



WELCOME... SHALOM

Thank you for your interest in the **Danforth Jewish Circle**.

The Danforth Jewish Circle is an inclusive Jewish community centred in downtown Riverdale. Our community is committed to making Judaism meaningful and accessible through a wide variety of social, cultural and religious programs. True to our spirit of inclusiveness, our membership is a varied blend of the individuals and families which make up our vibrant neighbourhood...including interfaith, multicultural and same-sex households.

The Danforth Jewish Circle offers many programs which reflect our community's commitment to nurturing Jewish life including:

- High Holiday Services
- Children's Jewish Education
- Part time rabbi
- Adult Programming
- Bi-Monthly Friday Night Shabbat Services
- Oneg Shabbat Celebrations
- Social Gatherings and Holiday Celebrations

We hope the enclosed information is helpful. We welcome your participation and input as we continue to build a progressive Jewish community that honours the past as we cast our sights forward.

Sincerely,

Daphne Woolf
Chair

What our members have to say about us...

I like it that we are beginning to define ourselves: we are evolving into something quite unique.

I appreciate having a place to go with my family where we feel an extreme level of comfort.

The atmosphere of the services is wonderful.

The DJC is where my spiritual and social needs intersect. It reflects my need to honour Jewish traditions while embracing current truths: many in our group are intermarried, but deeply committed to nurturing Jewish life.

My family isn't from Toronto. I used to feel like I wanted to go home for the holidays. Now I feel I am home.

As a child, being part of a Jewish community was something I took for granted. As an adult, I had to seek one out. The Danforth Jewish Circle offers a wonderful sense of community, of belonging...to adults and children alike.

Keep up the good work!



MEMBERSHIP

Membership Dues*	\$660 Family -2 adults and children to age 25
2009/2010:	\$330 Individual/Single Parent- 1 adult and children to age 25
	\$150 Senior age 65 and over
	\$100 Full-time student age 26 and over
	\$125 Single service ticket**

*Dues may be paid in full or with a series of post-dated payments from September 2009 - May 2010. No one is turned away for lack of funds. Please e-mail: info@djctoronto.com or call (416) 580-6303 if you need to arrange a reduced payment package. Membership includes all High Holidays and a year of programming.

** If you buy a ticket and decide you want to purchase a full year Membership, you can pay the balance owing (minus the ticket price.)

REGISTRATION

Please go to our website for current information for registration and payment at this link: <http://djctoronto.com/participate/membership.php>

*

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS help fund...

Your financial support enables us to continue to offer the type of programming so appreciated by our community. Your contributions help fund:

- High Holiday Services
- Bi-Monthly Friday Night Shabbat Services - *Rabbi-led services and member-led (in home) services*
- Rabbi - *for High Holidays, and monthly visits*
- The Children's Rosh Hashanah Service
- Free Day Care available at all services - *children age 2 - 11; children under 2 with parents; youth age 12 and up expected to join us at services*

OVER



- Children's education programming - *A portion of every membership supports and enriches our Children's Jewish Studies Program*
 - Adult education programming
 - Social/cultural events
 - Social Action Groups
 - Monthly Newsletter
 - Oneg Shabbats, Festival Celebrations and Social Gatherings
 - Saturday morning Torah Studies and/or study sessions
 - Administrator
 - DJC Eastminster office - *for Rabbi use and appointments with members*
 - **Access to and participation in a unique Jewish community** - no other group in Toronto is so uniquely dedicated non-affiliated and interfaith families.
- And more...*

CALLING ALL MENSCHES...!

Please consider making a contribution above the standard membership Fee. Your generosity is our main source of funding.

The Danforth Jewish Circle is a Registered Charitable Organization.

*

OUR VISION

We have come together to form a Jewish community here in Riverdale, one that reflects and responds to the spectrum of families and individuals that make up our vibrant neighbourhood.

While we cannot be everything to everyone, we will do our utmost to respect the diverse voices within our community. We all share, however, the following beliefs, which define us and unite us:

- We are inclusive and We are more than a religious community. Our Judaism has many facets: history, traditions, holidays, ethics, culture, spirituality, children, family and community.

