



## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2017 -2022 Schwartz/Reisman Centre (SRC)**

## **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2023-2028 Schwartz/Reisman Centre (SRC)**

### **Message from the Executive Director**

Inclusion is at the heart of our JCC's core values:

#### **Our Values:**

- **Belonging is everything** - We are passionate about building a welcoming Jewish community, committed to inclusivity, kindness, and respect for all people.
- **Wellness-Focused** - Our best self is one that includes our physical, mental, intellectual, creative, AND spiritual health and wellness.
- **People-Centered** - We maximize the potential of every individual by keeping the human experience at the centre.
- **Accountability** - We are accountable to the Jewish communities within which we live, work and play.
- **Evolve and Adapt** - We lead by example by being agile and willing to change accordingly within ever-shifting circumstances.

We are passionate about building a welcoming Jewish community, committed to inclusivity, kindness, and respect for all people.

At the JCC we respect and honour the unique gifts and strengths that each of us possesses. We emphasize the value, dignity and capabilities of every individual striving to offer every person the opportunity to participate in our JCC community and to contribute in a meaningful way.

We are dedicated to ensuring that dignity, integration and equal opportunities are embedded in all aspects of the JCC culture. We are committed to identifying, preventing and removing barriers -- in our facilities, programs and services -- as we work towards becoming a barrier-free JCC. We strive to create an inclusive and accommodating environment with opportunities for people with diverse abilities to connect, participate in programs, volunteer, work and feel a sense of community and belonging.

#### **Introduction**

The JCC is a unique not-for-profit community centre that meets people where they are and provides diverse pathways to belonging and engagement. By offering a wide range of programs and services we ensure that there is an entry point for every single community member to start their journey with us. We facilitate meaningful Jewish journeys by providing safe, non-judgmental spaces for people to develop and celebrate their Jewish identities over the course of their lifetimes. The JCC offers programs that support our community members in all stages of their lives, from infancy to the senior years. The JCC attracts Jews and non-Jews alike from every walk of life, and they enjoy equally the inclusive, welcoming, diverse environment shaped by Jewish values that defines the JCC. Programs include: Fitness Aquatics, Daycare, Camp, Cultural Arts, Visual Arts, Social, Recreational and

Educational Programming, Jewish Holiday Celebrations, Community Events, Sports Leagues and Sports Programs and more.

## **Section 1. Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers**

### **Customer Service 2017-2022**

**Customer Service** is provided in diverse ways to enhance accessibility to all – we have 3 in- person customer service stations at the SRC with staff well trained in providing customized and accessible service to all our members and guest who visit the centre in person. These customer service desks are covered by staff Monday through Sunday during all of our operating hours (5:30 am-10:00 p.m.). We make an effort to employ staff who speak Russian and Hebrew as many of our customers speak these languages and we wish to enhance their experience as much as possible. In addition, interested people may reach us by phone, email, mail, livechat via our website, and social media. We pride ourselves in being highly responsive and providing exceptional customer service.

Ongoing training in inclusive customer service provided to all front-line staff.

### **Customer Service 2023-2028**

**Customer Service** efforts continued as described above.

In 2023 we launched a new integrated Customer Management Relationship IT system through Club Automation which will provide better data and will enable us to track the trends and needs of our customer base.

In addition, the expertise of our Inclusion Services Manager is utilized by our sales and customer service staff when more complex issues arise. During covid an on-line booking app was introduced for programs which enable customers to book for programs and classes remotely. In-person and phone assistance with the app is provided by our front-line customer service staff. This app helps avoid disappointments regarding coming to a class and finding out it's full upon arrival. The app includes lane swim time and all aquatics and fitness classes.

