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Feature Story on page 18

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Letter from the Editor



Renewal, Resilience and a Global Stage in Vaughan

After one of the coldest winters in decades — defined by relentless snow and record-breaking storms — spring feels especially welcome. As the days lengthen and we mark the time change on March 8, International Women’s Day, we are reminded that renewal inevitably follows even the harshest seasons.

In that spirit of fresh beginnings, we proudly feature community leader Dr. Gila Martow — Optometrist, former MPP, and tireless advocate — whose dedication continues to strengthen and inspire our community.

When Councillor Martow shared that the JCC Maccabi Games will come to Vaughan in August 2026, I arranged a visit to the future hub at the Schwartz Reisman Centre in Vaughan.

Touring the impressive campus, I saw a vibrant, multi-faceted community space: state-of-the-art fitness facilities, indoor and outdoor pools, a school, synagogues, banquet halls, offices, and a welcoming kosher café.

“With over 13,000 square feet of training space and more than 30 NHL players training onsite, this is one of the premier performance facilities in the world.”



Josie Alonzi, The Voice Editor, Gila Martow, Councillor and Jeremy Blustein, Executive Director of the Honey and Barry Memorial Arena

We also visited the Honey and Barry Memorial Arena, a \$60-million complex featuring two NHL-sized rinks and a dedicated shooting pad with real ice. It is home to Gary Roberts High Performance Training, attracting elite athletes from across the globe.

More than 30 current NHL players — including Connor McDavid, Zach Hyman, Leon Draisaitl, Steven Stamkos, and Quinton Byfield — train there alongside dozens of rising stars.

This August, Vaughan will welcome international athletes for the JCC Maccabi Games — a celebration of sport, unity, cultural pride, and global friendship.

As April approaches, may Easter and Passover bring meaning, renewal, and joyful time with loved ones. Chag Pesah Sameach.

Warmly,

Josie Alonzi



The Voice IN ACTION

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Contents

Feature Story



VAUGHAN CITY HALL
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HOURS OF OPERATION
Monday to Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Mayor Steven Del Duca

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Linda Jackson

LOCAL AND REGIONAL COUNCILLORS
Mario Ferri | Gino Rosati | Mario Racco

COUNCILLORS
Ward 1 - Marilyn Iafrate
Ward 2 - Adriano Volpentesta
Ward 3 - Rosanna DeFrancesca
Ward 4 - Chris Ainsworth
Ward 5 - Gila Martow

- 3** Letter from the Editor
Josie Alonzi
- 14** Vaughan: A community united by passion and play
- 17** The Countdown is On: The 2026 JCC Maccabi Games® & Access are coming to Vaughan this summer
- 18** A Life Dedicated to Joy, Resilience, Leadership, and Community Service
Antonio Rosa
- 25** If These Parliamentary Walls Could Talk... What Would They Say?
The Honourable Senator Tony Loffreda
- 29** Bella Ciao! A Recap of the 2026 Milano-Cortina Winter Olympic Games
Anthony Macchia
- 33** How Far We've Come - And Why It Matters
Dr. Mary Marano



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WARD 4 CIVIC HERO!



Mayor Steven Del Duca, Ward 4 Councillor Chris Ainsworth, and Members of Council with Dave Elfassy, 2023 Ward 4 Civic Hero.

Dave has volunteered with the Vaughan Food Bank for 10 years (as of 2026), helping provide food and toys to families in need. He has also supported SickKids through the Thornhill Woods Haunted House by donating treats, gift cards, clothing, and tickets. In addition, Dave has helped organize community triathlons for children and families to promote physical activity and a healthy lifestyle. A strong environmental advocate, Dave actively participates in community cleanups to help keep Vaughan's neighbourhoods and greenspaces beautiful for future generations.



"I've known Dave Elfassy for years, and his contributions to our community are impactful. He's an active volunteer, a leader and someone who chooses to make a difference. Dave has supported various causes throughout the years, and whether it's SickKids, the Vaughan Food Bank, or the promotion of physical health, he gives 100 per cent. Ward 4 is fortunate to have someone like Dave Elfassy, and I was proud to nominate him as our Civic Hero for 2023."

- **Councillor Chris Ainsworth, Ward 4**

"Vaughan's Civic Hero Awards are presented annually to one resident from each of the city's five wards...Dave Elfassy is well known to residents of Ward 4 for his hard work, leadership and active volunteerism. He's helped those in need, contributed to charitable causes and worked hard to keep our community beautiful. Dave is a well-deserving recipient of the Vaughan Civic Hero Award, and we are proud to acknowledge his hard work."

- **Mayor Steven Del Duca**

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CONGRATULATIONS TILDA ROLL VAUGHAN WARD 5 CIVIC HERO!

During a meeting of the City of Vaughan Committee of the Whole, Mayor Steven Del Duca, Ward 5 Councillor Gila Martow and Members of Council recognized Tilda Roll with the 2025 Ward 5 Civic Hero Award during a special ceremonial presentation.

Tilda is a family law lawyer and mediator in Vaughan who has been practising for more than 30 years and has been working with the dispute resolution office at the Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario, since 2014. She has maintained a reputation for proven results, promoting reconciliation and putting children's needs at the forefront of disputes.

Recently, Tilda reported and testified against an individual who engaged in a hate crime targeting Jewish residents in Ward 5, successfully bringing them to justice with a sentence for jail time.

Tilda has also served on the board for Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (CHAT) from 2018 to 2022 and has dedicated countless hours as a volunteer at Chabad Flamingo



QUOTES

"I was delighted to present Tilda Roll with the 2025 Ward 5 Civic Hero Award. People like Tilda, who go above and beyond to make our community a better place to live and work, need to be recognized and celebrated. Her work as a lawyer and her volunteerism are inspiring and reflect the values of selflessness and generosity that we uphold in Vaughan. As Mayor, it is a true honour to highlight the work of those in our city who give back and support their neighbours."

- Mayor Steven Del Duca

"I am pleased that an extraordinary member of our community, Tilda Roll, is the 2025 Ward 5 Civic Hero Award recipient. Through her meaningful work within the Jewish community, as well as her career and advocacy for children, she exemplifies what it means to be a true leader and civic hero. This recognition is a testament to the impact she has had on many lives, and to the example she has set for all of us. Thank you, Tilda!"

- Councillor Gila Martow, Ward 5



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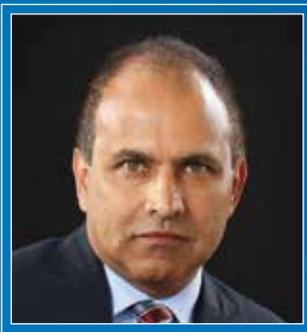
Tilda Roll joined by family accepting the award



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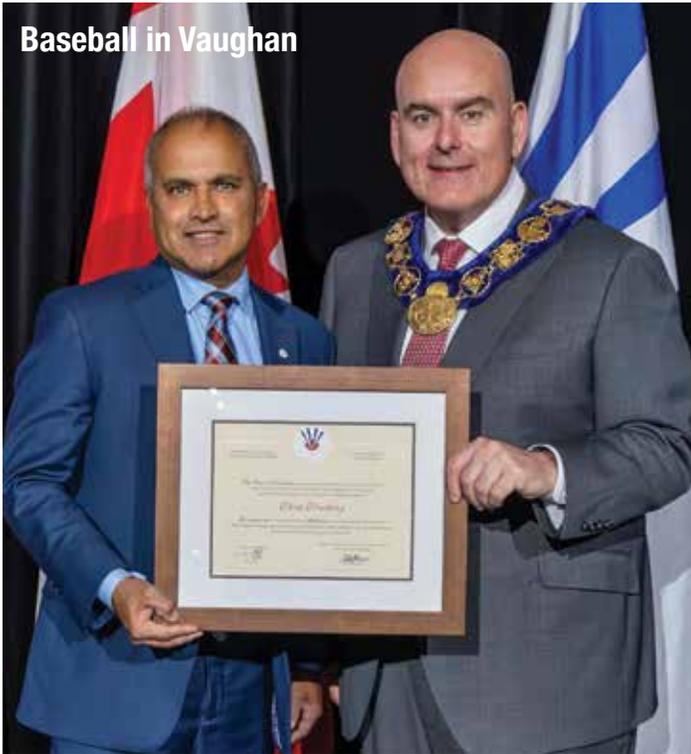
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Baseball in Vaughan



Dirk Drieberg, a long-serving leader in Ontario baseball, was awarded the Order of Vaughan, the highest honour presented by the City of Vaughan.

For nearly 30 years, Dirk has dedicated himself to developing youth baseball, coaching athletes from T-Ball through competitive levels and often managing multiple teams in a single season. His leadership has driven significant competitive success, including guiding Vaughan's 15U team to a Baseball Canada National Championship and securing multiple provincial and regional titles.

As a founding member of the City of Vaughan Baseball and Softball Association, Dirk helped merge local organizations in 2000 to create what has become Ontario's largest youth baseball and softball association. Serving in key executive roles, including President, he has expanded programming, strengthened partnerships with the City of Vaughan, and elevated Vaughan's reputation as a premier baseball destination. Under his guidance, the city has hosted national championships, provincial qualifiers, and numerous tournaments that contribute significantly to the local economy.

Beyond the field, Dirk has championed scholarships, charitable initiatives, mentorship, and volunteer development. His decades of service, visionary leadership, and lasting community impact exemplify the spirit of the Order of Vaughan.



Rep Team of the Year 14U AAA Provincial Champions receiving their award from Vaughan Regional Councillor Mari Ferri

BREAKING NEWS - Vaughan Baseball and the City of Vaughan has been awarded the Baseball Canada 15U National Championships for 5 years (2027-2031)



Alyssa Falzon (left) with Julian Nicolini who was the recipient of the Matthew Roberts Umpire Award given by parents Elvira Caria & Bob Roberts (right)



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Chag Pesach Sameach!

Mayor Steven Del Duca and Members of Council extend their best wishes
for a healthy and happy Passover.



2022-26 City of Vaughan Members of Council

First row, left to right: Gila Martow, Ward 5 Councillor; Chris Ainsworth, Ward 4 Councillor;
Rosanna DeFrancesca, Ward 3 Councillor; Adriano Volpentesta, Ward 2 Councillor; Marilyn Iafate, Ward 1 Councillor

Second row, left to right: Gino Rosati, Local and Regional Councillor; Linda Jackson, Deputy Mayor, Local and Regional Councillor;
Steven Del Duca, Mayor; Mario Ferri, Local and Regional Councillor; Mario G. Racco, Local and Regional Councillor





Vaughan: A community united by passion and play

This year, Vaughan will take centre stage as host city of the JCC Maccabi Games – the largest Jewish youth sporting event in the world. From Sunday, Aug. 2 to Friday, Aug. 7, the city will welcome more than 20,000 athletes, coaches, families, volunteers and spectators from across North America for a week of Olympic-style competition and cultural celebration.

