



Annual Report 2020

Spirituality | Learning | Culture

Makom – meaning place in Hebrew – is an inclusive community fusing Jewish tradition and progressive values through spirituality, learning and culture. Makom inspires diverse participants to explore together how Judaism can meaningfully enrich our lives.

Programming

The first few months of 2020 were jam-packed with services and events as we welcomed hundreds of participants into Makom's cozy College Street storefront.



Embodied Movement workshop in January



Book launch in collaboration with Fentster art gallery in February

Bi-weekly soulful and song-filled Friday night services, followed by social kiddushes and delicious vegan Shabbat dinners, attracted many new and returning participants, especially young adults.

"Thank you for the wonderful sense of belonging which you create!" - Miriam

Programming

Early 2020 adult programs included:

- Weekly Torah study classes geared primarily for retirees
- Embodied Judaism movement workshop
- neySHEV weekly mindfulness meditation sits
- Monthly spirited Shabbat morning services and stimulating lunch 'n' learns
- Poetry writing workshop
- Interfaith couples' meetups
- Purim Megillah reading and games party with Toronto Partnership Minyan for 150 participants



Makom's family programming connects downtown Jewish parents and children to Judaism and each other.

Family programs in early 2020 included:

- Shabbat morning family service & lunch
- Purim puppet show & megillah reading for 200
- Tu biShvat celebration in Wychwood Barns together with community partners

Almost 250 programs in 2020: more than double last year's count!



Makom during Lockdown

With a global pandemic and increasingly strict local restrictions, finding ways to connect safely as a community became even more important. We launched a series of online events, all offered for free and supported by our generous donors. Between havdalah, meditation, Torah study, crafting, community check-in, and Kabbalat Shabbat services, we had **programs almost every day**.

Rabbi Aaron also provided pastoral counselling to those in need of emotional and spiritual support.



Rabbi Aaron drumming during a Zoom service

“Makom has done an amazing job of building and sustaining its community in the digital space.” - Sarah

Marking Holidays Online

In preparation for Pesach, we offered Rosh Chodesh Nisan services and a class on how to run a meaningful seder. We began weekly Israeli dancing classes on Yom Ha'atzmaut, celebrated Lag baOmer through a Zoom bonfire and singing, organized a Tikkun Motzaei Shavuot, held a Yizkor service after Shavuot, and studied texts about fasting for the Fast of Tammuz.



Rabbi Aaron practices physical distancing during the pre-Passover chametz sale

*“I enjoyed the learning enormously, thank you.”
- Arnie*



Restarting in-person programming

Beginning in July, as the Province relaxed public health restrictions, Makom began gathering safely in person, outdoors, with masks and physical distancing.

A downtown church graciously welcomed us to their quiet courtyard, where we met bi-weekly for joyous Friday night services and mourned the destructions of the Temple and other calamities of Jewish history on Tishah be'Av.



"[I enjoyed] being with the Makom community and experiencing the beautiful outdoors" - Eric

In the fall, we hiked the route of a now-buried creek that flows under the city, while learning about the natural, Indigenous, and urban histories of our place.

At Makom's storefront, volunteers and staff safely cooked a fresh, delicious, and nourishing take-out lunch for 75 people experiencing hunger in our neighbourhood.

We also continued our online offerings of two Torah study classes and two meditation sits each week.



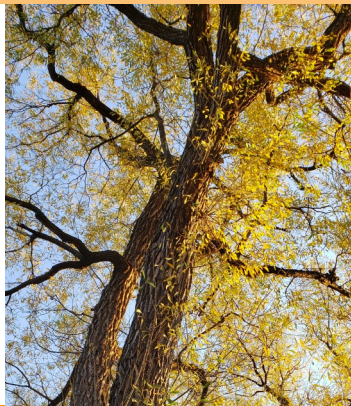
"Thank you for not disappearing!"



High Holidays

Challenged to provide uplifting, inspirational, and in-person Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services for over 200 community members during a pandemic, we offered 27 safe, outdoor services for smaller groups. Based in Christie Pits Park, our programs included traditional services, family services, meditation sits, Torah study, an interfaith couples' gathering, mindful chanting, and multiple shofar blowings for the broader downtown Jewish community.

"I loved being outdoors, the sense of togetherness, the joyful singing"



"An epic High Holiday season! I am beyond impressed with your creativity in identifying and implementing programming and solutions that met the needs of a diverse community, was inclusive, welcoming, traditionally observant, and prioritized the health and safety of our community members."

"Such 'ruach' right to the end!"

It was definitely a unique, meaningful, and memorable High Holiday experience for all, singing our hearts out for forgiveness and personal betterment in the eclectic atmosphere of a vibrant downtown park. We'll especially remember the pop-up rave happening nearby during Kol Nidrei!

"Thank you for making this possible. It meant a lot."



Makom Afterschool (2019-2020)

Makom Afterschool engaged 56 students from Junior Kindergarten through grade 4 in pluralistic Jewish learning and robust Hebrew language education two to three days a week. Beginning right after the school day ends and based in three public schools, Makom Afterschool is easily accessible to children who attend those schools and nine others nearby, from which we transport children.



Faced with a public school teachers' strike in February, Makom Afterschool organized full-day "Strike Camps," facilitating even more Hebrew and Jewish education for our students and child care necessary for working parents.



