

2015

ANNUAL
REPORT



Ve'ahavta

A Jewish Humanitarian Response to Poverty

Message from the Chair and CEO



Avrum Rosensweig



Bernie M. Farber

"I have come to appreciate the devotion and dedication that your organization provides to the less fortunate ... the understanding, concern, compassion and non-judgmentalism above all!"

—Steve, Mobile Jewish Response to Homelessness outreach van program client

There is no greater motivation for our work at Ve'ahavta than to receive appreciation from the people we serve as their lives change for the better.

We are also inspired daily by the many community members who pitch in to help. Working together we have accomplished great things.

Here are just a few of the achievements from 2015:

For the first time, the **Ve'ahavta Street Academy (VSA)** received funding from Toronto Employment and Social Services to deliver Essential Skills training to Ontario Works recipients. The nine-week Essential Skills program is now held three times per year in partnership with George Brown College. Over 70% of graduates move on to education, training, employment and volunteer opportunities.

Ve'ahavta, along with five other Jewish organizations, presented a **Statement of Solidarity and Action** at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission closing ceremonies in Ottawa. As well, a **Professional Development Day** was organized with Indigenous partners to support teachers and educators in 13 Jewish schools to help young people learn about Indigenous history and culture.

Thousands of youth locally and across Canada were engaged in activities that promote social justice through Ve'ahavta's **Dugmah Grants for Summer Camps**, the nine newly developed **Tikun Workshops** offered in schools, shuls and youth groups and the **Impact India** service-learning trip.

Through the support of our Development Cabinet, led by Tony Alberga, we have successfully strengthened our infrastructure and development capacity, enabling us to raise an additional \$480,000 in cash and contributed goods and services.

Ve'ahavta staff, Board members and volunteers also worked diligently to submit an application for accreditation with Imagine Canada. We extend our appreciation to consultant Hanita Tiefenbach for her leadership and Board member Bev Margolian for her expertise and guidance on policy development. We look forward to hearing the results of our application later in 2016.

We are very grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for funding the **Creative Writing Program** and our **Briut** health promotion program in partnership with the Kenora Chiefs Advisory. A special thanks goes to Distributel and all of our many donors, supporters and volunteers. And of course we applaud our excellent, dedicated staff, without whom our fine work would not be accomplished.

We welcome and thank Gary Samuel, Ve'ahavta's 2016 Board chair, for his dedicated leadership and Karen Goldenberg, Interim CEO, during Avrum's Special Assignment Year.

We wish everyone *nachas* during 2016, Ve'ahavta's special 20th Anniversary year, and look forward to celebrating with you on Sunday, November 13 at this year's Starry Nights.

B' shalom,



Avrum Rosensweig
Founder and CEO



Bernie M. Farber
Past President

Programs and Services

Ve'ahavta is a Jewish humanitarian organization dedicated to promoting positive change in the lives of people of all faiths who experience poverty, homelessness and other forms of marginalization. Ve'ahavta engages community members in meaningful and hands-on volunteer opportunities to support our collective mission of *tikun olam* (repairing the world).

Each year 600 volunteers give over 5,500 hours of time to assist with *tikun olam*.

HERE ARE THE 2015 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Community Poverty Relief

Community Passover Seder
Creative Writing Contest
Creative Writing Program in collaboration with the Toronto Writers Collective
Mobile Jewish Response to Homelessness (MJRH)
Ve'ahavta Street Academy (VSA)

72% of VSA graduates move on to education, training, employment and volunteer opportunities.

Community Engagement

Briut, Indigenous health promotion programming in partnership with the Kenora Chiefs Advisory
Community Events
Crisis Response
Dugmah Grants for Summer Camps
Impact Service Learning Trips (Impact India)
Kulam (a humanitarian initiative in Ethiopia in partnership with the American Jewish Distribution Committee)
Professional Development Day (for Jewish educators around Indigenous culture and history issues)
Tikun Workshops

"Without the MJRH van's assistance I would never be where I am today: off the streets and in an apartment I can call home."