“I am thrilled to welcome thousands of Jewish youth and their families to Vaughan this summer for the JCC Maccabi Games,” said Mayor Steven Del Duca, City of Vaughan. “Vaughan is home to an incredible community of sports fans and residents who enjoy an active lifestyle, which is why the City of Vaughan proudly supports and champions opportunities for friendly competition, like this one, that bring people together. Beyond these games, we remain committed to offering recreation opportunities that support health, wellness and community connection. This includes building new facilities, reinvigorating open spaces and enhancing the amenities we already have – ensuring our city continues to thrive and our residents can enjoy an unrivalled quality of life.”

At the games, young competitors will take part in events such as basketball, soccer, baseball and swimming, bringing energy and excitement to venues across the community. But beyond medals and match scores, the games represent something deeper – a celebration of Jewish identity, resilience and unity. At a time when connection and community matter more than ever, the event offers an opportunity to strengthen bonds, honour culture and inspire the next generation through sport.

“Vaughan is honoured to be home to one of the largest Jewish

communities outside Israel, and we greatly value the many ways they strengthen our city,” said Ward 5 Councillor Gila Martow. “Embracing diversity is central to who we are, and we are proud to honour the vibrant cultures that shape our community. The JCC Maccabi Games are a wonderful example of how we continue to bring people together while celebrating Vaughan’s Jewish heritage and a shared passion for sports.”

A city built for sport – and visitors

Being home to more than 500 sport facilities – from soccer fields to tennis courts to baseball diamonds – the city is a one stop destination for all things sports, attracting top notch players and high-profile tournaments that showcase exceptional athletic talent while drawing people together. The continued enhancements of modern facilities like the Honey and Barry Memorial Arena (18 Marc Santi Blvd.) and the newly opened Treasure Hill Soccer Centre (11085 Keele St.), ensure Vaughan is ready not only to host international events like the JCC Maccabi Games, but also to support everyday recreation.

Looking ahead, Vaughan’s commitment to major sporting events remains strong. In 2027, the city will proudly host the Baseball Canada 15U National Championship for five consecutive years – further cementing its reputation as a destination for sport tourism.

Turn game day into a getaway

When the final whistle blows, the excitement doesn’t have to end. Explore some of Canada’s most iconic attractions, including family fun at the LEGOLAND Discovery Centre Toronto and world-class shopping at Vaughan Mills.

Vaughan also boasts a wide range of accommodations – from luxury hotels to budget-friendly stays – making it easy to transform a week of competition into a memorable escape. With exceptional dining, vibrant neighbourhoods and easy access to the Greater Toronto Area, visitors can experience the best of both community spirit and adventure. Make the most of your visit and book your overnight stay at visitvaughan.ca.

“Vaughan is a standout destination – whether you’re here to cheer on loved ones in the JCC Maccabi Games or simply enjoying a well-deserved vacation,” said Ward 4 Councillor Chris Ainsworth. “Our city is home to some of Canada’s most iconic attractions, as well as beautiful accommodations and incredible restaurants offering cuisines from around the world. I hope every visitor takes time to discover the unique experiences that make Vaughan such a special place.”

Whether you’re here to cheer on an athlete, reconnect with community or simply enjoy a well-deserved vacation, the JCC Maccabi Games are your invitation to discover Vaughan – a city where sport, culture and tourism come together in one unforgettable experience.



Hockey Has a New Home in Vaughan!

The Honey and Barry Memorial Arena has already made its mark on the lives of athletes in this up-and-coming city.



Putting Vaughan on the Sports Destination Map

Vaughan is stepping into the spotlight as a premier sports destination, thanks in large part to the stunning new Honey and Barry Memorial Arena. Opened in 2025 on the Vaughan Jewish Community Campus, this state-of-the-art facility, featuring two full regulation-sized rinks and cutting-edge training space, is already transforming local recreation.

The arena, made possible by a transformative \$60 million gift from Jonathon Sherman in honour of his late parents, philanthropists Honey and Barry Sherman, serves the entire Vaughan community. It is home to the Vaughan JCC Warriors hockey program, Gary Roberts Performance training, and partnerships with NHL stars like hometown hero Zach Hyman, through the Hyman Hockey Camp program for young athletes ages 6-11. It has quickly become a hub for youth development, skating, and high-performance ice sports in York Region. Special to Vaughan is a new girls' hockey league, under the stewardship of Melissa Wronzberg. Visitors to the arena are instantly greeted by an interactive museum exhibit of Jewish-connected hockey players, designed by Alisa Breever and Kaily Kosher. The arena is truly a place where Jewish values and sportsmanship not only meet, but decorate the walls.

"I would like to personally thank Mayor Steven Del Duca and Councillors Gila Martow and Chris Alnsworth for all their support and guidance in navigating Planning and Building Standards at Vaughan City Hall," said HBMA Executive Director Jeremy Blustein. "We are so glad that we chose the City of Vaughan for our venue."

This August, the arena will take centre stage as a primary venue for the 2026 JCC Maccabi Games & Access, running August 2-7 with thousands of Jewish athletes. The ice hockey competition will be centred at the Honey and Barry Memorial Arena, giving Vaughan a starring role in this Olympic-style celebration of sport, Jewish pride, and community.

Willem Hart, Contributor

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The Countdown Is On: The 2026 JCC Maccabi Games® & Access Are Coming to Vaughan This Summer

We are officially in the year of the 2026 JCC Maccabi Games® and Access, and this summer, all eyes will turn to Vaughan. From August 2-7, our city will proudly host more than 2,500 Jewish teen athletes, coaches, and delegations from around the globe to participate in what is widely recognized as the largest Jewish peoplehood project outside of Israel.

Planning is well underway, and the excitement is palpable. For many of these teens, the Games will be an immersive journey that reinforces Jewish identity, nurtures pride and connects young people to a global Jewish community.

The JCC Maccabi Games® & Access come at a time of both challenge and opportunity. As Jewish communities around the world continue to navigate rising antisemitism and complex questions of belonging, we are witnessing an equally powerful force: a collective surge in unity, resilience, and engagement. This summer's Games will meet that moment with purpose, offering teens a transformative space rooted in joy, pride and community.

The City of Vaughan plays a central role in bringing this vision to life. From world-class athletic facilities to an inclusive community spirit, Vaughan is more than a host city, it is a partner whose essence reflects the values of the Games: building bridges through sport, service, and shared values.



As home to one of the largest Jewish communities outside of Israel, the City of Vaughan remains deeply committed to fostering an inclusive, tolerant, and welcoming environment for all. The 2026 JCC Maccabi Games® reflects that commitment, bringing people together through sports, teamwork, and shared community pride.

Hosting the 2026 JCC Maccabi Games® & Access offers Vaughan a unique chance to highlight its exceptional facilities, vibrant community life, and dedication to empowering youth. As one of Canada's most dynamic and diverse cities, Vaughan is poised to deliver an unforgettable celebration of sport, identity, and unity on the world stage.

“The JCC Maccabi Games® are about more than sports,” said David Brinder, Executive Director. “They build community, strengthen Jewish identity, and create lifelong connections for Jewish youth from around the world.” Every event, from athletic competitions to cultural celebrations, is carefully designed to replace isolation with belonging, and challenge with confidence.

Community participation is key to making this moment a success. From volunteering and coaching to hosting visiting athletes and attending the Opening Ceremony, there are countless ways for Vaughan residents to get involved. Together, we are not just welcoming the world, we are helping shape the next generation of Jewish leaders, athletes, and changemakers.

To learn more and stay involved, visit www.torontojccmaccabi.com





A Life Dedicated to Joy, Resilience, Leadership, and Community Service

By Antonio Rosa

On wintry Fridays in Montreal, while most kids were in class, a young girl would head north of the city with her father to explore the snow-covered ski hills. Those afternoons were not simply about skiing. They offered both father and daughter balance, resilience, and a shared purpose - lessons that would quietly shape a life devoted to service, leadership, and community building.

Gila Gladstone, was born on June 5, 1961, in Montreal, Quebec, into a family where public service and traditional Jewish values were woven into everyday life. She was the third of four children born to Mia Gladstone, a chartered accountant and college accounting professor, and Alex Gladstone, a meteorologist with Environment Canada. Her childhood unfolded in the Montreal suburban neighbourhood of Chomedey, Laval, which was very similar to the Thornhill community of Vaughan, where Gila raised her own four kids.

By her teenage years, Gila's confidence and willingness to step into leadership roles were beginning to take shape. During high school at Western Laval she demonstrated early leadership and teaching talent, creatively tutoring younger students and embracing roles in both dance and theatre. Her natural ability to connect with others and make a difference in their lives would become her defining trait. These early experiences laid the groundwork for a strong presence that would later serve her well in both the professional and political arenas.

Gila went on to attend the University of Waterloo School of Optometry, graduating at the remarkably young age of 22. During the summer



between her first and second year, she met her future husband, Dr. Jeff Martow, who would go on to become a respected Ophthalmologist. Gila and Jeff were married in June 1985, building a growing family.

Community Involvement

While successfully running her optometry clinic in the early 2000's, Gila became increasingly involved in community advocacy and local politics. In 2007, as a parent associated with the group Parents for Equality in Education Funding, she advocated for bringing fairness to faith-based education funding. An article she authored on the issue led to an appearance on a political TV talk show addressing Ontario's faith-based school funding controversy, where she was introduced to a broad network of community leaders who shared her concerns.

Around the same time, Gila served as President of the Beverley Glen Ratepayers Association (BGRA), registered with the City of Vaughan. This is when she first took an interest in municipal politics, particularly the proposal to divert the Hwy 7 VIVA Rapidway bus route down Bathurst and Centre in Thornhill. In opposition to most elected officials at the time, she insisted that the ridership was not likely to increase, and the cost to the community, taxpayers and local businesses was too high. Most now agree that the bus lanes were either unnecessary or premature.

Gila continued to be involved in local politics while volunteering on former MPP Peter Shurman's and MP Peter Kent's election campaigns. She served as President of the Thornhill PC Riding Association as well as other local boards.



Jeff & Gila at Hockey Chanukah

After the announcement that a byelection would take place in Thornhill mid February 2014, she was invited by then Progressive Conservative leader Tim Hudak to be the party's candidate.

Provincial Career

Determination and discipline carried Gila through three successful provincial elections. Known for her willingness to work across party lines, she collaborated effectively with colleagues, including then-MPP Steven Del Duca. One of her legislative efforts was a 2016 motion calling on the Ontario Legislature to officially denounce the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement against Israel. Del Duca offered bipartisan support, and together they held press conferences and media interviews - an early example of principled cooperation.

During her time in office, Gila focused on issues she believed were having the greatest impact on her residents. Among the most significant were reforming the tow truck industry, enabling the digital witnessing of wills during COVID, advocating for a fair funding agreement for Ontario's optometrists, and securing commitments for the Yonge North Subway Extension. The tow



At PM Harper's reception for PM Netanyahu

truck industry remains a persistent issue across the GTA, with ongoing reports of driver exploitation and "tow truck wars." While many of Gila's recommendations were implemented by the Ministry of Transportation, several proposals were not. Most notably, the unadopted proposals for specialized tow truck driver licensing and real-time, "Uber-style" tracking.

At the height of the COVID pandemic, Gila's residents were unable to legally execute wills due to in-person witnessing requirements. Through her collaboration with the Attorney General of Ontario, Gila introduced and passed a Private Member's Bill permitting the virtual witnessing of wills. This represented a significant step in integrating technology into government services, an area Gila was, and remains, deeply passionate about.

In her final year as a provincial representative, Gila publicly broke with her party and criticized her leader's handling of a major funding dispute with Ontario's optometrists. As an Optometrist herself, she became increasingly concerned when residents under 20 and over 65 years were unable to receive essential eye care due to prolonged government negotiations. Her public advocacy helped accelerate discussions and led to a quick settlement.

The final project which came to a head as Gila transitioned from provincial to municipal politics, was the Yonge North Subway Extension. The Ministry of Transportation planned to

cancel both Thornhill subway stops. Through sustained public advocacy, she secured assurances that the two stops would move forward and ultimately be approved.

Through her years in politics, she had the privilege of getting to know many people from a wide range of cultural and community groups. After deciding not to seek re-election provincially, Gila's desire for closer community connection led her to pursue municipal leadership. In 2022, she ran successfully for Vaughan City Council. Her commitment to Vaughan's growth, cohesion, and future has remained unwavering!

Now serving Thornhill at the municipal level as the Local Councillor for Ward 5, Gila has picked up where she left off and continues to advocate for the community. Chairing the city's Cultural Outreach and Accessibility Committees allows her to work with residents from the diverse community groups that make Thornhill a vibrant suburb.

Beyond politics, the Martow family shares a deep connection to Jewish sport and the international community. Dr. Jeff Martow is an avid golfer who won gold representing Canada at the 2019 Maccabiah Games in Mexico City in the Masters category. In 2022, Gila and Jeff travelled together to Israel for the World Maccabiah Games, where Jeff proudly competed as a member of Team Canada. They are set to return in 2026, with Jeff once again representing his country on the international stage.

Bringing JCC Maccabi to Vaughan!

Gila Martow played a key role in bringing the JCC Maccabi Games to Vaughan. With strong pitches from the JCC leadership along with Gila's insistence that the accessibility of the city by the 407 ETR be highlighted, Vaughan was awarded the bid. The event is sure to advance the city's growing reputation as a premier sports and events destination, supported by its outstanding facilities, strategic location, and community leadership.

For the first time in more than 40 years, the JCC Maccabi Games are returning to Canada, with Vaughan serving as the official host city from August 2-7, 2026. This Olympic-style event is the largest Jewish youth sporting competition in the world, bringing together thousands of Jewish athletes aged 13 to 17 from across North America for a week of exhilarating competition, connection, and community celebration.



With David Brinder, Executive Director JCC Macabi Games

Founded in 1982, the JCC Maccabi Games have grown from a small gathering of 300 athletes into a global experience that now welcomes more than 3,000 participants annually. The Games provide young athletes with opportunities to compete across a wide range of sports while building leadership skills, teamwork, confidence and a strong sense of Jewish identity. The Games are about far more than athletics. They are life-shaping experiences that foster Jewish pride, strengthen community bonds, and create lifelong friendships. Over the past four decades, more than 130,000 Jewish teenagers have been impacted, leaving a legacy of pride, resilience and connection.

As the host city, Vaughan will play a central role in delivering an exceptional 2026 Games experience. The city will showcase its world-class facilities, vibrant community support, and a welcoming atmosphere that reflects Vaughan's dynamic Jewish community. For local athletes, the Games present a rare opportunity to compete on home turf, supported by family, friends, and neighbours, while representing their city, province, and country on an international stage.

Thousands of athletes, volunteers, and spectators are expected to attend, positioning Vaughan as the heart of this global event. Beyond the competition, the Games will highlight the city's cultural richness, hospitality, and commitment to inclusive, inspiring experiences for youth athletes. Hosting the 2026 JCC Maccabi Games will further elevate Vaughan and the Greater Toronto Area, as a recognized centre for Jewish culture, sport, and community pride.

Councillor Martow's leadership, with the support of Mayor Steven Del Duca and Vaughan City Council, was instrumental in securing the Games. Collaboration between municipal leadership, volunteers, and community organizations has laid a strong foundation to ensure a safe, inclusive, and unforgettable experience for all involved.

The countdown is on! Vaughan is ready to shine, and the world is coming to play. For Councillor Gila Martow, bringing the JCC Maccabi Games to Vaughan is more than a municipal achievement – it reflects her commitment to empowering youth and strengthening community pride. She encourages residents across the city to pick up a 2026 JCC Maccabi Vaughan pin and wear it proudly as a symbol of unity, leadership and support for youth sports.

Sports is Vaughan, Vaughan is Sports!

Councillor Martow sees the JCC Maccabi Games as a catalyst for Vaughan's continued rise as a premier sports destination. That momentum is already translating into tangible results. Beginning in 2027, the City of Vaughan will host the Canadian Baseball Association's annual summer tournament for three consecutive years, reinforcing the city's ability to attract and deliver major sporting events.

Councillor Martow lives up to the meaning of her name: Gila is the Hebrew word for Joy. Throughout her life, Gila Martow has embodied this meaning through joy, resilience, and a spirit of service. Her journey spans education, healthcare, and politics, with each chapter marked by her deep dedication to those she serves. She has uplifted community members around her, consistently leading with empathy, integrity, and purpose. For Gila, her legacy is reflected not only in the initiatives she champions, but in the communities she strengthens through her unwavering commitment to public service.



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Election night 2022!

Chanukah in Thornhill

December 18, 2025 at Garnet Community Centre



Smiling residents enjoyed being served delicious D.A.N.I. kosher latkes by Mayor Steven Del Duca, while sharing festive greetings.



There was music, games, crafts, photo booths & lots of great entertainers.



Special thanks to UJA for setting up a stand to serve hot chocolate and treats.

The City of Vaughan's event team planned the free festivities which included performances & dance instruction by the Nirkoda Israeli Dancers and the Temple Kol Ami choir.

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Happy Passover

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Ward 4 Councillor
Chris Ainsworth
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chris.ainsworth@vaughan.ca

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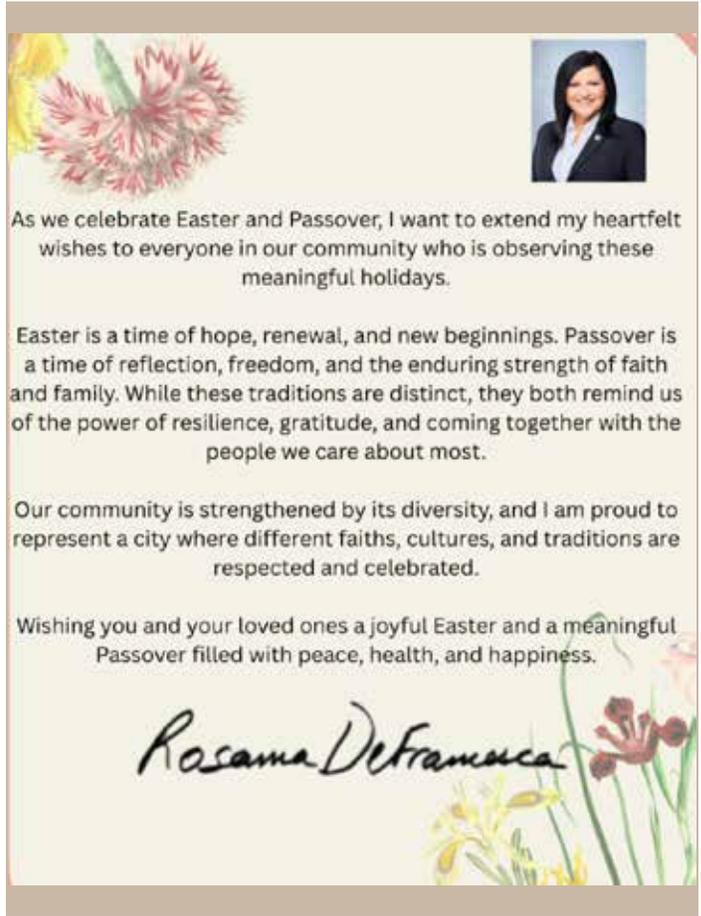
JCC

scentre.ca/supplementary-school

Linda Jackson
Deputy Mayor, Local &
Regional Councillor



Wishing all of the athletes the very best of luck for the **2026 Maccabi Games** in the City of Vaughan!



As we celebrate Easter and Passover, I want to extend my heartfelt wishes to everyone in our community who is observing these meaningful holidays.

Easter is a time of hope, renewal, and new beginnings. Passover is a time of reflection, freedom, and the enduring strength of faith and family. While these traditions are distinct, they both remind us of the power of resilience, gratitude, and coming together with the people we care about most.

Our community is strengthened by its diversity, and I am proud to represent a city where different faiths, cultures, and traditions are respected and celebrated.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful Easter and a meaningful Passover filled with peace, health, and happiness.

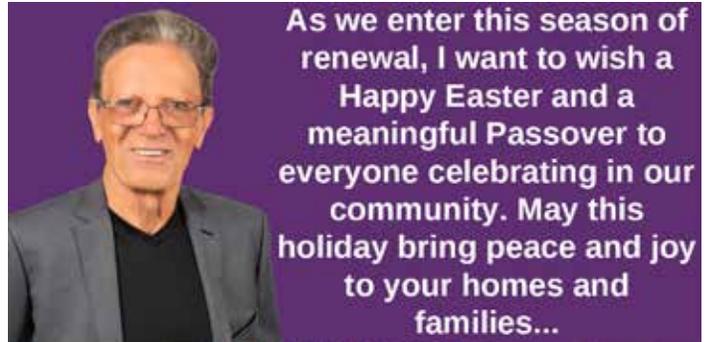
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WISHING YOU ALL A JOYOUS EASTER
AND A HAPPY PASSOVER



As we enter this season of renewal, I want to wish a Happy Easter and a meaningful Passover to everyone celebrating in our community. May this holiday bring peace and joy to your homes and families...



Gino Rosati
Local & Regional Councillor
(905) 832-2281 ext. 8441 gino.rosati@vaughan.ca



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If These Parliamentary Walls Could Talk... What Would They Say?

by *The Honourable Senator Tony Loffreda*

What secrets would they reveal from whispered negotiations, passionate debates, historic decisions, quiet compromises and private moments as Canada blossomed into one of the world's most desirable nations?

Of course, they can't speak. And for now, they barely even exist – at least not in the way Canadians remember them. Today, those walls – along with the ceilings, floors, and doors – are gone, as the Centre Block of Parliament has been dismantled to its structural core.

Earlier this month, in my capacity as the new Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration (CIBA), I had the privilege of a private tour of the Centre Block rehabilitation project on Parliament Hill.

Known as the Long-Term Vision and Plan, the Centre Block is undergoing a massive, five-billion-dollar transformation – the largest and most complex heritage rehabilitation project in Canadian history. Rebuilt after the devastating fire of February 1916, the current building is more than a century old and in urgent need of renewal. Behind its familiar Gothic Revival façade, it lacks many features expected of any modern building (state-of-the-art heating, cooling and ventilation, technological and security requirements) and requires significant structural upgrades, including seismic base isolation.

The objective is ambitious but clear: to create a modern Parliament that works better for parliamentarians and staff, welcomes Canadians and tourists from around the world, improves security and accessibility, reduces environmental impact, and preserves the historic character that makes Parliament Hill so iconic.

The Centre Block was vacated in late 2018, with the House of Commons relocating to West Block and the Senate temporarily housed in Ottawa's former railway station. Since 2019, it has been full steam ahead.

Touring the stripped-down shell of the building and walking through the Senate Chamber, the House of Commons, the Prime Minister's Office, the Hall of Honour, and the Senate Speaker's quarters, it was impossible not to imagine what these spaces have witnessed and heard. The walls may be bare, the corridors unrecognizable, but the echoes of history feel unmistakably present. I was particularly struck by the work beneath the building, where crews are reinforcing foundations dating back to Confederation itself and excavating a new basement. It was

mind-blowing. As our guides called it, it was the “you have to see it, to believe it” tour.

One of the project's most striking elements is the new underground Parliamentary Welcome Centre. At 23 metres deep, the excavation is staggering – some 40,000 truckloads of bedrock have been removed.

One day, in the not-too-distant future, it will offer Canadians an immersive, fully accessible, and engaging entry point into their democracy.

At its peak, the rehabilitation project will employ up to 1,500 workers daily and has already supported more than 4,000 jobs nationwide. It is also training a new generation of workers in highly specialized fields, from heritage masonry to advanced engineering – skills that will endure long after the (proverbial and literal) dust settles – including from the more than 350,000 stones that will be rehabilitated.

Now in its sixth year, the team behind the project is working hard to keep its current schedule. As someone appointed to the Senate in 2019, I confess I worried I might never sit in the Centre Block's Senate Chamber. It's no secret that these massive construction projects are not always on time and on budget. I was reassured that, if all goes according to plan, senators will reintegrate our old (new) digs during the first half of the 2030s – well before my mandatory retirement.

So, if these walls could talk, perhaps they would remind us that Canada's history is one of resilience, tolerance and brilliance. The stories these walls hold, protect and cherish, that have shaped our democracy, will live on within a rejuvenated, state-of-the-art Parliament, ready to serve Canada for the next hundred years.

As Chair of CIBA, my colleagues and I will continue to oversee and scrutinize major decisions related to this project to ensure it stays on time, on budget and respectful of the institution and the people it serves. Canadians can follow its progress online through quarterly progress reports, photos and a live video feed.

Ultimately, we want to ensure that the Centre Block – with its iconic 92-metre Peace Tower and 53-bell carillon – remains one of Canada's most welcoming, most accessible and most visited public spaces. After all, Parliament belongs to its people.

And if these walls could actually talk, they would surely agree that the democracy they shelter must always remain strong, independent, and free.



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Bella Ciao! A Recap of the 2026 Milano-Cortina Winter Olympic Games

By Anthony Macchia

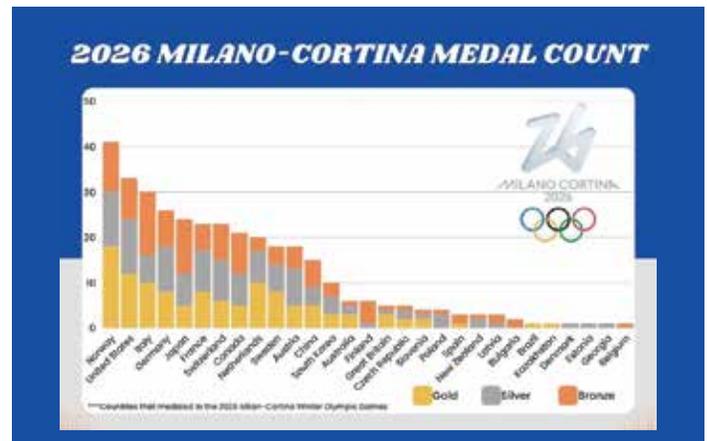
Athleticism, discipline, and raw talent were on full display this February at the 2026 Winter Olympic Games in Milano-Cortina. Across the sun-drenched peaks and icy corridors of northern Italy, nearly 2,900 athletes representing 92 nations competed in 116 events. These Games were notable for their expanding global reach, welcoming debut delegations from Guinea-Bissau, Benin, and the United Arab Emirates. Beyond the podiums, the event served as a vital display of international solidarity, proving the world community can still find common ground through the spirit of sport.

