

Letter to Friends:

A Message from Ometz



Dear Friends,

While there's still snow and ice on the ground, the light is beginning to change, and spring will be here soon. We hope that no matter what challenges you may be facing, you know that you always have your Ometz community to lean on.

**3rd Annual Multigenerational Art Exhibition in
Honour of JDAIM**



February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance, and Inclusion Month (JDAIM): an initiative to unite Jewish communities worldwide in championing the rights of all Jews to be full participants in Jewish community life. For the 3rd year in a row, Ometz, L'Annexe, and the Cummings Centre collaborated on a multigenerational art exhibition in honour of JDAIM: *From Strength to Strength*. The February 21st vernissage featured works by a diversity of artists – those who identify as living with a disability, mental illness, or neurological difference as well as those who do not. We were also excited to be able to feature some work by our Ukrainian newcomer clients this year. **Thank you to the over 300 community members who joined us for the inspiring event!**

Helping newcomers of all kinds



On Thursday, January 25, the 14 recipients of this year's **Ometz Newcomer Education Scholarships** were honored at a special ceremony at the Gelber Conference Centre. The scholarships help newcomers in the community pursue their educational and career goals, and successfully set down roots here. The uplifting evening included a piano performance by scholarship recipient Emmanuel Zweig and a dessert reception. Over the past 10 years, the Ometz Newcomer Education Scholarship has helped almost 100 students achieve their academic and employment dreams in a wide variety of fields, including medicine, engineering, music, law, business and computer science.

In addition to the 800+ newcomer clients from around the world who Ometz normally assists each year, our **Immigration Department has helped over 80 Israelis** with social services, counselling, and navigating resources since Hamas' October 7 terrorist attack. We have also helped them connect to the local community through social activities like last month's Tu B'Shvat celebration (which included seed planting, face painting, button making, arts and crafts and music entertainment) and this month's A Family Day Out in the Laurentians (which offered newcomers the opportunity to enjoy typical Canadian winter activities like skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, and relaxing by the fire at the cozy chalet). [Click here to read an article in the Canadian Jewish News about Israelis \(including Ometz clients\) who came to Canada for temporary respite during the Israel-Hamas war.](#)

Working together to nurture client success



As part of our holistic, wraparound approach, Ometz places an emphasis on collaborating with diverse community partners. **L'Annexe: the Ometz Centre for Young Adults** recently partnered with the First Episode Psychosis Program at the Jewish General Hospital and the Sylvan Adams YM-YWHA, to launch Stronger Together: an 8-week program of fitness and wellness-focused activities. The program helps young adults (age 16-35) experiencing mental illness to get into a healthy routine, grow personally, and make valuable social connections.

Ometz's Manager for **Supported Employment Services** created a professional group in collaboration with The National Jewish Human Service Association, to provide support and facilitate discussions for Disability Employment Network professionals.

The **Ometz Mental Health Support Services** has an ongoing partnership with the English Montreal School Board. Currently, they are offering clients a comprehensive social integration program, that includes a full schedule of groups and classes every weekday. These social skill-building groups focus on curriculum to help promote mental health recovery, personal wellness, and improving life skills and social skills as well as helping participants with strategies to better manage stress and anxiety.

Lastly, our **Schools and Groups Department** has been busy this winter leading the Island of Friends social skills program in several different preschools. The workshops help children develop pro-social behaviors through interactive activities and role modelling. Children are encouraged to focus on the identification of feelings, the need for empathy and respect, strategies for self-regulation and the importance of expressive communication skills to create

strong relationships. Dealing with conflicts in a healthy manner, while creating an awareness and tolerance of diversity, is also discussed.

Looking ahead: Emotional and academic support for children

From March 11 to April 29, **clinique entourfamille** – Ometz’s fee-for-service, multidisciplinary clinic for children and their families – will be running Emotion Regulation peer groups for Grades 2-3 and 4-6. The 8-week program will help children learn to recognize emotional states, manage attention levels, and develop insight about helpful and unhelpful behavior. Registration is open now!

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, call (514) 343-3524 or email info@entourfamille.ca.
- To learn more about Ometz school workshops, including how to book them, [click here](#).
- 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!

Thank you for helping us light the way forward!

February is our **month of Thank You**s, and we are so appreciative of everyone who donated to the 2023 Ometz Hanukkah Year-End Campaign! Your generosity will build resilience and connection during this challenging time – through workshops, counselling, and other mental health supports. We cannot thank you enough for helping the children, young adults and families who need it most.

[Click here to watch a beautiful thank you video from our clients.](#)



WATCH NOW

We are grateful to all of you for believing in our work and being part of our community!

With warm wishes,

Jeffrey Berkowitz
President, Ometz

Dominique McCaughey
Chief Executive Officer, Ometz



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