—Shawn Pugilese

CLIENT PROFILE

Torey Mitchell

When Torey Mitchell's Ontario Works Caseworker first suggested he attend the Ve'ahavta Street Academy (VSA), Torey says, "I felt like I didn't want to go. I wanted to stay home, not go to a program."

Torey, now 24, hadn't particularly enjoyed school. Having lost his mother at age 12, he had bounced around to different family members' homes, changed high schools four times and repeated courses.

Out of obligation to his caseworker, he attended the intake session for VSA, a nine-week Essential Skills program offered three times a year in partnership with George Brown College (GBC).

"At first, I was a bit nervous, because I was starting the program two weeks late. I didn't know the others," he says.

But what stood out for him was the sense of security. "Whatever we talked about, stayed in the class," he says.

The VSA staff and classmates became the family he never really had. He enjoyed the cooking, résumé writing and other workshops and could see possibilities for success.



"Honestly, if it wasn't for Ve'ahavta I wouldn't be where I am today."

For a few weeks after the program ended, he went back to playing video games, drinking and hanging out, but something kept nagging at him. He longed for the feeling of accomplishment that VSA provided him, the fellowship he experienced and the connection with the staff. When Ve'ahavta's Case Manager, who provides ongoing support for six months after the program, followed up with him, Torey decided to get serious about making a change in his life.

He attended an information session for GBC's Construction Craft Worker Extended Training (CCWET) program, applied and is currently attending classes. He hopes to get into machine operating.

Torey accepted the honour of addressing his VSA graduating class. He spoke eloquently about his journey.

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Deon Kibel

As with many volunteers, Deon Kibel's first exposure to Ve'ahavta was through the Mobile Jewish Response to Homelessness outreach van program. When his son, Ethan, now 15, was approaching his bar mitzvah, they arranged through the Village Shul to do a volunteer shift on the van along with Ethan's older brother Seth, now 19.

"Impactful and thought-provoking" is how Deon describes that experience. One man they met on the streets had gone to the same high school as Seth.

"This was a compelling illustration to all three of us, that we have much more in common with those who live on the streets than we often appreciate. The gap is much smaller than we realize," he says.

Deon was inspired to do more community work. When he ran into Mark Diamond, a former Ve'ahavta board member and chair, at a social event, Mark encouraged him to consider volunteer opportunities at Ve'ahavta. Deon decided to look into it further.

"What is distinctive about Ve'ahavta is that it allows me to participate in a way that is in keeping with my Jewish philosophy and values, but at the same time be very engaged and integrated with the greater community." As he was already supportive of the specific work that Ve'ahavta does, the choice was simple.



"Ve'ahavta provides a welcoming and rewarding place where you can feel like you belong while doing this important work."

He joined the Development Cabinet about 18 months ago and has been involved with fundraising since then, including heading up advertising sales for Starry Nights. The gala event brings in approximately one-quarter of the funds for Ve'ahavta's annual operating budget.

Deon feels that the work is challenging and presents opportunities for personal growth. "Ve'ahavta provides a welcoming and rewarding place where you can feel like you belong while doing this important work."

DONOR PROFILE

Shirley Granovsky

Shirley Granovsky, an annual major gift donor to Ve'ahavta, credits her late husband, Phil Granovsky, for teaching her about philanthropic giving.

Shirley, who was born in Toronto in 1924, married Phil in 1946. They had four children: Faula, Ronald, Stanley and Maxine. Phil worked as the owner of Atlantic Packaging, a manufacturer of paper products.

"My husband was my mentor; he was so generous. In the early years, even though we were just starting out, he tithed his salary, giving 10% to charity," Shirley says.

Phil travelled for the UJA and they often went together. "Phil visited Israel 120 times and I went about 25 times.

"As his partner, I would give a talk to the women about giving a 'dollar a day.' The women were not accustomed to giving on their own," she says.

Phil passed away 20 years ago, but Shirley carried on his tradition of giving. "The first time I made a contribution, it gave me so much pleasure, it just took off. That first year, I made a list of which organizations I was interested in. Each year, I found new ones that I wanted to give to."



