# Table of Contents

- About Ve’ahavta .................................................. 2
- Key Facts ........................................................... 3
- Message From the Chair ...................................... 4
- Message From the President ................................ 5
- Our Programs ..................................................... 6
- Volunteerism at Ve’ahavta .................................... 10
- Our Partners ....................................................... 11
- Tikun Olam Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program ................. 12
- Fundraising Events ............................................. 13
- Board and Staff ................................................... 16
Our Mission
We assist underprivileged individuals locally and abroad through volunteerism, education and acts of kindness, while building bridges between Jews and other peoples.

Our Vision
To be recognized as Canada’s central address for tikun olam (repairing the world).

Our Values
We are guided by the biblical commandment – ve’ahavta l’rayacha kamocha – love your neighbor as you love yourself.

We believe that it is our privilege and obligation to care for those in need regardless of their race, religion or nationality.

We believe that everyone, no matter their station in life, deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

We are committed to working in partnership with diverse communities towards achieving greater peace and justice.

We are committed to empowering homeless and at-risk adults and children to break the cycle of poverty.

We are passionate about creating volunteer opportunities that support ongoing learning, empower people of all ages towards personal growth and promote the qualities youth need to become future leaders.
## Key Facts About Ve’ahavta In 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10,180</td>
<td>10,180 client engagement interactions through the Mobile Jewish Response to the Homeless outreach van, during which were distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,228</td>
<td>15,228 sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,100</td>
<td>14,100 pairs of socks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,840</td>
<td>12,840 cups of coffee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,984</td>
<td>3,984 litres of water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,700</td>
<td>7,700 volunteer hours worked;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,702</td>
<td>2,702 Kinder Kits were distributed to underprivileged children in Toronto;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,920</td>
<td>1,920 homeless men, women and children received warm meals;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>192</td>
<td>192 hours of free tutoring were provided to children ages 8 to 12 years old;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>25 partner agencies were engaged.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Message from the Chair

There is an old Anishinabe saying, “those who build the house are built by it.” At Ve’ahavta we are indeed building a house that we hope will be a place of refuge, healing and hope. By building this house the Ve’ahavta family—our staff, volunteers and our generous donors are themselves builders of a better society. Ve’ahavta remains unique in this country. While professionally driven, it is the relationship between staff, our dedicated volunteers and our donors that make us stand out. We are a family that embraces life through acts of loving kindness.

In the time I have been involved with this organization I have come to know life in a fuller and more elegant way. While we deal daily with poverty and the pain it brings, our outreach van also brings kindness and relief. Our school for the marginalized and community meals offer real dignity to those who have rarely felt dignified. And while we all struggle with our sordid history towards First Nations peoples, our program in partnership with Northern Ontario’s indigenous communities, known as Briut, brings new ways of providing health care to people on reserves who so desperately need it.

Our sages tell us, “one who shares in the distress within a community will merit witnessing its deliverance.” So, as we continue to build our house, our hope is that we will all see the fruits of our labour and begin to understand that acts of loving kindness will help make this world a better place.

I am proud of my association with Ve’ahavta; I am honoured to be part of a movement that places human kindness and dignity above personal gain. May we all go from strength to strength.

It is my privilege to share with you the many achievements you’ll read about in this year’s community report.

Sincerely,

Bernie M Farber,
Chair, Board of Directors, Ve’ahavta
Shalom!

Chai. Life. 18. Ve’ahavta has been around for 18 years. And it is with great pleasure and pride that we present to you our community report outlining Ve’ahavta’s growth, the partnerships we have developed, and our successes in the area of tikun olam (repairing the world).

