



***National Council of Jewish
Women of Canada, Toronto***

ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2017

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President's Report

As I look back on this term 2016-2017 I am so grateful to Eva Karpati who as Vice-President has already made her mark on our organization. She has initiated the making and giving of welcoming quilts to Refugee families, she makes sure that we are posted regularly on facebook, she was a key player in establishing the Human Trafficking Awareness Day on May 10, 2017 and the presentation by Mayor John Tory of the Proclamation in the name of NCJWC, Toronto. She has become involved and interested in the day to day operations of our organization and is well prepared to take over the position of President.

We streamlined our office staff, and Lisa Ash is no longer with us. Shabina Arfeen and Sophie Doman have been looking after the office duties, while Andreas continues to look after the building.

We gained a new project, The Mitzvah Knitters, who have contributed generously to the Back Pack Project and our Chanukkah Party in collaboration with JIAS. Regretfully, Elizabeth Erlich and Marsha Urowitz are stepping down as leaders of the L'Chaim Cancer Support Group. Toronto is hoping to sustain this programme and will search for volunteer leaders. Glenda Cooper and Dara Nathanson have retired from their positions as leaders of the Passover Food Drive. The future of this programme is in question. Several Lunch and Learn sessions needed to be cancelled because of poor attendance and this programme is also in question.

Council House continues to be a center of activity – many branch meetings, joint branch programmes, Maj Jongg and quilting Wednesday afternoons, the social group Positive Change and many non-member events that bring us revenue. Drive for Driedels, Passover Food Drive and the Garage and Closet Sale annually take over our auditorium. Many thanks to Andreas for his efforts in these projects.

National and Toronto will be celebrating 120 years of service. An event in conjunction with the Annual National General Meeting will be held on October 22, 2017. 'Reaching for the Stars' will be featuring Roberta Bondar as our keynote speaker and will be held at Temple Sinai. Debbie Wasserman will be installed as National President at this event. It has truly been an honour serving and I will continue to be present and active.

Respectfully submitted by
Ena Cord, President

The Future of 4700 Bathurst St.

In the winter of 2017, the Board gave approval to sell 4700 Bathurst St. and Membership ratified the approval. Colliers International is the broker we chose after interviewing three firms. On May 25, 2017 a first round of offers were presented. On May 29, 2017 a second round of offers were presented. With the recommendations of our brokers from Colliers and our Lawyers from Blakes a PSA (purchase and sale agreement) was presented to the bidder of our choice and accepted. On June 12, 2017 this will be presented to the board for approval. Bathurst Prince Charles is an option for our relocation. DMS (Property manager for Bathurst Prince Charles) successfully investigated the zoning and announced that we are

able to utilize 2500 square ft of office space. An architect was hired to look at the space and accommodate our needs. This will also need approval from the Board.

Respectfully submitted by
Ena Cord, President

Strategic Planning Committee

The committee was open to all. Members of the Board and PAC were strongly represented. Other members who attended were Rhonda Hecker, Carol Shapiro, Susan Lapell, and Bev Hutner. Because of the lack of new leadership, no new volunteers coming forth, and a decrease in our space when we move, the future of the following programmes or projects are in question; Drive for Dreidels, Passover Food Drive and Lunch and Learn. The Board has just voted to accept the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee to release the Passover Food Drive. The new Board will investigate the possibility of a future involvement with another organization, but the project as we knew it for over 30 years will cease to exist.

Respectfully submitted by
Ena Cord, President

NCJWC Toronto Foundation Bathurst/Prince Charles

I am very pleased to report that our Bathurst/Prince Charles Building at 3270 Bathurst Street continues to be very well run under the capable Management of Alan Alexander, our Property Manager with DMS Property Management Ltd. along with his Staff.

Lena Gabriel, our Site Administrator has been very well received by the residents and we are pleased with her performance.

Bathurst/Prince Charles is an integrated housing project with 160 units. There are 62 units that pay Market Rent, 33 that are Rent Geared to Income and 65 units that are on Rent Supplements. The building is comprised of one, two and three bedroom apartments. As of July 1, 2017, there will be a 1.5% increase in the Market Rent. Fortunately, as of this month there are no vacancies. 'Pace Independent Living' is responsible for managing our handicapped units.

The NCJWC-TS Foundation Mortgage was renewed on November 1, 2016 with CMHC for 2 years and will expire on November 1, 2018. At that time, many decisions will have to be made regarding the Mortgage. The Mortgage will be fully paid off as of January 2022 at which time the Foundation will own the building outright.

Many Social and Recreation Activities take place. For example, there is Chair Yoga and a Fitness class that take place once a week. A night Yoga class was added for those that cannot attend the day class. There was also a free tax clinic that was held in March.

The annual Chanukah Party hosted by Oran Branch was held on December 20, 2016. The Branch puts on their own entertainment and serves refreshments that include Latkes. It was very well attended. Also, Yachad Branch hosted their annual Purim Party on March 8, 2017 with entertainment by "MAESTRO" Music Band, a one-man singer and solo piano player.

Delicious refreshments were served and a good time was had by all those in attendance. This year, Randy Fingrut, Yachad Branch's Service Chair wrote an article for the CJN about the Purim Party and also included some of her own delicious Purim recipes. We are always appreciative of Randy for her continued support of this program.

The annual barbeque will take place on August 30, 2017. This is one of the highlights of the year for the residents. It will be catered by Big Al's Delish and it is always well attended. This year we had a first for the B/PC Building. One of our young families held a 'Bris' in April 2017 which I had the privilege of attending. This is their second child. The big sister was there to welcome her new baby brother. I have attached a few pictures from the event which turned out to be a very special morning.