"I am happy that Ve'ahavta is looking after people who are forgotten."

When Shirley received material from Ve'ahavta, she was impressed. "How is it that I've never heard of this place? You need to publicize!" she says.

Now that she has become more familiar with the organization, she says, "I like everything about Ve'ahavta. I am happy that Ve'ahavta is looking after people who are forgotten. For example, the Aboriginal people who experience so much prejudice."

Shirley finds the outreach van to be the most compelling program. When she first visited Ve'ahavta and saw the storage room for the supplies that the van distributes, she was amazed.

"I couldn't believe how much people in the community donated (in food and goods) to Ve'ahavta. I was very impressed by their generosity," she says.

2015 Highlights

Community Poverty Relief



DISTRIBUTED
18,800
sandwiches

600 pounds of coffee
along with hundreds of sleeping bags, pairs of socks, underwear, pants and other clothing items during

17,625 interactions
with individuals engaging over

300 volunteers
in the MJRH mobile outreach van program

.....
DELIVERED
1555 participants an opportunity to express their voices in

319 Creative Writing Program workshops with

54 trained facilitators at

12 locations including shelters, social service agencies and community centres*

*between 2014 and 2016

AWARDED

8 top cash prizes to Creative Writing Contest winners plus

3 honourable mentions out of more than

140 submissions judged by

17 judges some well-known in the literary field

The Creative Writing Program and Contest are in collaboration with the Toronto Writers Collective. The Creative Writing Program is funded by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

"Writers are told to write what they know, and these people have known tragedy and triumph few of us will ever experience. The overall calibre of the writing was excellent, and many of these stories will stick with me forever."

—Contest Judge Science Fiction writer Robert J. Sawyer

Community Engagement

ENGAGED

1629 campers

386 camp staff

7 summer camps

in *tikun olam* activities supported through Ve'ahavta's Dugmah Grants

WELCOMED

300 guests including clients, friends and supporters

70 volunteers

2 community partners in celebrating the annual **Passover Seder** in partnership with Holy Blossom Temple and Congregation Habonim



EDUCATED

30 teachers and educational professionals in

13 Jewish schools in collaboration with

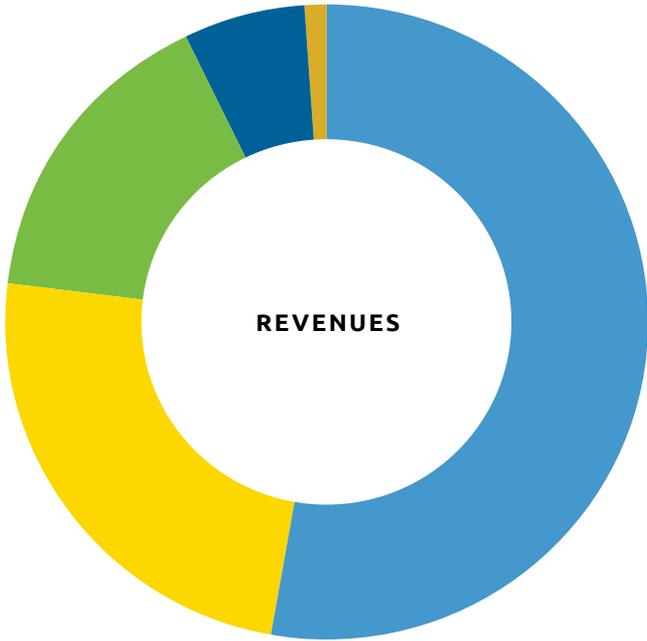
6 Indigenous and education partners to enable them to educate young people about Indigenous history and culture in keeping with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report recommendations

