



MESSAGE from Linda Steinberg, President

A New Board, New Opportunities, New Growth

I am very excited to work with NCJWC's newly installed Board for the 2025–2028 term, elected at our October Triennial AGM in Winnipeg. Under the guidance of Leah Craven and her team, the AGM brought members together from across Canada for meaningful discussion, learning, and renewal.

AGM highlights included recognition of Sharon Allentuck and Penny Yellen for their outstanding contributions to Winnipeg's Jewish community; inspiring presentations on antisemitism and online hate by Belle Jarniewski and Dafna Dror; continued renewal of NCJWC; and the sharing of valuable resources. Our next AGM will take place in **Toronto on October 17, 2026.**

In November, I was honoured to attend **Winnipeg Section's 100th anniversary celebration**, hosted by Her Honour, The Honourable Anita R. Neville. The event was a moving tribute to generations of members and their lasting impact.

NCJWC's **Ageism Committee**, led by Sharon Allentuck, and **Antisemitism Committee**, chaired by Eva Karpati, delivered impactful presentations now available at www.ncjwc.org. Our new initiative, **The Power of Small Conversations**, is advancing quickly under the leadership of Deb Shime.

I also attended the **ICJW Herczeg Seminar and Executive Meetings in Haifa** with Debbie Wasserman, Jordana Corenblum, and Shirley Hyman. It was inspiring to see how closely our Canadian work aligns with global initiatives. Mazel Tov to **Debbie Wasserman**, nominated as **ICJW President-Elect**, to be installed this May in Mexico City.

During my visit to Israel, I met with **Gadi Lifshitz, CEO of ALUMA**, to reaffirm the importance of NCJWC's support for counselling services responding to growing demand.

As we move forward, our Board will implement insights gained through our work with mentor Adam Khan, setting priorities that will strengthen NCJWC and amplify the voices of Jewish women across Canada.

Through your support and active participation in our Board, committees and Sections, we build community, creating meaningful impact together.

Linda Steinberg
NCJWC President

NCJWC Board Members 2025 - 2028

Officers:

President – Linda Steinberg (Toronto)
Immediate Past President – Debbie Wasserman (Toronto)
Honourary Presidents – Helen Marr (Toronto)
Sharon Allentuck (Winnipeg)
Vice Presidents - Rebecca Asbell – Outreach (Edmonton)
Eva Karpati – Antisemitism (Toronto)
Naomi Kingston – Communication (Toronto)
Secretary – Yamila Chikiar (Vancouver)
Treasurer – Bianca Krimberg (Suchet) (Calgary)

Section Presidents:

Edmonton - Jodi Zabłudowski
Montreal - Monika Simon
Simcoe – Helen Silverstein
Toronto – Patty Niles
Vancouver - Jordana Corenblum
Winnipeg - Leah Craven



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that your NCJWC membership goes even further? By belonging to any NCJWC section across Canada, you are automatically part of the National organization and the International Council of Jewish Women as well!

Together, our sections form a strong national network with an international presence. Stay connected! Explore our National programs, advocacy efforts, and events available to you as an NCJWC member.

The POWER of SMALL CONVERSATIONS



Project Update

In the last few weeks, we have seen synagogues vandalized in Winnipeg and mezuzahs ripped off doorways in Toronto. These are examples of the increase in antisemitism that we have seen in Canada, and across the world, over the last few years. The National Council of Jewish Women of Canada is committed to combatting this rise in hate through our Government of Canada funded project the *Power of Small Conversations*. Research consistently shows that personal connection and dialogue are powerful tools in reducing hate. *The Power of Small Conversations* is a grassroots response—bringing people together in small, facilitated settings to create space for respectful dialogue, storytelling, and learning.

Since our last update in August, a great deal of work has been happening behind the scenes to move *The Power of Small Conversations* from idea to action. This work has been guided by a strong commitment to collaboration, thoughtful planning, and engagement across the country. Volunteers have been deeply involved in shaping every aspect of the project, and regular updates have been provided to the Toronto and National Boards, the National Antisemitism Committee, and all sections. The first Project newsletter was shared in Fall 2026 and dedicated pages are being created on both the National and Toronto websites. A project update was also shared at the Triennial/AGM in Winnipeg in October. Ongoing communications a priority so that we ensure timely and thoughtful updates to key audiences.

