

2021 - 2022



**ANNUAL PROGRAM
REPORT**

NCJWC Toronto Annual Program Report June 2022

Who We Are

NCJWC Toronto engages and impacts the community through relevant and meaningful programs and projects that provide education, service and social impact.

Our History- Highlights

- ▶ 1897- NCJWC Toronto established as a catalyst for Jewish women to respond to the needs of the vulnerable.
- ▶ 1922- First Council House opened at 44 St. George St.
- ▶ 1964- Council establishes its new home at 4700 Bathurst St. for the next fifty-six years.
- ▶ 2020- NCJWC Toronto moves to 890 Sheppard Ave. W. where it will continue to serve the community with pride.

Greetings from the President, Sheila Neuburger



Hi everyone. It has been my honour to be your President over the past year. We have many reasons to be proud of our accomplishments during this time – we have continued to build on the past successes of the organization both before and during the early part of the pandemic. Our staff and volunteers have proven to be resilient, creative and enthusiastic about ensuring that our organization is not only sustainable but thrives in the years to come. The last few years have highlighted the importance of social connections, caring for others and providing concrete support to people who are in need. We have demonstrated this in many ways – Zoom branch meetings, a thriving Passover Food Drive, expanded L’Chaim programming, Kick off to Camp, Human Awareness Trafficking events, and expanded education programs for our members. I look forward to another exciting year as my term continues in this role. I would welcome the opportunity to meet you, hear your ideas about programs, how to serve our members more effectively, and future directions. I can easily be reached at President@ncjwctoronto.org.

Greetings from the Executive Director, Robin Gofine



Since taking on the role of Executive Director in April, 2022 I have had the privilege of getting to know many of you. I am settled in my office and enjoy the beauty and thought behind the design of NCJWC Toronto’s new home and feel very fortunate to be in such a wonderful environment. Many women are dropping by- either to say hello, to attend a meeting or to meet for the Wednesday afternoon quilting group. I know that Council has always been seen to be a home away from home for its members. I am confident that as our projects develop and as the space is used, it will become a well-loved home for members.

I am inspired by the accomplishments of the women who have lead this organization and the valuable projects that continue to support its mission: community service through education, social action and social impact. This summer and the coming months will be focused upon the future and engaging our members and our community about how we engage the next generation of leaders to ensure the ongoing success and growth of this great organization. I look forward to meeting each of you and working with you. I hope you have a wonderful summer!

NCJWC Toronto Accomplishments at a Glance

In the face of the pandemic, we are proud that NCJWC Toronto has continued to thrive. We have settled into our beautiful new home, hired a new Executive Director, pivoted to wonderful zoom programs in response to the needs of our members continued with ongoing projects and launched new ones. These are a few highlights:

- ▶ Our **AGM** was held on November 18/21 virtually. Geriatrician Dr. Nathan M. Stall, spoke about the challenges facing older adults with the complexity of COVID combined with other health issues they face including dementia.
- ▶ On Sunday, November 21/21, NCJWC Toronto hosted its very first **Mitzvah Day** and prompted our members to action. We made sandwiches for the homeless, collected and filled purses containing essentials for women in shelters, and donated bags of clothes, coats and boots for Ve'ahavta clients. The Mitzvah Knitters donated bags of knitted blankets. Toys and gift cards were also donated for the JF&CS Annual Chanukah Drive for Dreidels.
- ▶ The **L'Chaim** Committee– NCJWC Toronto's Cancer support program- chaired by Susan Austin and Irene Papernick, established a new partnership with **Wellspring**. Wellspring will train volunteers to be Peer Support Mentors for cancer patients and caregivers of individuals diagnosed with cancer and their loved ones.
- ▶ **NCJWC Toronto's Program Committee**, chaired by Ena Cord and Bev Hutner, launched a Zoom program series:
 - On March 28/22 Dr. Paula Rochon, Director, Women's Age Lab, Women's College Hospital talked about Healthy Aging.
 - On April 4/22 a virtual Lunch & Learn interviewed expert Jeremy Otto about the fundamentals of social media, hosted by our President Sheila Neuburger.
 - On May 17/22 we hosted our final virtual Lunch & Learn featuring Shani Azulai, Deputy Consul General, Consulate of Israel for Toronto and Western Canada, who provided us with an Israel Update.
- ▶ April 2022 featured the 39th annual **NCJWC Toronto Passover Food Drive**, chaired by Shelly Feldman and Susan Glickman. Our volunteers ensured the distribution of 2200 boxes of Passover food to the most vulnerable in our community. Over \$200,000 was raised to cover the costs of this vital program. In spite of the Covid-related logistical challenges of food distribution, we are stronger than ever. We are already planning for next year which marks the 40th anniversary of the Passover Food Drive.
- ▶ **One Voice**, chaired by Eva Karpati completed its toolkit for faith leaders to better support victims of domestic violence.
- ▶ **Teaching Awareness through Puppetry (TAP)**, chaired by Laura Berkley, continues to thrive and work to educate children and help to create kinder, more inclusive communities. For the past year, TAP has adapted to the changing environment and offered virtual workshops. The use of technology and high demand enabled TAP to deliver 100 workshops, reaching over 1300 students in the GTA (an over 50% increase since last year).
- ▶ The **Toronto Jewish Quilting Project**, quilted 1000 beautiful potholders, which were distributed in the Passover Food boxes. This longstanding quilting group has begun to again meet regularly at Council House on Wednesday afternoons, making beautiful quilts for cancer patients referred by L'Chaim and community members.
- ▶ During May's **Jewish Heritage Month** celebrations, NCJWC Toronto featured a daily post on social media celebrating the accomplishments of Canadian Jewish women.
- ▶ **NCJWC Toronto's Human Trafficking Awareness Committee**, chaired by Ena Cord, hosted a workshop "Open Your Eyes: How to Talk to your Children about Human Sex Trafficking" with over 70 participants, on May 3rd. In addition, Ena Cord and Eva Karpati have been invited to present at the 19th Annual International Human Trafficking and Social Justice Conference in August, 2022 on zoom.
- ▶ **NCJWC Toronto launched KICKOFF TO CAMP 2022** in May. Thanks to the generosity of our members and branches, we successfully raised \$15,000 to ensure that 207 underprivileged children being subsidized to attend camp this summer through JF&CS will be able to buy a new pair of sneakers or other camp necessities. A presentation ceremony to JF&CS took place on June 7/22. Thank you to Miles Nadal and Family for their generous lead gift!
- ▶ **NCJWC TORONTO** will be launching a new pilot project this summer in partnership with the Betel Centre to address social isolation of our seniors. This project will match volunteers from NCJWC with Betel Centre members who have asked for a buddy. If you wish to participate or for more information, please contact our office.

Thank you to all of our branches for their ongoing commitment to NCJWC Toronto!

CHAI BRANCH, Noreen Kasman, Chairperson

Chai Branch is still meeting on a regular basis on Zoom. Monthly programs included book reviews by Jennifer MacLeod, Ellin Bessner and Anne Dublin speaking about their books, a lecture on Women's Health, and an online Bingo game for the closing event. Funds were raised through the sale of Mah-jong cards and the branch collects items to support the needs of the vulnerable and needy for Ve'ahavta and St. Michael's Anglican Church.

COUNCIL 17 BRANCH, Sarah Kellerman, & Joyce Zweig, Co-chairpersons

Council 17 meets on the second Tuesday of each month, September to June. Council 17 has hosted various programs this year including; book reviews, music, art, cooking programs and the attendance has been stable even during COVID. The adjustment to ZOOM has gone very well and we plan to have two in person meetings yearly. For the first time in two years, the closing meeting will take place in a restaurant.

DINAH BRANCH, Judy Chodirker and Sharon Chodirker, Co-chairpersons

Another year of Covid, another year of virtual programs for Dinah branch. Programs included a book review and a program about an inspiring Jewish darbuka drummer in Istanbul. In addition, DINAH joined a few excellent zoom programs together with Orah Branch, and an interesting talk about Jewish-Indigenous relations with Yachad branch. Dinah branch held a successful fundraiser in April, our 3rd annual virtual games night raising \$2,300 through players and donations. \$1,000 was donated to a new campaign, "Kick Off to Camp 2022". Most recently, members enjoyed getting together in person for an outdoor end of year potluck dinner!

International Branch, Paula Epstein, Treasurer

International Branch has not had any meetings since the start of COVID in March 2020, however the branch made a very generous donation to the "Kick off to Camp 2022" campaign in May, which is greatly appreciated!

