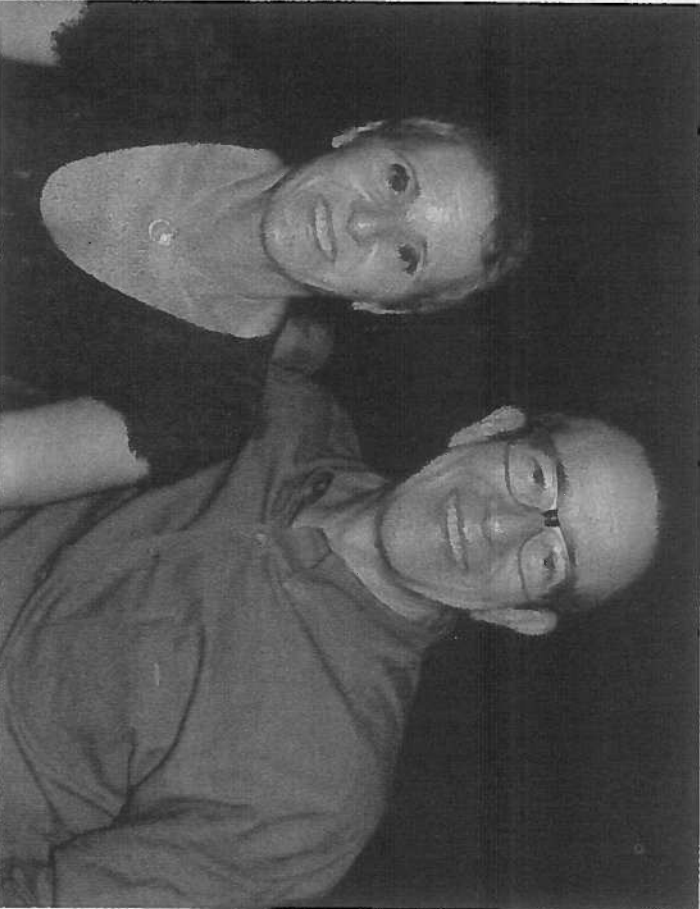
One program that tends to fly a bit under the radar is called P2G, which stands for Partnership 2Gether. This is a Calgary Jewish Federation funded program, supported by UJA and private donors, that links several Canadian Jewish communities with a particular region.

In this case P2G consists of Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg and Atlantic Canada who work together to help facilitate human development projects in the region of Israel known as Etzba Hagaili.

tion of northern Israel above Lake Kinneret that sticks up like a thumb into Lebanon

generation to remain here and start families of their own. And that is probably the sim-

One example of a typical P2G program is the current project to refurbish a com-



Cathy and Marty Cole launched the Cole Family Israel Project Fund at Calgary Jewish Federation as a way of celebrating their birthdays.

and Syria.

One of the main challenges facing his region of 50,000 is to create a quality of life that will encourage the younger

plest explanation of the mission statement of P2G – to encourage Etzba Hagaili to achieve its potential within a thriving Israel

puter lab at Uziel school. This initiative will benefit from the Cole Family Israel Project Fund at Calgary Jewish Federation,

established by Dr. Marty and Cathy Cole as a way of celebrating their birthdays. Cathy Cole also happens to be chairperson of the Calgary P2G volunteer committee and visited Etzba Hagaili not long ago and knows the impact these projects can have.

Calgary Jewish Federation has supported this school in the past, but Uziel still has many needs," she says. "The new computer lab is not only for the students, but will be used by the community for adult education. "Uziel school was the first Israeli educational experience for many Ethiopian immigrants and now there is a group of Bene Menashe from India being absorbed into Israeli society through the school.

"The new computer facilities will help Uziel kids connect with their counterparts at Akiva Academy through the Friends Across the Sea program for grade fives. The students at Uziel and Akiva will be able to work on joint projects together, which builds the concept of Jewish peoplehood."

Calgary Jewish Academy runs a similar program with HaGomel school. And in December it hosted a visit by Grade 9 students from Har Vagai school.

What appeals to Cathy Cole and others involved in P2G is that it is Canadian volunteers working with Israeli volunteers. When the Canadian volunteers go to Israel every year for business meetings (and the Israelis come to Canada once a year) there are pro-forma meetings with local officials and experts. But the real business is done people-to-people.

