



March 21, 2021

Dear Parents, Families and Community,

As a community, we are so very proud of the year we have had together, and how our committed team of resilient Jewish educators have gone above and beyond to ensure another year of learning and growth for our students, despite the challenges posed by Covid-19. **In fact, we have thrived and led efforts in the GTA for pivoting to online Jewish education.** Our student satisfaction surveys remain very strong, indicating our students continue to excel during their virtual learning.

We are sixty-seven students strong and our community continues to grow in spirit and faith even when we are not physically together. We are so appreciative of the students' love of learning and have enjoyed working alongside your children each week. As we look ahead to next year, we invite you to enrol your children for another year of enriching Jewish education.

While planning for next year is well underway, we continue to introduce innovative learning modalities with our remote Israel programs, which introduce Israeli culture and history to our students from the comfort of their homes. We look forward to continuing and enhancing these meaningful education opportunities for our students in future years. Our family engagement is high with involvement in both our virtual tours and the family education programs. Feedback from parents is very positive from our family education programs. DJCS is the first part-time Jewish education program to pilot virtual Shinshinim, providing yet another bridge between our community and our Israeli family.

The new Shinshinim program participants join into classes on Zoom to provide enriched activities for all classes. Specifically, this program engages students in activities and programs designed by two university aged students from Israel. Our students look forward to learning from these inspiring individuals who help them feel more connected to their Jewish identity. We are excited to report that the process of interviewing and confirming our Shinshinim for 2021-2022 has begun. This as an essential element to our holistic Jewish curriculum. Our programs for the spring also include a virtual Parent session with our Shinshinim, as well as a conversation about virtual learning and supports.

Another program the DJCS is participating in is a citywide initiative through UJA called *Unboxing Judaism*. This program looks to connect with all GTA Part-Time Jewish Education programs with the goal of delivering holiday boxes to all families currently

registered at DJCS, and those who were enrolled in 2019-20 but chose not to re-enroll for the 2020-2021 year. We are pleased to report that the first Tu Bishvat box was delivered to over 100 households and a virtual program was hosted by DJCS, with families from both enrolled years. We are proud to be a part of this great partnership.

We are maximizing all the government supports made available to us for both wage and rent subsidies. We acknowledge the extraordinary vision, passion, and resourcefulness of our entire team in reaching out to families and providing quality programs. It is through their dedication that we have been able to remain fiscally viable through this unprecedented time.

We are committed to continuing to provide engaging education through our virtual platform and are keeping up with all the latest Ministry of Education and public health measures. Additionally, we are also guided by the policies and procedures of the JCC for their after-school programming based on the recommendations of the Ministry of Health. As information is shared with us, we will make sure the community is kept up to date.

The well-being and safety of our students and their families is our top priority. We are ready and prepared to transition back to blended or in-person learning when we are safely able to do so and will always abide by government guidelines. With that said, we also remain flexible and responsive to your family's needs. We affirm our additional supports for students with special education needs.

For the DJCS to continue providing every child with a quality Jewish education, we need your commitment for early re-enrollment. **Your support means everything to us and is critical to ensuring we remain vital and thriving for years to come.** If your circumstances require it, please reach out to Belinda Keshen for details about our bursaries.

During these times, it is critical for the Jewish community to remain vibrant and connected. **We hope we can count on your early re-enrollment.**

Our enrollment package contains:

- Board letter
- Enrollment Forms
- The relevant information about our COVID-19 policies and the re-entry process

Sincerely,

Belinda Keshen, Principal

Avi Spector, President of the Downtown Jewish Community School
On behalf of the Board.