### **Information and Communications 2017-2022**

**Information and Communications** with our customer base is frequent and varied. Our customers may opt-in to receive a weekly e-blast highlighting special events, programs and information. Important and time sensitive information is also communicated this way. In addition, notices of key information are posted at our Customer Service Desks and on doors to the Centre if required. Our program providers regularly connect with our customers via email, phone and in-person. We have a robust social media presence to connect with the community as well. If anyone request information in a format that is specific to their needs, we are committed to do so. During covid, while our facility was closed, we deployed our front line customer service staff to call and check in with our members to maintain connections and we offered virtual programming to maintain communications and connections.

### **Information and Communications 2023-2028**

**Information and Communications** continued as described above. In addition, we launched a new website in 2023 and it is AODA compliant.

### **Employment 2017-2022**

The JCC is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to fair and equal treatment of all our staff, volunteers and those who use our facilities and enjoy our services, including people with disabilities.

All Accessibility Policies of the JCC are available to our customers and staff. They are posted on our Health and Safety bulletin boards and on our website. Alternative formats are available upon request.

All Accessibility Policies of the JCC are included in our staff handbook and employment contracts and agreements. Accessibility training is a condition of hire and is elaborated upon during on-boarding and staff training.

All workplace information, including emergency information, job descriptions, employment manuals, and health and safety information shall be provided to an employee in an alternative form, if requested.

All job posts on our JCC websites and external recruiting sites include information that informs the public that the JCC will accommodate the needs of people with disabilities through all stages of the hire process.

In addition, on-boarding training, job training and talent and performance management are adapted where needed and where requested to accommodate staff with disabilities to afford them equal opportunities for career growth and development.

As well, employees returning to work from disability are catered to where possible with modified duties and/or adapted work space devices as reflected in their return to work transition plan and advised by their medical practitioners.

To aid **Employment** efforts we added a footnote to all our job posts – internal and external - that indicate we welcome all applicants and that accommodations during all phases of the hiring process will be made wherever possible. We also forged a relationship with the vocational counselor of the Reena program which runs on our campus. Reena is an organization that provides housing and programming for people with a diverse range of special needs. Through this partnership we were able to provide proactive meaningful paid employment opportunities to some of their program participants including in laundry, cleaning, and customer service. In fact, prior to Covid Reena twice honoured the SRC as an outstanding employer at their annual gala and we were proud to accept this award.

We also worked with various high schools and provided co-op positions for students with special needs in our daycare, programs, customer service and administration. We also worked with our employees who came to us via other sources who needed adaptations to either their work spaces, work equipment or work processes to provide them opportunities for gainful employment.

### **Employment 2023-2028**

Unfortunately Covid put the breaks on many employment initiatives. We were closed for several months and had to rebuild our membership base when we reopened with budget constraints. Thankfully 2023 has seen us back to normal hiring activity. Our partnership with Reena has not yet resumed but as suitable employment openings come up, we are open to resume collaboration again.

We are continuing with all the other employment practices cited above to break down barriers and provide accessible employment opportunities and remain open to all candidates who apply to work at the SRC. Particularly during and after covid we experience more staff with mental health challenges and we continue to provide individualized support and adapted work environments for those staff who need it.

We have a new partnership that began in 2023 and it is in its beginning stages. It is called VolunteerABLE in partnership with Holland Bloorview. The VolunteerAble program provides supported work experiences and employability skills training to individuals ages 14-21 years old with developmental disabilities and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder. The program combines workshop-style learning with hands-on volunteering opportunities at the SRC, promoting self-discovery of strengths and interests. As part of this program, participants will gain volunteer hours, try a variety of volunteer roles, learn more about their personal strengths and interests and learn more about what helps them do their best job (e.g. strategies, accommodations). We are hoping to have this program up and running by the end of 2024. Not only will it give valuable employment training experiences to the participants, it will afford us the opportunity to continue accessibility training with our managers and staff in all the departments who will be supporting these program participants.