"Everything is very tangible, you can feel it and touch it and you get to meet the people who are benefiting from P2G programs," Cathy Cole says. "What impresses me is the Israeli volunteers take such strong stewardship over the projects. "They live there, they know what is important. They make sure the programs are working as they should and that the money is being spent wisely. "Typically the Israelis

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Calgary JCC to host International Women's Day event

The Calgary JCC will be hosting an International Women's Day event that aims to inspire, celebrate and empower women. Attendees can commemorate the contributions women have made in the local community and around the world, as well as raise awareness of issues that women still face today.

"This day gives everyone the opportunity to honour the women who have had a positive impact in their lives and it teaches us that we can all make a difference in this world."

Adora Nwofor, renowned comedian and model, will be headlining the event with her talk "Empowering Women with Humour." Hagar Renet, a registered psychologist, will facilitate the workshop "Building Confidence at Any Age," and Aviva Cheuk, President of CHW Calgary, will share her passion about "Women & Philanthropy."

Guests will also have the opportunity to browse a designer marketplace, enjoy

an exciting fashion show that demos all the latest new trends in style and makeup. The event will feature DJ live-music, a cash bar, and many opportunities to win sensational door prizes provided by the distinguished vendors.

The event will be held on Sunday, February 28 from 11:00 am to 4:00pm. The event is open to the public, and women of all ages are encouraged to come. Tickets can be purchased at www.calgaryjcc.com/registration, event code 8300, or by calling the JCC customer service desk at 403-253-8600. Early bird and JCC members' ticket prices are \$10 or \$15 at the door.

International

Women's

Day is officially celebrated on March 8 and it honours the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. It has been observed since the early 1900's and grew in popularity as a way to combat radical ideologies of the time. The international women's movement continues to grow in strength due to the collective efforts of people around the world who are concerned about human rights.

For complete event details please visit www.calgaryjcc.com/yom-haisha. For additional information please contact Shula Banachik by email at shula@cjcc.ca

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have a flair for innovation. When Ben Gurion University opened a medical school in Tsfat several years ago - P2G was one of the supporters - they tracked down almost every Israeli post-doc in the world and challenged them: 'We're opening a new medical school. We want you. There are no rules, just produce great doctors.'

P2G funds on-going projects and one-offs. For example, the high school in Emeq Afuta received funds for a robotics program that will help students participate in

top robotics competitions around the world. These kind of competitions produce the next generation of scientists and engineers. The robotics lab encourages Etzba Hagaili students to train for the high tech world of the future.

Another P2G project is designed for children with emotional problems. These are at risk youth who come from unstable families, they have trouble at school, and they may be dabbling with drugs. The local residents know there is a need for counseling and support for

these youth, but there is not enough trained staff and it was hard to find a permanent home. So the Israelis found an upside down solution.

"The Israelis came up with a very innovative solution, they call it Hatouch Al Hatouch - a mobile counseling unit that can travel around the region," Cathy Cole explained. "In a way this is the kind of thinking outside the box our Israeli partners do so well."

She also urges that Calgarians who are planning a visit to Israel to put Etzba Hagaili on the itinerary.

"It seems to be a forgotten part of the country but it is one of the most beautiful places in all Israel. We can put people in touch with our P2G partners in Israel. They are very familiar with Calgary."

The beauty of the P2G program is that it is very broad and diversified touching nearly every aspect of life in Etzba Hagaili. By pooling resources the Canada partners can achieve major impacts with relatively modest investments and improve the human potential of this entire region.

What is my home worth today?

By Rosalee Krygier

Valentine's Day is approaching but there doesn't seem to be any love in the air when it comes to the real estate market.

While the average price of all listings has only come down slightly (from \$542,129 this time last year to \$538,388 this year so far), volume is trending down significantly. January 2014 saw 1,439 transactions, January 2015 saw 880, and January 2016 will likely see a projected 630 or so, as per information available when this article was written.

We are definitely in a buyer's market, as well as a renter's market. If you are selling, or own a rental, be sure to PRICE IT RIGHT and do your research. I project at least 12 to 18 months before any real positive changes come into effect.

Fun Fact:

The Seattle Kingdom was so expensive that it wasn't paid off until 2015, a full 15 years after it was demolished.

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