

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**NATIONAL
COUNCIL
OF JEWISH
WOMEN OF
CANADA**
ncjwc.org





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PROJECTS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Monika Simon, Montreal, QC, Ageism
Eva Karpati, Toronto, ON, Antisemitism
Cheryl Rockman Greenberg, Winnipeg, MB, Jewish Genetic Awareness



MESSAGE from

Linda Steinberg, President

The past year we have embraced renewal and growth, challenging our assumptions during our Strategic Planning process while exploring opportunities for future growth, cross-section collaboration and fundraising initiatives. We are thrilled to announce the establishment of Montreal Section.

In light of the events of October 7th and the alarming rise of antisemitism, the collective voices of Canadian Jewish women are more important than ever before. We strengthened our partnerships through a coalition of National Jewish organizations to fight antisemitism through educational online programs. Twelve hundred registered for the panel discussion following the viewing of Sheryl Sandberg's documentary, "Screams Before Silence." Our next collaboration will focus on addressing Violence Against Women.

We launched the series, "Women on the Front Lines", featuring prominent women who are tackling antisemitism. Joan Lurie who represents ICJW at the United Nations, provided valuable insights in her presentation "Antisemitism is Rampant since October 7th. What can we do at the UN and in the Diaspora?"

Our Antisemitism Committee is actively redefining our path forward. Sadly, our efforts to build bridges with our Muslim women's interfaith group did not survive the aftermath following October 7th.

Addressing ICJW's emphasis on Ageism, Dr Allison Seculer presented our second online program. "Defy Dementia".

Following the events of October 7th, NCJWC initiated a successful Israel Emergency Campaign providing ALUMA with additional funding to expand their trauma therapy counselling and also established a new children's computer centre at the Yoseftal Hospital in Eilat.

Several Sections will be celebrating significant milestones over the next few years. I am so pleased to participate in Vancouver's 100th anniversary celebration and AGM this November. Winnipeg's 100th anniversary will follow in 2025.

Our national organization was nominated for a Mitzvah Day International Award recognizing the phenomenal efforts of our Sections in providing exemplary programs and service projects in their respective communities.

Our involvement with ICJW gives us a voice on the world stage, but also provides a lens to learn about Jewish communities worldwide and assists in planning for new initiatives. Debbie Wasserman and I attended the ICJW meeting in Panama and Debbie further represented us at the conference in Slovakia.

We are honoured to host the ICJW Executive meeting in Toronto which coincides with our AGM. An enriching experience for all!

Together we are stronger and stand a little taller. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to your communities and to NCJWC.

SECTION REPORTS



On Sunday, March 3rd 2024, the Aviv Israeli Folk Dance Association celebrated 18 years in the Edmonton Community. A large dance festival was held, and NCJWC – Edmonton Section was a proud sponsor of this fun event.

On Tuesday, May 14th, the Edmonton Section partnered with Jewish community groups for the annual Yom Ha'atzmaut program which was held at the Beth Israel Synagogue. This was a wonderful celebration to commemorate Israel's Independence Day.

Edmonton Section sponsored a short film at the Edmonton Jewish Film Festival, and on Thursday, May 30, the short film called "The Anne Frank Gift Shop" was shown at the Capital Theatre at Fort Edmonton Park. The Edmonton Jewish Film Festival was, and will continue to be, an important event for the Jewish and general community of Edmonton.

On Sept 8th, two long-term employees (Jeni Adler and Rhonda Eidelman) of Jewish Family Services were recognized by the Jewish community. The Edmonton Section was a proud supporter of this event. We support the SMART (Seniors Making Age Relation Transitions) Program, and one of the employees Rhonda Eidelman was recognized for this work. NCJWC-Edmonton was recognized in the program as well as verbally at the event.

On Sunday, September 22, 2024, the Edmonton Jewish community held a "Mitvah Day" program at the Bissell Centre, whereby over 200 lunches were provided to those in need. Support came from different groups in the local Edmonton Jewish community, including NCJWC – Edmonton Section.

