

**Year Ending
AUGUST 31, 2020**



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Who We Are

Hillel BC promotes Jewish life on campus and beyond, providing a warm, welcoming environment where students are able to grow religiously, culturally, socially, and ethically. 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.

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Introduction

The report below details the activities carried out by Hillel BC during the 2019-2020 academic year. Not surprisingly, this year presented many challenges to our students and staff, as COVID forced us to shut our doors to students in late March. However, as community builders, we saw this challenge as an opportunity to re-think and re-create the way we are servicing our students. Below you will find examples of both in-person programs (which took place between September 2019 and February 2020) as well as programs which were adapted to COVID from March onward.

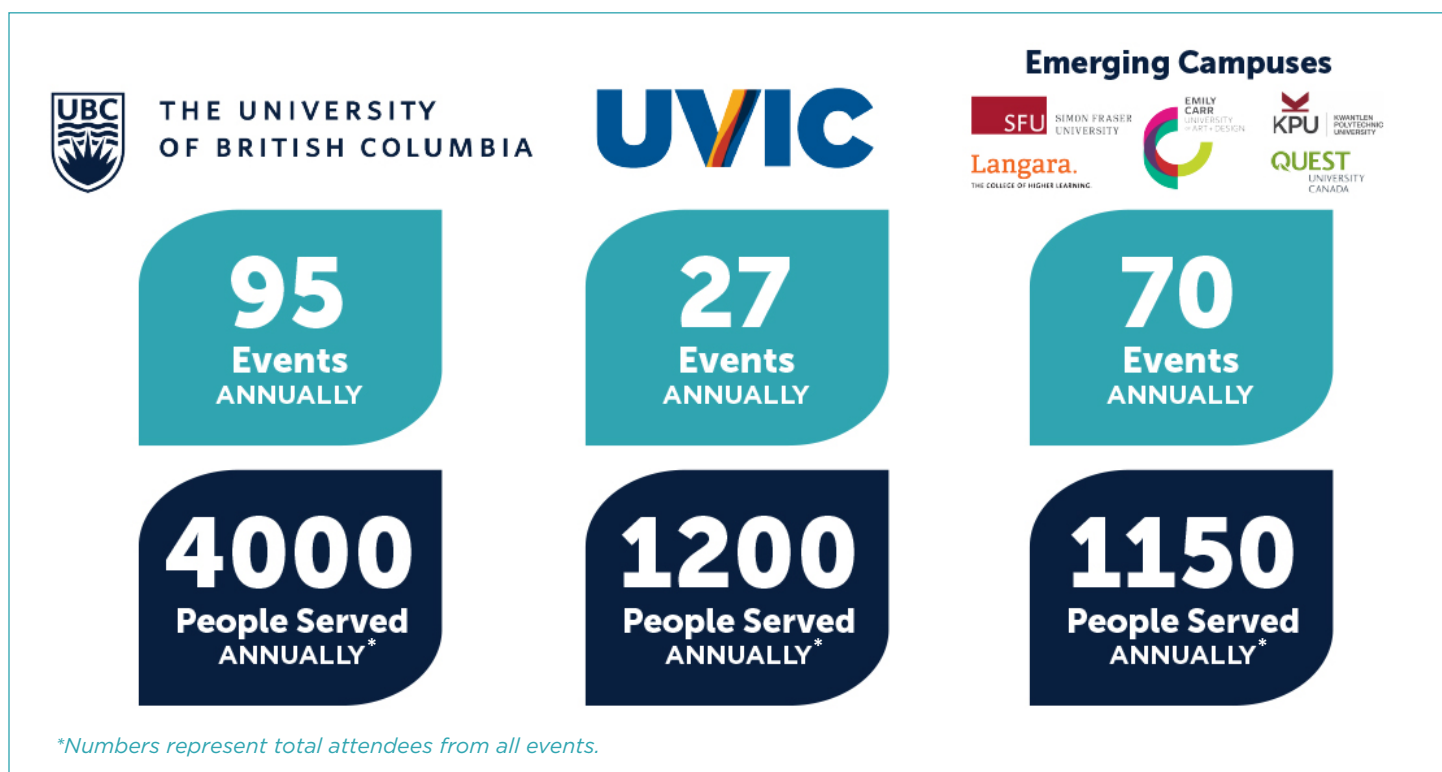
We continue to work hard to ensure Hillel remains a vibrant and responsive organization and a place students can call their Jewish home on campus. As we continue to adapt our programming and the way we connect with our students, we are constantly reminded that this is all made possible thanks to the generosity of supporters and donors within our own community.



ROB PHILIPP, CPA, CA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



GORDON BRANDT
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD



Jewish Identity

Hillel's mission is to be a Jewish Home Away From Home for Jewish students across BC's largest campuses. As such, we focus our programs in a way which allow students to explore their Jewish Identity in a safe and supportive environment. Below are a few examples of the programs Hillel BC has put on over the past academic year that provide continued learning and growth opportunities to strengthen Jewish identity amongst students:

JLF (Jewish Learning Fellowship): a ten-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 ten weeks Hillel educators 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 2 - 3 times per month and included hands on Tikkun Olam projects such as making and distributing food to vulnerable populations living on the Downtown East Side (DTES). The seminar was attended by 20 students most weeks.





International Holocaust Remembrance Week:

Hillel BC, in partnership with the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center, CIJA, and the Federation of Greater Vancouver put on a multi-day symposium to commemorate the Shoah and the 75th anniversary of the

liberation of Auschwitz. Prior to the opening ceremony, Hillel organized a private lunch for survivors, students, and community members. Hundreds of people participated in the events of the week, including 25 survivors.

High Holidays: Hillel offered students a full range of programming during the High Holidays. Events included: Erev Rosh HaShana service and meal, Tashlich, Yom-Kippur Services and Break Fast meal, as well as different Sukkot activities including putting up a sukkah on campus at UBC. Programs were offered both at UBC and UVic.

Other Holiday Celebrations: Hillel provided Hanukkah candles and gelt for students during exam period to ensure they were ready for the Holiday which took place during the winter break. For Tu B'shevat Hillel hosted a "Bob Ross Paint Night" program where 15 students created a Bob Ross inspired piece of nature art.



Purim: Together with Chabad we hosted a Purim carnival in the Student Union Building. Students enjoyed Hamantaschen and Megila readings together with holiday activities such as making Mishloach Manot (Purim Gift Baskets).



Shabbat Dinners: This year Hillel regularly hosted 100-125 students for each of our Shabbat dinners. These dinners, which are hosted at least once a month, allow for a great opportunity for Jewish students to meet and mingle while bringing in Shabbat with a home-style cooked meal.



General Jewish Programming: During the winter semester Hillel offered a couple of lunch and learn programs. “Schmooze and Shmear” has students facilitating on a topic that is meaningful to them where guests are encouraged to ask questions and participate in discussion. “Ask the Rabbi” was a general and open conversation where students engage in conversation with and ask questions to Rabbi Bregman in the safe and secure environment they know and love. The Jewish Student Association (JSA) hosted three movie nights to showcase Jewish culture, humour, and universal themes.

Adjusting Programs to a New Reality: As COVID forced us to close our facilities in late March, Hillel had to quickly adapt all of our programming to fit the new social and gathering limitations. The last few Shabbat dinners were moved online, where Hillel (together with other community organizations) cooked and delivered the meals to students who attended an online Kabbalat Shabbat. Approximately 30 students participated in each program. Similarly, a virtual Passover Seder was hosted by Rabbi Bregman with meals being prepared by community organizations and delivered to Hillel students. (More on our response to COVID: see “COVID programming” section).



Israel Programming

Hillel BC provides a platform through which young students can explore their Judaism and their connection to Israel. While working closely with the Israel on Campus (IOC) club, Hillel BC was able to put on programs which presented students the opportunity to better understand the shared values between Israelis and Canadians. Other programs focused on providing students with the knowledge and confidence required to dispel anti-Israel rhetoric which is often present on our campuses. Below are a few examples of programs carried out through the past year:

Israel Week: Five days of programming showcasing different aspects of Israel and Israeli culture. Programs included Israeli dancing, movie night, and Israel Shabbat.

Artists 4 Israel: Offered two art related programs for students on campus. One was t-shirt creations in the Student Union Building where students could choose the design they wanted, and artists would create their shirt in real time. The other was a movie night where we showed a documentary about “Healing Ink”, an Israeli organization helping survivors of terrorism and violence heal through the art of tattooing. 150 students participated in the program.

Yitzhak Rabin Program: Sarah Fisher, the Shlichah for Camp Miriam, was invited to speak to students and faculty about the impact and legacy of Yitzhak Rabin. She taught us about Rabin’s life and the importance of his contributions to modern Israel. Students engaged in conversation surrounding that legacy and what Jewish students can continue to do to ensure that we spread knowledge and awareness of his legacy.





Antisemitism on Campus Panel: The Israel on Campus club hosted a panel of 4 students who have dealt with Antisemitism on campus in some way. Attendees heard stories that took place on three different campuses: UBC, McGill, and University of Toronto. These stories spanned

from issues in student government (McGill), to the refusal to serve kosher food because of Hillel's stance on Israel (U of T), to verbal and vandalism attacks towards students (UBC). Hearing about a variety of experiences showed attendees that Antisemitism is not always overt but still affects people who are experiencing it. It also enlightened the 30 participants to pay closer attention to things that happen on campus that may not seem Antisemitic on the surface even when they really are.

Israel Movie Nights: In collaboration with the Vancouver Jewish Film Festival, Hillel BC and the IOC club hosted a couple of Israeli Movie Nights at the Hillel House.

Birthright Recruitment: Hillel hosted a few events to help recruit students to the Canada Israel Experience Birthright Trip. The events provided an opportunity for students to ask questions regarding the trip and allowed past participants to share their stories of their experience in Israel.



Humanitarian Tabling: In partnership with Hasbara Fellowships Canada, students tabled on UBC campus to teach about "Save A Child's Heart" (SACH). Many students who came to the table did not know much about Israel and after hearing about "Save A Child's Heart" they wanted to learn more about the charity and what Israel does in general to aid the world's community. Donations for SACH were collected at the table and then given to the organization.

Panel with Hillel Ontario: Hillel BC cohosted a cross country student led education session followed by a panel discussion with Hillel Ontario that focused on common Antisemitic and Antizionist tropes we hear on campuses across Canada. Facilitators unpacked each trope, looked at its historic origins and taught students how to respond to these tropes. The end of the program was a question and answer period where students were able to ask about campus specific situations and help them

learn how to respond to these situations. Approximately 40 students from across the country were in attendance.

Desserts Around the World: 150 students attended the event put on by Hillel and the Israel on Campus (IOC) club. The IOC invited various clubs on campus (including the UBC Taiwan Association, Sponsor A Child's Education UBC and the UBC Cooking Club) to taste Israeli desserts and share the rich and diverse culture the country has to offer.



Interfaith and Intercultural

Many of our programs at Hillel are aimed at building connections between different faith and cultural groups on campus. This allows Hillel to showcase its pluralistic approach while gaining allies for different Jewish causes on campus. Below are a few examples of such programs:

Greek Life Shabbat Dinner: Jewish students who frequent Hillel are involved with Greek/Fraternity life on campus. Greek Shabbat draws in more than 100 students, who for some, this is their first time coming to a Hillel event. 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.



Taste of Co-Existence: Building on the success of last year, the Taste of Co-Existence program returned to Hillel for the winter semester. The program, which brought together a local Israeli restaurant owner (Itamar Shani of Chickpea) and local Palestinian restaurant owner (Haitham El Khatib of Aleph), showcased through a productive discussion, and delicious food how collaboration, discussion, and friendship can occur when the two-sides strive to co-exist. The program drew over 100 students each week.

Chaplaincy Meetings: Led by Rabbi Bregman, the Hillel House - Diamond Foundation Centre for Jewish Campus Life became the meeting place for the bi-monthly Multi-Faith Chaplaincy meeting. The meeting brought 17 different Chaplains to the building to discuss matters concerning religious student life on campus and worked on ways to further collaboration between the different religious groups.

Global Lounge: The Hillel Jewish Student Association is part of the global lounge. The Global Lounge is a multi-cultural centre on campus whose primary purpose is to connect cultural groups. Our program (with the Kazakhstani student group as our assigned partner) was a discussion about the law passed in Quebec regarding religious symbols for government employees and whether it is a violation, and the benefits/drawbacks of being a “visible” minority.



UVic Festival of Lights: Hillel sponsored a large Festival of Lights dinner in November which brought together over 150 students, faculty, administration, and community members at the University of Victoria. As different Festivals of Light take place around that time of year (including Christmas, Diwali, Kwanzaa, and of course Hanukkah), the dinner provided an opportunity to learn about different cultures and highlight diversity on campus while bringing awareness of Jewish culture/religious practice in the context of the Diaspora and Israel. Noted guests included the Mayor of Oak Bay, the Mayor of Saanich, as well as the President of the University of Victoria.

Leadership Development and Student Wellbeing



Hillel BC continues to be a place where students come to de-stress and feel at ease. We work to offer opportunities they may not get elsewhere on campus to keep them coming back. This is also an opportunity for student leaders to develop programming as they are the most in tune with their peers.

Shabbat UnPlugged (SUP): Shabbat Unplugged is a weekend long Shabbaton experience for university students operating out of Winnipeg, Manitoba. This year, we

made it a priority to increase our student's exposure to other Hillels across western Canada. Over 100 students from Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg participated in workshops led by Hillel Staff, and guests from organizations such as CJPAC and StandWithUs.

Hillel Heartwarming: During exams we had warm apple cider, hot chocolate, and cupcakes for students.

Exam Packages: 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.

AEPuppies: In the Hillel House, AEPi hosted a program called AEPuppies where the fraternity brothers brought their dogs to campus. 120 students got to play with the dogs for the afternoon.



Victoria Programming

Programming in Victoria has continued during the last year. Programs include Shabbat, holidays, tikun olam, and day of action.

Shabbat: UVic Hillel hosted 50+ students per monthly Shabbat dinners. The home-made meals and welcoming environment are a great opportunity for students to connect to their Jewish identity and to feel at home in Victoria.

Holidays: Hillel offered students dinners for Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. Students assisted in putting up a sukkah at the Victoria house and hosted both pizza night and shakshuka making in the sukkah.

Tikun Olam: students collected and delivered blankets to a homeless shelter in Victoria and prepared 200 tuna, egg salad, and peanut butter sandwiches for delivery as well.

Day of Action: UVic Hillel was involved in attending one of the workshops in the 5 Days of Action on campus whose purpose is to encourage students and community members to take steps towards ending discrimination and racism. There was a student from Uvic Friends of Israel club on the panel of students, who come from different faiths.

Other Programs: As stand-alone programs, this year UVic Hillel offered Jews and Brews, challah baking, wine and cheese, BBQ evenings, Hebrew café, and participation in clubs day.



COVID Programming

Shabbat Happy Hour: Students were invited to join a zoom happy hour to see their friends and chat with the Hillel staff. We had happy hours to meet the incoming JSA executives, one for graduates of the class of 2020, and a few open sessions for anyone to join.

Rosh Chodesh: For Rosh Chodesh Tammuz Hillel hosted a program where students started by engaging with a biblical text and then discussed how it relates to their sense of self and translated that into art.

Chavurah: Weekly learning sessions for students on a variety of topics ranging from zoom fatigue to how to navigate social justice issues from a Jewish lens. Some of these sessions were led by staff and some were led by students.

Shavuot: To partake in the custom of eating dairy on Shavuot, Hillel hosted a live mac and cheese cooking session on zoom. To fulfill the custom of learning we hosted a student led learning session on the story of Miriam.



Relaxation Sessions: During april exams we offered a week's worth of relaxation sessions including yoga and breathing, story time, healthy snack making, and organization/time management.

Volunteer Task Force: Hillel students and staff volunteered in the Vancouver Jewish community throughout quarantine. We delivered Challah through Mike Sachs's initiative and Shabbat meals with Schara Tzedek.

Shabbat Dinners: Shabbat Dinners continued during COVID, preparing and delivering meals to students and using zoom to create an approximately 90 minute program. Some dinners were co-hosted with other organizations such as Axis and Moishe House.

Reaching out to Students: All Hillel staff continue to reach out to individual students to offer support during this difficult time.

SFUnion: The SFU Hillel board and students gathered online for an exclusive happy hour.

UVic Hillel: During quarantine, programming has continued in Victoria. Students have participated in virtual yoga sessions, Shabbat to go, outdoor BBQ, movie night, and hiking near the city.



Going Forward

Despite COVID, we have had a very busy year with activities. We continue to be creative and flexible in our approach so that we can adapt as necessary.

The upcoming programs will also adapt to changing conditions on the university campuses in British Columbia and we are in regular touch with Hillel International as well as Hillels throughout Canada so we can share and learn from them as well. Again, we are very thankful for the support we have received from our supporters and donors who help us create and maintain a Jewish life on campus.





Hillel^{BC} 
YOUR JEWISH HOME AWAY FROM HOME



PROUD PARTNER AGENCY OF
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GREATER VANCOUVER

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