

Letter to Friends:

A Message from Ometz



Dear Friends,

Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, ended this past Thursday. As the days grow longer and colder this winter, we hope that you continue to find light through the support of family, friends, and your Ometz community.

Responding to the Israel-Hamas war and rising antisemitism



Following Hamas' October 7 terrorist attack against Israeli civilians, and the global uptick in antisemitism, Ometz jumped into action to address our local community's urgent needs. To help people of all ages combat stress, anxiety, fear and isolation, we are providing counselling, mental health supports, and group and individual interventions. We have also been offering new groups to help build resilience and connection.

In October, our Schools and Groups Department organized three workshops for parents and children (from preschool to university-aged) on how to handle stress and anxiety during the war. We are currently running a variety of relief workshops in schools and synagogues, on topics such as stress management, online wellbeing and dealing with violent imagery on social media. We are offering a special workshop for educators on managing difficult conversations in the classroom, and a grief support group for congregants who have recently lost family or friends due to the conflict.

Since the war began, we have also helped 80 Israeli individuals/29 households who are here for temporary respite with social services, counselling, and navigating resources. Ometz has established a special triage process to quickly get people the services they need, whether that means access to warm clothing, help registering for schools, or information about upcoming social activities to help them connect to the local community.

Collaborating for academic, emotional and employment success



This fall, clinique entourfamille – Ometz’s fee-for-service, multidisciplinary clinic for children and their families – launched its Thriving Families webinar series, with “The Hidden Value of a Report Card: How to manage stress around grades.” They are also offering educational need evaluations on a rolling basis, to help kids unlock their full potential, address their unique needs, and to provide them with the tools and resources needed to thrive academically.

L’Annexe: the Ometz Centre for Young Adults recently partnered with AMI Quebec and Friends of Mental Health, who each came to the centre to offer wellness-focused workshops. We also offered two “crash courses” in response to immediate client needs: one on goal setting and the other on job searches. Next month, L’Annexe will be offering its first music therapy group in French!

For the first time, Ometz’s Employment Department collaborated with the Bais Yaakov Seminary to offer a special integration aide training program: teaching participants how to assist children and young adults with behaviour challenges, learning disabilities and ASD integrate into the classroom and community settings. We also have an exciting new partnership with the Atwater Library; we are providing employability services and programs at the library for job seekers who are 45+, such as a recent LinkedIn 101 training, and they provide our clients with activities like computer courses. We look forward to seeing how the collaboration continues to evolve this winter!

[Click here to read an article in *La Voix Sépharade* about Ometz’s holistic,](#)

Family Hanukkah Party brings light, hope and connection to newcomers



On Sunday, December 3, we hosted our annual Family Hanukkah Party – celebrating the Festival of Lights with over 450 newcomers from countries including Ukraine, Israel, and France. Ometz clients, staff and volunteers enjoyed fantastic music, engaged in arts and crafts, played games, and savored a delicious holiday meal and donuts. At the end, more than 200 children went home with a special holiday gift!

Last year, Ometz helped over 800 newcomers from around the world successfully build new lives here. Social events like the annual Hanukkah party are an important part of helping these newcomers connect to the community and to each other.

Many thanks to Levy Salis LLP and an anonymous event sponsor, as well as the toy and gift card donors, Shinshinim and all the Ometz volunteers (who assisted with gift packing, greeting/registration, activity stations and clean up) for making this inspiring event possible!

children

Registration is now open for clinique entourfamille's 8-week Emotion Regulation Groups for children in grades 2-3 and 4-6 (January 8-February 26). Participating in the group can help children learn to recognize emotional states, manage their attention and concentration, and develop insight about helpful and unhelpful, appropriate and inappropriate behaviour(s). Additionally, a new tutoring service will be available starting this January: academic tutoring with a social-emotional regulation piece, run by a facilitator trained in play therapy.

Thinking of You

- Volunteering with Ometz is a great way to give back to the community! We are currently looking for French-speaking mentors who can help children and teens improve their French language skills for school, or help adults with their conversational skills to prepare for French exams and/or job opportunities. The time commitment is once a week, up to 1-hour per session, for a minimum of 3 months. Knowledge of additional languages, such as Hebrew or Russian, is a bonus! To find out more, email volunteer@ometz.ca.
- To register your child(ren) for clinique entourfamille's upcoming Emotion Regulation group, [click here](#).
- To learn more about Ometz school workshops, including how to book them, [click here](#).
- If you are a job seeker aged 45+, you may be eligible for free job search services, including one-on-one LinkedIn coaching. For more information, contact Yelena yelena.chernobulsky@ometz.ca or (514) 734-1339.
- To read more of our recent press coverage, [visit Ometz's Newsroom page](#).
- Don't forget to follow Ometz on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) (and L'Annexe on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)) to stay up-to-date on all our latest news!

Help us light the way to a brighter future!

If you would like to make a gift (of any size!) to the **Ometz Year-End Fund**, we invite you to make your **donation by midnight on December 31st**. During these challenging times, *you* can help us light the way forward. Your support ensures that we can continue providing vital programs and services to the children, young adults and families in the community who need it most. [Click here](#) to make your gift now:

DONATE NOW

Wishing you and your loved ones peace and strength for the year ahead,



Jeffrey Berkowitz
President, Ometz



Dominique McCaughey
Chief Executive Officer, Ometz



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