Since the summer of 2025, a national Steering Committee made up of NCJWC members from across Canada formed and has already met three times. The committee provides guidance on the overall direction of the project and helps ensure that national and local perspectives are reflected.

At the same time, we have established an Advisory Circle of prominent individuals who lead organizations that are deeply committed to combating antisemitism in Canada. Our hope is that members of this group will be among the first to host conversations during our pilot phase in the Spring of 2026 and will support promotion and outreach across the country. The first Advisory Circle meeting is taking place in January 2026.

Significant progress has been made on the content and structure of the conversations themselves. An initial draft of a comprehensive Conversation Guide—covering everything from preparation to follow-up—has been completed and is being reviewed. Once completed it will be translated to French. To support learning, key topic areas have been identified, and knowledgeable organizations and individuals are being invited to contribute short, accessible background resources on topics such as antisemitism in Canada, the Holocaust, Jewish identity, and Canadian values and human rights.

At the same time, volunteers are working on tools to evaluate the experience of participants and facilitators, as well as to track participation data. This learning will support ongoing improvement and help meet reporting requirements to Boards, the Government of Canada, and information sharing with key stakeholders about our findings.

Deb Shime

Project Manager, The Power of Small Conversations

For more information, or to get involved, please contact:

Linda Steinberg, President, NCJWC, lindasteinberg7@gmail.com

Robin Gofine, Executive Director, NCJWC Toronto, rgofine@ncjwctoronto.org

Herczeg Jerusalem Seminar for Jewish Education

Women's Leadership in Diverse Communities: Forging a Common Future of Hope

The Council of Jewish Women's Organizations in Israel and the International Council of Jewish Women hosted the quadrennial Herczeg Jerusalem Seminar for Jewish Education in Haifa, Israel from November 9 – 12, 2025.



Lilian Grinberg, (current ICJW President, Mexico City), Debbie Wasserman, (current ICJW Vice President, ICJW President Elect, Toronto) Jordana Corenblum (NCJWC Vancouver section President), Linda Steinberg (NCJWC President, Toronto) and Shirley Hyman (NCJWC Life Member, Vancouver).

Reflections of Jordana Corenblum, President of NCJWC Vancouver

I had the great privilege of attending the Herczeg Jerusalem Seminar in Haifa, Israel. I am deeply grateful to National Council of Jewish Women Canada for the Bunny Gurvey Bursary Fund that made my participation possible.

The seminar's theme—***Women's Leadership in Diverse Communities: Forging a Common Future of Hope***—was not merely aspirational. The women who organized the program ensured that this thread was woven through every session and encounter.

What stayed with me was not a single defining moment, but a series of experiences that revealed what people are capable of carrying, surviving, and rebuilding.

Our visit to the Druze village of Julis was among the most powerful moments of the week. Sitting with Sheikh Muwaffaq Tarif and other Druze community leaders was a profound honour. We heard directly about the situation in Suwayda, including kidnappings, murders, and sexual violence. The parallels to the atrocities of October 7 were unmistakable, and the room was heavy with a shared sense of helplessness. I was struck—and unsettled—by how little I had known about this crisis before hearing from Druze organizers and activists who spoke with such openness and courage about what has been unfolding since July. It was a sobering reminder of the region's immense complexity.

Learning more about The Dinah Project and its work documenting conflict-related sexual violence was another standout session. We continue to grapple with the horrors of the sexual violence perpetrated on October 7, alongside the widespread denial of these crimes. The painstaking work of gathering, analyzing, and verifying this information is both difficult and essential. I have enormous respect for those committed to pursuing justice and repairing some of the most deeply broken parts of our world. Their published work is available to read in full for those who wish to engage more deeply.

Professor Daphna Hacker brought a different energy—sharp, grounded, and fiercely clear. Drawing on her expertise in law and women and gender studies, she framed leadership in a way that felt both practical and hopeful, without minimizing the realities women face. One insight in particular stayed with me: pessimism is a privilege.

The ability to dwell on negative outcomes or to despair often comes from a place of security, where basic needs are met. Those living in precarity or facing immediate threats do not have that luxury; they must hold onto hope in order to survive and work toward a better future. It was a powerful reframing.