NCJWC – Edmonton Section has enjoyed working with the National Board, and we look forward to continuing on the important work in the upcoming year. May we all grow from strength to strength.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jodi Zabłudowski, President, NCJWC, Edmonton



We have been busy for the last year researching options concerning administrative matters (incorporation in Quebec, bank account, by-laws) and brainstorming what programs to mount.

With the help of a Montreal lawyer (pro-bono with the help of Dorothy Reitman) and our accountant, it was decided that we should operate under the umbrella of our national organization to whom we pay our dues until such time that we have a sizeable amount of money and employees. This will save us the cost of hiring an accountant every year to file a tax declaration in Quebec.

We have created a logo for the Montreal Section, created e-mail addresses, and continue to promote NCJWC Montreal Section among family, friends and in the community.

Although we had twenty people who helped restart the Montreal Section, only 10 are registered as official members.

Although still small in numbers, the enthusiasm of the members is encouraging!

We had a successful Mitzvah Day in May, received a donation of a painting to use for a future fundraiser, are exploring a climate change circle, Defy Dementia podcasts, and on the inspiration of the L'Chaim Cancer Project, we are considering a fundraiser for Hope & Cope, an initiative of the Montreal Jewish Hospital.

We are also working on a short video with material from the Canadian Jewish Archives to connect to the former Montreal Section, which many people remember fondly.

I am delighted to introduce you to Jax Jacobsen, journalist, editor from our NCJWC Montreal Section.

Respectfully submitted by:
Monika Simon, President, NCJWC, Montreal Section



Simcoe County has continued with its two monthly programs. The book club has remained virtual. The last Wednesday of the month, we meet for lunch where anywhere from 4 to 15 women can show up. It is proving to be a great way to introduce potential members to our section.

In July we held our 3rd annual Games Day fundraiser. This year we added a raffle, more tables and almost doubled the money raised. Through the summer, we offered weekly aquafit classes and had an aesthetician offer mini facials, both in support of NCJWC. We are grateful that we were able to send a substantial donation to both ALUMA and The Talia Trust in Israel. We also made a gift to the local Barrie food bank.

We have a few members knitting black caps for our IDF soldiers. Simcoe County continues to work closely with our PJ Library connector and our members who are mostly grandparents are encouraged to bring their grandchildren to PJ events. Our "Adopt a Family" for Passover was successful and we plan introduce the program for Shabbat.

Through the generous gift of a member, we became a gold sponsor of Third Age Barrie which offers a daytime lecture series geared to retirees to keep them intellectually stimulated and countering isolation. As a sponsor we can display our banner, brochures, introduce NCJWC and speak about our organization to the 300+ participants. In November we had a fascinating introduction to bean to bar chocolate when an international chocolate judge led us through a chocolate tasting, much in the way a sommelier would with fine wine.

For International Mitzvah Day, we have chosen to support the Barrie Food Bank. It is a multi-pronged initiative that includes volunteer participation at the Tim Hortons Holiday Cookie Smile Campaign (November 18- 24). Then in April 2025, we will be touring the food bank followed by a volunteer experience. We are being supported by both the local synagogue & PJ Library in our Mitzvah Day events.

Our membership has stayed stable at about 50 members however following the AGM 2024, I am going to suggest to our board that we consider moving away from the membership model.

Respectfully submitted by:
Helen Silverstein
President, NCJWC, Simcoe County



This year has been one of growth has emphasized the importance of our organization. With the fall out of the pandemic and the resurgence of antisemitism which is unprecedented in recent years, growing numbers of Jewish women are seeking meaningful social connections with purpose. Our programs have responded accordingly.