There have been a few meetings with a number of members of the Board together with both Paul Smith of DMS Property Management Ltd. and Alan Alexander, our Property Manager regarding the possibility of moving the Toronto Section offices to 3270 Bathurst Street once Council House is sold. Paul Smith is looking into the Zoning By-Laws as well as contacting Architects and Planners to draw up plans for a space on the first floor that is no longer being used by the residents. We will continue to keep you posted. It could turn out to be a wonderful opportunity for Toronto Section.

As you can see the Bathurst/Prince Charles Building is a very busy place with much thanks to Alan Alexander who tries very hard to provide new and innovative programs and events for our tenants.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my Board of Directors for their continued support with a special thank you to Linda Steinberg (Vice-President/Secretary) and Debbie Wasserman (Treasurer) for doing a great job in their respective positions. They have made my job as President that much easier. I very much appreciate their dedication and insight. This is my last term as President of the Foundation. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as the President for the last 2 terms. I wish Linda Steinberg much success as she takes on the position of President, along with her new Board. It is a very exciting time for the Foundation and I look forward to continuing to serve on the Board as Immediate Past President.

The next Board of Directors Meeting will take place on Monday June 19, 2017.

As a member of Toronto Section you should take pride in knowing that the B/PC Building is a wonderful, model building. It would be our pleasure to give you a guided tour. Also, your Branches are welcome to hold a meeting there if the room is available.

Have a wonderful, safe summer!

Respectfully submitted by;
Roz Fine
President, NCJWC –TS Foundation

Treasurer's Report

Unfortunately, Toronto Section continued to experience financial challenges this year. Once again, we had to dip into our reserves and had to cash in a GIC this year to supplement our income.

While The Passover Food Drive did not raise enough money to cover all costs, which continue to increase, we had enough in set aside from previous year's donations to cover the shortfall. Financial donations to the Passover Food Drive continue to be of utmost importance to the Drive. The prepared food bags available for purchase for \$20 at our partner grocery stores were very popular; however, we believe the success of these bags drove down actual cash donations.

Until our new fiscal year, money coming into Toronto Section will once again be from branch fundraising, the annual garage sale and napkin and greeting card revenues. Please join me in welcoming Bev Hutner as incoming Treasurer for 2017-2019. Bev brings tremendous experience to the role; I am very pleased to leave our finances in her very capable hands.

Respectfully submitted by,
Patty Niles, Treasurer

Fundraising Report

Online Auction

Fundraising to support our community projects has always been an integral part of Council's activities. Looking for a new twist, the Fundraising Committee hosted an Online Auction October 31-November 14, 2016, listing 140 items with the assistance of Auctionjam Inc. and eBay as our platform.

Lots of excitement for those of us participating as bidders as well as tracking initial sales. Members and those who regularly visit this online auction site increased their bid the last few minutes that each item was posted. As participants, we were not all winners but with a few exceptions all items were sold.

Council members and many of the recipients of the 300 letters sent out by Auctionjam Inc. provided a varied selection of items. At the end of the day, hotels, restaurants and sports events were the most lucrative adding to the net profit for Council of almost \$5000 after expenses.

We learned a lot and can certainly improve the experience for future first time bidders. We thank our committee for helping to make this initiative a success.

Linda Steinberg and Debbie Wasserman
Fundraising Committee Co-Chairs 2016

Membership

Membership Kit, Dues, Website Membership Tab - On-line Activity and Registration

In our 120th year, we are thrilled to tell you that with everyone's help, we have made excellent progress and our membership not only survives – it thrives. As of this month, our figures show we have several new members bringing our total membership in Toronto Section to 625. We are also pleased to report that the Membership Tab is now active for all Membership types, new, existing branch, regular members and Life Members. Please use this link to update your information on a regular basis. It can only assist us in ensuring the accuracy of our information. If you recall, last year we changed the way dues are collected, so all branch treasurers are responsible for collecting TS dues and this has proved to be extremely successful. By the end of 2016, the majority of TS dues had been collected.

In our last report, we told you about the Membership Kit and this is an ongoing project. We look to all of you to give us the feedback we need to ensure we are meeting your needs. However, we are still lacking in one major area – we need to reach out to younger women and encourage them to join us and volunteer. Studies show we are not alone.

“Volunteering + Values: A Repair the World Report on Jewish Young Adults” was commissioned by Repair the World, a national organization that aims to make service a defining element of Jewish life, and conducted jointly by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University and Gerstein Agne Strategic Communications –

“Most Jewish young adults do not volunteer for Jewish causes or under Jewish auspices; they're volunteering at soup kitchens or for disaster relief; they're mentoring, tutoring inner-city kids and building playgrounds.”

Communication

Because of the changes taking place, we have postponed the planned quarterly phone-ins and on-line Satisfaction Surveys until the Strategic Planning Committee have made their recommendations for the future direction of Toronto Section. This is all part of our need to ensure we make a meaningful contribution to you and will do whatever it takes to create the two-way communication we all need and value. We are working hard to find ways to bridge the gap between engagement and disengagement and this is the focus of the Strategic Planning Committee.

