

Employment | Family | Immigration



We care | We carry on



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ometz

Annual Report 2008-2009

AGENCE OMETZ

Ometz = Courage

A community of services...for life

Who we are:

Agence Ometz is a Jewish human services agency providing employment, immigration and social services to help people meet their challenges and fulfill their potential, and to secure the growth and vitality of the Montreal Jewish community.

What we do:

Agence Ometz provides access to a range of high quality services, supports, resources and tools to help children, individuals and families:

- > Become strong, healthy and resilient;
- > Connect to the Montreal Jewish community in a meaningful way; and
- > Integrate more fully into society at large.

How we do it:

We offer accessible and culturally sensitive services founded on Jewish values including:

- > Advocacy on behalf of our clients' needs;
- > Employment services to help clients become and remain economically self-reliant and productive;
- > Immigration services to facilitate the lawful entry of Jewish refugees and immigrants into Québec and to advance their integration into the Jewish and broader communities; and
- > Preventive, therapeutic, educational and financial services and supports to assist the most vulnerable.

Our promise:

- > To treat every individual with respect and compassion;
- > To deliver personalized, confidential and responsive services.



President & Executive Directors Message

One year later - finding our voice



Mitch Shiller
President

Dear Friends,

Merger + one year – so how are we doing? We are confident that we are doing well.

A merger of three agencies in any year would be a daunting challenge. Just to make it really interesting, we chose to launch Ometz, unknowingly, on the cusp of a global economic crisis. This in turn led to a reduction in our funding over the past 18 months of nearly \$500,000.

When life handed us lemons – Ometz quickly learnt how to make lemonade. Crisis offered us a unique opportunity – the chance for our new management team and our new board of 21 passionate volunteers to find their collective voice. The Ometz response – united and developed by way of consensus – spoke on behalf of all the clients, programs and stakeholders that we represent in the areas of employment, family and immigration services.

While we had predicted that the ability for Ometz to speak for all three areas of service would be one of the significant benefits of the merger, we did not anticipate experiencing this so soon after our merger. Yet when cost cutting became inevitable and prioritizing services and programs imminent, we did what we had to do. We quickly developed the evaluation tools that allowed us to identify our core competencies and to prioritize them. This was a major achievement and a key bonding experience for the board and management. We responded with confidence, with credibility, and in **one voice**.

Our prophetic tradition teaches us that revelation and understanding comes from the 'still small voice'. In the Book of Kings I, the prophet Elijah is in the desert, where he has traveled 40 days and 40 nights, until he reaches the base of the mountain of God. He witnesses the following: "A great and strong wind cracked the mountain and shattered boulders, but God was not in the wind. And after the wind there was an earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire, but God was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still small voice" (IK 19:11-12).

Initially our merger was loudly heralded as a new and bold approach (read – wind, earthquake, fire). Yet it is the still small voice we heard thereafter that led us to learn how to integrate three cultures, negotiate three ways of doing business and to speak in unison – quietly, effectively and with purpose.

The still small voice is our measure of success in yet another way, as it is also represented by the sounds of silence. In other words, we are encouraged by what we have not heard this past year – complaints from our clients that service has suffered; resistance from our staff that change has not been managed well; or objections from our volunteers that they have not been sufficiently engaged. On the contrary, as you read through this annual report we believe you will learn that while much has changed, at Ometz it has also been largely business as usual.

None of this could have been possible without the strong commitment of our board members, our lay volunteers, our staff and our major partners - FEDERATION CJA, Centraide, Emploi Quebec and the Ministère de l'Immigration et Communautés Culturelles. Your vote of confidence and your ongoing commitment is what allowed us to continue to respond to over 13,000 requests for service this past year.

Finally, you probably want to know how an agency can lose \$500,000 in funding, maintain services and not terminate staff. It takes dedication and creativity and lots of hard work. It was achieved in a number of ways. We explored every opportunity of generating revenue by charging for service wherever possible. We ramped up our fundraising efforts. But mostly we achieved our cost savings through the willingness of dedicated staff to accept new responsibilities when positions were closed through attrition.

No one lost a job and no client was denied service. We are very proud of that record.