In the hunt for Olympic hardware, Norway once again proved its winter supremacy. The Norwegian delegation led the standings with a record-breaking 18 gold medals and 41 total podium finishes. Their performance was nothing short of dominant, particularly in the endurance disciplines; Norwegian athletes secured a staggering 25 combined medals in Cross-Country Skiing and Biathlon alone. Other powerhouses included the United States, which found significant success in Freestyle Skiing and Speed Skating, and the host nation, Italy, which delighted local fans with strong showings in Alpine Skiing and Short Track.

For Team Canada, the results told a more complicated story. Finishing 11th in the gold-medal standings (8th in total medals) with 21 podium finishes, the performance marked Canada's lowest medal haul since the 2002 Salt Lake City Games. The momentum

felt uncharacteristically slow at the start, as it took nine days for the Canadian anthem to play for a gold medalist. To put this in perspective, during the 2010 Vancouver Games, a smaller Canadian contingent secured nine more gold medals than the 2026 squad.

This slide suggests a potential decline in Olympic investment. While Canada is the spiritual home of hockey and a literal "winter country" defined by the Rockies, national sport funding has remained largely stagnant for years. This financial stagnation trickles down, placing immense pressure on athletes and associations who must cover rising costs for elite coaching and specialized equipment. As the focus shifts to the 2030 Games in the French Alps, Canada faces a pivotal question: will it reinvest in its athletic identity? To maintain our reputation as a global winter power, we must ensure our support for athletes matches the passion they display on the world stage.



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Mayor Steven Del Duca and Members of Council wish you a Happy Easter!



2022-26 City of Vaughan Members of Council

First row, left to right: Gila Martow, Ward 5 Councillor; Chris Ainsworth, Ward 4 Councillor; Rosanna DeFrancesca, Ward 3 Councillor; Adriano Volpentesta, Ward 2 Councillor; Marilyn Iafrate, Ward 1 Councillor

Second row, left to right: Gino Rosati, Local and Regional Councillor; Linda Jackson, Deputy Mayor, Local and Regional Councillor; Steven Del Duca, Mayor; Mario Ferri, Local and Regional Councillor; Mario G. Racco, Local and Regional Councillor



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How Far We've Come - And Why It Matters

A Women's Day Reflection

By Dr. Mary Marano,
Psychotherapist | Relationship
& Wellness Strategist

International Women's Day is more than a celebration. It's a marker of movement.

It's a pause to acknowledge how far women have come and how much further we are capable of going.

There was a time when women could not vote. A time when higher education was restricted. A time when financial independence required permission.

Today, women lead companies, sit in government, perform life-saving surgeries, build businesses, shape policy, and influence culture. They are entrepreneurs, educators, scientists, athletes, creators, caregivers, and community architects.

And they are doing it in unprecedented numbers.

But Women's Day is not only about achievement. It's about value.

It reminds us that a woman's contribution, whether in a boardroom or a living room -

carries weight. That leadership and nurturing are not opposites. That strength and softness can coexist.

When we speak about women with respect, when we honour their labour (paid and unpaid), when we acknowledge the invisible emotional work that keeps families steady, we are doing more than affirming women.

We are shaping the next generation.

Our daughters are watching.

When they see women celebrated for their intelligence, resilience, creativity, and leadership, something powerful happens. Their expectations expand. Their ambition feels natural. Equality becomes assumed, not requested.

And our sons are watching too.

When boys grow up seeing women valued - not minimized, not ranked beneath, not defined solely by role - partnership becomes their baseline. Respect becomes instinctive. Collaboration becomes normal.

Women's Day is not about division. It is about normalization.

Normalization of shared power.
Shared leadership.
Shared responsibility.
Shared dignity.

We are raising future adults in a world where women's voices are no longer whispers; they are present, visible, influential.

And that visibility matters.

Because when empowerment becomes ordinary, not exceptional - our daughters stop asking if they belong.

And our sons stop questioning whether women do.

That is progress.

Not perfection.
Not competition.
Progress.

So today, we celebrate how far we've come - not with complacency, but with commitment.

Commitment to language that honours. To homes that model equality. To workplaces that recognize contribution in all its forms.

Because when value is visible, possibility expands.

And that may be the most powerful legacy of all.



Let's build empowering
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Instagram @lifeandfamilycounselling



*Sending my heartfelt
congratulations to
all the athletes
participating in the
Maccabi Games!
Wishing you the very best
of luck and every success.
Enjoy this incredible
experience and
represent with pride!*



*And to everyone
celebrating, I wish you a
very **Happy
Passover!***

Dr. Earl Schwartz



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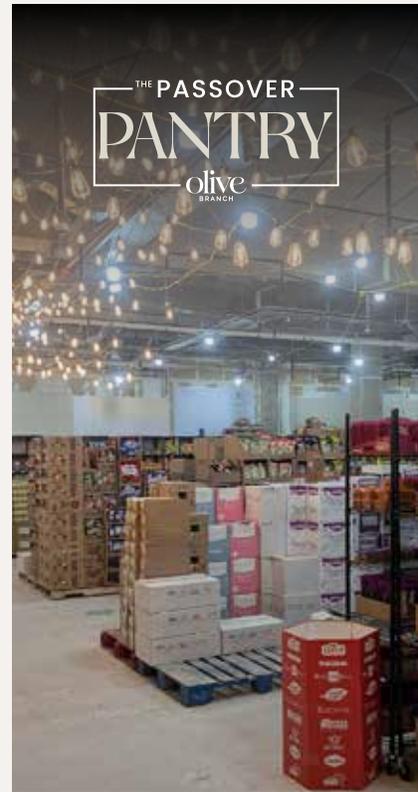


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