Summary

We are committed to ensuring this organization grows and stays relevant and meaningful to the next generation of Jewish women in our community. Our website shows a National tab, plus the various Sections. Please check it regularly and look at the amazing work our Membership is doing at the Section, National and International levels. We are truly making a difference in the community, in the nation and internationally. We are strong, powerful women individually, but when we come together as NCJW women, there is no stopping us. We are the oldest Jewish Women's organization in Canada and we are as relevant to each

other now as we ever were. We value you and your participation so please do stay involved and encourage your daughters and granddaughters to join us in our work.

In closing, I want to tell you about the amazing experience I had at the National Convention in Winnipeg. When asked at the convention for my thoughts about the experience, I used a quote by Rabbi Tarfon, from Pirkei Avot, (Ethics of the Fathers). He taught: “It is not your responsibility to finish the work (of perfecting the world), but you are not free to desist from it either? (2.16). As a member of NCJWC, I’d like to add a further Pirkei Avot quote from Hillel, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I?” As Jewish women, we have to make the world a better place and be a shining light of hope to ensure we are committed to eliminating suffering wherever we can.

Thank you again for the opportunity.

Respectfully submitted by,
Susan Austin, Membership Chair

House

Thankfully this year has been a quiet one for our ‘house’. The building itself has had its regular maintenance but there have been no emergency repairs. The boiler has not had any major issues.

This year we did purchase a new microphone and podium. The adjustable podium is very much appreciated by our speakers.

Respectfully submitted by,
Debbie Wasserman, Chair

Newsletter

Toronto Section News was published twice during 2016-2017. The Fall Edition sent out in early September 2016 highlighted events in the latter part of 2016 and advertised upcoming Council programs and happenings from September through to December. The Spring edition published in early March 2017 reported on Fall events and drew Council members’ attention to program and service opportunities through the Spring of 2017. Every effort is made to be as inclusive as possible with respect to both Toronto Section and Branch activities.

We are so pleased to be sending copies of the newsletter electronically – the colours are vibrant!! We send hard copies through regular mail to those members without email. If any member wishes to have a hard copy they may take one from the office.

Thank you to our publisher Ariella Eben-Ezra for all her efforts on our behalf.

Respectfully submitted by,
Ena Cord, President

Nomination Committee Report

On December 21, 2016, the Nomination Committee members, Carol Ringel, Glenda Cooper, Gloria Roden, Susan Austin, Linda Steinberg and I met to discuss the makeup of the future NCJWC Toronto Board. We shared ideas and recommendations for securing the best possible people for the tasks. Many names were put forth and it was decided that I would follow through with the contacts.

It was a long but very rewarding assignment. There were some challenges. For example, like a puzzle, the parts needed to fit sequentially. I couldn't offer the same portfolio to several people in the hope that one will accept. I needed to wait, clear with one candidate and then move on to the next. In the meantime, committee members and others continued providing me with a list of potential Board directors.

In the end, I believe, that our incoming Board is a strong one. Each individual brings a unique and powerful set of skills to the table and yet, I sense that even with all that, the whole will be greater than the sum of its parts. And, that's saying something!

Respectfully submitted by

Dahlia Rusinek

Personnel Report

Due to the financial situation of our organization it was necessary to terminate the position of Receptionist. Consequently, Lisa Ash has not been employed with us since December 12, 2016. We have shortened our hours of operation to 9:30am - 3:30pm in order for Shabina to get more done during her regular hours. We have also tried to encourage members to volunteer in the office.

We are working on a comprehensive Code of Conduct which will be included in the Employee Manual and the Board Kit to ensure that we all abide by the best Human Rights practices.

Respectfully submitted by

Eva Karpati on behalf of the

Personnel Committee; Linda Steinberg, Debbie Wasserman, Ena Cord, Dahlia Rusinek

EDUCATION

Book Event

On a very rainy night in May we had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Mavis Himes do a talk on her book called The Book of Names. It was very interesting and informative. We enjoyed

hearing the discussion and then later had the Q & A time which answered many questions. Another terrific evening at Council House.

Respectfully submitted by,
Elayne Shuster

Health Issues

Women and Heart Disease. Understanding the Issues - Protecting Your Loved Ones

On May 3, 2017, Zion Branch hosted a lecture by Dr. Beth Abramson on 'Women and Heart Disease' to honour the memory of our cherished friend and valued member Cheryl Hochman ז"ל . Cheryl was actively involved in Zion Branch for close to 20 years and also led many Toronto Section programs: Just for Me Backpack, Prom Dresses for Students, Lunch and Learn Enrichment for Seniors, Reading Angels and Breakfast Program for Children, Drive for Dreidels, and Women's Shelter Program.

Dr. Beth Abramson, a renowned cardiologist and leader in her field delivered an outstanding and informative presentation to an audience of 140 including Cheryl's family and friends. Drawing on her own research, as well as the research of others, Dr. Abramson discussed the realities of heart health, the disturbing statistics, risk factors for heart disease and prevention. A lengthy Q & A followed this engaging presentation. Dr. Abramson was very pleased to connect with NCJWC Toronto and generously waived her speaker's fee. Cheryl's sister Linda Kremer, who is also a council member spoke on behalf of the family, thanking Zion Branch and Toronto Section for this special evening, a tribute to Cheryl.

