

1. What brought you to Edmonton? How long have you been here?

- Husband, 9 years
- Husband, 9 years
- Husband/work, 5 months
- Husband, 7 months
- Born here, 31 years
- Born here, 24 years
- Parents moved here, 32 years
- Husband/work, 4 years

2. How do you find Jewish community life generally?

- It's very compartmentalized depending on age. As a kid, there's always lots to do: high school has bbyo and ncys. There are lots of groups when younger. Hillel is kind of up in the air and disorganized or inactive at times. Now a lot of that stuff doesn't exist like young Judea formerly ran out of the JCC. The community is not as formal because there's no JCC for programs to run out of. Young adults are in the weird in between. If you're not married or don't have kids or are still in school, there's nothing to do. I grew up with a JCC so the division is by age to me.
- A lot of complaining about the lack of unity. There's not enough kosher stuff, restaurants, groceries. Nothing for young adults who want to find husbands/wives, they all leave to go and find mates. Sense of apathy.
- Unconventionally disorganized, it just is. No programming, lack of support.
- There's a huge disconnect. There are different sects and observances, but no common place to come together. That's what the JCC was. It didn't matter you went to the JCC. Now there's no unity. There's literally nothing here.
- I remember when [the JCC] was first built. My mom ran the shop. We had the teen lounge, aerobics, murals that we painted, speakers, community classes, and so on. That's the legacy with the names on the wall. It's gone, but now there's nowhere to see that history.

- When I came here I said I was so excited to see the JCC. My husband laughed and said not to get too excited. You know, I met my husband at a JCC. It was very hard to become a part of the community, I had to seek it out. As a new comer no one was saying welcome, we want you, connect with us. It wasn't a two way street. I even tried to get a job with federation and ended up with TT. It's so bizarre.
- Nothing to draw people here other than work or husbands working/living here.
- A student came up to me at U of A as I was hanging a Hillel poster, he asked, "You're Jewish? There's Jews here?" The school draws people here, but they need a reason to stay here.
- Really divisive. TT has it's people, each synagogue/organization has there's. That's why we need a JCC to bring everyone together.
- Even if the federation can't find them, there's nowhere to go that's unaffiliated. I don't have a desire to belong to a synagogue, but if there was a JCC I would support it and join it. I don't want to belong to Jaime platz. Now I'm more involved in the community because if have a kid at TT.
- We moved here to be part of a synagogue, but I hear a lot of complaining. I went to the TT Chanukah tots party and I was surprised at all the young families. I felt a little out of place and it shouldn't be like that.
- Somewhere for people to go to meet other families, other Russian/Israelis, etc. Currently, community events have to be at a synagogue, but then always have a religious tone, so not everyone feels comfortable.
- Sad. I'm from Winnipeg which is so vibrant. I'm used to that.
- Four of us moved here for our husbands who had great upbringing and memories growing up with the Edmonton JCC. They brought us here to have a family, to share that same experience, but now...
- Jews would have been screwed without a state of Israel. Having a JCC for our people, one place we can call home, brings legitimacy.

3. Thinking of your aspirations/expectations of community life, what would you like to see the community offer that would enrich your Jewish life? Do you see any challenges/barriers to realizing those aspirations?

**Please note, the answers below refer more to the challenges/barriers.

Attendees felt they had already answered the first part in question #2.

- Getting everyone to come together. To agree. Because we are segregated. Everyone being okay with a JCC and what it offers. Everyone being happy enough to use it. Everyone needs to leave egos at the door, come together, and do what's right for the community.
- We are growing exponentially. We have a mission to make Jews feel comfortable. Young singles feel the need to leave. We need something to keep or come back to singles here. That's our future.
- Perception needs to change. I think it's a great city, but people feel there's nothing to come back to.
- Where I come from it's easy to be Jewish. Restaurants, kosher stores, it's everywhere. Shouldn't have to search or order or even have to ask where I can get/find things. Make things more accessible. You just get frustrated and then give up.
- Money
- Land/location
- Cohesion.
- It feels like we're doing things for the elders, for Beit Horim downtown, but what about the younger people. What is the Jewish future in Edmonton. If I asked my grandmother, she'd say "I've lived a good life." And want us to focus on the younger generation.
- The biggest obstacle is always Jewish opinions. If we agree somehow the money will follow.
- I think the people who are in charge of making decisions have an older pessimistic view of Edmonton. Because the old JCC failed. Well, there are new, younger Jews and the needs have changed. Just because it didn't work before doesn't mean it won't/can't now. Get over the pessimism of the past. The formula for the last didn't work because of the building, the operators, etc. but that doesn't matter. Separate the past/future. Outdated thinking.

- It worries me that some members of the federation think with “I”s and individual agendas. The greater good of the community will be put aside for these agendas, which caused the downfall the first time.
 - Proper leadership and organization of appropriate programs
 - The community is lost. There’s no communication because everything is so secret. People don’t know what’s happening, but there are lots of rumors. I understand this is preliminary, but some people think it’s a dead issue and no money.
 - Federation needs to do more than send out a letter. I didn’t even know the Federation knew I existed, then I received the letter [November 22 communication about the Facilities committee, etc.] and was like “oh wow, I’ve made it on the list.”
4. What value might there be in having a central gathering place for the Jewish community, and what purpose(s) might it serve?
- Ground community, build community, bring longevity. People will come back and it will keep people here.
 - Provide a foundation for everyone
 - Meeting place
 - Life of the Jewish community depends on having a JCC
 - Edmonton is a fantastic place to live, be a kid, raise a kid ... I would come back if there was something to come back to. I want to come back. Make the community appealing and thriving.
 - Change four walls into a community