NOVA STUDY BRANCH, Phyllis Kaplan, Chairperson

Once again, Nova faced the challenges of COVID. With thanks and appreciation to Orah Branch, NOVA Study Branch was able to enjoy many shared joint programs that would have otherwise not have been possible. Nova Study Branch member Carol Shapiro presented an enlightening book review of "A Piece of the World" by Christina Baker Kline. In the early fall, NOVA members met in person, for lunch on the patio at Paisanos and hope to conclude the year with a similar outing. The branch looks forward to next year and hope we can resume "normal" activities.

ORAH BRANCH, Shelly Feldman, Chairperson

Orah Branch had a stimulating and enjoyable year of Zoom programming, thanks to its great programming committee, which included outstanding speakers and a book review. Orah is appreciative of the branches that joined with us, so that we could collectively share the costs of the speakers. Orah Branch provided seasonal holiday gifts, to the residents at the Bathurst Prince Charles Building, in December 2021 and look forward to doing it again in 2022. We started off the year with an in person outdoor get together with prepackaged food and drinks and we are looking forward to a homemade potluck outdoor dinner at the end of June.

YACHAD BRANCH, Joan Segal & Elkie Handelman, Co-chairpersons

Yachad Branch has continued meeting on zoom every 2nd or 3rd week. We joined Orah Branch for 3 meetings which members found to be cost effective and enjoyable. Programming covered a variety of topics from health to Jewish history to science including, Dr. Jordan Feld, who spoke about his research on Covid, and Pippa Feinstein on the relationship between Judaism and Indigenous practices. Yachad members collected used clothing for Ve'ahavta with fall/winter clothing and are presently working on our spring/summer donation. They also supported the "Kick Off to Camp, 2022" campaign with a branch donation as well as individual donations by branch members. A closing event is being planned at which the new executive will be installed.

ZION BRANCH, Naomi Kingston, Chairperson

Zion Branch continued to meet regularly this year with a multitude of thought-provoking programs. To kick off the year, Zion members met in-person to enjoy a Mad Hatter's Tea Party! They had a lot of fun, wore creative "mad hats" and enjoy delicious, traditional tea party treats. On Zoom, Members traveled by armchair to Italy where Dr. Anna and welcomed back Liane Harris Racioppo who introduced everyone to "The Roaring Twenties" and "The Silk Road". Moving to some new experiences, Zion joined National's programs on Human Rights and learned alongside Yachad Branch, "How Jewish Communities Can Contribute to Reconciliation". The branch looks forward to being in-person, outdoors for our culminating two meetings of the year... a tour of the Toronto Botanical Garden and a closing dinner. To give back to the community, members again participated in the Baby Give Back program, Passover Food Drive and especially heartily donated to the Kickoff to Camp Campaign. Zion branch look forward to continuing our friendships and being part of NCJWC Toronto next year.

THORNHILL STUDY GROUP, Susan Austin, Chairperson

This past year on Zoom, Thornhill Study Group was able to enjoy a sense of camaraderie and belonging. Programs organized by the committee, headed by Judy Weinryb, started with Ori Dagan, a Toronto jazz singer and composer in an all-Gershwin concert and included two authors talks: Author, Ann Dublin, who discussed her book: Jacob, and the Mandolin Adventure and Carol Borgh, the daughter of Kindertransport survivors talked about "Reflections on the Kindertransport: Rescuing Children from pre-War Europe". There were also presentations from a chiropractor, Zichron Menachem (an Israeli organization providing support for children with cancer), Gilda Spitz's on her family and the MS St. Louis, and a cooking class with Carolyn Cohen. Two programs were also held about the Jews of Iceland and Alaska and a book review from two of our members. The group attended a live performance by mentalist Haim Goldenberg. \$500 was donated to the Kick Off to Camp campaign and \$360 to L'Chaim Wellspring partnership. In order to address shrinking membership, Thornhill Study Group is exploring alternatives such as merging with another group fully or just for programming. Whatever happens, we are committed to NCJWC Toronto and are thrilled with the new direction of our leadership. Thanks, and have a wonderful summer.

For more information please contact: Robin Gofine, Executive Director rgofine@ncjwctoronto.org or 647-262-3117