OVER



- We are egalitarian. Women and men have equal status in our religious services.
- We are inclusive and represent a wide spectrum of individuals and families, including interfaith, multicultural and same-sex households. All of us are committed to nurturing Jewish life.
- We will be accessible to all who wish to participate in our religious and cultural events. Through translation, transliteration, discussion and education, our rich traditions will be explained.
- We are not affiliated with one movement within Judaism. We are a progressive alternative, keen to explore the scope of Jewish life and to discover what meets our needs

HISTORY

The Danforth Jewish Circle was created in the spring of 1996. A few dozen individuals gathered in a neighbourhood home and discussed a collective desire to build a community that reflected a common need to preserve Jewish traditions and culture while reflecting our contemporary lifestyles. While few of those present went to synagogue on a weekly basis, most of us shared a deep commitment to Judaism, a commitment that is often interpreted on a personal level but finds its greatest meaning when expressed collectively.

Shortly after the informal gathering in the spring of 1996 it was decided to hold a potluck Shabbat dinner in the basement of a local church (there being no synagogue in which to meet) to gauge the response to a Jewish community event. There was no formal publicity whatsoever. We relied entirely on word of mouth to help spread the word. We expected a few dozen curious souls, and were overjoyed when over 150 people showed up. Before long, committees were struck to tap into what we now knew to be a wellspring of desire. A monthly newsletter began to appear. A High Holiday service was organized. A community group was born.

From those humble beginnings the Danforth Jewish Circle has grown to the point where over five hundred individuals and families look to us to

OVER



meet their needs, whether it's a school for their children, a monthly Shabbat service to feed the soul, a Book Club that challenges the mind, or OVER – a place to gather each year for the High Holidays. In a few short years we have established ourselves as a community group with a long-term commitment to nurturing Jewish life in east-end Toronto.

VOLUNTEERS/ DJC STAFF

The Danforth Jewish Circle is organized and administered by a dedicated group of volunteers and staff. Volunteers are the very life-blood of the DJC. Volunteering provides the many extra hands and feet we need to run our programs, organize our events, and ensures our fees remain affordable. It is the combination of our dedicated staff and volunteers working together that make our community hum.

More information about our staff - part time rabbi, cantor, teaching and administrative; and our volunteer Board of Directors is available on our website: www.djctoronto.com.

**

OUR SERVICES



We hold all our High Holiday and monthly Rabbi led services in a local (Riverdale) church- Eastminster United (310 Danforth Avenue) - or “Bethminster” as we affectionately call it.

Once High Holidays are over, our Rabbi visits us monthly to lead a Friday Shabbat service, Saturday morning Torah session and various educational programs.

As well, we have monthly member-led services or “In-home” Shabbats graciously hosted by DJC members. A “veteran” DJC member leads the service followed by a friendly nosh and socializing. (It's a great way to meet members in a more intimate setting.)

OVER



All service dates, times and (home) locations are posted in our monthly newsletter.

If you're interested in hosting an in-home Shabbat, please e-mail us at info@djctoronto.com

CHILDREN'S JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

DJC JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

Established by parents in 1998, our children's Jewish studies program is designed and dedicated to providing our children with a positive Jewish experience, an understanding of their heritage and history, and a sense of belonging to a diverse community with a unique culture. Our objective is to ensure our students learn not just the "what" but the "why" with an emphasis on arts, music, culture and fun.

Our program values Judaism as a dynamic living religion. Certain themes and goals are integrated throughout all levels of our program. Our students learn to question what it means to be a Jew and how being Jewish affects our values, beliefs, and behaviour. Together, students and teachers will ask the question "Who am I?" and explore what a Jewish identity means personally, within the family, the Jewish community, and the community-at-large. A key component of the program is respect for the broad spectrum of multi-culturalism, which exists within Judaism. These issues will be explored through discussion and debate, music, drama, language, holidays, bible stories, Torah, and Jewish rituals, as well as, history and current events.

Our website has detailed program information with a curriculum overview: <http://djctoronto.com/explore/children.php>

To receive more information about our program, or to register your child (children) in our School, please contact our School directly by phone: (416) 580-1233 or e-mail: info@djctoronto.com.

OVER



For more information on our newly launched **B'Nei Mitzvah program** or our new **Whole Hebrew Language program**, e-mail: info@djctoronto.com

ADULT PROGRAMMING

The DJC is committed to nourishing the intellectual and educational needs of our community. We are responsive to our members needs and our programming is created by Board, member and Rabbi led initiatives.

