

# HILLEL BC ANNUAL PROGRAM REPORT 2021-22

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YEAR ENDING  
AUGUST 31, 2022





**Hillel BC**   
Celebrating 75 years on campus

**A YEAR OF  
LEARNING,  
RELEARNING,  
AND  
CONNECTING  
AGAIN!**

# CONTENTS

## WHO WE ARE, MISSION AND VISION, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND STAFF

2

## INTRODUCTION

3

## JEWISH IDENTITY

4

High Holidays

5

Jewish Learning Fellowship (JLF)

International Holocaust  
Remembrance Day

Other Holiday Celebrations

6

Hanukkah

ShaBAT Mitzvah

Purim Extravaganza

7

Russian Speaking Jewish Students

Pesach

Shabbat

Lieutenant Governor Janet Austin's Visit

8

General Programming

## ISRAEL PROGRAMMING

9

Israel Week

10

Israel Shabbat

Israel Learning Fellowship

Perspectives 2022

11

Ambassador Visit

Issues Policy #10 - SFU

Divestment Motion

12

## INTERFAITH AND INTERCULTURAL

13

Multifaith Shabbat

14

Maintaining Spirituality: An Interfaith Dialogue

Snack Swap

Greek Shabbat

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT WELL BEING

15

Exam Bags

16

Mishloach Manot for DTES

Hillel Heartwarming

BGS Mentorship

## HILLEL BC IN VICTORIA

17

Holidays

18

Lectures

UVic Shabbat

Hebrew Language Cafe

Jews and Brews

Hillel Goes Outdoors

19

Multifaith Singing Circles

## EMERGING CAMPUSES

20

## YEAR: BY THE NUMBERS

# WHO WE ARE

Hillel BC promotes Jewish life on campus and beyond, providing a warm, welcoming environment where students in BC are able to grow religiously, culturally, socially, and ethically. We enable young Jewish adults to explore their Jewish identity and relationship with Israel in a safe, pluralistic, and inclusive community. Our programs and events on multiple campuses across BC reflect the diverse interests and needs of our members, build valuable leadership skills, and help to create a long-term impact in the Jewish community and beyond.

## OUR MISSION

Enriching the lives of Jewish students so that they may enrich the Jewish people and the world.

## OUR VISION

We envision a world where every student is inspired to make an enduring commitment to Jewish life, learning, and Israel.

## HILLEL BC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### PRESIDENT

Gordon Brandt

### VICE PRESIDENT

Sam Hyman

### TREASURER

Eric Andrew

### SECRETARY

Jessica Lithwick

### MEMBERS AT LARGE

Frank Cohn

Harvey Field

Shannon Gorski

Talia Steele

Alexis Pavlich

Sandy Penn

Bruce Raber

Rebecca Recant

Alex Schiff

Rachael Segal

## OUR STAFF

### TEAM 2021-22

Rob Philipp, *Executive Director*

Ohad Gavrieli, *Assistant Executive Director*

Lindsay Kerr, *Director of Student Life*

Rabbi Kylynn Cohen, *Senior Jewish Educator*

Gilad Cohen, *Lead Advocacy Professional*

Einat Livni, *Springboard Innovation Fellow (UBC)*

Zoe Mandell, *Lead Campus Professional (Emerging Campuses)*

Abigail Schmidt-Brown, *Lead Campus Professional (UVic)*

### TEAM 2022-23

Rob Philipp, *Executive Director*

Ohad Gavrieli, *Assistant Executive Director*

Lindsay Kerr, *Director of Student Life*

Rabbi Kylynn Cohen, *Senior Jewish Educator*

Adam Dobrer, *Lead Advocacy Professional*

Einat Livni, *Springboard Innovation Fellow (UBC)*

Ofer Joseph, *Lead Campus Professional (Emerging Campuses)*

Tal Katz, *Lead Campus Professional (UVic)*



# INTRODUCTION

We are excited to share with you our latest Annual Program Report. The past year saw us gently come out of the global pandemic and start to deliver more normal and in person programs throughout the year. While our approach has become more flexible, Hillel BC remains true to its mission, and we continue to be the backbone of Jewish campus life for our students.

