

# LIPC Newsletter

*London Interfaith Peace Camp Initiatives*

## *In This Issue:*

**Campers and Counsellors:  
Sharing LIPC Stories**

**Walter Zimmerman:  
Celebrating Rosh Hashanah**

**Some 'How To's and Did you  
Know...'**

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## **"We are Thankful"**

We cannot believe that it has been just over a month since our campers and counsellors headed back to school learning either in-class or virtually from home. We hope you are well and adapting to the new academic year. Please know we are thinking of you. In this issue, we want to share some stories from our time together this summer! This month, we reflect on how thankful we are for all of you. We continue to learn from one another each summer during camp and at different times throughout the course of the year. Many Blessings.

# Sharing LIPC Stories



In April, I was informed that we would be unable to hold any of our regular camp activities in person at King's. Although I was saddened by the thought of not seeing the team or the campers in person, I knew that LIPC's role of bringing together communities would not fail in a time like this. Our challenges were greater than ever before: the logistics of running a virtual camp, creating a camp environment on a screen, converting our programming to a virtual form, and the list goes on. But these new challenges were no match for our team. The team's dedication combined with the commitment from our campers, counsellors, and communities, supported the translation of LIPC 2020's message and activities to a virtual format, leading to its success.

*Written by Nevia Frank, Assistant Coordinator of LIPC*



*"We are enjoying Peace Camp! You and your team are making it so interactive and fun, and we are learning so much. Thanks for all of your efforts - I know it must be challenging to run the camp in such a different format!"*

*LIPC Camper Charlie and family*

I started peace camp when I was in grade 4. Since then, I've always loved learning about other religions and cultures. In the summer of grade 8, I became a camp counsellor. It was easily my favourite year at peace camp, and I even completed more than the required volunteer hours while camp only lasted for five days! I've always loved watching kids enjoy themselves and having the most fun in their lives. Peace Camp was the greatest place to achieve this, even during a pandemic this summer. Thank you, London Interfaith Peace Camp! *Written by Ali, Camp Counsellor*



# Celebrating Rosh Hashanah



Hello Peace Campers and Families! Maija asked me to write a bit about how the recently ended Jewish High Holy Days played out during this year of Covid-19. After spending so much time with all of you on Zoom this summer, it probably won't surprise you to learn that in spite of desperately wanting to be together with our synagogue's members, family, and friends. We, at Temple Israel, were forced to take the safe path and pray and "meet" together on small screens during this most important time on the Jewish calendar. The year 5781 on the Jewish calendar, which traditionally counts years from the Creation of the World, begins with Rosh Hashanah which literally means the "Head of the Year" but usually translates as Jewish New Year. This year, it began on the evening of Friday, September 18th and nothing - not a pandemic, not a hurricane (and there was a famous one in 1900 right before Rosh Hashanah in Galveston, Texas, which killed 6,000 to 10,000 people,) not anything else - can change this timing. You can't just postpone it until the next spring or cancel it like an award ceremony or a baseball or theatre season. Rabbi Debra and a committee at Temple Israel began making alternative plans as soon as it became obvious that in-person religious services would not be possible this year, even six months in the future. Our congregation consists of about 120 families and includes many older people and even if our government had not banned large gatherings, our many older members would have faced serious health risks had we met in person to pray.

So, just like the Peace Camp organizers, we spent countless hours reimagining how to provide meaningful services and observances. It was decided early on to pre-record our choir's beautiful melodies, one voice at a time, and merge them together with software. As a long-time choir member, I can say that this year, I rather enjoyed how much more relaxing it was just to be able to be an ordinary congregant when it was time for the musical portions of the services.

# Celebrating Rosh Hashanah



Rabbi Debra also asked me if my family and I would read the Torah portion in Hebrew and chant the blessings surrounding these readings. It was a great honour that my wife and I and our children and grandchildren in both London and Los Angeles were able to make those video recordings. In all, it was a very different way to observe these most important of the Jewish Holy Days but not necessarily a less than ideal way. As an added bonus, it also allowed people who would normally be shut-ins to attend, another benefit of virtual services.

Each of our services requires a prayer book so several days before Rosh Hashanah were set aside for members to drive to Temple Israel, properly masked, to pick up the books, called Machzorim. In addition, each family received a traditional round challah and a bottle of apple cider, flavoured with honey, since apples and honey are traditionally eaten together at this season to symbolize a sweet New Year. This was another lovely unexpected benefit. Thank you, Rabbi Debra, for providing these treats.

In summary, would we have chosen this way to welcome the New Year? Probably not. But did it work out well? I think many would agree that it did. We pray that next year will not still require services via Zoom and FaceBook but if they are necessary, we are going to be ready.

Peace, Salaam, Shalom. *Written by Walter Zimmerman. LIPC Adult Volunteer*



# How to...get involved in the London Community



"Each year, LIPC takes part in the Interfaith Tree Planting initiative with Reforest London in the fall months. There are many opportunities that are coming up. Check out their website in how you can get involved.

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/fall-2020-tree-planting-events-tickets-125226322301>

If there are other interfaith initiatives that YOU want to share with us that are happening in London, make sure to let us know!

## DID YOU KNOW....

...this month is Rabi' ul Awwal in the Islamic Calendar. It is a very special month since Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was born in this month in Mecca. Muslims around the world celebrate his birthday from 570AD.