Respectfully submitted
Linda Steinberg and Barb Ravka
Zion Co-chairs

Holocaust Education

NCJWC Toronto hosts “Musical Memories of the Vilna Ghetto” by Cantor Deborah Staiman on Saturday November 5th

Council House was privileged to host an incredible evening of song as part of Holocaust Education Week. The auditorium was filled to the brim with young and old, including survivors, their children, grandchildren, friends and others from the community. Cantor Deborah Staiman, creator of the program, recounted life in the Vilna Ghetto as she masterfully intertwined songs and historical narrative. She paid particular tribute to poet and resistance fighter, Shmerke Kazerginski, whose life mission was to save, collect and preserve Holocaust songs and stories. Cantor Staiman's beautiful, stirring voice conveyed a myriad of emotions, often bringing people to tears. She sang with such passion and soulfulness. Her facial expressions, dramatic pauses and powerful storytelling drew in the audience throughout. The program was highly educational; it was evident that a tremendous amount of work and research went into the concert. Staiman's choice of piano and violin accompaniment was perfect—only enhancing the haunting, yet toe-tapping experience. From the first nostalgic song, Vilna, which was written before the creation of the Vilna Ghetto, to

the last song, Zog Nit Keynmol, which everyone sang, the audience was totally engrossed. So gripping!

Thank you Cantor Deborah Staiman for creating this most meaningful and inspirational program. Certainly for those of us present, its emotional impact will remain with us for a long time.

Respectfully submitted by,
Florene Moskovitz, Chair

Enrichment Program for Seniors - Lunch and Learn Program
The Susan Zajdner and The Fay Mosoff Seniors' Lunch & Learn Program

Numbers of attendees have declined and so the following sessions had to be cancelled; Tuesday Jan 17, Tuesday January 31 and Tuesday May 30. The future of Lunch and Learn will be determined this summer.

Respectfully submitted by,
Gita Arnold & Sheila Freeman.

ADVOCACY

Gift of life - Organ and Tissue Donation

Nothing to report.

ALUMA

Below is an excerpt from a report sent by Orly from ALUMA detailing the use of the funds received by NCJWC. A significant contribution was made in the memory of Anna Leith (Vancouver Section) from which twenty-five clients were awarded subsidies according to their financial needs.

Case 1: Couple in their thirties, parents of two children aged 3 and 5. The Mother has become ill with cancer since the birth of her younger child. The couple is coping with the complex challenge of managing a serious illness while raising two young children. They come for therapy regularly, at times each one individually and at times together. They have told us that Aluma is their "lifeline" for support. They would have lost hope long ago, had it not been for our caring and sensitivity. Of course, this is also easing a potentially difficult crisis for the family.

Case 2: This is a couple made up of a European fellow and a returning Israeli pregnant with their first child after many attempts of In vitro Fertilization. They are an older couple with an unstable history to their relationship. There were many questions that arose that brought them to treatment as to their future together here in Israel. The fellow was dealing with a language issue and signs of inability to establish himself in Israel. His partner was grappling

with a difficult past of divorced parents and an estranged Mother. They were very concerned about their future as parents and came for skills in raising their unborn child. They told us at the end of treatment that they would never have been able to go through this process had it not been for the financial aid available to them at Aluma. Today, they are still in Israel, and establishing themselves with greater emotional strengths.

NCJWC's contribution enabled us to upgrade our closed-circuit television system, used as an aid in supervision of our learning therapists. The purchase includes an upgrade of our microphones and speakers. The response of clients treated behind the one-way mirror, has been very positive and we express our gratitude to you for enabling us to advance our supervision.

The monies donated in 2016, were used to benefit both clients and staff. They provided us the opportunity for professional development which in turn provides for higher quality treatment for our clients.

I am pleased to tell you that at the beginning of 2017, I arrived at a decision with the Board of Directors to raise the salaries of our therapists by 10 percent. This is after a 16 year period when minimal salaries were not increased. This was a gesture of appreciation and recognition for the staff's devotion to Aluma. Even with this raise, the salaries are minimal in comparison to other family therapy centers in Israel.

I appreciate and look forward to any help and contributions that we receive from you. My best wishes for a glorious spring, and a very Happy Pesach.

Respectfully submitted by,
Hazel Wayne, ALUMA Chair

Donor Campaign

On Sunday November 27 Bonnie Wells along with Dinah Branch organized a Donor Telethon at Council House.

The Donor Campaign of 2016 noted that 202 member donated as compared to 187 in 2015.

The total donations for Donor in 2016 were significantly higher than that of 2015.

In previous years when there were Donor Committee Chairs the total collected was much higher. Unfortunately there has been no committee chairs for the Donor Campaign for 4 years.

Respectfully submitted by,
Ena Cord

Garage Summer Sale and Closet Sale

June-July, 2016

Yachad Branch raised in excess of \$7,000.00 through its annual Garage Sale and its continuing Tuesdays' closet sale. This project served to accomplish several goals. It helped our NCJWC-TS community de-clutter their homes and donate valued surplus items to a cause multifaceted in scope. Not only did this year's Garage Sale help those in the community who couldn't otherwise afford to pay retail for quality items, but also brought a goodly sum into our coffers. Parenthetically, the concept of reducing our waste, reusing materials, and recycling our unwanted household goods has always resonated loudly with Yachad's sensibilities. Moreover, it enabled our members to work in a collaborative environment, sorting items and setting up. Furthermore, this project attracted past Yachadot and other volunteers who recognized its importance and worked tirelessly to ensure its success. KOL HAKAVOD! to all of us and a special thank you to Monika Simon, my Co-chair and to Phyllis Dubin, the summer closet sale chair.

Respectfully submitted by
Dahlia Rusinek

SERVICE

Positive Change

The bi-monthly program, Positive Change, is going strong. It is a group of vital women who enjoy each other's company, have fun and laugh and also discuss serious topics. At one of our meetings we invited an accountant who worked with clients on money topics to help our women with their concerns and advise them about their investments.