When you read this community report please keep in mind that we at Ve’ahavta have gone through many hours and days of introspection determining what we should “look like” after nearly two decades, and how we should respond to the challenges facing our people and the world today. We wanted to make certain that Ve’ahavta is strategically aligned with its objectives, and is able to offer meaningful volunteer opportunities to some of the finest community leaders and community workers in the country. We wanted to ensure that Ve’ahavta is financially sound in terms of fundraising and oversight. To that end, we established a finance committee, chaired by board member and entrepreneur, Alan Bass. And in order to strengthen Ve’ahavta’s programs and administrative systems we engaged Karen Goldenberg, former CEO of Jewish Vocational Services, as senior consultant.

As we looked closely at our programs together with our program committee, we made the difficult decision to phase out certain programs that were no longer in line with our mandate or areas of expertise. This allowed us to increase our capacity and launch initiatives that can make a greater impact. For instance, in July 2013 we launched Briut Ontario, a Jewish-Aboriginal health-promotion initiative in northern Ontario. And most recently, we created a Youth Leadership arm—a must for the future of Ve’ahavta.

In order to make these initiatives work we knew that a strong staff complement was key, and I’m excited to say that, today, Ve’ahavta has the most dynamic group of professionals ever.

I hope you enjoy reading our community report. Thank you for playing a role in Ve’ahavta’s development and our bid to repair the world. At the core of all of this is the recognition that chesed (kindness) and empathy are key factors in our commitment to the work we do. One day, perhaps, we’ll close our doors, as equity and peace for all will have arrived. But until then, there is much work to do. I believe we are on a good road.

Mazel Tov. We are 18 years young!

B’Shalom,

Avrum Rosensweig
President and CEO
VE’AHAVTA STREET ACADEMY (VSA)

In 2013, the Ve’ahavta Street Academy, in its 4th year, celebrated the graduation of 18 students. Among those graduates was Carlos Lopes, who attended the summer session of VSA. For Carlos, VSA meant the start of a new direction in his life. After completing the program in the autumn of 2013 Carlos became the VSA Program Assistant. Carlos is currently enrolled in 2 certificate programs at the Toronto Hostel Training Center and is looking for full time employment. He also continues to be a Ve’ahavta volunteer.

This program offered me so much of what I want and need to feel welcome, and that I belonged. It made me aware that human beings are designed and built to overcome. What I perceived to be IMPOSSIBLE is now becoming POSSIBLE.

CARLOS LOPES, VSA PROGRAM GRADUATE AND ASSISTANT

THE LITA AND MIKEY HOMEWORK CLUBS

In 2013, the Lita and Mikey Homework Clubs operated weekly in two schools in low-income GTA communities. Ve’ahavta staff members and 13 volunteers helped 60 students between the ages of 8 and 12 succeed academically by providing them with 192 hours of free coaching to enhance levels of literacy, creativity, self-confidence and self-reliance.
Ve’ahavta Programs
Local Initiatives

MOBILE JEWISH RESPONSE TO THE HOMELESS (MJRH)

The bitter winter of 2013 dramatically underscored the critical role MJRH plays in mitigating the pain of homelessness for Toronto’s street people. In 2013, Ve’ahavta outreach workers, assisted by 627 volunteers, provided support for clients 10,180 times. In addition, Ve’ahavta launched a 6-month pilot project program that would formalize the case management component of the MJRH program to better meet the comprehensive needs of our clients.

THE KINDER KIT PROJECT

With tremendous volunteer support, these essential backpacks filled with a year’s-worth of school supplies were distributed to 2,702 underprivileged children in Toronto, through 11 Jewish day schools and 8 local social service agencies.

COMMUNITY MEALS

In 2013, Ve’ahavta provided 2,150 homeless men, women, and children with warm and nutritious meals served by staff and volunteers at 16 community meals. The meals were held at the Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre and Evangel Hall Mission.
**Ve’ahavta Programs**

**Local Initiatives**

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**TIKUN OLAM COMMUNITY PASSOVER SEDER**

On the second night of Passover, 166 Ve’ahavta guests of all faiths gathered at Congregation Habonim to share in Ve’ahavta’s 14th Annual Passover Seder. Ve’ahavta President Avrum Rosensweig and spiritual leader Eli Rubenstein led the Seder, while 40 volunteers served a sumptuous meal generously donated and prepared for the occasion.

