



# Jewish Philanthropy in Ontario

In June 2013, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada hosted a conference that brought together charity leaders, donors and volunteers to explore the philanthropy of the Jewish community in Ontario. Here is a collection of insights from the conference and beyond.

## AT A GLANCE

**391 665** Jewish population in Canada

**195 540** Jewish population in Ontario

**100** Number of beneficiary agencies that the United Jewish Appeal Federation of Greater Toronto supports

**14** Number of synagogues in Ottawa

**5** Number of Canadian universities that teach Yiddish

## TERMINOLOGY

Tzedakah: Hebrew for ‘charity’ or ‘giving.’  
Tikkun Olam: Hebrew phrase that means ‘repairing or healing the world.’

## CASE STUDY

In 1913, four immigrant women from Toronto’s Jewish community collected \$12,000, mostly in small change, to build a hospital where Jewish immigrants and their families could receive culturally-sensitive care and treatment. Ten years later, a location on Yorkville Avenue was purchased and the Toronto Hebrew Maternity and Convalescent Hospital was opened. In 1924, the name was changed to Mount Sinai Hospital, and served as one of the only places in Canada where Jewish doctors could practice medicine. Today, Mount Sinai has over 1,000 active volunteers across 80 programs and has received some of Canada’s largest gifts to advance healthcare and research. It is affiliated with many universities and, with the support of many donors in Toronto and beyond, has the most comprehensive maternal and infant health program in Canada, a first-rate surgical oncology program and has made medical breakthroughs areas such as inflammatory bowel disease, musculoskeletal diseases and biomedicine.

## WISE WORDS



“Charitable giving is an important tenet of Jewish religion and culture. Despite the philanthropic tendencies of the community, it is important to recognize that we have a diverse range of giving interests at varying capacities. In fact, many Jews have interests that extend beyond their immediate community and successive generations are committed to donating to countless charitable organizations. Peer-to-peer solicitation is highly effective within the Jewish community. There are also many examples of how we are mobilized to give if there is a clear collective benefit. Finally, while a fundraiser approaching Jewish donors does not have to be Jewish, it is necessary that you do your research and effectively communicate the importance of the cause.”

— *Maureen Molot, Board Member, Hillel Lodge Long Term Care Foundation, and Panelist, Jewish Philanthropy Conference*

## BACK IN TIME

**IN 1760, FIVE JEWISH OFFICERS WERE AMONG THE BRITISH TROOPS WHO ATTACKED AND SEIZED MONTREAL IN A WAR BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND FRENCH.**

The most prominent figures in this group were Samuel Jacobs and Aaron Hart, both of whom settled in Montreal. After many years of statutory and discriminatory limitations placed on the earliest Jewish immigrants, they were given full political rights in 1831, 27 years before anywhere else in the British Empire. Many early Jewish-Canadians were either fur traders, merchants or members of the British army. Shearith Israel, the oldest synagogue in Canada, was built in Montreal

in 1768. In the early 1830s, Samuel Liebshitz founded Jewsbury, now known as Kitchener, Ontario. European Jews came to Canada fleeing anti-Semitic attacks that started in the 1880s and continued into the early 20th century. Between 1880 and 1930, the Jewish population of Canada had grown to over 155,000, prompting the formation of the Canadian Jewish Congress in 1919, the result of a merger of several smaller Jewish organizations. In 1933, one of the most

infamous anti-Semitic incidents in Canada took place, known as the Christie Pits Riot. After a baseball game in Toronto a group of young men using Nazi symbols started a massive uproar, arguably the largest in the city’s history. After WWII, the government opened its doors to 40,000 Holocaust survivors seeking refuge in Canada. Presently, the majority of Canada’s Jewish population lives in Ontario and Quebec.

## INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

Conference presenters and participants shared many great examples and tips about giving within Jewish community. Here is what we heard:



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The Jewish Philanthropy Conference was part of a series for fundraising professionals, donors, and volunteers to develop a greater understanding of the giving traditions and charitable interests of several diverse communities in Ontario. Organized by the AFP Greater Toronto Chapter and the AFP Ottawa Chapter, this initiative was generously funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Partnership Project and the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada.