
SOUTHERN GEORGIAN BAY JEWISH COMMUNITY

November 29th, 2023

I wanted to extend a warm welcome to all members of our Southern Georgian Bay Jewish Community. What a wonderful opportunity to schmooze and meet with some of you Monday night. I am looking forward to doing this all again sometime soon and when there isn't a snow squall in the forecast. Despite the conditions on Monday, about 40 of us were able to gather and begin our discussions. We have started to formulate a list of interested people and are looking to continue to spread the word throughout our circles, so please do so.

I spoke Monday about the need for us to come together with the intention of building a sustainable Jewish community and presence in our area. Developing a sense of community will serve to build on-going opportunities for connection, as well as to address the resurgence of antisemitism in our region. In order to help develop a presence and plan events, outreach, and community education, we are in the process of forming a committee of people who are able to invest some time and energy in getting this up and going. If interested and you haven't signed the form we brought Monday, please email me specifically indicating your interest. Once we have established our committee, planning for events, social gatherings, and addressing the increase in antisemitism we are experiencing will be in the capable hands of a dedicated and committed group. I heard lots of great ideas Monday night, and I'm sure more will follow.

I have met with Yvonne Hamlin, the Collingwood Mayor, and have received her support for the initiative. Since that meeting I have sent in a request for deputation with town council. My intention is to lobby to have them pass the globally recognized definition of antisemitism prepared by the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance). This has already been done in Toronto and more recently the city of Barrie. This is just a starting

point in order to begin to address the serious increase in antisemitism we are currently facing.

We are also in contact with the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre's Tour Of Humanity bus, a mobile Holocaust education exhibit, with hopes of scheduling some dates soon for them to come to our town for our students and community at large. This year, the town of Collingwood has also agreed to have a menorah displayed in the window of the town hall which is nice. Our Jewish holidays and events will now be added to the Collingwood events calendar. So lots is happening but there's lots more to do. We shall keep you posted with respect to next steps and we look forward to future opportunities to connect and build a strong sense of community among our members.

If you have any questions, thoughts or concerns please don't hesitate to email or text me as I am not always available to answer my phone.

Sincerely,

Rashell and Dr. Michael Feldman