We celebrated International Women Day. Many of the women shared personal stories of their relationships with their husbands and sons. Each of the women offered a "present" to all the women in the world; e.g. more rights, equal pay and harder punishment for abusive husbands. The meeting ended with all the women standing in a circle and cheering to women's power. Everyone left feeling very well!

Respectfully submitted by
Rachel Ornoy, Chair

Human Trafficking Event

"Bought and Sold in Toronto" ***Human Trafficking Awareness Event***

On Wednesday, November 2, 2016 at 7:30pm National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto, located at 4700 Bathurst St, will be hosting a free community program on Human Trafficking Awareness: "Bought and Sold in Toronto."

Following the showing of the film "NOT FOR SALE", a distinguished panel of experts in the field will address this important issue. Detective Constable Teresa Curtis, Human

Trafficking Enforcement Team of Toronto Police Services, Varka Kalaydzhieva from the FCJ Refugee Centre, Carly Kalish, a social worker from East Metro Youth Services, and a survivor of human trafficking will all speak about this criminal activity in our city. There is still a prevailing misconception that this scourge does not exist in Toronto. Only by continually sending out the message that this is not the case will we start to eradicate this activity.

This project is in response to NCJWC, Toronto's commitment to fight human trafficking in Canada through education and initiating public information forums. Toronto Section began organizing educational events on this issue in 2013 as did our other Sections in Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg.

Human Trafficking Awareness Day

In January, 2017 the committee approved of the concept of making Toronto a human trafficking free zone. This developed in time into a proclamation of May 10th as a Human Trafficking Awareness Day announced by the John Tory and the city of Toronto.

Five months later we had the event in Nathan Phillip Square. We invited 8 other organizations, who work on eradicating Human Trafficking in the GTA, to join us. They each had a table for their material, for the community to get to know them.

Mayor John Tory welcomed the attendees and read out the proclamation that he presented to us. The four excellent speakers who are all involved in combating human Trafficking addressed the audience; Jennifer Richardson, Cassandra Diamond, Kevin Vowles and Bruce River.

There were about 20 students from 2 colleges who made signs with messages against human trafficking, walking the Square to encourage passersby, to join the event. We gave out buttons, bookmarks with our information and sheets of SIGNS OF LURING AND BEING TRAFFICKED.

That the city of Toronto announced that this proclamation was initiated by National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto was an excellent publicity for our organization.

Respectfully submitted by
Rachel Ornoy, Chair

Mitzvah Knitters

Mitzvah Knitters is so excited to be a part of NCJWC Toronto. We are a group of knitters who come together to knit for people in need. In the past Mitzvah Knitters has donated lap blankets to hospitals, hats, scarves and mittens to homeless men and women, children in need and new immigrants. We respond to community requests as they arise. Since its inception, Mitzvah Knitters has donated over 18000 items.

Mitzvah Knitters is in its eight month at our new home at Council House. We are successfully building our core group of knitters and are always happy to see new faces. We continue to meet twice a month on Mondays between 1 and 3 p.m. We have also had some evening meetings to accommodate those who have other commitments during the day.

Since moving here we have donated over 1300 items to hospitals, shelters, nursing homes, schools and special projects of Council. We knit and crochet scarfs, hats, adult and baby blankets, mitts and our newest project, Twiddlemuffs. These are hand muffs that are specific for helping Alzheimer and autistic individuals.

We are always looking for knitters, donations to fund our yarn purchases and any excess acrylic yarn that you may have in your home.

Our knitters range in ages from 25 to 95. All are welcome whether you knit, crochet or are eager to learn. It is a Mitzvah to help those in need.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Renee Birnbaum and Elaine Barkin, Co-Chairs

The L'Chaim Project

In the fall of 2016, L'Chaim was again named the recipient of the Growing Women's Health Campaign (formerly known as The Tree of Life™ Campaign) at the Shoppers Drug Mart located at 1115 Lodestar Rd. in Rimrock Plaza. The campaign is a four-week program held every autumn in support of women's health organizations in Canada.

In November, a wonderful therapeutic program was held for L'Chaim members entitled "Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My!" This program was facilitated by Claire Edmonds, PhD, a well-known psychologist with expertise in working with cancer patients, who is herself a cancer survivor. Dr. Edmonds' program presented ways to reduce the anxiety and stressful thoughts that accompany a cancer diagnosis; and stimulated much lively discussion from the participants.

In December, L'Chaim held its annual Chanukah Party. This year's party, a "Paint Night", gave everyone a chance to both celebrate together and be creative. Everyone was provided a real canvas, paints and guidance from a representative of Tanya Zbili Art.

In April, L'Chaim held another extremely well received and attended therapeutic program featuring popular facilitator Claire Edmonds, PhD. Entitled "Surviving and Thriving after Cancer", the evening provided a forum for frank and moving discussion about the great challenges that cancer brings, transforming those all who face its trials. The evening's program went on to discuss the ways in which the difficulties faced on one's cancer journey can also bring about growth and even positive change.

Susan Austin, L'Chaim's Phone Call Intake Coordinator, continued to speak sensitively to new clients, explaining L'Chaim's services. Marsha Urowitz, L'Chaim's Co-Chair and "matchmaker", continued in her duties of matching new clients with L'Chaim volunteers who have had a similar cancer experience; and arranging for gift bags to be delivered to each new client.

