



# Jewish Immigrant Aid Services of Canada

4600 Bathurst Street, Suite 315, Toronto, Ontario M2R 3V3 Canada 416.630.9051

SEPTMBER 2010  
שנה טובה ומתוקה תשע"א

L Shanah Tovah  
Have a sweet year!



## A Rosh Hashanah Message from our President

As I write this greeting, we at JIAS Canada look back on the last year's activities and deliberate on what they might mean for our future. JIAS Canada has always argued that we must encourage immigrant participation in Jewish communal life by empowering individuals to assume leadership roles within the community. Equally important is the involve-

ment of the host community and making its organizations more welcoming and inclusive. With that in mind JIAS Canada had created a program - JOLT (JIAS Canada Opportunity for Leadership Training: Leadership Bridging Cultures), which was custom-designed to address these issues. Last year JOLT was piloted in 3 communities: Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa, in partnership with JFS's in these communities. JIAS Canada has also argued that in order to assure the survival and flourishing of the Canadian Jewish Community as a whole, we must first halt the decline of smaller Jewish communities. Doing so will require all of us to assume our role in supporting the dispersion of new immigrants and integrating them into Jewish communities across the country.



Victor Linetsky  
President

Thus our work with the smaller communities in the Atlantic region is extremely valid and rewarding. As Jews from around the world choose Canada as their new home – whether they come here to escape discrimination, anti-Semitism, imminent danger, financial hardship, or to join other family members who have already relocated – we must be sensitive and responsive to their needs. We understand what immigrants go through when they arrive here and the hardships they endure as they begin their new lives. With

our Service Providers, we help them overcome their struggles with migration, settlement and integration into their new communities. At this time of year, as we approach the High Holidays and reflect on our past and on our future, I encourage all of you to look beyond our individual needs and to focus our attention on the well-being of the community as a whole. In a world that seems to be becoming increasingly hostile to our people, Canada is one of the few countries that still provides us with a welcoming environment. Our collaborative work with NGO's in the field of settlement and integration has enhanced our ability to build strategic partnerships, increased inter-cultural understanding and shared with others what our community contributes to Canada as a whole.

We need your continued support in order to remain effective and carry out our mandate. We strengthen ourselves by strengthening others and I encourage you to continue showing generosity. We are counting on your commitment to Jewish Community and Jewish immigrants. On behalf of my family as well as the entire Board and Staff of JIAS Canada, I want to wish all of you

### **Shanah tovah u'metukah**

May you  
and your families  
have a  
good and sweet year!



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## JOLT connects Russian Jews to their roots

By Irena Karshenbaum

As Jewish Family Service Calgary is preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2011, it is learning that the only thing constant is change. Under this change category are the changing needs of immigrants. No longer are their needs just basic pertaining to food, shelter and jobs, as were the needs of my parents when my family first arrived from the Former Soviet Union in 1979. The needs of today's immigrants are often more complex pertaining to succeeding in an increasing complex economic environment while maintaining a connection to their roots. It's a difficult balance to strike especially considering that it's not always easy for a newcomer to discern between integration and assimilation as on the surface those shades appear to occupy the same spectrum of grey. Thanks to JOLT (JIAS Canada Opportunity for Leadership Training: Leadership Bridging Cultures) that line is becoming clearer. JOLT 1.0 participant Ilya Kamenetsky confirmed this when looking back in May of 2010 on his experience with JOLT. "It has been tremendous spiritual, cultural and personal journey for me. When I started with the program I was very close to the edge of assimilation as I wasn't too much concerned about preservation of my Jewish culture. JOLT was like an awakening call for me."

In Calgary, JOLT was launched over two years ago. A group of 13 participants began attending interactive sessions where they learned about the local Jewish community and its diverse nature. The JOLT 1.0 participants eventually selected Jewish organizations where they would participate as members and were matched with mentors who would show them the ropes.

As a bit of a pleasant surprise, the JOLT 1.0 participants expressed a desire to stay together as a group and went through a strategic planning exercise to determine their vision, mission and goals. They called themselves the Russian Speaking Jews of Calgary and rolled up their sleeves to help the local Jewish community.

They may be the first organized Russian speaking group in many years

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*JOLT 2.0 participants gather on the speaker's podium for a Torah lesson from Rabbi Shaul Osadchey for session #2 at Beth Tzedec Congregation on February 22, 2010.*



Continued from page 2

to organize and sponsor a Jewish community event by organizing the JOLT 2.0 Launch held on January 24, 2010. Mazel tov to them, as with over 60 people in attendance from the Russian speaking and the native-born Jewish community, the event was a resounding event.

The participants of JOLT 1.0 helped to recruit members of their own community and launched JOLT 2.0, which began in January 2010 almost a year to the day of the first group beginning their program.

The ties to the local Jewish community were also strengthened as confirmed by mentor Eric Libin who spoke about JOLT 1.0 participant Alex Linetsky, "He has brought a new view point and is exactly what we were hoping he would provide! His energy and hard work have been outstanding... He has reminded me of why I am involved and what the community needs to grow!"

With JOLT 2.0, the format has remained almost the same with one small improvement. The group has been visiting various Jewish organizations on their turf to learn and see first hand how they operate. At their second



*JOLT 2.0 participants visit Akiva Academy to learn about Jewish education on June 14, 2010.*



*JOLT 1.0 participants Irena Babitska (left) and Evgenya Knopov (third from left) take the lessons they learned in JOLT to organize their own tour of Jewish Calgary on June 6, 2010 for Canadian Hadassah WIZO to launch a Russian chapter.*

session in February 2010, JOLT 2.0 participants visited the Beth Tzedec Congregation and got a tour of the Conservative synagogue from the Rabbi. At their sixth session in June 2010, JOLT 2.0 participants visited Akiva Academy, a day school to learn about the opportunities and challenges of providing a Jewish education today. At their seventh session in July 2010, members of both JOLT 1.0 and 2.0 met for a joint session at Temple B'Nai Tikvah and received insight into the Reform movement and lay leadership from the Temple President.

At the time of this article, the JOLT 1.0 group, aka Russian Speaking Jews of Calgary, is busy fundraising to sponsor a Russian movie night at the upcoming 10th annual Beth Tzedec Jewish Film Festival, in addition to their individual involvement with their respective Jewish organizations.

The JOLT 2.0 participants are in the process of selecting their Jewish community organizations and are fast on the heels of their fellow JOLT 1.0 friends.

Irena Karshenbaum is the JOLT Coordinator at Jewish Family Service Calgary.



## JOLT participants say their goodbyes as the program wraps up

This past Spring JFSA held a farewell dinner at The Maple Grill, Vancouver Kosher Restaurant in honour of the successful JOLT (JIAS Opportunity for Leadership Training: Leadership Bridging Cultures) program, and its participants. Each participant received a certificate of internship completion from JIAS as well as a book on leadership. Both the participants and the mentors reflected on their internship experience. The sentiments were strong and very positive. JOLT connected Russian-speaking Jews with opportunities and involvement in the community and provided a network of support to assist in their integration into Canadian society. The nine JOLT participants were introduced to a variety of Jewish communal professionals who served as mentors for the program's duration. The participants were also placed successfully into different internships throughout the community for practical volunteer experience, some of which will continue on after the pro-



grams completion. JFSA and the participating Jewish organizations are looking forward to working with our new community leaders! For further information about JFSA's other Resettlement, Integration and Immigration services, please visit: [www.jfsa.ca](http://www.jfsa.ca)

Submitted by: Charlotte Katzen  
Director of Resettlement and Employment Services  
Jewish Family Service Agency

## A LETTER TO THE GRADUATES

June 2010

Dear Jolt Participant:

*In Judaism, we never really graduate.*

*We move on to greater responsibility, greater compassion and greater leadership. And that is what you have been doing through JIAS in growing your own leadership.*

*May this book and the mentoring you have received prepare you for the holy task of leading the Jewish community and give you the strength and optimism to make a difference, now and in the future.*

*With blessing,*

Erica Brown

Dr. Erica Brown is a writer and educator who works as the scholar-in-residence for the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and consults for the Jewish Agency and other Jewish non-profits. Erica is the author of *Inspired Jewish Leadership*- a National Jewish Book Award finalist, *Spiritual Boredom* and co-author of *The Case for Jewish Peoplehood* (all through Jewish Lights). Her forthcoming book is *Confronting Scandal*. She was a Jerusalem Fellow, is a faculty member of the Wexner Foundation, an Avi Chai Fellow, winner of the Ted Farber Professional Excellence Award, and the recipient of the 2009 Covenant Award for her work in education. Erica has degrees from Yeshiva University, University of London, Harvard University and Baltimore Hebrew University. She has served as an adjunct professor at American University and George Washington University and lectures widely on subjects of Jewish interest and leadership. She writes a weekly internet essay called "Weekly Jewish Wisdom" that appears on the *Newsweek/Washington Post's* "On Faith" website. She resides with her husband and four children in Silver Spring, Maryland. She can be reached at [www.leadingwithmeaning.com](http://www.leadingwithmeaning.com).