### **Training 2017-2022**

It is a condition of hire and embedded in all our employment contracts – full time and part time contracts - that all staff have to read our AODA policy and sign off on it in our on-line digital onboarding portal and also view the online training videos provided by the government on making the workplace Accessible and Respectful. Here is an excerpt from our employment contracts:

#### **Accessibly for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

You acknowledge that you have viewed the online training videos and read our AODA Policy contained in the JCC All-Staff Handbook:

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-code-and-aoda>

In addition, as part of the onboarding process, HR and department managers lead new staff on a tour of the facility on their first day and as part of the health and safety and emergency protocols review, we also reinforce our JCC core values and discuss our policies and practices for creating an inclusive and respectful workplace. Department heads conduct additional training on customer service on a regular basis, especially for our front-line staff who deal with the public (sales, customer service, fitness, programs etc). Staff are trained for example to set up a room for a meeting or event to leave an open space(s) for people who may join using a wheelchair.

From time to time, we bring in speakers for our staff meetings who will highlight different aspects of inclusion such as LGBTQ+, mental health experts, people with disabilities and so on. We are also fortunate to have a full-time professional Inclusion Services Manager on staff who provides ongoing support, training and problem-solving to all our staff in various departments on an as needed basis.

### **Training 2023-2028**

We continue with all the training initiatives outlined above. In addition, in 2023 we launched a digital goal setting and performance review platform for our staff with mid-year and annual in-person reviews. The plan is to roll out a formal training and development component to augment

the talent management process by 2025. This will include further training on the required behaviours to be a successful JCC employee, which in turn includes respectful and inclusive attitudes and behaviours.

### **Design of Public Spaces 2017-2022**

The SRC opened July 2012 and was designed with optimal accessibility in mind. We have large doors with push buttons on all the main entrances and exits on the main floor and 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The building is easily accessible to wheeltrans and any other transportation or individuals coming to the centre with mobility needs. We have ample designated accessible parking spaces both above ground and underground. Specifically, on the surface level we have 88 parking spots and 8 designated accessible spots near the entrance. In the underground parking we have 320 parking spots and 10 designated accessible spots near the entrances.

We have an escalator as well as elevator taking people up to the main level and an elevator to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Our fitness centre also has an elevator dedicated only to patrons who need access to the gym floor and studios which are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level. We have ample accessible washrooms with push buttons. As well, our three swimming pools all have wheelchair accessible ramps and we have a specific pool wheelchair. We have a large atrium on the main level and very wide hallways and stairwells which makes it easy for people of all abilities to navigate as well join in community events that take place in the atrium. In addition, all 3 of our customer service counters were built with both high level and low level countertops to enhance accessibility for any customers who use a wheelchair or for employees who work behind the desk who may use a wheelchair. We have a large conference centre on the main level which is also completely accessible and inviting to all.

### **Design of Public Spaces 2023-2028**

All of the initial accessible design features outlined above still apply. In addition, in 2023 we opened two outdoor basketball and pickleball courts which are on the main level and accessible to all users. There two hockey arenas currently being built on the campus, scheduled to open 2025/6. They two will have accessible entrances and exits.

### **Other 2017-2022**

One of the unique features of our community centre is that we are not just accessible in physicality and policy but we actively curate programming for people with special needs. We have a department dedicated to curating Diversity and Inclusion Programs.

The Inclusion Services Team works with a Diverse Inclusion Task Force comprised of professional staff and community members with disabilities and their families to create a successful and meaningful experience at the JCC. Program needs, design, and curriculums are discussed to best meet the specific needs of participants.

The JCC welcomes people of all ages, genders, race, abilities, faiths and backgrounds and provides community-based recreational programs designed for individuals with different abilities and special needs.

Ensuring there is a good program fit is especially important in setting up participants for success. Prior to registration, parents/guardians are requested to fill out an assessment form and, for some

programs, take part in a 15–20-minute interview. During the intake process, additional information from other professionals may be requested.