After many years of service, Elizabeth Erlich and Marsha Urowitz announced that they will be stepping down as co-chairs of L'Chaim in June of 2017. In the spring of 2017 they met with President Ena Cord, and VP Eva Karpati, to provide them with needed materials, outline L'Chaim's present administrative procedures and offer input as to how L'Chaim might best continue its operation under new leadership.

A Summer Social is planned for June, providing clients and volunteers with an evening of relaxation, fun and fellowship.

Respectfully submitted by
Elizabeth Erlich, Chair

“Just for Me” Backpack Project

A HUGE SUCCESS!

As has become a summer tradition at Council House, Dinah Branch members and their kids came together to pack backpacks on a hot August night. Some of the kids have been participating in this project for more than 5 years and are such experts that they immediately noticed improvements and changes vs. prior years!

Their enthusiasm was infectious and they brought along some friends to help. They were so efficient that the bags were packed and stacked up in less than an hour!

The backpack recipients are clients of JF&CS who otherwise would not be able to get new school supplies.

This year, word got out to the larger community about this project and we benefited from school supply donations from Bialek and the Toronto Foundation for School Success (the non-profit arm of the TDSB). And most impressive were the handmade hats, mitts and scarves lovingly knit and crocheted by members of the Mitzvah Knitters (now a project at NCJWC Toronto)! They spent hours knitting and crocheting goodies to put in each and every backpack, and we know the recipients will feel a bit warmer inside and out as a result! The project is funded by proceeds from Bingo and earmarked specifically for the Just For Me Backpacks.

Want to get more involved? Reach out to Robin Tameshtit at rtameshtit@gmail.com

Respectfully submitted by
Robin Tameshtit, Chair

The Toronto Jewish Quilting Project

It is with great sadness that I announce the passing of Michelle Burt. Michelle was the person who introduced me to the magic of quilting during my cancer treatment. Michelle showed me the healing power of creating quilts and how gifting something made by hand is precious and priceless. And thus, I felt compelled to establish the Toronto Jewish Quilting Project thirteen years ago. Michelle came many times to teach us new skills and she was a constant source of guidance and encouragement. Each of the 300 Angel Quilts we have

created would not have been possible if she had not taught me those first few stitches. We will miss her dearly.

Our banner started as a lesson by Michelle Burt on applique quilting.

On a very happy and grateful note we have been gifted with a stunning financial donation by member Marlene Nesbitt. Her generosity is enormous. Our Project will now be able to create many more quilts of love and comfort to people touched by cancer. Marlene is our Double Angel as she has gifted us once before. We are indeed so fortunate that she has us in her heart.

Please join us any Wednesday from 1:30 – 3:30 to add a few stitches of love to our Angel Quilts.

Respectfully submitted by
Eva Karpati, The Toronto Jewish Quilting Project Chair

Community Day Quilting

The Community Day of Quilting for Refugees on Sunday, June 5th was a huge success. Forty people came out from 10:00am – 5:00pm to help sew quilts for new families arriving to Toronto. Participants were NCJWC Toronto members, Toronto Jewish Quilting Project members, as well people from the community wanting to be engaged in this endeavor. We had experienced quilters to complete novices. Michael Levitt, our MP came to extend greeting and appreciation from our government and Lia Kessel from JIAS came to share the true experience of refugee families. We had media coverage from CTV news that same night a result of which another quilt was donated. That day produced 12 quilts in various phases of completion.

The participants have been extremely enthusiastic about continuing to come out to help finish sewing these Welcome Quilts and therefore a number of subsequent sessions have been set up.

July 18 was a momentous day as it was the day we gifted our first Welcome Quilt to a family of six who came in May but had spent four years in a refugee camp. The children, not even knowing why we were there were anxiously waiting in the lobby. They were eager to show off their few words of English. When we presented the Welcome Quilt the family was overwhelmed and so appreciative. Giggles and warm hugs followed.

We have created not only a quilt but a blanket of friendship. This important project of NCJWC, Toronto reinforces our history of reaching out to the community and assisting new Canadians.

Please contact Eva Karpati at vp@ncjwctoronto.org if you would like to participate in the Welcome Quilts project.

Respectfully submitted by
Eva Karpati, The Toronto Jewish Quilting Project Chair

Welcome Quilts Project

Since our Community Day of Quilting for Refugees on Sunday, June 5th, the participants have continued to create these quilts of welcome. They have made 12 quilts and are working on more. Their gifts of compassion are creating a bridge of friendship between us and these new families. They are grateful that people who are complete strangers are showing that they are not alone and that they are being cared for. Each of the families has shown us warm hospitality in return.

In our last newsletter we reported on our first gifted quilt. Since then we have gifted five more.

The second quilt went to the Pusuma family on October 4th. This gifting was arranged by our member Monika Simon, whose congregation Temple Emanu-El was instrumental in the return to Toronto of this wrongly-deported Roma family. They had already spent two years in sanctuary at Windermere United Church in Toronto. Jozsef, their daughter Lulu and Timea were extremely grateful.

The third Welcome Quilt went to the Khello family on November 29th. Originally from Aleppo, the family spent four years in Lebanon as refugees in a two room house without a window. The boys were not allowed to go to school. They came here in May privately sponsored by congregation Darchei Noam. They are grateful for the generosity.

On December 18, we gifted quilt four to Samar, his wife Nazli, and their two year old son, Yaya. They were sponsored by a Sikh group called Call Canada Home. The young couple came here in August and were in Turkey for a year before that. [JIAS](#) was the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) and our contact. They were humbly grateful.