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**THE CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST**

Ve’ahavta’s 12th Annual Creative Writing Contest received close to 100 submissions from marginalized individuals around the GTA. These works were evaluated by a panel of notable judges including Ron Maclean, Elliotte Friedman, and Michael “Pinball” Clemons. Prizes were presented at a coffee house event and ceremony on July 9, at Holy Blossom Synagogue, during which the winners were celebrated and given the opportunity to recite their work to an attentive audience.

*The keepers of Anishinabe traditional knowledge say it begins with a whisper. Sometimes there’s so much going on to even pay attention, especially when you’re constantly trying to stay one step ahead of trouble. Looking back, I figure I heard that whisper when I was seven years old along a prairie highway on a bitterly cold winter night.*

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*EXCERPT FROM A WHISPER IN THE WIND, BY WESTWIND EVENING, 1ST PLACE WINNER OF VE’AHAVTA’S 12TH ANNUAL CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST*
In 2013, Ve’ahavta’s international department implemented the Briut program in partnership with the communities of Capoey (Region 2) and Bartica (Region 7) in Guyana. Three Briut fellows devoted close to a year in Guyana supporting the development and enhancement of local, community-based health promotion programming with youth and adults. The Briut program was made possible by the generous support of the Canadian Auto Workers Social Justice Fund.

In 2013, Ve’ahavta continued to partner with Kulam and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) to support the building of schools and clean water wells in Ethiopia. Ve’ahavta also worked with the JDC as an executive member of the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief, a coalition of North American and U.K.-based Jewish organizations collectively supporting communities in crisis due to natural or man-made disasters. In 2013, Ve’ahavta formed the Jewish Coalition for Syrian Refugees in Jordan as well as the Jewish Coalition for Victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

In 2013, Ve’ahavta was proud to support the Uganda Spine Surgery Mission. Over a 10-day period, the USSM’s 6-person team evaluated over 120 patients, operated on 11 patients, delivered over $50,000 in medications and supplies to Mbarara Hospital, and touched the lives of countless Ugandans.
On August 15, 2013, Ve’ahavta, in conjunction with seven First Nation communities in Kenora, Ontario, announced the launch of a groundbreaking national health promotion initiative called Briut—the Hebrew word for “health”. Briut aims to support long term healthy living of Aboriginal populations by strengthening the delivery of local community-based health promotion programs.

Initially, Ve’ahavta designed Briut to respond to the health care needs of indigenous populations in Guyana, South America. Now in its third year of implementation, and with demonstrated positive results, Ve’ahavta has adapted the program to serve Aboriginal Canadians living in rural contexts.

Briut is generously supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation with a four-year grant of $238,500. This initiative is guided by an advisory council headed by three honourary co-chairs: former Prime Minister The Right Honourable Paul Martin, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine, and Canadian Philanthropist Mr. Larry Tanenbaum.

Volunteers are essential to Ve’ahavta’s pursuit of tikun olam and have become partners in our mission to reach out to others with compassion and understanding.

Last year, approximately 1,070 volunteers devoted over 7,700 hours to Ve’ahavta’s numerous programs. Ve’ahavta wishes to thank each of our volunteers for their remarkable contribution to the success of Ve’ahavta and the betterment of the world.
Ve’ahavta’s mission to build bridges between Jews and other peoples is predicated on partnership and collaboration. Partnering with many local and international community agencies allows us to leverage our existing resources, expand the scope of our outreach, increase the impact of our donor dollars and improve our services to clients worldwide.