RAISED
\$80,755
for global disaster relief*
*as of June 22, 2016

CRISIS RELIEF IN 2015 – 2016

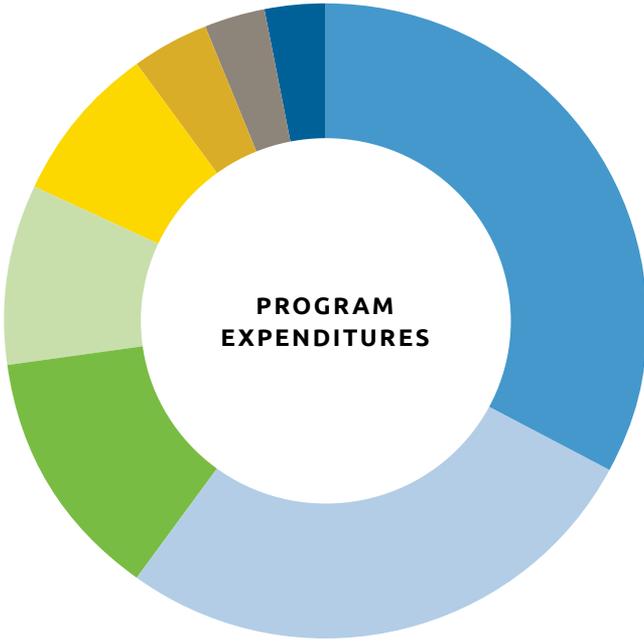


2015 Financials



■ Donations	53%
■ Starry Nights Gala	24%
■ Government Grants	16%
■ Contributed Goods and Services	6%
■ Investment Income	1%
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Total	100%

To see Ve'ahavta's full 2015 financial statement, please visit veahavta.org



■ Mobile Jewish Reponse to Homelessness	33%
■ Ve'ahavta Street Academy	27%
■ Briut/Health Program – Kenora	13%
■ Creative Writing Program and Contest	9%
■ Community Engagement Programming	8%
■ Crisis Response	4%
■ Impact India Trip	3%
■ Other	3%
Total	100%



Ve'ahavta is celebrating its 20th anniversary. You are invited to join the celebration at our annual Starry nights gala.



Lifetime achievement award to be presented to: **Ruth W. Messinger**

Named as one of the world's most influential Jews, Ruth W. Messinger is the first Global Ambassador and past President of American Jewish World Service (AJWS). As of 2016, AJWS has granted more than \$270 million to promote human rights in the developing world and launched campaigns to end the Darfur genocide, reform international food aid and respond to natural disasters around the globe. Previously, Ruth had a 20-year career in public service in New York City.

OUR MISSION

We assist disadvantaged 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).

2015 Board of Directors

Chair/President: Bernie Farber

Directors: Anthony (Tony) Alberga, Dr. Gordon Arbess*, Alan Bass, Tom Chervinsky, Mark Fox, Philip Goldband, Norman Levine, Paul Lindzon*, Bev Margolian, Jordana Ross, Renee Roth z"l**, Gary Samuel, Benjamin Shinewald, Ira Teich, Larry Zimmerman

*Retired in 2015

**Deceased in 2015

OUR VALUES

We are guided by the Biblical commandment – *ve'ahavta l'rayacha kamocho* – love your neighbour 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.

2015 Staff



Photo credit: DFM Services

Major Donors

Listing acknowledges donations of \$5,000+ from January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