Dr. Shoshan Haran was another extraordinary speaker. She shared her experience of being held hostage in Gaza, alongside the murders of her husband, sister, and neighbors. She spoke without dramatization, simply describing what it meant to endure the unimaginable. Dr. Haran credited much of her strength in captivity to the books she had read about how people survived the Holocaust. Beyond her story of capture and release, we were equally struck by her long career in agriculture and her founding of Fair Planet, an organization dedicated to alleviating hunger and advancing the goal of global food security. Her continued advocacy—including her work with Hostage Aid Worldwide—was both humbling and deeply moving. I look forward to reading her forthcoming book next year.

Throughout the seminar, I was struck by the depth of human capacity on display—grit, compassion, and ingenuity expressed not through grand gestures, but through steady, committed, often invisible work. I left feeling inspired, grounded, and grateful to witness the kind of leadership that keeps communities stitched together in the most difficult times.

The week also reinforced how closely our work in Vancouver and across Canada is connected to a broader international effort. Hearing what ICJW sections around the world are building in their own communities created a strong sense of connection and momentum—one I hope we continue to deepen. With Debbie Wasserman stepping into the role of Canadian ICJW President-Elect this May, there is an exciting opportunity to bring even more of that international energy home to National Council of Jewish Women Canada.

NCJWC COMMITTEES

AGEISM COMMITTEE

As the new chair of the NCJWC's Ageism Committee, I am pleased to report that our committee has expanded. From east to west, I am delighted to introduce our members.

Monika Simon, who lives in Montreal, is the immediate past chair of the committee. National President Linda Steinberg, along with Debbie Wasserman, Naomi Kingston, and Nicki Weiss, are based in Toronto. Nicki is the newest member of the committee. Judi Card, also new to the committee, represents Edmonton Section. Our new member representing Vancouver Section is Cate Stoller. I am based in Winnipeg.

We are currently planning our next webinar, which will likely take place in the spring. Stay tuned for date and topic!

If you would like to watch previous Ageism Webinars, they are available on our national website at www.ncjwc.org

Sharon Allentuck, Ageism Committee Chairperson

ANTISEMITISM COMMITTEE

SAVE THE DATE!

Thursday, March 19th at 8:30pm ET
Antisemitism: What Is In a Word?

Antisemitism in Canada is reaching levels unprecedented in our lifetimes. It is important to understand what exactly antisemitism is. The IHRA legally non-binding definition of antisemitism has now been adopted by 46 countries worldwide and well over 1000 entities including universities, sports teams, and more. It is the only intergovernmental definition, and it is the most widely-used and accepted one. The Canadian federal government, through its office of the Envoy on Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism, has released a handbook to understand the definition in a Canadian context. This webinar will explain the definition and respond to the ongoing wilful mischaracterization of it.

Presenter will be **Belle Jarniewski**, a member of Canada's federally appointed delegation to the IHRA since 2013. She is the Executive Director of the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada and the Manitoba Institute to Combat Antisemitism

SECTION UPDATES



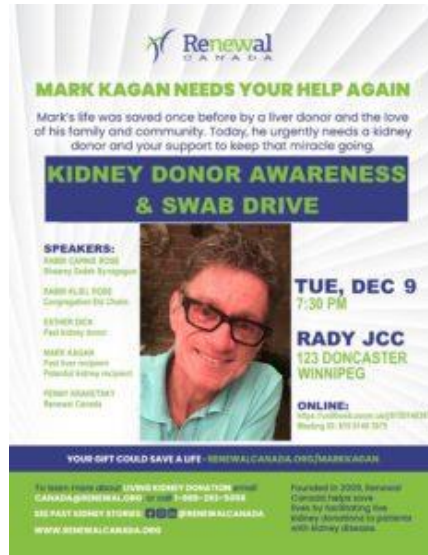
EDMONTON UPDATE

This past September, Jodi Zabłudowski, President of NCJWC Edmonton, played a meaningful role in advancing kidney donation awareness through NCJWC's sponsorship of a Kidney Swab and Awareness event held in partnership with Renewal Canada.

The event brought together members from across Edmonton's Jewish community to learn about live kidney donation and to support longtime community member Craig Rose, who is currently awaiting a transplant.

Speaking on behalf of NCJWC, Jodi emphasized *pikuach nefesh*—the Jewish imperative to save a life—and highlighted organ and tissue donation as a profound act of *chesed*.

Her involvement helped amplify education, compassion, and national awareness while reinforcing NCJWC's commitment to advocacy and life-saving initiatives at the local level.