On February 12th, we gifted our fifth Welcome Quilt to a Yazidi family. This family of seven had just arrived two weeks ago. They were brought to Canada through the auspices of [Project Abraham](#) of the Mozuud Freedom Foundation. The father, mother, son, daughter-in-law and three children lived in Turkey after fleeing Iraq to escape persecution by ISIS. Through an interpreter they expressed their gratitude.

The sixth quilt was gifted March 5th to a family sponsored by Temple Sinai's Syrian Initiative Committee. This Kurdish family is from a town near Aleppo. They paid a person to be taken out of Syria into Turkey where they were refugees for three years living in a one room in a house. To show their gratitude the father brought out tanbur, a Kurdish lute and played while his wife sang for us.

This is a remarkable project of ours as it brings us full circle to where we started 120 years – caring for newcomers to Toronto! We should be proud.

Respectfully submitted by
Eva Karpati, The Toronto Jewish Quilting Project Chair

Teaching Awareness through Puppetry (TAP)

As we begin to gear down for summer hiatus, we look back on all of the exciting things that have happened in the past 6-8 months. We are very pleased to announce that following input from key stakeholders, including focus group research, we launched our new Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) workshops for grades 1-3 and 4-6. Initial feedback has been excellent and demand is strong for this important topic. As more and more students are being integrated into school communities, conversation and learning is critical to laying the groundwork for acceptance and inclusion of children living with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

We continue to offer workshops about how to be a good friend and celebrating differences through epilepsy and seizure first aid, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and hydrocephalus. The key message of all our workshops is the importance of acceptance, inclusion and positive strategies to build awareness about differences. Too often it is easy to judge or exclude others. Teaching Awareness through Puppetry plants the seeds of acceptance and kindness that will grow with students throughout their lives. We are very grateful to the National Council of Jewish Women – Toronto Section, for their steadfast support and belief in our program.

This winter and spring we have led 28 workshops with over 1800 students, teachers and administrators. We have attended teacher and parent conferences and even participated in a Special Olympics celebration in the Toronto District Catholic School Board. This was a first for our puppets but a perfect place to celebrate differences! Our volunteer puppeteers are the most dedicated and fun loving group! They meet the demands of our very busy schedule with professionalism and great determination.

If you are interested in becoming a part of our program through volunteering or have any questions about the program or wish to donate, please contact us at 416 964 9095 or info@tap-toronto.com. Thank you! We hope to see you soon.

Don't forget to check out our website at www.tap-toronto.com or follow us on facebook.

Respectfully Submitted by

Rindy Bradshaw and Kirsten Sixt

Directors, Teaching Awareness through Puppetry

Contact at TAP 416 964 9095 (Wednesdays & Thursdays) or email us

tap@epilepsytoronto.org

Drive for Dreidels

Along with JF&CS and other partners such as The Cooper/Shear Family, Miles Nadal JCC, Joseph & Wolf Lebovic JCC, and Prosserman JCC Daycare, NCJWC – T collected and sorted toy donations from the community for use by the social workers for children in need.

With the addition of more drop locations, donations were down once again at our location, however, overall, The Drive for Driedels was a tremendous success this year. Thousands of toys were delivered and gift card dollars were raised for vulnerable children and youth at JF&CS.

Once again I would like to thank all the members involved. D4D would not be the success it is without all of the community members who volunteered their time to donate, sort, pack and schlep all of the toys!

Respectfully submitted by,
Patty Niles, Drive for Dreidels Chair

Outreach - JIAS

The Chanukkah party in collaboration with JIAS, scheduled for December 15, 2016, was cancelled, as a result of a very nasty winter storm. Much of the work had been done and much energy had been put forth both by JIAS and NCJWC volunteers, but the blast of winter would not let up.

I want to thank Jodi Block and her group of volunteers for their continued commitment to this tradition. I also want to thank Nova Study for providing volunteers to stuff the loot bags which this year, were backpack filled with toys and beautiful hats and scarves crafted by our Mitzvah Knitters. Fortunately, JIAS was able to give out these backpacks to the children who would have attended.

We look forward to continued a collaboration with JIAS, providing a welcoming experience for newly arrived immigrants and their families.

Respectfully submitted by,
Ena Cord, Outreach Chair

Passover Food Drive

2017 is my final year as Passover Food Drive Chair for NCJWC Toronto. It has been a wonderful experience, a time for personal growth to have made the Passover Food Drive a strong brand within the community.

This year the Passover Food Drive was down in donations, however, not down in Donors. I believe what prevailed was that donations were less, and we did not do our 'Buy a Chicken Raffle'. However, the branding within the stores was very strong; you could really see that it was the Passover Food Drive campaign. We sold over 800 Passover Greeting cards, we sold gift baskets at Delivery Day, and we raised money at the No Frills on Center Street, and at Sobeys, by selling cards and asking for donations. The stores that supported the Passover Food, also did prepacks, that they excelled in this year. Many people, I believe, who donated a food bag considered this to be a donation.

It is with thanks the wonderful volunteers who work on the Passover Food Drive committee that this year went as smoothly as it did. Each person went out of her way to ensure the success of the Drive. A special thank you to Dara Nathanson, Bonnie Dale, Paula Frisch, Shirlee Aronson, Gail Crystal and Gail Fenwick.

A decision was made ensuring that every person on our recipient list was registered with a social agency, to warrant that these people were looked after during the year as well. In order to do this, all of the agencies we notified that their members needed to be registered with various Social agencies within the GTA in order to receive a box. It is with thanks to Bernard Betel that the needs of many of our Russian-speaking recipients were met. They went over and beyond their call of duty.