Please accept our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions

NAME	YEAR	NAME	YEAR
Visionaries \$100,000+			
Distributel	15/16	Gluskin Sheff and Associates	15
Ontario Trillium Foundation	15/16	Jeff Goodfield	15
Toronto Employment and Social Services, City of Toronto	15/16	Daphne Wagner and David Green	15
Groundbreakers \$50,000 – \$99,999			
The Azrieli Foundation	15	Hampton Securities	15
The Barter Network Ltd	15	Bev and Steve Margolian	15
The Murray Frum Foundation	15	The Mayvon Foundation	15
Shirley Granovsky	15/16	Ontario Realtors Care Foundation	15
Robert Kerr Foundation	15	Portfolio Management Corporation	15
Evelyn Levine and Family	15/16	Samuelsohn	15
Innovators \$25,000 – \$49,999			
Anthony and Marion Alberga	15/16	Gary Samuel and Paula Zivot	15
Nani and Austin Beutel	15	The Gerald Schwartz & Heather Reisman Foundation	15
Echo Foundation	16	The Nathan and Lily Silver Family Foundation	15
Robert and Ellen Eisenberg	15	Ruby Silvertown	15
Trailblazers \$18,000 – \$24,999			
Anonymous	15	Mary Lou Smith and Andrew Simor	15/16
David and Danielle Frum	15/16	The Lawrence and Judith Tanenbaum Family Foundation	15
Lianne and Bruce Leboff	15	Renee Unger	15
Trendsetters \$10,000 – \$17,999			
Anonymous	15	Whitecastle Investments Limited	15
Accelerated Connections Inc.	15	Mel and Pedie Wolfond	15
Apotex Foundation – Honey and Barry Sherman	15	Champions \$7,500 – \$9,999	
The Bridle Bash Foundation	15	Naomi Azrieli	15
Frederick and Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation	15/16	Maria Cannizzaro	15
Tom and Karen Ehrlich and Family	15	The Mariano Elia Foundation	15
The First Narayever Congregation	15/16	David Katz	15/16
The Jeremy & Judith Freedman Family Foundation	15	David and Naomi Mansell	15/16
The Sam & Gitta Ganz Family Foundation	15	Florence Minz	15
		Gryfe's Bagel Bakery	15/16
		PearTree Financial Services	15
		Mayer Rosenzweig	15
		The David and Judy Shore Foundation Inc.	15
		Ronna and Murray Winkler z"l	15
		The Leonard Wolinsky Foundation	15

NAME	YEAR
Guardians \$5,000 – \$7,499	
Danna Azrieli	15
Ron and Sharon Baruch	15
Lou Berkovits and Family	16
The Norman Black Foundation	15
Chitiz Pathak LLP	15/16
The Sydney and Florence Cooper Foundation	15
Leslie and Anna Dan	15
Mathew Diamond	15
Anita Ekstein	15
Peter and Leor Ekstein	15
The Finkler-Friedland Family Foundation	15
The Friedberg Charitable Foundation	15
Gazit Canada Inc.	15
Bryan Gerber	15
The Ben and Hilda Katz Charitable Foundation	15
Susan Kendall	16
The Kensington Foundation	15
Norman and Shelley Levine	15/16
Manulife Securities - Elie Nour Group	15
Marketron Broadcast Solutions LLC	15
Mazon Canada	15/16
Metrosphere Light Corp.	15
Milli	15
National Bank Financial Group	15
Victor and Naomi Pamensky	16
SC Financial Investments Inc.	15
Scotiabank	15/16
Slate Asset Management L.P.	15
The Soberano Charitable Foundation	16
Howard Sokolowski	15
The Howard and Carole Tanenbaum Family Foundation	15
Turner Fleischer Architects	15
Trez Capital Limited Partnership	15
Van Rijk Jewellery	15
Larry Weinberg and Debbie Pearl-Weinberg	15
Henry Wolfond	16

Fundraising Events to Benefit Ve'ahavta Programs

NAME	YEAR
Innovators \$25,000 – \$49,999	
Adam Wolfond's Bar Mitzvah	16
Off the Clock Event and Full-House Poker Tournament	15/16
Trendsetters \$10,000 – \$17,999	
Josh Sable and the Cast of A107's Production of RENT	16
Naomi's 50-50 Challenge	15
Champions \$7,500 – \$9,999	
Noah Deital Bar Mitzvah	15
Guardians \$5,000 – \$7,499	
Adda Epstein-Shapiro Bat Mitzvah	15
Sam Maltz Bar Mitzvah	15
Impact Ethiopia Trip Members	16
Jaimie and Alexandra's Lemonade Stand	15/16



20th Anniversary Major Donor Reception
 From left: Gary Samuel, Ve'ahavta 2016 Board Chair; Paula Zivot; Mel Cohen, Event Chair; Avrum Rosensweig, Ve'ahavta Founder & CEO



Ve'ahavta

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