Jodi Zabłudowski, President Edmonton



MONTREAL UPDATE

We started the New Year by making another meal donation to Hope & Cope! Some 30 containers of soups, main and side dishes, and baked goods were delivered to the Jewish General Hospital (JGH) for cancer patients after their treatments.




NCJWC Montreal President Monika Simon (right) with Rosanna Magnone, Manager of Psychosocial Services, JGH

A new program will be launched in partnership with Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom on **March 26** for people living with dementia and their caregivers/friends.

We are excited about this concert, which was inspired by one of the Defy Dementia episodes, created by Baycrest's Dr. Allison Sekuler and author/broadcaster Jay Ingram. Dr. Sekuler presented a webinar entitled Defy Dementia to NCJWC members over a year ago.

Of course, baked delights will make socializing after the musical experience even sweeter.



SAVE THE DATE!

Defy Dementia: A Musical Afternoon of Connection & Care

Thursday, March 26, 2026 | 2:00 PM

In partnership with NCJWC Montreal, join us at Temple for a warm, uplifting afternoon of music and community as we gather to Defy Dementia, a special concert presented by Rona Nadler and the Blue Dawn Quartet. This musical experience celebrates the power of music to spark connection, memory, and joy.


This event warmly welcomes people living with dementia together with their caregivers, family members, and friends, as well as friends and music lovers from the wider community. Please note that this is a shared experience, not a drop-off or respite program. Caregivers are invited to attend and enjoy the concert alongside their loved ones.

Cost:

- \$18 for a person living with dementia *and* their accompanying caregiver/companion
- \$18 for friends and music lovers

Registration:
Details to be announced. Please check Temple's *Weekly Voice* for updates to reserve your place.

Questions:
Contact Monika Simon at president@ncjwcmontreal.org.



In collaboration with the **Jewish Public Library**, we are attending and promoting another event on **Thursday, March 26, 6 pm** — a documentary film on the life of Jewish Egyptian artist Soued Zaki, produced by her Israeli granddaughter.

We are creating an NCJWC Montreal bilingual bookmark for the evening, and offered the Jewish Public Library to include it in any book borrowed in the weeks ahead. The bookmark is designed by our member Sophia Wolkowicz. The painting shown on the bookmark was donated by another artistic member, Marcia Goldberg.

Monika Simon, President Montreal



SIMCOE COUNTY UPDATE

NCJWC, Simcoe County had a busy 2025 and we look forward to what we can accomplish in 2026.

For Mitzvah Day, NCJWC Simcoe County volunteers prepared and delivered 200+ lunch bags filled with sandwiches, snacks, fruit, veggies, and a drink. These lunches were shared with organizations serving

diverse, vulnerable communities including the Barrie-South Simcoe Metis Council, Barrie Food Bank, Hope Barrie's Warming Centre as well some were hand delivered to un-housed individuals in need.

In January and February, we have programs designed for outreach to younger women. One is at an entertainment venue and the other is a paint night being led by a local artist.

Our crochet/knitting group continues to make baby blankets for "Hug and IDF Mom" and our book club continues as our first and longest running program.

We have a new special interest group we are calling the "**snow bears**" for women staying in cold and snowy Simcoe County for the winter. These bears will not hibernate! They are doing their own planning of movie nights, lunches and dinners. Our "snowbirds" are meeting mid- February in Hollywood, Florida. All NCJWC members are welcome to join us at the Hard Rock Café and Casino on February 5th.

Our partnerships with the local synagogue, PJ Library and Jewish Facebook groups have been helpful in bringing awareness of NCJWC, SC. In 2025/26 we welcomed 9 new members, several of whom as a result of these partnerships and after consideration, we have decided that it is in our best interest to retain the present membership model.

Looking ahead to 2026, our goals are to strengthen our leadership for long-term sustainability, deliver meaningful programming for our members, support vulnerable populations, and cultivate allies to stand with the Jewish community against antisemitism.