We are fortunate to have such wonderful staff who put in so much time, energy, creativity, and love into everything they do. Their commitment to our mission has allowed Hillel to remain a vibrant and agile organization during a challenging couple of years, and ensures that Hillel continues to serve the changing needs of our student community.

Also, 2022 marks Hillel BC's 75th anniversary on campus. Established in 1947 on the same spot we are on today, we continue to carry out our mission of enriching the lives of Jewish students so they may enrich the Jewish people and the world. To celebrate our 75th year, we've updated our logo in a way which allows us to celebrate and evolve beyond after our anniversary.



We are so very grateful to our donors and our community, who provide us with the support we need to continue this important work.

Todah Rabbah!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rob".

**Rob Philipp, CPA, CA**  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gordon Brandt".

**Gordon Brandt**  
President of the Board



A young man with curly hair and a kippah is playing a saxophone. The image is overlaid with a teal semi-transparent rectangle containing text.

# JEWISH IDENTITY

For many students, cultivating a strong and resilient Jewish identity during their years on campus can be a major determinant for their involvement in Jewish communal life following graduation.

As we slowly transitioned past COVID restrictions, Hillel BC continued to provide many opportunities for students to explore and strengthen their Jewish identity through events, shared experiences, and learning opportunities.

With many of our programs offered in-person this year, Hillel BC continued to play a vital role in shaping the future of our Jewish community.

The following pages exhibit a few examples of the programs we delivered this past year.



With Rosh HaShanah being the first days of school, we jumped right into the year with full force! We were very happy to be able to offer in person and hybrid options for High Holiday programming this year. We hosted an Erev Rosh HaShanah/Welcome Back dinner, first day Rosh HaShanah services in person and streaming, Tashlich, Erev Yom Kippur dinner and Kol Nidre, Yom Kippur services in person and streaming, and a break fast.

## JEWISH LEARNING FELLOWSHIP (JLF)

An eight-week educational seminar facilitated by Hillel BC in conjunction with Hillel International for Jewish university students with various engagement levels in Jewish communal life.

In these eight weeks, Rabbi Kylynn, our Senior Jewish Educator, introduced students to the study of Torah, the rhythm of the Jewish calendar, and the pluralistic exploration of Jewish culture, ritual, and spirituality. Sessions took place weekly and were concluded with a cohort Seudah Shlishit and graduation.



## INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

This year we hosted Holocaust survivor Louise Sorensen, in partnership with the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center, for an International Holocaust Remembrance Day event.

Louise shared her story, showed us some artifacts from her childhood, and answered questions from students.

We were grateful for everyone in the UBC community who attended.

## OTHER HOLIDAYS CELEBRATIONS

Sukkot activities included putting up a sukkah on campus at UBC which students ate lunch in and performed the mitzvah of shaking the lulav and etrog. Rabbi Kylynn hosted two lunch and learn sessions in the sukkah as well as helped students perform the mitzvah of shaking the lulav and etrog all through the week. Our Shabbat dinner that fell during Sukkot featured a fall harvest menu and we taught a bit more about the holiday.



For Tu BiShvat we hosted a seder and terrarium building program in conjunction with JNF Pacific. Kylynn led us through a traditional and kabbalistic seder and sprinkled throughout were opportunities to put together a jade plant terrarium.

## HANUKKAH

Hanukkah fell quite early in the 2021-22 school year which gave us the opportunity to try something new. We hosted a semi-formal “Night Before Hanukkah” party for students complete with a photo booth, DJ, Hanukkah trivia, and treats including latkes and sufganiyot. Students could also pick up Hanukkiyot and candles from us to light during the week.