MAKOM AFTERSCHOOL
Jewish Learning Reimagined

When the global pandemic reached Toronto in March, Makom Afterschool pivoted quickly to online lessons without missing any classes. Weeks before public schools offered any online classes, our fantastic teachers were continuing our students' Jewish and Hebrew learning. Our online pre-Passover program for all students and their parents and

grandparents combined holiday songs, learning about the seder plate, and a theatrical retelling of the exodus. Despite the lockdown, Makom Afterschool ran online through June, providing our students with ongoing, caring, interpersonal connections with their teachers and peers at a time of great anxiety and uncertainty in their lives.

www.makomfamilies.org



Makom ATID

Makom ATID provides deep and meaningful Jewish learning and further Hebrew instruction to middle school students. Students have the option to enrol one or two afternoons per week, for Jewish studies only or for Hebrew as well. Students gain knowledge and understanding while also forming a community of downtown Jewish peers.

In the 2019-2020 school year, ATID's 15 students in grades 5 through 8 focused on mitzvot – Jewish ritual and ethical practices – and the diversity of approaches to Jewish life. Although ATID classes met after school at Makom's storefront, instruction migrated immediately online when schools closed due to the pandemic.



MAKOM ATID
Afterschool Torah Im Derekh-Eretz

For the 2020-2021 school year, grade 5 was moved to Makom Afterschool, as a better developmental and educational fit for students. Eight students in grades 6 through 8 are enrolled in ATID, which is operating online for the foreseeable future. The students are delving into more mature and nuanced understandings of Jewish holidays and the Torah's narratives, learning directly from primary Biblical and Rabbinic sources in online chavrutaot (study pairs), class discussions, and multimedia resources.

www.makomfamilies.org/b-mitzvah



Makom Afterschool Flex

The pandemic prevented us from returning to TDSB classrooms in September, and the difficulty of predicting the next few months made Makom leadership and parents alike reluctant to commit to an entire year of online classes.

Instead, we introduced Makom Afterschool Flex: a semester-based program providing online Hebrew and Jewish education to students in JK through Grade 5, individually or in pairs.

35

students enrolled

"We can see the effort and energy she puts into every lesson."

"We're really happy with the program so far. Both of my kids like it, despite the fact that it's "extra school"."

"Ours are loving the Flex approach so far, and so are we."

The Flex model enables us to make decisions about the upcoming semester several weeks (rather than several months) in advance, in accordance with the evolving public health situation. We look forward to returning to in-person classes when it is safe to do so.

www.makomfamilies.org/flex

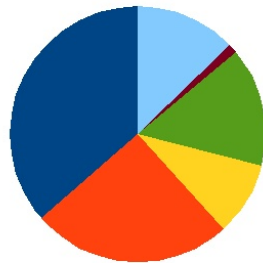


Financial Information

Fiscal Year 1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020

Revenue (total \$246,435)

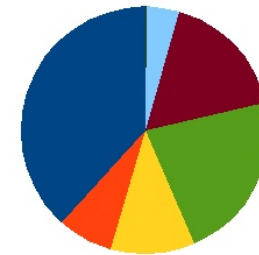
- Donations
- Membership/High Holidays
- Programs
- Gov't Covid Subsidies
- Other Income
- Overhead Contribution from Afterschool/ATID



Makom Community and Makom Families

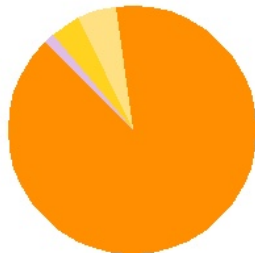
Expenses (total \$172,409)

- Program Staff
- High Holidays
- Other Programs
- Storefront Rent/Maintenance
- Admin
- Fundraising



Revenue (total \$198,157)

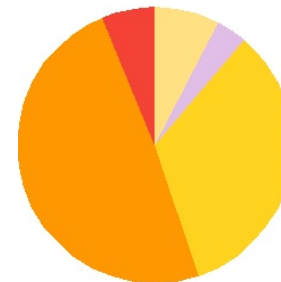
- Tuition
- Donations
- Grants
- Transportation Fees



Makom Afterschool and Makom ATID

Expenses (total \$199,270)

- Rent, books, and supplies
- Teaching Staff
- Director of Education & Managing Director
- Fundraising
- Makom Overhead



Makom relies on the support of our generous donors!
To give, visit www.makomTO.org/donate



Makom Leadership

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ari Kaplan
President

Alan Sless
Secretary

Barry Gang
Treasurer

Lily Ohana
Afterschool Liaison

Tae Hart
Caring Committee

Adina Gamse
Treasurer
(until March 2020)

STAFF



Rabbi Aaron Levy
Founding Rabbi



Adina Gamse
Managing Director
Since March 2020



Sorel Loeb
Director of Education

AFTERSCHOOL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

| Current Members | Until July 2020 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Evan Castel | Orrin Wolpert |
| Andrea Schaffer | Linor Gerchak |
| Bram Abramson | Sarah Zelcer |
| Sharon Levinas | Lily Ohana |

Alex Sipos-Kocsis
Managing Director
Until March 2020



David Fishbayn
Marketing Coordinator
April - September 2020



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**We look forward to
hearing from you!**

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