Delivery day went smoothly, and we completed the delivery by 11.00 am. An amazing achievement. Dara Nathanson, Bonnie Dale and I ensured that every person on the list was cross-referenced with the delivery route. We also allocated every driver to a recipient, and were able to follow up with returns, as to who did not receive their boxes. Drivers were informed to bring their boxes back to Council House if the recipient was not at home. The day after delivery, went very smoothly. We had about 80 people who did not receive their boxes. They came in and we could see immediately who they were. We did not have many walk-ins. I had ordered an extra 30 chickens to support the walk ins, and all were gone within 2 days.

A very big thank you goes to Andreas Terriminy, Shabina Arfeen and Sophie Doman. Andreas, you are there, through thick and thin. Hard working and smiling. You are something special. Thank you for your support and kindness. Shabina, your help in running the office and your support was appreciated by one and all. Sophie your job was enormous, but somehow you managed. Adam Atkinson for your dedication and hard work.

In conclusion, and at the end of my tenure, I would like to thank each and every person who has touched the Passover Food Drive, the committee for their continued dedication, sponsors, volunteers and anyone whom I failed to mention. It is because of people like you, that the Passover Food Drive has been such an amazing success.

I would like to thank you all for having the confidence in me and to allow me to take the Passover Food Drive to new heights. It is an honour that I will always be proud of.

Respectfully submitted by
Glenda Ephron Cooper, Chair

BRANCH REPORTS

Council 63

Council '63 has 20 members this year.

We have had a diverse program including:

John Thomson, expert on terrorism and security

Anne Dublin, author

Movie Night to see "Lion" at Cineplex

Pot Luck dinner

Bill Genova speaking on the History of Yorkville, Toronto

Alison Pick, author

Attendance at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival to see "A.K.A Nadia"

Geoffrey Clarfield speaking on Jordan & Israel, The 2 State Solution?

Respectfully submitted by

Ellen Eisen, Chairman

Shalom Branch

Shalom Branch has just celebrated our 10th anniversary year. Our branch was started by two wonderful women – Eleanor Bergman and the late Rose Copeland. We are still going strong. Our activities this year include listening to interesting speakers, group outings to movies, dinners and a downtown dramatic play. As usual our Channukah party was a success. Our next meeting will involve review of a best seller.

Submitted by Marilyn Cooper and Wanda Wintrobe

Thornhill Study and Zion Branches Mah Jongg Day

The only constant is change. That is our mantra. We are forever changing. We have been together for many years and really enjoy the camaraderie and yet we thrive on change. Our program this year reflected this. We are always open to new members and have two lovely women who have joined us this year.

We have covered a wide and varied cornucopia of topics and events this time. In September, we had a lovely dinner together and the speaker, Robert Hawke, was informative and funny. Then we had an enthralling evening with Dr. Sima Goel, speaking about her experience as a refugee and talking about her book. Before we could catch our breath, we were whisked into the world of mystery writing – so enlightening and entertaining. Then we joined Orah Branch for an informative evening listening to Dr. Steven Blitzer telling us everything we wanted or did not want to know about chronic pain.

Our next program was a return visit by our favourite movie critic, Kevin Courrier. What an enjoyable evening! Next came a very serious issue for everyone – Human Trafficking. It is unbelievable to listen to the heart-breaking stories and their unbelievable reality. We all

committed to help and ensure we spread the message. We then learnt to quilt, courtesy of our wonderful Toronto Section VP, Eva Karpati. One of us even managed to sew the quilt to her scarf! What a great evening.

Soon afterwards, the snowbirds in our group left for the winter sun and a much smaller group of us had a truly marvelous evening at the end of November, listening to Kitty Wintrob talk about her wartime experiences as a child evacuee in the UK. It was fascinating.

We decided on a winter hiatus and came roaring back after Pesach with a wonderful speaker, Ian Leventhal, showing us how Art Transforms A City. It was a mesmerizing presentation. Next came an amazing presentation by Rouhama Danto showing us Michelangelo's Hidden Jewish Symbols and Messages on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. It was so interesting and informative.

Now we are waiting with baited breath for the rest of our exciting programs. Soon we will have our joint Mah Jongg fundraiser with Zion branch, which is always a huge hit and raises much needed revenue for NCJWC Toronto. Then Orah and TSG are having Mike Daley giving us a presentation on Judy Garland and two weeks later, we are having another amazing event with Orah where Julia Zarankin will be speaking about The Ballet Russes. We follow that with our elections and then our closing dinner.

So we will continue to volunteer and serve wherever we are needed while enjoying every moment of our time together.

On behalf of Thornhill Study Group, we wish you all a wonderful summer.

Submitted by Susan Austin

Zion Branch

Zion Branch is a cohesive group of 24 women who support each other, have fun together, learn together and share our family milestones with one another. As a branch we developed a programming roster that provides stimulating and thought provoking conversation. Our wide range of topics included: Zen Tangles creative doodling, Transgender Awareness, a movie review, presentations on the Middle East, the Hermitage and Art Installations near and far. Zion's opening and closing dinners and annual Chanukah Party are always social highlights. Our members participate in Toronto Section activities and once again we teamed up with Thornhill Study to host our successful Mahj Fundraiser. Looking forward to another wonderful year.

Respectfully submitted

Barb Ravka and Linda Steinberg
Co-Chairs