We also partnered with Chabad UBC for the annual Nes at the Nest event where both groups, as well as MLA for Vancouver-Point Grey, David Eby, had a chance to address the guests and then light the giant Hanukkiah. There was also plenty of latkes and donuts for students to enjoy!

## ShaBAT MITZVAH

On the 13th anniversary of her conversion to Judaism, Rabbi Kylynn celebrated by offering a ShaBAT Mitzvah Saturday morning service at Hillel. Students who missed or didn't have the opportunity to celebrate their own, or wanted to reclaim their Judaism had the opportunity to say a blessing or read a section of Torah.



## PURIM EXTRAVAGANZA

Our two-part Purim extravaganza was a full day event! In the afternoon we had a soccer ball bouncy house, carnival games like cornhole and darts, BBQ hot dogs, and a sandwich making station. The sandwiches were for the mitzvah mattanot la-evyonim ("gifts for the poor"). The evening portion featured a costume party complete with a megillah reading, trivia, a photobooth, and hamentaschen for students.



## RUSSIAN SPEAKING JEWISH STUDENTS

Through Hillel International and the Genesis Philanthropy Group, we received a grant to do outreach and programming specifically for Russian Speaking Jewish students. This year we offered a Durak tournament (card game) with tea and cookies, and a Matryoshka painting program.

## PESACH

For the first time since 2019, we held an in person Pesach seder at the Hillel House! We had over 50 students and guests join us on the second night for a student-led seder supported by Rabbi Kylynn and catered by The Community Kollel. Pesach fell during the April exam period this year so being able to bring students together during this very busy time was extra special.

## SHABBAT

With campus being open for most of the year, we were delighted to host in person Shabbat dinners all year, typically twice per month. Some had themes like Sukkot, Spooky, Multifaith, and Greek Shabbat which was co-hosted with AEPi and brought members of the Greek Life community on campus to Hillel. All dinners started with the Shabbat blessings led by students and featured a D'var Torah (weekly portion lesson) delivered by Rabbi Kylynn.

## LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JANET AUSTIN'S VISIT

The Honourable Janet Austin, BC's Lieutenant Governor and now an honorary patron of the Jewish community, visited Hillel as a part of her community tour. We gave her a tour of the building and had a lively discussion about some of the issues facing Jewish students on campus.

## GENERAL PROGRAMMING

We kicked off our school year with a Welcome Back Booze and Jews event outside at our UBC building. We continued hosting game nights in the fall semester but this year we hosted them in person! We offered a variety of board, card, and Wii games.

Expanding off last year's virtual Hillel fair for King David High School, this year staff and students went to King David and supplemented their visit with video introductions from Hillels across Canada. Also with Hillels across

Canada, we put on a virtual Summer Opportunities Fair which brought together approximately 30 organizations with opportunities for Jewish students/young adults in an interactive online space called GatherTown.

Out of multiple requests from students, we began offering weekly Hebrew classes in the winter semester and over the course of the few months, the group grew from 3 to 9 students. We are excited to continue offering this next year! We also had two build your own pizza parties this year; one specifically for first year students and one during exams just before Pesach to use up the chametz that was left in the kitchen.





# ISRAEL PROGRAMMING

Hillel BC is proud to be a safe space on campus where students can explore, learn about, and celebrate their Jewish Homeland.

We are witnessing first-hand the growth of anti-Israel sentiments across our campuses. We choose to combat this by hosting events to discuss both the beauty and complexities of Israel.

In the following pages, you can see examples of how we continue to feature Israel throughout the year, keeping it in the hearts and minds of our students.

## ISRAEL WEEK

Israel Week, a mainstay of our winter semester lineup, returned this year and happened in person! We kicked off the week with an Israeli Cooking tutorial led by Chopped Teen Canada and Wall of Chefs champion, Justine Balin. She guided us through making mesabacha and flatbread with plenty left to take home. We had a current events lunch and learn with Gal Icek, Shlichah for Camp Miriam, where students engaged in a discussion about contemporary geopolitics in Israel.

