

# Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada

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## A Hannukah message from our new President

Dear Friends,

As we approach Hannukah, I'd like to reflect on the role of JIAS Canada today.

Canada has always been, and always will be, a country of immigrants. We, at JIAS Canada together with our Service Provider Partners, have always strived to assist Jewish Immigrants in their first steps in Canada and provide them with the necessary tools to help themselves and become contributing members of the Jewish community and Canadian society at large.

As the focus of our work at JIAS Canada has changed to accommodate the diversification of the clients we serve, the importance of building community has taken centre stage. Not only is JIAS Canada helping newcomers to settle in Canada, but we are helping dedicated Jewish immigrants become partners in the building of vibrant Jewish programs and institutions.

In these tough economic times newcomers will need more of your support and help than ever before. We are counting on you and your commitment to Jewish immigrants.

The strong beliefs and confidence that brought victory to the Maccabees and eight days of light to the Temple can guide us as we face the challenges of our times. The eternal lesson of Hannukah--that faith gives us the strength to work miracles and find light in times of darkness--inspires all of us to strive toward a brighter future.

On behalf of the Board and staff of JIAS I want to wish you and your families Chag Sameach. May the lesson of the Maccabees bring strength to our communities and act as a guiding light for all of us.



Photo compliments of: Michael Weinberg

  
Victor Linetsky

## Mazel Tov! It's a little... synagogue!

Dear Friends,

Last night when you were tucked away warmly in bed, a new arrival came into Heritage Park. The little synagogue on the prairie travelled through the city and arrived at the park in the early morning hours on Wednesday, November 26th, 2008.

Sorry we couldn't invite all of you for the big moment... because little synagogues sitting on big trucks can make a very big splat.

Mother and little synagogue on the prairie are doing fine. It's yellow with white windows and incredibly cute. The little synagogue on the prairie will be named Montefiore Institute.

Proud Mamas and Papas are Trudy Cowan, Shauna Switzer, Leslie Levant, Shel Bercovich, Emanuel Cohen, Daryl Fridhandler, Dr. Ralph

Gurevitch, Bobby Libin, Jack Switzer, Betti Weiss, and Irena Karshenbaum. We're all welling up with naches! Proud Bubbes and Zaydas are all of you! Our incredibly generous donors and society volunteers, without whom



our little Montefiore Institute would be just a twinkle in her Mamas' and Papas' eyes.

We love our little synagogue and are extremely proud of it. We hope you will make a point of visiting it at Heritage Park during the winter holidays. Heritage Park is open on the weekends between November 22nd and December 21st, 2008.

Sincerely,

Irena Karshenbaum

President

The Little Synagogue on the Prairie Project Society, Calgary

www.littlesynagogue.ca

littlesynagogue@shaw.ca



Irena with synagogue model

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## A TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL HERLING

We were sad to learn of the passing of Michael Herling in July of this year. Michael and his late wife, Marta established the Michael and Marta Herling Scholarship Fund at JIAS Canada. Each year the scholarship has been given to one special student who is felt to be



**Michael and Marta Herling**

deserving of a little extra help on his or her way to success. Michael Herling was born in Czernovitz, Romania in July 1913. Life in Czernovitz was vibrant and highly cultured. The city produced its fair share of artists, writers and intellectuals. Life

there greatly influenced Michael's character, values and loyalties and most likely instilled in him his lifelong passion for education.

He completed his Baccalaureate in Vienna and his Doctorate of Economics in Florence, Italy in 1935. He was a lifelong learner – well read and absolutely up to date on current affairs, political and economic issues.

He enjoyed discussing and debating. In most recent years, he was fascinated by the study of comparative religions.

Upon his father's death in 1935, he returned to his mother and sister in Czernovitz to help out with his father's import business, but the Russians eventually took that away.

In 1940 Michael married Marta Klein – a marriage that spanned sixty years. They survived WWII together, and were refugees fleeing to Craiova and to Bucharest. They eventually immigrated to Canada (Montreal) in 1950 via Israel.

Marta and Michael raised two daughters and Michael was the quintessential family man – devoted to his daughters and their husbands, and developing a close and unique bond with each of his four grandsons. He encouraged their schooling and developed interests in their individual passions. This past year he was i-chatting on his Mac computer with the boys, and would share sushi platters with them when they came to visit. Not bad for a 95 year old!

When Michael first arrived in Canada, he, along with family members, established a wire and fasteners company that over the course of his 40 years in the

*“From the bottom of my heart I would like to thank you for giving me a scholarship. I greatly appreciate your generosity and I promise to do my best in school to justify your trust in me. Your scholarship will give me an opportunity to fulfill my dreams of becoming a full time student. Without your help it would not be possible.”*

– Ilya Shilshut

*2008 Michael and Marta Herling Scholarship winner*

business grew into a substantial North American steel and fastener producer.