Thank you to our partners for enhancing our tikun olam efforts:

Adath Israel Congregation
The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee
Annex Shul
The Canadian Auto Workers Social Justice Fund
Congregation Habonim
Evangel Hall Mission
FoodShare Toronto
Frontier College
Fred Victor Caledonia
George Brown College
Holy Blossom Temple
The Israel Trauma Coalition
The Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief
Jewish Family & Child Services
Kenora Chief’s Advisory Kulam
The Lions Club of Bartica
Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre
Regent Park Community Health Centre
Regional Health Administration (Region 2, Guyana)
Scott Mission
Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre
Toronto Writers’ Collective
Uganda Spine Surgery Mission
Wolfond Centre

Thank you to the following organizations for their collaboration and for sharing in our vision:

All Saints Church Community Centre
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue
Beth Torah Congregation
Beth Tzedec Congregation
Beit Rayim
Beth Tikvah
Children’s Aid Society of Toronto
Catholic Children’s Aid
Cedarvale Public School
Cottingham Public School
Congregation Darchei Noam
Davenport-Perth Neighborhood Centre
East York Toronto Family Resources
Flemington Neighborhood Services
Fred Victor Women’s Hostel
The Friendship Centre
The House
The Toronto Heschel School
Holy Rosary Church
Kehillat Shaarei Torah
The Mustard Seed
New Circles
Shaar Shalom Synagogue
Street Haven
Sound Times
Temple Emmanuel
Temple Har Zion
Temple Sinai
Village Shul
Working Women’s Community Centre

Program Partners
Ve’ahavta’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program inspires young people who are reaching a meaningful milestone in their lives to set an example by emphasizing the role they can play in making the world a better place.

When Josh Arbess began planning his bar mitzvah he knew from the start that he didn’t want an over-the-top dance party to celebrate. He wanted to do something more meaningful, something to truly celebrate the humanitarian values he’d been brought up with — and the values of tzedakah which are in keeping with becoming a bar mitzvah boy.

Josh decided that he would use a portion of his bar mitzvah money to buy 1,000 Kinder Kits —backpacks with school supplies that Ve’ahavta distributes to underprivileged children all over the world — to be shipped to the House of Hope orphanage in Haiti, which he personally visited with his father.

“Ve’ahavta is more than a great organization” Josh says. “It’s a vehicle for inspiration and fulfillment. The money you raise is one thing, but the devotion and work you put into the whole tikun olam experience is your key to changing the world.”

We are grateful to young people like Josh, and their families, for thoughtfully inviting Ve’ahavta to play a role in their simcha and for actively helping those in need.

To find out more about the new 2014 iMitzvah Program, contact shawna.meshwork@veahavta.org or visit www.veahavta.org
Starry Nights Committee

**Starry Nights Event Chair**
Tony Alberga

Alicia Gouveia
Renee Birnbaum
Bruce Cowley
Sandra Hausman
Judy Schwartz
Maura Cooperberg
Karen Ehrlich
Karen Ehrlich
Ruth Hart
Eli Rubenstein
Fran Grundman
Renee Unger
Brian Vyner
Carolyn Tucker
Fern Levitt
Mark Diamond
Danielle Kaplan
Shari Wert

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**Starry Nights 2013**

Ve’ahavta’s signature fundraising event, Starry Nights, was held on Sunday, November 10, 2013, at Koerner Hall, in the TELUSTR Centre for Performance and Learning.

More than 500 guests joined us in what was a moving and beautiful evening and a joyful celebration of all we have achieved together.

Featuring keynote speaker, Frank O’Dea, formerly homeless and founder of Second Cup, and comedian Adam Growe as Master of Ceremonies, the evening paid tribute to 9 extraordinary humanitarians:

Phil Fontaine, Dr. Andrew Simor, Joe Gottdenker, Faigie Libman, Moshe Hammer, Amanda & Joshua Belzowski, and Jaime & Alexandra Eckler.