We rounded out the week with Artists 4 Israel and a presentation about their trip to Israel with Estevan Oriol, a famous tattoo artist from Mexico. He travelled to Israel and immersed himself in the street art scene in Tel Aviv and took many beautiful photos to showcase his trip, and finally, Israel Shabbat.

## ISRAEL SHABBAT

Led by the students of UBC Israel on Campus, and the final event of Israel Week, Israel Shabbat featured an Israeli menu and a learning session about Israel.

Students learned about Israel “beyond the conflict” and highlighted many of the successes that Israel has had over the years. The room was decorated in blue and white, and tables had centerpieces of Israeli sand and flags with fun facts about Israel.



## ISRAEL LEARNING FELLOWSHIP

This year, Hillel once again offered an Israel Learning Fellowship (ILF) at UBC. Students met once per week for 6 weeks to do partner and whole group learning. Over the course of the fellowship, the students learned about and explored the fascinating religious, political, and social pluralism of Israel.



## PERSPECTIVES 2022

After two years of waiting and rescheduling we finally took our inaugural Perspectives trip to Israel with 13 student leaders from UBC, primarily non-Jewish students.

We heard from a variety of speakers across the political and cultural spectrum and went to Jericho in the West Bank as one of our most important stops.

These 10 days were designed to give all the students the confidence to have conversations about this incredibly complex topic on campus, where we know that public conversations tend to be very one-sided.



## AMBASSADOR VISIT

In April we had the privilege of hosting Dr. Ronen Pinchas Hoffman, Israeli Ambassador to Canada. He spoke to students, staff and community leaders about challenges and opportunities facing Israel in the twenty-first century, the strength of the Canada-Israel relationship and the delicate process of peacemaking. We thank him for his candor, humour and hope to have him back again soon!

## ISSUES POLICY #10 - SFU

The Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS) Council voted to create a “Free Palestine” working group to formulate a statement and issues policy on behalf of Council in May 2021. This working group introduced Issues Policy 10 (IP-10); endorsing “all forms of resistance as prescribed by international law in all of ‘historic Palestine’”.

We worked with the SFU Jewish Students Association (JSA) and with community partners, highlighting the blatant antisemitism of the issues policy, and of the Society dedicating an entire special session of Council to the delegitimization and demonization of Israel. After the motion was adopted, we engaged with SFU President Joy Johnson, and are hoping to set up a time for a roundtable discussion between the University and Jewish students on how to combat antisemitism at SFU and address other Jewish equity issues.



In early winter of 2022, we learned of a troubling anti-Israel motion in development by a coalition of student clubs at UBC, requesting that the Alma Mater Society (AMS) “issue a statement condemning Israeli apartheid and the occupation of Palestine”, urging the UBC Board of Governors to divest from a list of companies per a UN-created database. After an AMS subcommittee broke AMS Code by failing to give notice of their hearing, the motion was sent to Council.

Hillel organized the Jewish community on campus to submit an official statement for the record, correcting misinformation included in the motion. On the day of AMS Council deliberations, fifty pro-Israel students showed up with Israeli flags, and student leaders representing the

diversity of the Jewish community spoke out eloquently against the motion. While we succeeded in amending the motion to compel Council to analyze all UBC holdings for companies complicit in human rights abuses (not only those related to Palestine), we were unable to prevent the motion from passing. Hillel issued another statement reaffirming our commitment to dialogue as the only pathway to maintaining peace on campus and resolving the conflict.

On April 12th, UBC President and Vice-Chancellor Santa Ono issued a statement rejecting the BDS movement citing the University’s commitment to equity, inclusion and academic freedom.