In addition to being a well-respected businessman, Michael could be considered a true Renaissance man – he was well read, a lover of art and opera and a world traveler.

Michael served the Montreal community and the Jewish community in many ways but his primary commitments were serving on the Board of Governors of Ben Gurion University and of course, his long-standing service to JIAS and HIAS.

His involvement with JIAS grew out of his own personal immigrant experience, which, combined with his lifelong passion for education and strong sense of community, were the motivating factors in establishing the Michael and Marta Herling Scholarship Fund.

We offer our warm condolences to his family, and hope that his memory will always be a comfort to them.

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## Bridging settlement and employment services

By Tamara Novik

As a result of the collaboration between JIAS Canada and JVS Toronto, this summer JVS was awarded a new and exciting project funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Bridging Settlement and Employment Services (B-SES). The main objective of the B-SES project is to identify local services, develop individualized models of service, and develop tools and materials for staff to facilitate a consistent approach to delivering settlement and employment services. The project places a large emphasis on building partnerships with local service providers, the government, and local employers in three participating communities of Vancouver, Winnipeg and Calgary.

The first phase of the project focused on research and an assessment of existing services in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Calgary both within Jewish and mainstream communities conducted by a newly hired manager Jolanta Nozka. In November JIAS Canada facilitated an exploratory trip to Vancouver (see photo) which proved to be very successful. The response to the project, as well as a high level of cooperation from JFSA Vancouver and strong interest from participating mainstream community organizations, indicated that this endeavour could benefit both our clients and our agencies. We look forward to visiting service providers in Winnipeg and Calgary in December. The ultimate goal of this exciting project is to contribute

to the development of effective settlement practices for all newcomers. Therefore, our intention in piloting the project within Jewish communities from coast to coast is to eventually share and replicate the model with other ethno-specific groups.



L to R: Jolanta Nozka (JVS), Miri Tal (JFSA), Sasha Gerson (JFSA), Charlotte Katzen (JFSA), Mila Voihanski (JIAS), Tamara Novik (JVS)

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## JIAS participates in Kohn summer intern program

The Kohn Summer Intern program is a project of JVS Toronto in partnership with Hillel of Greater Toronto, named in honour of Annie Kohn, a dear and inspirational friend of the community who exemplified the highest Jewish values.

It is an innovative 10-week program for undergraduate and graduate students attending college and university who would like the opportunity to work in Jewish communal leadership and have a demonstrated commitment to the Jewish community.

Participants are placed in professional positions at leading Toronto Area Jewish communal agencies for the purpose of gaining valuable work place experience.

The primary objectives of the program are for participating interns to:

- Develop professional and practical skills by performing fieldwork in a Jewish communal agency;
- Evaluate opportunities for future professional or volunteer involvement in the Jewish community;



Boaz Kremeris

- Increase knowledge of current issues facing the Jewish community;
- Gain familiarity with the structure of local Jewish agencies;

- Benefit from supervision and mentoring from leaders in the Jewish community.

JIAS Canada was fortunate to have Boaz Kremeris join our organization this past summer as a Kohn Intern. Boaz is a Kinesiology student at York University who was interested in writing, outreach, public relations and marketing. His main task was to work on our CELEBRATION OF JEWISH IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA Book Project. Boaz worked closely with the Celebration Book Committee to identify Jewish immigrants who have added to the fabric of our communities and he undertook a number of the interviews. An immigrant himself from South Africa and Israel, Boaz was extremely sensitive to the task at hand, and was a pleasure to work alongside. We were grateful that he joined our team and wish him luck for his future studies. Our thanks to JVS Toronto and Hillel for this opportunity.

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November 30, 2008

## Some Highlights from the Annual Report delivered at our Annual Membership Meeting

The DECADE PLUS IMMIGRANTS: LEADERSHIP BRIDGING CULTURES project is about to begin.

The program curriculum was developed by David Shneer of the University of Colorado and Caryn Aviv of the University of Denver. It is an excellent tool to engage the émigré participants and the organized Jewish community. Caryn and David have also developed the TRAIN THE TRAINERS session which is planned to take place in Calgary in January 2009.

It is hoped that this program will become a model that can be used for other ethnic groups within the Jewish community and in general. The uniqueness of the project has to do with working not only with the newcomer community, but also addressing the issue of systemic barriers and cultural sensitivity in the host community.

The BRIDGING SETTLEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (B-SES) project was launched in September 2008. On November 17<sup>th</sup> Mila Voihanski, together with Tamara Novik, Director Newcomer Services for JVS and Jolanta Noska, Project Coordinator, visited Vancouver. As a result, contacts were established with various employment service organizations for immigrants. An arrange-

ment was also made whereby an employment counselor from the YMCA will perform on-site employability assessments as part of a government program. A similar trip is planned for Winnipeg and Calgary. In Hamilton, because of its proximity to Toronto, a JVS counsellor will be providing employment services once or twice a month, according to need.