DJC BOOK CLUB

After completing a very successful Speaker series, the DJC launched a Book Club in 2003 which continues to flourish to this day. Our format is informal with our locations in members' homes, each session facilitated by prominent community leaders. Meetings are structured focusing on the book's central themes prompting lively and passionate debates followed by an after discussion "nosh".

Our celebrated facilitators have included Elaine Newton, Derek Penslar and Cynthia Good.

Selections include:

- *The History of Love* by Nicole Krauss (January 15, 2008)
- *Lost in Translation* by Eva Hoffman (April 3, 2008)

**More information about our 2009/10 Book Club will be posted online by September 2009 by clicking on the link:*

<http://djctoronto.com/explore/education.php>.

SOCIAL/CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Through our Adult Programming committee, we've organized a wide variety of social/cultural events including weekend retreats, Israeli dancing, coffee houses, a challah workshop, movie night - our list continues to grow as members get involved and organized in planning these activities.

OVER



Our recent weekend retreat was enjoyed by 20 members at the Soyaha Yoga Retreat in Picton. Our members organized and led this retreat and it was a declared success! Many came home with a peaceful feeling and renewed energy which lasted beyond the weekend.

A challah workshop in January was a big hit, with many hands kneading, baking enjoying themselves and their families reaping the benefits of the afternoon workshop.

A coffee House and a movie night are on the agenda, but still in the planning stages. So, bring us your ideas, and let's get going!

COMMITTEES/GROUPS

DJC LISTENING CAMPAIGN

The Listenig campaign began in the Fall of 2006 with our then Rabbi, Eli Kukla. A core group of trained "listeners" (DJC members) heard stories from over 100 members about their personal connection to the DJC and their hopes for the future. The following is a short list of some of the themes and issues that have emerged from these conversations: *caring for aging parents, the environment, diversity issues, youth programs for DJC teenagers.*



We then organized house meetings with these themes as its focus. (A house meeting is a "relational conversation" between 8-12 people who sit down together to share their stories, concerns, and dreams around a specific theme or issue.) The goal of these meetings is to help build and strengthen a vibrant, caring community with the capacity to act on the needs and values of its members.

THE LISTENING COMMITTEE

The Listening committee is comprised of trained listeners who meet regularly through the year and work to support the various committees (as below).

OVER



We invite you to write to us if you would like to share your story - either new members or “veterans”- we welcome an opportunity to connect with you.

Please e-mail: info@djctoronto.com or call 416-580-6303.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

This committee continues to meet regularly and tackle aspects of diversity -interfaith dialogue within the community, gender & sexual orientation issues, race, class, ability, Israeli/Palestinian relations- and further narrow its focus for future actions and educational opportunities for all DJC members.

DJC YOUTH GROUP - DJCYG

For all teens amongst us (post B’Nei Mitzvah age to 17), this group currently has an active, growing membership among DJC youth and beyond! (Non-DJC member youth are also welcome.) If you want to know more about us or join our group, please e-mail: djcyouthgroup@gmail.com or go to our Facebook group: DJCYG.

COMMUNICATION

In order to reduce our carbon footprint, we communicate mostly by monthly newsletters or “e-zines”. We do a yearly mailing for High Holidays. We have a lively website which provides information as well as updated list of all events and activities. We continue to mail our news to a small group who don’t have access to e-mail.

CONTACT INFORMATION

DJC Administration: info@djctoronto.com phone: 416.580.6303

DJC Jewish Studies: info@djctoronto.com phone: 416.580.1233

Website: www.djctoronto.com

OVER



FUNDRAISING

The costs to develop and sustain all aspects of the DJC are significant. The Board of Directors is currently developing an aggressive fundraising plan by appointing a Fundraising Committee of the Board and any interested DJC member volunteers. This committee has direct responsibility for managing all fundraising initiatives including foundation and corporate funding, and special events. By organizing and developing an effective fundraising plan, we can ensure the long-term sustainability of our community group.

Please contact us if you want to contribute your time/skills in this area at: info@djctoronto.com.

SUPPORTERS

Special thanks go to Miles Nadal JCC (formerly the Bloor JCC), the Jewish Connection Partnership, the Jewish Outreach Institute (JCP/JOI) and the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto whose grants and partnerships have enabled our program to flourish and grow. Additionally we'd like to thank the many **Danforth Avenue Merchants** and Business people for their on-going support and generosity.