Based on this first year of learning, we look forward with hope, with confidence and with clarity of purpose.

Shana Tova! Happy New Year!

m. shiller, g. small, howard berger



Gail Small
Co-Executive Director



Howard Berger
Co-Executive Director

Why did we merge?

For the benefit of people like Sonia.....

Sonia, a chartered accountant, arrived in Canada from Uruguay in 2004, after meeting handsome and successful Jonathan, who was vacationing there that winter. They married after a whirlwind romance, and by the time they moved to Montreal, she was pregnant with her son. Almost immediately, Jonathan became verbally, emotionally and physically abusive. He effectively isolated her by not allowing her to learn the language and restricted her from making friends. She was trapped by her isolation, her need to provide a home for her son, and the fact that her husband was the one who sponsored her to remain in Canada. He threatened to withdraw the sponsorship, have her deported and keep their child.

It took time, but Sonia began to explore what was possible. She came to community, spoke to Ometz's Immigration specialists, and eventually was able to leave the family home. She stayed at community shelters, including ASTEH, the joint JWI and Ometz project, and was assisted in filing for her landed immigration status on humanitarian grounds. Sonia has since taken French courses at night at Ometz, and participated in workshops to help develop her resume and interview skills. She now works at a financial institution in a position that was identified by her Employment Counsellor. Her son Mark was subsidized to attend two months of day care this past summer, and is currently enrolled in a Jewish day school. Her case worker continues to provide the support and resources she needs to help her get stronger and establish her life.



A community of services...for life

Social Services

Individuals and families in our community continued to benefit from our expertise in social services and support programs even as we transitioned through our first year as a merged agency. Traditional programs like crisis intervention, social service supports, financial assistance, mental health services and volunteer services continued to enrich the lives of our community.

We were also able to introduce a series of exciting new programs including the following:

Maximizing Youth Potential – designed to break generational poverty by enhancing academic success;

TASSI – an online information and support for Jewish community youth developed, designed and managed by young people;

Food initiatives – to assure access to nutritional resources and information - Good Food Box, Jewish Day School nutrition program, Kosher Meat discount program;

Foster Home outreach project (in partnership with Batshaw Youth and Family Services) – to identify and educate the community about the need for foster homes for Jewish children.

Outreach to the Orthodox Community on mental health issues resulted in a series of workshops in partnership with Ahavas Chesed.

This year

We served

614 camp scholarships
2,200 financial assistance
160 mental health services
1,830 intake
115 special needs subsidies
200 volunteers

Clothing Give-away

This year, close to 500 children from low-income families ushered in the long-awaited summer season wearing brand new clothing. In partnership with the Young Adult Division of FCJA, we organized our 8th Clothing Give-Away event. Once again, Sam Segal of Total Kids Wear made this event possible by generously donating clothing for hundreds of children. This year, manufacturers such as AC12, Adorable Kids, Doris Hosiery and LaSenza Girl also joined the cause.



Immigration

New immigrants particularly benefited from the close working relationship that developed between immigration, employment and social services. Our new centralized intake

dealt with these cases more efficiently. One interview now replaces the earlier multiple steps that these clients used to experience, as our approach is more holistic and responsive.

This year **We served**

- 291 pre-migration counseling
- 567 settlement
- 117 language courses
- 218 info sessions
- 322 trips
- 275 social & integration activities

Clear Speech

An English Pronunciation Program for non-native English speakers in order to acquire clear language speaking skills, so important for job interviews, and general communication.

What would April be without a **Tax information** session? We held one of the sessions in Russian, which was much appreciated!

Sunday At the Artz

Exploring language and Jewish themes through art provided children, with art, photography and drama as mediums for looking at Jewish holidays, family life and language acquisition. This program was realized in partnership with the YMYWHA.

Integration Activities

We travelled to the Festival du Chocolat in Bromont, The Ottawa Annual Tulip Festival & attended a Café Céramique activity.

Our **Women's Club** enjoyed an evening at Ernie's and Ellie's for a Passover cooking class and had a wonderful spa evening, "Être belle", held at Avanti.