The following are highlights of some of our accomplishments over the past year:

- Receiving a \$100,000 grant from the government of Canada which has enabled us to create a plan for the future financial security of NCJWC Toronto- now in its implementation stages.
- Successfully holding the most successful Mitzvah Day in our history which helped and supported (an estimation of over 1000 individuals) in our community. This year's Mitzvah Day is taking place on Sunday, November 24, 2024 and there is an active committee in place with several communities-based projects underway.
- Completing our third annual Kick off to Summer Campaign which has resulted to date in providing gift cards to over 500 children in the GTA to purchase summer essentials (runners and other summer items).
- Launching a new Fighting Antisemitism Committee that has engaged new members to our organization. The Committee is planning programs that educate our members about how antisemitism is impacting our community in various realms: the arts, educational system, medical community and others. Upcoming lunch and learn programs will focus upon Antisemitism and the Arts, Antisemitism in the Medical Profession and Antisemitism in the School System.
- Successfully completing the 41st Annual Passover Food Drive- ensuring that we provided food boxes to over 2450 vulnerable members of our community.
- Launching the Faith Leaders Guide to Domestic Violence that addresses domestic violence in our communities. This is an interfaith project that has resulted in the dissemination of this valuable resource to over 375 faith leaders in the GTA.
- Continuing to support Jewish cancer patients through the L'Chaim Cancer Support Program which is delivered in partnership with Wellspring. Programs focus upon reaching out to Jewish women touched by cancer, with a special two-part series which reached out to younger women in our community, providing them with valuable information on a range of topics.
- Continuing the work of the Toronto Jewish Quilting Project which creates exquisite quilts that are gifted to cancer patients in the GTA.
- Renewing our efforts to reach out to young women, by launching a new Friday morning drop in for moms and babies. Childcare program and Smartiepants founder Jenna Grossman will be leading programs to introduce young children to Shabbat and at the same time introduce young moms to the great work of NCJWC.
- Presenting artist and CBC journalist, Talia Schlanger, who will be sharing her story through word and song at our Annual General Meeting on Thursday, November 21st at Beth Emeth Synagogue.
- Refreshing our membership package which focuses upon who we are, what we do and why now more than ever it is important to join NCJWC Toronto.

Respectfully submitted by:
Sheila Neuburger, President, NCJWC, Toronto



Our year began with an incredible AGM guest speaker, Marsha Lederman, speaking about "coming out" as a Jewish journalist and how her Jewish identity found its way back in. Our signature program, Books for Kids, was able to donate \$3,375 worth of new books to children and families. NCJWC Vancouver is also working with JFS Vancouver to create a new food security education program. Kids participated in a free, three-part farm-to-table experiential learning series, utilizing our Vancouver Jewish Community Garden.

NCJWC Vancouver hosted an incredibly successful Games Day for Israel. WE hosted 120 game players and were able to send \$9100 to Aluma Counselling Centre in Israel. We were also able to help in the purchase of very needed first aid supplies and to support grassroots programs helping displaced families, the parents of IDF soldiers as well as adults with cognitive disabilities.

We also supported the development of a new program, Warm Welcome Vancouver. This program was born out of a growing need in our community to support families arriving from Israel after October 7th and the program collected and redistributed items that families would need - sleeping, feeding and safety items, warm clothing, toys, and books. We were also able to collect donations and offer new items and gift cards as well.

This was also the first year we marked Repro Shabbat in Vancouver. An NCJW initiative that started in the US as a response to the attack on sexual and reproductive rights that has plagued our southern neighbors. We were thrilled to gather at a local synagogue to celebrate the Jewish values of choice and responsible, inclusive and accessible healthcare. We hope this will become an annual event.

Our Annual International Women's Month event brought together 140 people for the first live recording of the Beyond a Ballot podcast, with exceptional guest Selina Robinson.

We have participated in and supported events that foster open dialogue around the current war and geo-political circumstances in Israel. We held events in tribute to lives lost and forever altered.

This year we are celebrating our 100th anniversary. We will wrap up our year with a fabulous roaring 20s party on Sunday November 24th. We are looking forward to coming together in joy and celebration after a very heavy year. We thank everyone who has been involved in NCJWC Vancouver, past, present and future.

Respectfully submitted,
Jordana Corenblum, NCJWC Vancouver President



NCJWC, Winnipeg Section: 2023-2024 Year in Review

On behalf of the Winnipeg Section, I am pleased to provide the following summary of our 2023-2024 activities. During this difficult year, our section has experienced a period of dynamic community engagement and innovative projects.