Service animals and support people are welcomed where necessary. Accompanying support people and/or caregivers are not be required to pay entrance fees. This is an overview of our diversity and inclusion programs:

### **The Swim Program**

We are pleased to offer individualized swimming lessons tailored to the participant's specific needs. This unique program teaches fundamental swimming skills and water safety skills through a behavior-based approach in a safe and supportive environment.

Designed for children, teens and young adults (4-25 years old) with different abilities and special needs (including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Intellectual Disabilities, and others).

### **Multisport**

A perfect combination of Soccer and Basketball! The program will focus on fundamental concepts of sports in a fun and supportive environment. Children will work on dribbling, passing, catching, kicking, running and throwing while having a lot of fun and making new friends.

Our program is designed for children (6-15 years old) with different abilities and special needs (including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Intellectual Disabilities, and others).

### **FitGirls, Adaptive Fitness Sessions**

FitGirls is a girls-only teen adaptive fitness program that focuses on positive body image, self-esteem, confidence and girl empowerment! Our program is oriented towards individuals with different abilities and special needs (including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down's Syndrome, Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Cerebral Palsy, Intellectual Disabilities, and others).

### **Social Clubs and Outings**

A co-ed social group for young adults (18-30 years old) with different abilities and special needs (including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Intellectual Disabilities, and others). Adolescents who have difficulties dealing with group dynamics and social interactions will be given the opportunity to spend a social evening in a supportive environment with the guidance and supervision of trained staff. Outings will take place in a recreational setting, once or twice a month.

Activities may include:

Bowling

Karaoke

Rock Climbing

Laser Tag

Board Game Cafe

Movie

### **Yoga**

Yoga Cares will provide opportunities to increase flexibility and balance, promote coordination and strength of body and mind, increase focus, concentration and cultivate positive self-esteem. Classes include elements of movements, mindfulness, and breath awareness. The program is designed for young adults (18+ years old) with different abilities and special needs (including Autism Spectrum

Disorder, Down's Syndrome, Learning Disabilities, ADHD, Cerebral Palsy, Intellectual Disabilities, and others).

### **Centre Camp - Inclusion Program**

The Jack and Pat Kay Centre Camp philosophy is to create a memorable camping experience for children of all abilities. Camping is a wonderful social experience and at The Jack and Pat Kay Centre Camp we recognize and celebrate how special and unique we all are! Our engaging, fun, enthusiastic and dynamic program is designed to ensure everyone is successful and enjoys everything our day camp offers. We are committed to create a safe and welcoming environment in order to promote each camper's growth, independence and self-confidence.

**Our goal is to offer all campers a joyful and integrated summer experience. The level of support for each camper will be determined based on their individual needs.**

**For campers that requires additional support, we try our best to provide one-on-one support at no additional cost**

In addition, every February is dedicated to **JEWISH DISABILITY AWARENESS, ACCEPTANCE AND INCLUSION MONTH (JDAIM)**. This is a unified effort among Jewish organizations worldwide to raise awareness and foster inclusion of people with disabilities and those who love them. Activities include light up the SRC in blue, staff wearing blue JDAIM shirts, showcasing art and music by our talented program participants and other unique events.

### **Other 2023-2028**

Our Diversity and Inclusion department continues to grow. Currently it has over 100 participants with over 20 part-time staff providing customized tailored programming. Our goal is to continue advocating for space and funding to expand this reach over the coming years.

In addition, our other departments in the SRC such as our Daycare and Supplementary Hebrew Schools develop Individual Education Plans and provide support to our children with special needs who require support to be able to integrate and benefit from their respective programs. Our Daycare works with the City of Vaughan to access funding from the RISE program which provides for 6 hours of additional classroom support to provide one-on-one support to children identified with a special need. They also provide access to multi-discipline experts who provide training to the teachers how to adapt the classroom and program so all children enrolled can thrive.