Through the generous contributions of our many sponsors and individual donors, Starry Nights raised $525,000 to support Ve’ahavta’s poverty alleviation projects.
Starry Nights Corporate Sponsors

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Distributel

**Platinum Sponsor**
Barter Network Ltd.

**Gold Sponsor**
Rotary Club of Toronto
Nani & Austin Beutel & Family
The Azrieli Foundation

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The Leboff Family Charitable Foundation
The Nathan and Lily Silver Family Foundation
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Anthony Alberga
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Dorel
Paradise Homes
Mel and Pedie Wolfond
Paisley Manor Insurance Brokers Inc.
BMO Harris Private Banking
Anita Ekstein
Peter and Stella Ekstein and Family
**Fundraising Events**

**JaimE anD alExanDRa’S lEmonaDE StanD**

Jaime and Alexandra Eckler are two sisters in Grades 4 and 2, respectively, at the Montessori Jewish Day School in Toronto. Jaime and Alexandra started up a lemonade stand in 2009 to help support Toronto’s homeless. Since the inception of their charity, the girls have raised over $20,000 for various homeless organizations including Raising the Roof, Eva’s Initiative and Ve’ahavta.

In five short years, Jaime and Alexandra have organized and hosted five events starting with a lemonade stand and puppet show at the end of their driveway, then adding an art component and moving the event to a nearby park. The following years included a recycled art event, a full-fledged carnival theme and last year’s photography event in which Jaime and Alexandra partnered with the school they attend, the Montessori Jewish Day School, to successfully raise $6,000 for Ve’ahavta.

To find out how you can become involved in a tikun olam event, contact shawna.meshwork@veahavta.org

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**LEAGUE OF ROCK**

After 12 weeks of coaching by the League of Rock, the bands Black Shabbos, Shtetl People and Kosher Acid came together on July 25th, 2013, and rocked The Garage at Downsview Park – for the second time.

The room was filled to capacity once again with adoring fans that came out to support the musicians. The event raised $40,000 in support of Ve’ahavta’s poverty alleviation projects.
We deeply appreciate the time, expertise and governance of our volunteer Board of Directors.

**Bernie Farber**  
Chair  
Senior Vice President, Gemeni Power Corp.

**Anthony Alberga**  
Fundraising Chair  
Chairman and CEO, Downing Street Group

**Alan Bass**  
Treasurer  
President, Korbitec Inc.

**Renee Roth**  
Marketing and Program Committee Chair  
VP International Sales, Marketron International Canada Inc.

Dr. Gordon Arbess  
Director, HIV Clinic, Department of Family & Community Medicine, St. Michael’s Hospital, University of Toronto

Karen Ehrlich  
Toronto Mediation Centre

Henry Greisman  
Karabus Management Inc.

Paul Lindzon  
President, ITA Shearlings

Ira Teich  
Founder, Teich Group

Bruce Cowley  
Creative Head, Digital Channels Programming, CBC Network

Jordana Ross  
CBC Production Executive

Brian Vyner  
Financier

Mark Diamond  
Director and Owner Camp Manitou

Larry Zimmerman  
Lawyer, Zimmerman Associates

Thank you to our hard-working and committed staff for another successful year:

**Avrum Rosensweig**  
President & CEO

**Kirill Zaretsky**  
Senior Director of Development

**Carol Berns**  
Fundraising and Office Coordinator

**Karen Goldenberg**  
Senior Consultant

**Lauren Gostick**  
Program Coordinator, MJRH

**Ruth Hart**  
Volunteer Services Coordinator

**Ilana Linden**  
Development Officer

**Shawna Meshwork**  
Development Officer

**Amit Robson**  
Outreach Worker

**Danny Richmond**  
Director of Youth Leadership

**Theresa Schrader**  
Program Coordinator, VSA

**Robyn Segall**  
Director of Programs and Marketing

**Eliana Tizel**  
Finance Coordinator

**Dave Warwick**  
Controller

**Sarah Zeicer**  
Director of International and National Projects

Ve’ahavta would like to thank all the wonderful interns who have graced us with their talent and enthusiasm, and contributed to our success in 2013.