During the year we held several Professional Development conference calls for the Front Line Staff across the country. One, which was particularly useful and appreciated by the participants, was a training session on the current updates on immigration, delivered by our Board Member, Stephen Green.

We carried 350 cases during the year and answered approximately 1,200 enquiries. Staff continues to work on complex cases, which are referred to us by our service provider partners.

It has been very exciting to begin work on the CELEBRATION OF IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA project. A very active committee has met regularly to develop the idea of promoting immigrants and their successes. An innovative and creative designer has been engaged to work

with us on the project, which is intended to be both an online presentation and a published book version. A team of committed and talented volunteers has been interviewing immigrants across the country from different backgrounds and waves of immigration, and volunteer editors have been working on the final product. It is anticipated that the internet version will be launched early in 2009. We are most thankful both to the members of the Committee and the volunteers for their commitment and dedication to the project.

The CCR (Canadian Council for Refugees) Taskforce on Professionalization of Settlement Workers, co-chaired by Mila Voihanski and Diane Fisher of Calgary Catholic Immigrant Services, continues to work with the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to secure funding for the project, which will include training for settlement workers, pan-Canadian settlement competencies and a system for formal accreditation.

**A full version of the Annual Report can be obtained by contacting our office.**

# Bias and Prejudice: Where is this person from?

Answer: picture of Rubin Friedman 40 years ago – born in a refugee camp in Austria, parents from Poland.



With the support of the other Immigrant Serving Agencies of Ottawa (IASI), Jewish Family Services of Ottawa received funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada November, 2007 to undertake a project to assist the Settlement Sector in Ottawa to deal with biases and prejudices which arise while assisting newcomers to integrate into Canada.

Everyone has biases and prejudices. Immigrants come to Canada with the

biases and beliefs of their own societies.



**Left to right:**  
Farah Aw-Osman,  
Esperance Umutesi,  
Rubin Friedman

Newcomer attitudes can include a wide variety of negative stereotypes about Jews or other religions as well as behaviours that would be seen as sexist, homophobic or otherwise inappropriate and could interfere with their successful settlement and integration and contribute to their ongoing marginalization and exclusion. Front line workers need approaches to deal with such prejudices when they arise.

At the same time, newcomers encounter the biases and prejudices of those already here and should have strategies for dealing with these.

In this context, the JFS Anti-Racism and Cultural Integration Project is seen as one step among a number that need to be taken. The team includes Rubin Friedman, a former lead trainer on “Taking Action Against Hate” and a consultant to police and other institutions on Hate and Hate crimes, Farah Aw-Osman, a former youth worker with the Somali Family Services

of Ottawa and anti-racism activist and Esperance Umutesi, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide who has experience in facilitating group discussions relating to developmental difficulties and provides a strong support in French.

Together they have developed and delivered a training session of two half days (over 120 have been trained in Ottawa), using power point, interactive presentation and small group discussion. They have developed a booklet for newcomers that will be translated into several languages and will also be producing video scenarios to be posted on the JFS web site to aid in training and understanding

how to deal with bias and prejudice.

They have most recently given a well received presentation at the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Conferences in November and have submitted a proposal to expand the service, in partnership with JIAS Toronto, to other regions of Ontario and to those who work with newcomers in other social, educational and community services. For further information contact Rubin Friedman at rfriedman@jfsottawa.com.

## OUR NEW BOARD

THE FOLLOWING BOARD WAS ELECTED AT THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING ON 30<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2008

VICTOR LINETSKY, PRESIDENT

LESLIE LASKY

RONNEE ALTER

SUSAN MOUCKLEY

LES FRIEDMAN

FARREL SHADLYN

STEPHEN GREEN

EMILY SHANE

GABRIEL GROSMAN

LINDA STEINGARTEN

HOWARD M. KARBY

LESLIE WILDER

## YES, I want to help Jewish immigrants live a better life in Canada

I understand that my contribution will help JIAS expand its important local and national programs.

Here is my contribution of:  \$1000  \$500

\$360  \$180  \$100  \$72  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Circle One: Cheque  Visa

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

I would like more information about activities at JIAS

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_ PC \_\_\_\_\_

Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

An official receipt for income tax purposes will be issued for all contributions of \$18 or more

Please send this reply form or a photocopy to:

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### Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada

We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with respect to protecting privacy. The information you provide will be used only to deliver services and to keep you informed and up to date on the activities of Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada, including programs services, special events, funding needs, opportunities to volunteer or to give, information on other charitable giving opportunities that you may find of interest, open houses and more, through periodic contacts.

If you wish to be removed from any of these contacts, simply contact us by phone at 416.630.9051 or by e-mail at national@jias.org and we will gladly accommodate your request.

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