# Newcomer Artist in Halifax



My name is Margarita Tsvaygenbaum Fainshtein, and I am an artist and teacher of Fine Arts. Since I came to Halifax in September 2009, I've been passionately involved in the Halifax Jewish community and with the Atlantic Jewish Council (AJC).

I was very excited to hear about the plan to organize the Shalom Halifax Jewish Youth Program. It was a great project, where I got to teach art connected us to our Jewish roots. We organized a small exhibition on Hanukkah and Yom Ha'atzmaut and the newcomer kids were very proud to present their artwork to the members of the local Jewish community.

Besides the AJC, I am finding other opportunities in the art world. I found that the art community in Halifax is incredibly welcoming. I had a great opportunity to teach in recreational centres and organized a big event, presenting kids' works. In addition, I delivered art workshops in the libraries and at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. I have also had the opportunity to exhibit my work in the city art event and I am one of the artists included in the 2010 Halifax Art Map. As a newcomer, I've faced a lot of challenges and difficulties, but positive thinking and faith have helped me achieve my goals. I am very optimistic about my art future herein Halifax.



**While we were on the East Coast!**



Meeting with newcomers to Halifax

Edna LeVine and Mila Voihanski with Halifax Program Committee



Fredericton and Moncton Immigration Committee meeting with Mila Voihanski and Edna LeVine at the Moncton Shul

Meeting with newcomers to Moncton





## Community to community: Building community relationships based on respect and trust

Jewish Family Services of (JFS) has done extraordinary work in mentoring the Somali Centre for Family Services. That these two groups are working together sends a positive and encouraging message.

The model of collaboration works, and can be replicated anywhere if the will and true communal spirit exists in both communities. It is a unique experiment that has positive ramifications for international collaboration.

JFS has a keen interest in the welfare of the Somali community as there are many parallels between the Jewish and Somali communities. Through much outreach, JFS recognized that the Somali community could not alone advocate for itself. JFS actively promoted the rationalization of service delivery to the Somali community through meetings and collaborative endeavours.

Somali Family Services was created under the mentorship of JFS. JFS strongly believes in mentoring, and provides professional training (leadership. Advocacy, project development, and management skills) to the staff of the Somali Family Centre. Part of the aid came through opening doors to funding opportunities and accepting the

deeply care about the community. This collaboration has made a significant impact on the Somali community as a whole. There is strong leadership coming out of the community and Somali professionals are now delivering services to their own community. The Centre is viewed as a credible Somali organization that is sought after for information and collaboration on many initiatives. The two organizations now collaborate on a number of issues. However, this relationship took some time to develop due to suspicions and cultural barriers faced by both groups. The crucial issue of trust required many frank and honest discussions to overcome. These past two years have been extremely difficult and rewarding for both the Jewish and Muslim communities as such, JFS believes this story needs to be told. There has been a focus on negativity for too long, and if we hope to continue building strong, active communities, we need to work together.

Front Row (left to right) – Mohammed Dalmar, Marion Silver, Paul Bregman, Brian Diener, John Diener  
Back Row (left to right) – Roshan Musa, Martin Freeman, Muna Haji-Egeh, Mark Zarecki, Ahmed Mohamed, Mymouna Hashi, Huda Abdi, Adele Sidney, Samira Hashi, Jack Shinder, David Malek, Ruben Benmergui



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financial responsibility of the organization. The relationship between JFS and the Somali Family Centre is built on respect and trust and came about through the actions of people who

JFS believes this story needs to be told. There has been a focus on negativity for too long, and if we hope to continue building strong, active communities, we need to work together.

## Welcoming newcomers with a song

Submitted by Merrill Shwaid

JCFS Winnipeg, Manitoba, August, 2010

A year ago, Jewish Child and Family Service in Winnipeg, began a new initiative by creating a musical component to the many diverse services it offers. This came about when a group of newcomers approached the Integration staff with a special request of providing an outlet for both children and seniors to sing. After some discussion on the merits of providing a venue for socializing along with positives of musical expression it was decided that JCFS would help establish a Newcomers' seniors choir and help develop a children's choir. The formation of the JCFS seniors' choirs has been a very successful project. Nine immigrant seniors participate in the choir. Sixteen children and a quartet of young adults currently sing in the Junior choir, which is a cooperative endeavour with the Etz Chayim synagogue (a large Conservative congregation in Winnipeg) and the agency. We are proud to note that in total there are 29 participants in the choirs, ages ranging from 5 to 86 years old!