Helen Silverstein, President Simcoe County



TORONTO UPDATE

This past fall was a busy one for NCJWC Toronto. Some of the highlights include:

A highly successful **Mitzvah Day 2025**. Under the capable leadership of our Chair Sandy Leider and an active committee, all of our initiatives were developed in consultation with our community partners to ensure that we were meeting their needs. We engaged **over 100 volunteers** in our multitude of activities and together we were able to:

- *Collect and deliver over 200 winter items for homeless men and women being served by Ve'ahavta.*
- *Collect and deliver winter coats, hats, scarves and mittens for children and teens currently living at the North York Women's Shelter.*
- *Collect and deliver over 150 new toys and games for critically ill children and their siblings who are clients of Chai Lifeline.*

- *Collect over 75 purses filled with personal hygiene products for women that will be distributed to women's shelters in the GTA through the Fill a Purse for a Sister Campaign.*
- *Created NCJWC Toronto Kindness Cards with messages of love and support that will be distributed to the lonely and vulnerable in the GTA.*
- *Created a newcomer quilt at a handson quilting workshop hosted by the Toronto Jewish Quilting Project.*
- *Hosted a Family Bingo at the NCJWC Toronto Section Foundation Building, providing an afternoon of fun and relaxation for the residents.*
- *Deployed five volunteers to help out at DANI for their Sunday afternoon program and volunteers to support Seniors at the Aspira Kensington Retirement Residence.*

We are pleased to report that **The Power of Small Conversations** project is moving forward. Working in partnership with NCJWC, we are in the process of creating the Power of Small Conversations Advisory Committee, planning our launch event for late 2026 and preparing our facilitators guide for the pilot of our first set of Small Powerful Conversations in spring, 2026! We have volunteers working on this project across the country and look forward to keeping you updated as the project unfolds.

NCJWC Toronto is pleased to announce the creation of the **NCJWC Toronto Storytellers Club** in partnership with the North York Women's Shelter. Chaired by Susan Austin and Debbie Wasserman, we are seeking enthusiastic volunteer storytellers to tell stories and do activities with the children living at the shelter for an hour on Sunday afternoons or on a weeknight before bedtime. NCJWC Toronto will be providing sweet treats. A pilot launch took place in December and was very well received.

NCJWC Toronto participated in a **Business Mentorship evening with JIAS Toronto**. Ten NCJWC Toronto volunteers met with provided support, advice and connections to job-seeking newcomers. This is the second mentorship evening with JIAS Toronto and we look forward to future events.

The L'Chaim Cancer Support Program offered a range of social recreational programs for Jewish women touched by cancer. Programs included a cooking demonstration healthy cooking, a pet therapy afternoon, and a Hanukkah program featuring artist Laya Crust. L'Chaim has also established a Wig Bank to provide free wigs to women undergoing chemotherapy who are losing their hair.

The Toronto Jewish Quilting Project has received significant media attention. Niv magazine profiled the project in their most recent online edition. Click here to read. In addition, CBC interviewed founder Eva Karpati. To watch the interview, click here.

<https://www.nivmag.com/articles/quilting-through-life-the-ncjwcs-the-toronto-jewish-quilting-project-deliver-warmth-and-comfort-to-cancer-patients>

CBC Interview:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.7019258>

Patty Niles, Toronto President



WINNIPEG UPDATE

Fall 2025 was a busy and meaningful period for the Winnipeg Section. We are deeply grateful to our volunteers, donors, and community partners whose generosity and commitment made the following accomplishments possible.

Backpack Project (August 2025)

Now in its ninth year, our annual Backpack Project once again supported children as they prepared to return to school. This year, we provided fully stocked backpacks, including water bottles for the first time, to clients of Jewish Child and Family Services. We fulfilled our highest number of requests to date, reflecting both increased need and strong community support. Notably, many of the families assisted were newcomers from Israel and Ukraine, alongside local families experiencing financial hardship. We are proud to help children begin the school year with confidence, dignity, and the tools they need to succeed.

Mitzvah Day (November 23, 2025)

The Winnipeg Section once again led Winnipeg's participation in International Mitzvah Day, bringing together organizations from across the Jewish and broader community for a powerful day of collective action. Activities included preparing and delivering meals at outreach centres, collecting feminine hygiene products and toiletries for shelters, volunteering at drop-in centres, collecting winter clothing, and stocking food pantries. We are proud to report that a record 32 organizations participated in Mitzvah Day 2025 in Winnipeg!



Employment & Labour Law Workshop (December 3, 2025)

In partnership with JCFS Settlement Services, we co-hosted an Employment and Labour Law Workshop, led by Cindy Lazar, Labour and Employment Lawyer and Past Section President. This well-attended and informative session addressed timely workplace issues and reflected our ongoing commitment to education and support for newcomers and community members.

Celebrating 100 Years of the Winnipeg Section (November 4, 2025)

We were honoured to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the NCJWC Winnipeg Section at a beautiful reception at Government House, graciously hosted by Her Honour the Honourable Anita Neville, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba.

Members, supporters, and community leaders joined us for this milestone event. We were thrilled to welcome Linda Steinberg, who brought greetings on behalf of NCJWC, and Sharon Allentuck, who conveyed greetings from ICJW. The evening celebrated a century-long legacy of advocacy, service, and impact - projects and initiatives that have shaped lives within both the Jewish and wider Winnipeg community.



Leah Craven, Winnipeg President



MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN ISRAEL

ALUMA

During a recent visit to Israel, ahead of the ICJW Executive Meeting and the Herczog Seminar in Haifa, I had the opportunity to visit ALUMA's Tel Aviv office and meet with Deputy CEO Gadi Lifshitz. Although the office was officially closed on a Friday afternoon, Gadi warmly welcomed my husband and me, reflecting the openness and dedication that define ALUMA.



Gadi Lifshitz, Deputy CEO and Linda Steinberg NCJWC president

ALUMA's modest, well-used offices reflect years of compassionate service to individuals, couples, and families in need of professional mental health care. Despite some uncertainty related to a change in building ownership, ALUMA's mission and impact remain strong.

We toured the therapy rooms, including one with a two-way mirror used to train new therapists. This important teaching tool was made possible through a bequest from Ann Keith, a devoted member of the Vancouver Section, whose legacy continues to support ALUMA's work.

Since October 7, ALUMA has seen a significant increase in clients seeking help for anxiety, depression, and trauma, particularly among couples and families, including children. Couples therapy now requires new approaches, as therapists address complex issues related to intimacy and LGBTQ+ concerns.

Donor support has enabled ALUMA to respond by expanding training, supervision, and "care of the caregiver" initiatives, ensuring therapists are well supported.

ALUMA is deeply grateful for NCJWC's long-standing financial partnership and emergency funding following October 7. Together, we are making a meaningful difference.

Linda Steinberg

International Council of Jewish Women

In November 2025, the ICJW Executive Committee convened in Haifa, Israel, for its formal meeting and to participate in the ***Herczog Jerusalem Seminar for Jewish Education***. Held every four years in partnership with the Council of Women's Organizations in Israel, the seminar is a cornerstone of ICJW's educational mission, dedicated to fostering leadership, empowerment, and cross-community cooperation in pursuit of a more compassionate society.

The 2025 seminar theme, ***"Women's Leadership in Diverse Communities – Forging a Common Future of Hope,"*** reflected ICJW's enduring commitment to inclusive leadership and social impact. During the Haifa meeting, the Executive Committee finalized and formally adopted ICJW's defining statements.

The organization's official identity markers are now:

- **Tagline:** *"Jewish women advocating globally for women and girls for over 100 years."*
- **Elevator Pitch:** *"The International Council of Jewish Women, representing Jewish women worldwide, advocates for the empowerment of all women and the advancement of women's equality and human rights."*

In addition, the Strategic Planning Committee presented significant proposed reforms designed to enhance ICJW's operational efficiency and global impact.

The ICJW Nominations Committee has officially announced the slate of candidates for the 2026–2030 administrative term, and it was confirmed that I will be installed as the next President of ICJW. I am honoured and excited to begin my term alongside such dynamic and powerful women. The formal installation will take place at the upcoming ICJW Convention in May 2026.

All proposed structural, policy, and constitutional changes developed over the past four years will be presented for final vote and ratification at the ICJW Convention in Mexico City, taking place from May 10–14, 2026. These reforms are intended to ensure that ICJW remains a vibrant and effective global force for the advancement of women's rights and social justice.

As NCJWC is an affiliate of ICJW, **any** NCJWC member is welcome to attend ICJW meetings. At this time, the voting members are Linda Steinberg (Affiliate President), Sharon Allentuck (North American Chair), Helen Marr (Past ICJW President), and myself, in my current role as ICJW Vice President. Other NCJWC members may attend but will not have voting privileges.

If you are interested in attending the ICJW Convention in Mexico City this May, please contact me. It would be wonderful to have a strong Canadian delegation.

Debbie Wasserman ICJW Vice President



Dedicated to furthering human welfare in the community.

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