Mitzvah Day: On November 19, 2023, the Winnipeg Section once again spearheaded the community's participation in International Mitzvah Day. We had over 20 organizations participate. Examples of mitzvahs included collection of non-perishable food for Bnai Brith Canada's food bag program, clothing for Siloam Mission, books for Rossbrook House (youth drop in centre), backpacks and winter gear for Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY), and feminine hygiene products for Ndinawe Safe House; baking at Ronald McDonald House; making sandwiches for Main St. Project; delivery of Hanukkah baskets for JCFS; volunteering at Agape Table preparing and serving food to the homeless; writing letters to abductees' families; teaching children about kindness through art; raising funds for the JFW Israel Emergency Fund; creating 50 'blessing bags' for women and children at Willow Place; creating personalized Chanukah art cards for Simkin Center residents; and random acts of kindness.

Employment and Labour Law in Manitoba: In partnership with JCFS Settlement Services, on November 23, 2023, we offered a workshop with Cindy Lazar (Labour and Employment lawyer and Past NCJWC, Winnipeg Section President). We are pleased to be partnering with JCFS to once again offer this program on November 13, 2024.

Games Day: On November 24, 2023, we organized a Games Day fundraiser in partnership with Adas Yeshurun Herzlia to support the Yoseftal Hospital in Eilat. Participants enjoyed playing games such as mahjong, canasta, and backgammon while raising funds for a crucial cause.

Mishloach Manot Project: Our annual Mishloach Manot project took place on March 18, 2024, where volunteers baked hamantaschen and provided 80 packages for clients of Jewish Child and Family Services. This initiative was made possible through the generous support of our volunteers, donors, and sponsors.

Instagram Launch: In April 2024 we were very excited to launch our official Instagram account! This platform will help us share our activities and engage with our community more effectively. This was made possible due to the creative talents of new board member Goldie Yudelevich.

Jewish Child and Family Services Chametz Drive: Prior to Pesach, we participated in a community wide initiative led by JCFS to encourage people to donate unopened non-perishable chametz for their food pantry.

Knish and Bourikas Baking Fundraiser: On May 5, 2024, we hosted an intergenerational baking fundraiser. We had over 70 participants attend, which included members and friends of all ages, who learned new baking techniques and created their own treats to take home. Part of the proceeds were donated to ALUMA.

Pride Parade Participation: On June 2, 2024, we proudly participated in the Pride Parade as part of the Jewish community contingent. The community banner featured the phrase "Love is Love" in both English and Hebrew, symbolizing our commitment to inclusivity and support for the LGBTQ+ community.

Working Women Employment Mixer: This new branch met on 6 occasions over the year, under the leadership of board member Efrat Golan, and has provided a forum for peer networking and job skills development for newcomers to our community.

Backpack Project: In August 2024 we assembled and delivered backpacks filled with school supplies for clients for JCFS. The need this year increased by approximately 30% due to the arrival of new families from Israel and Ukraine. JCFS expects there may be new requests after the start of the school year, and we raised funds to help support new requests. This annual project has been dedicatedly led by board members Alexandra Blinder and Eva Florentin, and our community has been incredibly supportive of this project.

I extend deepest gratitude to our office administrator, members, volunteers and donors for their unwavering support and contributions throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Leah Craven, President, NCJWC Winnipeg Section

NCJWC COMMITTEES

ANTISEMITISM COMMITTEE

As the world changed on Oct 7th so did our committee objectives. We suddenly went from working on relationships with other women's organizations to combat racism to developing strategies of self-preservation. Now a year later we are starting again to emerge from our protective shell and looking outward again but with a new perspective. Our scars have made us stronger.

This year the Committee has established two goals.

The first is to strengthen our voice by making it truly a National one by ensuring representation from all the Sections. This creates a three-pronged benefit. The Sections inform National of their programs and issues vis-à-vis antisemitism which can vary with the regions across Canada. The Sections can dialogue with each other for ideas and suggestions. And National communicates with the Sections about the connections, liaisons, possible partnerships and National programming that enhances the profile of the Sections as well. The Women on the Front Lines and the Screams Before Silence Panel are examples of this.

Toronto Section has established its own Antisemitism Committee under the leadership of Susan Glickman. They have done some very impactful programming. It was a natural fit for Susan to come onto the Committee. From Vancouver Section we now have representation through Yamila Chikiar, a Board member. We are thrilled for this West Coast voice. Montreal and Simcoe County representation is pending

The second goal is to once again reach out to cultivate new allies within the Jewish community and the non-Jewish community. Since Oct 7th many new groups have formed across Canada to combat antisemitism. We have connected with most of them.

The non-Jewish community has proved to be more of a challenge. The first prerequisite to any connection is the recognition of Israel and its right to self-determination. There are many organizations that are reluctant to voice

their support. Individually support is much more forth-coming.

In order to facilitate informed dialogue on Antisemitism within our community and outside our community, Patty Carlson, with members of Toronto Section, has created a document on the Truths We Need to Know - an educational tool to be used when talking about Israel. This is in production and will be an interactive Power Point presentation. It will allow all of us to stand with confidence to combat antisemitism.

Committee Members:

Chair Eva Karpati

Lorraine Berk, Patty Carlson, Yamila Chikiar, Susan Glickman, Naomi Kingston, Dorothy Reitman, Monika Simon, Linda Steinberg, Debbie Wasserman

AGEISM COMMITTEE

Committee Members:

Monika Simon Montreal

Debbie Wasserman. Toronto

Linda Steinberg Toronto

Naomi Kingston Toronto

Definition of Ageism:

Ageism affects how we think, feel and act towards others and ourselves based on age. It imposes powerful barriers to the development of good policies and programmes for older and younger people, and has profound negative consequences on older adults' health and well-being.

Ageism Committee Activities:

The Committee was very productive, met 6 times on Zoom since the last AGM, created four Ageism reports on the topics of Affordable Housing, Loneliness and Isolation, Medically Necessary and Appropriate Medications, and Wellness & Prevention Activities — highlights taken from the National Seniors Strategy Evidence Briefs inspired by Dr. Samir Sinha's 2023 webinar on #Ageism in Medicine."

The **June 5, 2024 webinar on "Defy Dementia"** with Dr. Allison Sekuler, was equally successful with 100 registrations.

To continue to increase awareness of dementia and how to slow its progression, the Committee proposes that Sections use the Defy Dementia podcasts to create programs around the many topics featured (see Ageism Committee Proposal to Board). We also plan to write "Did You Know...?" facts about dementia for the newsletter with the link to the respective 'Defy Dementia' podcast.

Since we don't have at least one member from every Section on the Ageism Committee, we can't call it a national initiative. Regrettably, if we don't succeed to have cross-Canada representation, the Ageism Committee may have to fold.

Monika Simon, Vice President and Committee Chair

GREETINGS

ALUMA

NCJWC has supported ALUMA yearly for the past 50 years.

Our National members and supporters are to be commended for their additional financial support to ALUMA during this most difficult time for Israel and Israelis. We will continue to provide additional emergency funding with your support. The staff are most appreciative.

Dear Linda,

October 18, 2024

Thank you and the entire NCJWC for the continuous efforts to support our activities.

We continue to provide a therapeutic response to an increasing number of clients who turn to us following reserve service, or mental distress that is increasing as the war continues.

We need your continued warm support and would greatly appreciate it.

Warm regards,

Gadi Lifshitz

Tahel Organizational Practices

ICJW

I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations on the success of your annual meeting. Thanks to our wonderful representation in the ICJW, I am aware of the great work you do and the positive impact you generate. It is an honor to work alongside you and witness the commitment and dedication you bring to every action.

Additionally, I want to express my excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to hold our next executive meeting in Toronto. It will be a privilege to meet you in person and share a few days that will undoubtedly be filled with preparation, learning, and enriching camaraderie.

With great appreciation and anticipation,

Lilian Grinberg

ICJW President



Dedicated to furthering human welfare in the community.

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