The choirs have performed twelve times this past year at a variety of Jewish community events including, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Yom Ha-zikaron,



Yom Ha- shoah as well as Chanukah. The conductor- Lina Streltsov, and her family arrived from Israel three years ago. She has an extensive background in directing musical theater, and conducting choirs of all age groups. The piano accompanist - Tatiana Smolyaninov is an experienced elementary teacher. She has a broad background in teaching music as well as an accomplished pianist.

The feedback they have received from the community has been excellent. Loud applause and standing ovations have shown how much the audiences appreciate their talent, exuberance and musical gifts. The Winnipeg Jewish community has been strengthened by their presence.

It has been a wonderful way to welcome both children and seniors. We have benefited by the contribution the choirs are making in celebrating our Jewish traditions through our rich musical heritage.

The Junior choir now has both Canadian born children as well as children from the new Immigrant community. The Junior choir is a joint project of the Etz Chayim congregation and JCFS



## Dear Selection Committee Members:

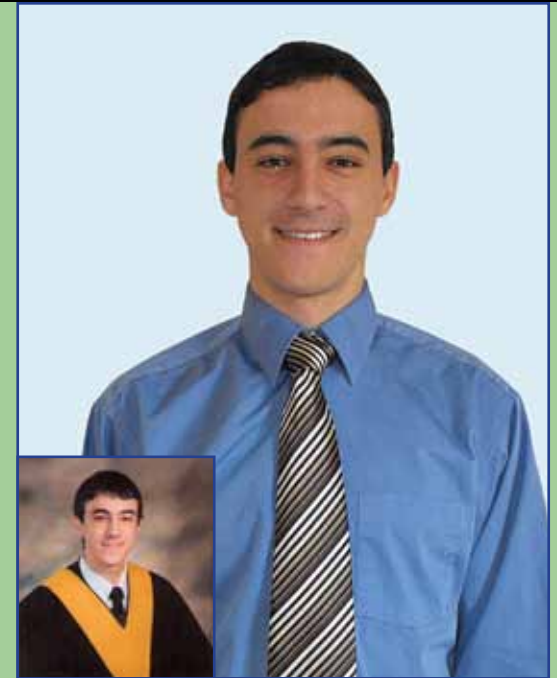
My name is Yosef Lazarev and I would like to thank you for selecting me as the recipient of the Michael and Marta Herling Scholarship. Receiving this scholarship will assist and support my goal of acquiring a university education and professional standing in Canada. Currently, I am enrolled as a second year student in the Bachelor of Science degree program (Biochemistry Major) at the University Of New Brunswick.

I was born in Holon, Israel and immigrated to Canada with my parents and two younger brothers in 2008. I graduated from Fredericton High School in June 2009 and began my studies as a science major at the University of New Brunswick in September 2009. Following graduation from the University of New Brunswick I plan to study Medicine. In addition to university course work, I get a lot of satisfaction volunteering at the Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital where we help young patients in the pediatrics department

recover from surgery, provide a positive environment for them, play with them and decorate their rooms.

This summer I had a rewarding experience as a staff member at Camp Kadimah in Nova Scotia. Working at the camp was an enriching experience for me in many ways. At the camp I shared my knowledge of Jewish traditions and the Hebrew language with young children from across Canada and Israel. I was very happy to have the opportunity to share my knowledge with the campers. Furthermore, I feel I have a responsibility to help sustain and grow our small Fredericton Jewish community by participating and leading services on Shabbat and Jewish holidays. It is something I truly enjoy.

Sincerely,  
Yosef Lazarev



### **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# \_\_\_\_\_

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I would like more information about activities at JIAS   
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

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

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

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**Visit us online at [www.jias.org](http://www.jias.org)**

## 2009 JIAS National General Scholarship Winners

Lola Bakhareva  
Medicine Hat

•  
Roni Gorets  
Halifax

•  
Einat Menashe  
Winnipeg

•  
Mauricio Daniel Suchowlansky  
Toronto

## Michael and Marta Herling Scholarship

Yosef Lazarev  
Fredericton