Lastly, in 2023, our Fitness department was thrilled that their work with the Government of Canada's Community Services and Recovery Fund enabled the SRC to purchase of new innovative equipment for those with special needs to promote wellness and fitness. This new adapted equipment is integrated into the equipment on the fitness floor and provides for an integrated and inclusive experience for any people who wish to use it. Our fitness personal trainers are also trained on how to guide patrons using this adaptive equipment in a safe and beneficial way.

### **Section 2. Strategies and Actions**

The SRC is continuously working to increase accessibility and meet all levels of conformance and guidelines in accordance with the AODA. As an agency we are committed to continue to work toward improving accessibility. We are committed to identifying, preventing and removing barriers in our facilities, programs and services. Specific initiatives planned include:

## **Customer Service**

In 2023 we launched a new integrated Customer Management Relationship IT system which will provide better data and will enable us to track the trends and needs of our customer base. The goal is by the end of 2024 to provide regular monthly data analytical reports to our department heads which will drive decisions on how to provide enhanced customer service.

As well, the JCC senior management is working with an external consultant on strategies to develop an enhanced integrated customer service connection between our front-line service staff and our program staff to ensure that all our customers needs are met, including program room set up and other logistical considerations. The goal is to have the strategy in place by the end of 2024 and to implement in 2025.

## **Information and Communications**

To date, we have not had any requests to provide communications in an alternative form from the ones we do provide, but we remain attentive and open to any requests.

The JCC conducted an extensive communication campaign with our community in 2022 ahead of preparing our JCC strategic plan 2022-2026. More than 8,000 people were communicated with through a mix of on-line surveys, focus groups and one-on-one meetings. The survey questions explored a wide range of issues including but not limited to, current relationship and engagement with the JCC, barriers to use or membership, perceptions of the JCC and a deeper dive into the customer experience.

This exercise will be repeated in 2026 to gauge how we have done since then and to inform our next strategic plan. Until then we have ongoing communications and department specific surveys and in-person consultations with our customers and are always looking for ways to hear from the community we serve.

## **Employment**

Training for the new VolunteerABLE program in partnership with Holland Bloorview. Began in 2023. Our goal is to have participants in the JCC by July 2024.

We are looking to expand our Diversity and Inclusion department by one more full-time coordinator position which shall expand the reach and impact of this vital department within our JCC. A job post is currently circulated and we hope to fill this position by July 2024.

All jobs at the JCC are posted in public forums such as Indeed, LinkedIn, Work In Culture, our websites etc. We continue to commit to an inclusive approach to hiring.

## **Training**

We are looking to raise funds and allocate funds to a dedicated training and development division of our HR department by July 2025. This will allow us to provide more training opportunities on numerous topics including diversity and inclusion.

## **Design of Public Spaces**



The campus is currently under construction to add two new hockey arenas scheduled to open in 2025/6. The parking for this venue has been completed and the new outdoor field is under construction in front of the Kimmel Family Education Centre. This is scheduled to be completed by July 2024 in time for summer camp. Construction is managed by the Campus not the Schwartz/Reisman Centre who is a tenant on the Campus/

## **Other**

Plans to offer programming to our members and guests with special needs continue. Growth of these programs is dependent upon the need in the community and enrollment. Where there is both, we will continue to advocate internally for space in our pools, gyms and program rooms to expand the program offer. This is a collaborative effort between the community members and the JCC.

For more information on this Accessibility Plan, please contact:

Jeanette Hyde, Director of Human Resources, 905-303-1821 ext. 3046 [jeanette@srcentre.ca](mailto:jeanette@srcentre.ca)

Karina Kiler, Manager of Diversity and Inclusion 905-303-1821 ext. 3042 [karina@srcentre.ca](mailto:karina@srcentre.ca)

If you require this document in an alternative format, please reach out to Jeanette Hyde or Karina Klier. Current formats are available on our website, via email, via phone, or in-person.

This Multi-year Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least every 5 years.

This Multi-year Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least every 5 years. The Plan shall be prepared by the HR Director and Inclusion Services Manager and reviewed and signed off by the VP of Programs.