“

...As a community of learning, it is incumbent on UBC to place paramount value on the free and lawful expression of ideas and viewpoints. Positions on complex geo-political issues that protect human rights are best made by guarding academic freedom and freedom of expression in an environment that supports constructive and respectful debate. But constructive and respectful debate cannot occur when members of one group are made to feel personally attacked for their identity or where tolerance and inclusiveness are not fostered in productive discourse. We work to avoid polarization on the basis of student identity, religion, or political beliefs so that students are safe and free from harassment. Therefore, UBC’s fundamental commitment to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion must be reflected in all that we do and say in pursuit of our academic mission.

For these reasons, the university does not support BDS and, therefore, cannot support the AMS motion to urge UBC and the Board of Governors to divest...

”

**Santa Ono, UBC President and Vice-Chancellor**  
April 12, 2022

# INTERFAITH & INTERCULTURAL

At Hillel BC, we firmly believe in building interfaith connections and giving our students a platform for intercultural exchanges.

Through our programming, we are ensuring that our students are building inclusive communities. These events help them understand other cultures and beliefs from around the world, as they learn to respect and value perspectives.

Check out some of the events that were held this year!

## MULTIFAITH SHABBAT

Together with St Andrews Hall (church), The United Church, Origin Church, The Sikh Students Association, Bahai Students of UBC, and The Turkish Students Association, we hosted a Multifaith Shabbat dinner. All groups were given time to address the dinner guests, and shared how multifaith connection building is important to their faith.

## MAINTAINING SPIRITUALITY: AN INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

The UBC JSA partnered with UBC Born for More/Origin Church, Sikh Student Association, and Thaqalayn Muslim Association on an interfaith dialogue and social. There were spiritual leaders from each faith talking about maintaining spirituality, table discussions with people from various groups, and of course delicious snacks.



## SNACK SWAP

Israel on Campus (IOC), the Turkish, Russian, Central Asia, Italian, and the Mexican Student Associations all cohosted a multicultural snack swap at Hillel. Students were given a “passport” to use when going around to the different booths to try snacks and engage with the various groups.



## GREEK SHABBAT

Students were thrilled about the return of Greek Shabbat this year! With over 100 students in attendance, we met Jewish and non-Jewish students involved in 12 different Greek organizations on campus. Building on past experience we see that students who participate in Greek Shabbat as their first Hillel event tend to return to Hillel for other events which are not related to Greek Life.

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND STUDENT WELL-BEING

In addition to helping keep our students connected with their roots, we are on a constant pursuit to prepare them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Hillel BC organizes trainings and events to promote leadership development, and regularly shares other developmental opportunities and resources with the students to keep them updated.

Our programs also focus on the well-being of our students; and while we always stay connected with them, we ensure added support during crucial times.

## EXAM BAGS (DECEMBER AND APRIL)

We assembled exam packages for students to take as needed which had snacks and supplies (granola bars, post its, pens, highlighters etc) for them during their most stressful time of the semester. The December bags also featured materials for Hanukkah.

## MISHLOACH MANOT FOR DTES

One of the stations at the daytime part of our Purim party was making sandwich bags for people experiencing homelessness on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Bags were packed with a sandwich, juice, and granola bar, and then delivered by staff and students.

## HILLEL HEARTWARMING

During the December exam period, we had hot chocolate, apple cider, and snacks for students to enjoy while taking a break from studying for their final exams. We rearranged the furniture in the lounge to be more like lodge seating to add to the theme of cozy and relaxing.



## BGS MENTORSHIP

In the fall semester, Hillel partnered with the Ben Gurion Society (BGS) to offer mentorship opportunities for students interested in different career paths. We offered sessions on Law, Medical, and Real Estate, and students had opportunities to ask questions to and spend time with young leaders in our community working in diverse areas of these fields.



# HILLEL BC IN VICTORIA

UVic-focused programs help us maintain and develop a vibrant Jewish community on this campus.

All Hillel BC activities were adapted to adhere to COVID-19 restrictions last year, but this year we transitioned to hybrid connections. As a result, UVic students had the opportunity to collaborate with Mainland students on planning and delivering different online programs. They were also able to connect in-person with peers on campus.

