

Update Jewish Heritage Committee May 2024
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SLIDE 2 JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

In 2018, Parliament unanimously passed a bill proclaiming, that throughout Canada, the month of May will be marked as “Canadian Jewish Heritage Month,” celebrating the inspirational role that Jewish Canadians have played and continue to play in communities across the country. This important initiative celebrates the contributions Jewish Canadians have been making to this country for 250 years, from law, to politics, to culture, to sports.

The first Jews arrived in what would become Canada in 1760 as members of a British regiment. They settled in Trois Rivieres, Quebec. The Jewish population remained tiny until over a century later, when we start to see significant waves of Jewish immigration to Canada and North America, towards the end of 19th century and first quarter of the 20th century. During this period, over 2.8M Jews left eastern and southern Europe, fleeing economic and social persecution, and violent attacks known as pogroms that became commonplace in small towns

SLIDE 10

SLIDE 13 MAKING CHALLAH

The braided challah, which is made with eggs, is the Jewish Sabbath and holiday bread. It is surrounded by folklore and tradition and loaded with symbolism. Students mixed all the ingredients in a bag to bring back to their school to bake.

SLIDE 14 DECORATING TZEDAKAH BOXES

We also offered students the opportunity to decorate Tzedakah boxes. Tzedakah literally means righteousness. To do tzedakah is to live justly. It is often interpreted as charity, because Judaism views giving as the ultimate act of righteousness. Whether it is volunteering, advocating for social justice, or giving money, tzedakah is an integral part of living a Jewish life and is required of all Jews. Please find boxes made by Allenby students for you to use to collect for your favourite cause.

SLIDE 15 EDUCATING AGAINST HATE

From October to December 2023, Toronto Police Service reported Antisemitic incidents were up 211 per cent compared to the same time period last year. Antisemitism made up 53 per cent of all reported hate crimes during that period.

City Data mirrors TDSB's hate statistics as reported in March where Jewish students make up approximately 3.5% of the population but the proportion of incidents that involved antisemitism from October to December 2023 increased by 5 percentage points from 10 to 15%, as compared to the same period last year – the highest reported hate by creed.

The JHC supports the efforts of our Equity and Human Rights Office in educating against hate.

SLIDE 16 COMBATTING HATE AND RACISM

The JHC is pleased to be involved in the creation of the Board's Antisemitism Strategy – we