## HOLIDAYS

Hillel in Victoria had a full slate of holiday programming this year!

There were dinners for Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, Sukkot (including a sukkah in the back yard), and Hanukkah. For Hanukkah there was also a field trip to Yonni's Donuts, a local bakery in Victoria where students got to tour the kitchen and eat fresh donuts, and a giant Hanukkiah lighting at the Student Union Building with Chabad.

Tu B'Shvat was celebrated with a self-paced activity book related to trees, nature, and renewal, and a zine workshop led by a student leader.

Students celebrated Purim with a booth at the UVSS Sexpo, where the role of feminism and bodily autonomy in the story of Purim was highlighted, with crafts and snacks as well as a Purim party at the house. With Pesach being during the exam period, students were matched with community seders to attend if they wanted to.

## LECTURES

Throughout the year there were many lectures offered to students on a variety of subjects.

There was Jewish Pilgrimage, Israel 101, Understanding antisemitism, Intro to Kabbalah, and Stories of Resilience: A Storytelling Workshop. These were done with various partnerships in the community and gave students the opportunity to connect with community members while learning in a welcoming environment.

## SHABBAT

Hillel in Victoria hosted monthly Shabbat dinners at the house (with one online) for students this year. Meals were cooked by staff and students, and dinners included ice breaker activities and games.



## HEBREW LANGUAGE CAFE

With a growing number of Hebrew speakers engaging with Hillel in Victoria, Hebrew language cafes were offered where they could speak in Hebrew with each other and speak with students who wanted to polish their skills.

## JEWS AND BREWS

Once per month students were invited to Jews and Brews, a social evening at a pub on or off campus. This is a chance for them to socialize in a neutral setting and decompress from the stress of their classes.

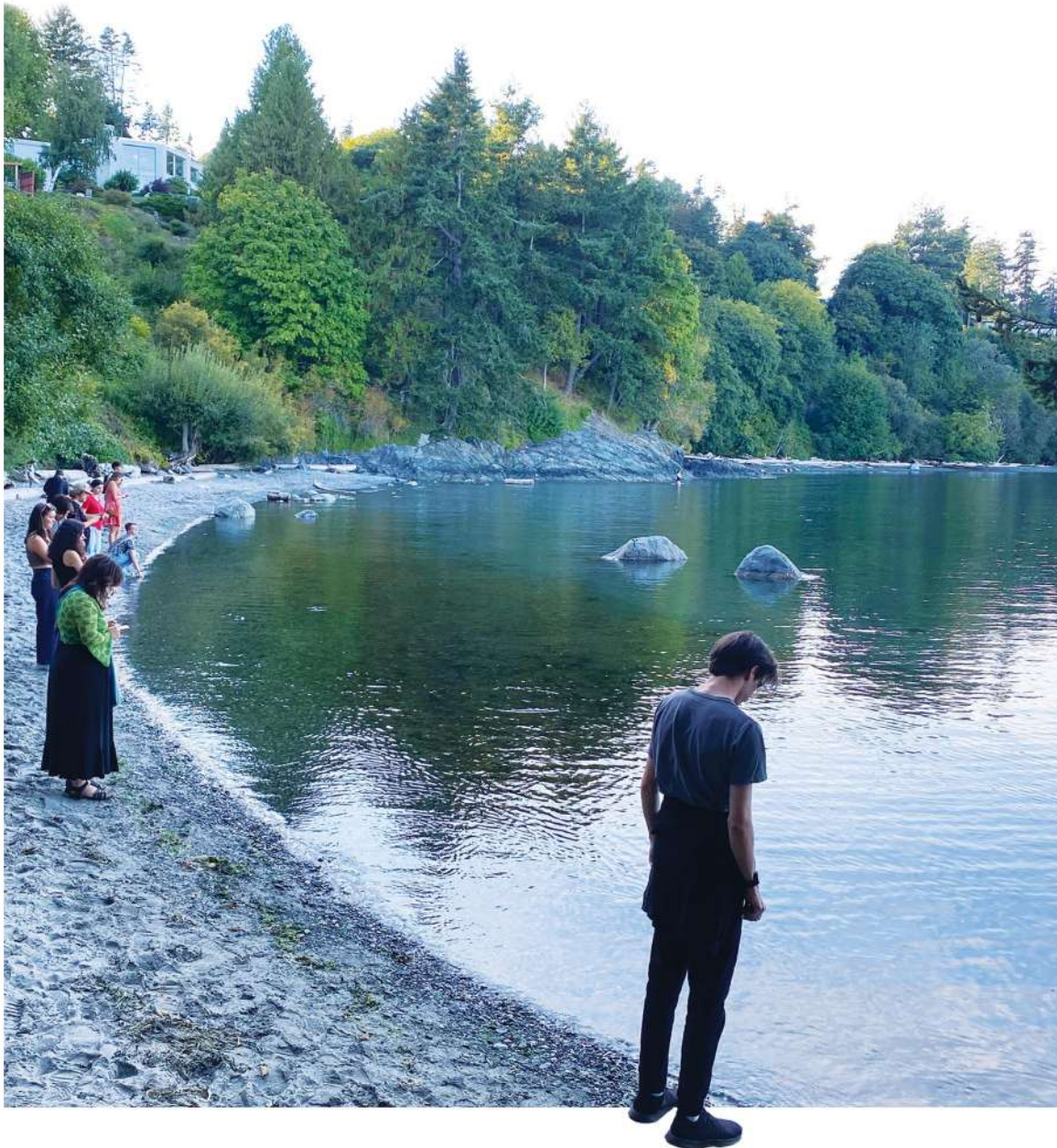


## HILLEL GOES OUTDOORS

Once each semester students had the chance to register to join Hillel Goes Outdoors where they found an easy-moderate hike and spent the day in nature together.

## MULTIFAITH SINGING CIRCLES

In partnership with UVic Multifaith Services and Rabbi Matthew Ponak, the multifaith singing circles showcased different religions through music. This series was offered three times in the fall semester.



A background photograph of three people wearing face masks standing behind a table. The table is covered with a white and blue checkered cloth and has various items on it, including a box of 'bits', a box of 'CHOCOLATE', and some food containers. The people are smiling and looking towards the camera. The image has a teal overlay.

# EMERGING CAMPUSES

After almost two full years of virtual school, programming on the Emerging Campuses returned this year. Weekly lunches, an Emerging Campuses staple, happened at SFU, Langara, and Emily Carr University of Art + Design during both semesters.

Once per month during the winter semester, one of those lunches was Torah and Tea with Rabbi Kylynn where students had the chance to discuss how a given passage of Torah connected to a current event.

All three campuses came together for Shabbat dinner during both semesters, typically at Emily Carr University in the Student Union Building. Virtual Games Night stuck around this year giving students from near and far a chance to play games together online. The Emerging Campuses wrapped up their year with a potluck picnic at Queen Elizabeth Park.

# YEAR: BY THE NUMBERS

UBC	UVic	EMERGING CAMPUSES
<b>92</b> EVENTS ANNUALLY	<b>47</b> EVENTS ANNUALLY	<b>68</b> EVENTS ANNUALLY
<b>3150</b> PEOPLE SERVED ANNUALLY*	<b>725</b> PEOPLE SERVED ANNUALLY*	<b>475</b> PEOPLE SERVED ANNUALLY*

\*Numbers represent total attendees from all events.

**PROUDLY HELPING SHAPE  
THE FUTURE OF OUR JEWISH  
COMMUNITY IN BC.**

**Hillel<sub>BC</sub> 75**  
Celebrating 75 years on campus

## HILLEL BC

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