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Employment & Business Center

In our first year as the Employment & Business Centre of Ometz we continued our leadership role in helping people secure their economic future through employment counselling and job placement. As always we welcomed new immigrants, people with disabilities, university graduates, mature workers and others of all ages and backgrounds.

The ProMontreal Entrepreneurs program (PME) celebrated its 10th anniversary. Due to the economic downturn, an increasing number of seasoned business people looking for work were referred from the Employment department. In response PME developed the Matrix program bringing together downsized managers with business mentors to brainstorm, develop and implement new businesses.

This year

We served

Employment - Job seekers

- 367 immigrants
- 867 young adults
- 365 mature workers
- 136 people with disabilities
- 178 career counseling

2,923 employers

Entrepreneurship

- 171 entrepreneurs
- 40 mentorship matches
- 238 youth challenge
- 71 workshops

The impact of the economic downturn brought to light a new category of job seeker broadly defined as 'the new unemployed'. These are professionals, managers and business people whose companies were forced to downsize. This group also includes small business owners, retirees and independent consultants, many who are seeking a job for the first time in their lives. To help this group we created a 'Cocktails & Conversation' event bringing employers and job seekers together by means of a revolving table exchange that maximized the exposure of the job seekers to multiple employers in a relaxed setting. We also launched a campaign for job generation based on a partnership with community business leaders and local synagogues.

The merger worked as we hoped it would. Our employment counsellors now collaborate more efficiently with our Social Services department to address the pressing needs of our most financially vulnerable clients as well the clients from our mental health program.



Mazel Tov!

PME Fund

The PME Fund celebrated its 10th year anniversary of loaning funds to aspiring entrepreneurs. To date, there are 20 funded businesses with a gross volume of annual sales in 2009 of more than \$12.2 million employing 81 community members.

A community of services...for life

Schools Services

This past year the School Services department continued to enrich the quality of school, family and community life by offering specialized services to early childhood and daycare centres, pre-schools, elementary, and high schools throughout Montreal.

Educators, mental health and guidance professionals benefited from professional development and networking opportunities.

Parents benefited from assessment and counseling services and participated in parenting workshops and Parlour groups.

Students benefited from skill building opportunities, speech and OT assessments, interactive group programs, crisis intervention and career counselling.

The merger enabled the development of a close collaboration between Career Counseling, Immigration Services, Counselling Services and School Services, underlining the importance of treating children holistically.

Counselling Services

The role of a family agency historically includes counseling services directed to individuals, to couples and to families. The merger integrated services to children and families within our counseling services. The Montreal community now benefits from a host of counselors, psychologists, drama/art therapists, specializing in the following areas, amongst many others:

Parenting challenges

Separation and divorce

Violence

Loss and Bereavement

This year

We served

1,320 students – school counseling services

2,700 students – speech and occupational screenings

1,500 students – prevention groups

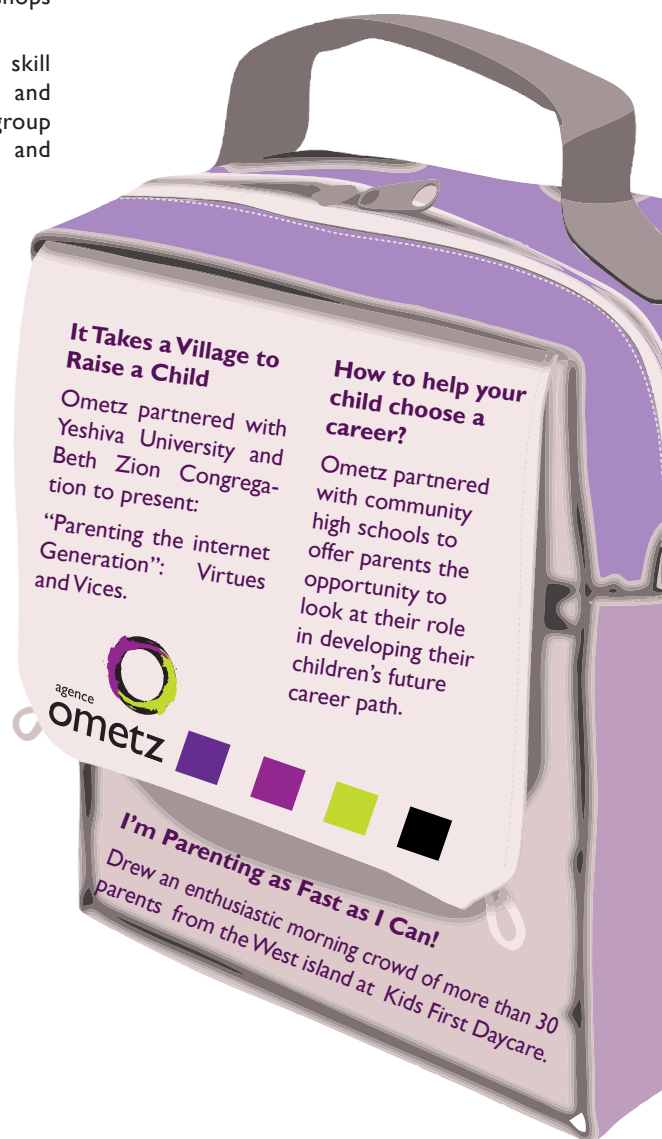
55 psychological assessments

70 daycares, elementary schools and high schools

310 parents in parlour groups

242 families in counseling

226 children/families interactive play therapy





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Dr. Benjamin Burko

A well known Montreal pediatrician, animated a very informative evening of questions and answers for parents of Pre-School children.

Parlour Groups

310 parents met monthly in small groups in each others' homes to support and enhance their parenting strategies. This program has been in existence for over 10 years and continues to grow.



**Workshop with
Carol Kranowicz**

Ometz partnered with Rich Rewards and The Unicorn Foundation to bring Carol Kranowicz, author of "Catching Kids Before they Fall". 180 people attended the all day workshop on Sensory Processing Disorder, to help children who have difficulty reacting effectively to everyday sensations in their homes and classrooms.

**Conference with
Dr. James Garbarino:**

Sponsored by the Sharon Steinberg project, this conference on "The New Adolescent" was an opportunity for some 200 parents and 100 professional staff to learn about the latest research on a challenging stage of child development. Dr. Garbarino highlighted the importance of strength based practice and asset accumulation as part of our assessments and work with clients. He focused on the importance of understanding "context", as we set goals for our work with clients and communities.

A community of services...for life



Training Department

As the economic downturn challenged our community; Ometz launched a new training center.

The Ometz Training Center provided support, guidance, skill building and job search techniques to candidates whose numbers have exceeded those of prior years. Corporate clients accessed our technical training department; in some cases to increase the skill sets of their declining workforce as well as to maximize their current staff output. Organizations benefited from our Professional Development Programs in Communication, Customer Service, Networking, etc.

In our goal to integrate new immigrants, the Ometz Training Center worked closely with Social Services and Immigration to design workshops and programs to meet their needs; for example, Understanding the Montreal Job Market. These workshops are an extension of the integration activities taking place for new immigrants. In this way, the merger has resulted in successful cross departmental planning that benefits our clients.

This year

We served

2,039 individuals through training & workshops

Training programs have been created to meet the needs of Ometz's diverse clients. Our Transitions Program, an employability program developed in partnership with Ministere de l'Education - Social Integration Services for Adult Education, is a response designed for those who have been out of the workforce due to individual challenges or who have had difficulty sustaining employment. This program helps participants build confidence in their ability to succeed and acquire the skills necessary to move forward. A job club as an adjunct to the Supported Employment program provides a daily structure and group style approach to job searching reducing isolation and increasing productivity.

Testimonial

"I came to Ometz at a very difficult point in my life. I had been laid off of my job where I was employed for over 20 years. As part of my severance package, I was entitled to counseling at an outplacement company. Unfortunately, their methods and values did not suit my needs. They were extremely aggressive and made me feel as if there was no hope unless I did things their way. A friend as well as a family member told me about Ometz. I started by attending Tracey Greenberg's 'Networking Club' and then attended her workshops on various job-search subjects. What I liked best about the approach at Ometz is that every participant is an individual. Tracey tailored her advice to each of us and never tried to force her opinion on anyone.

It took me about a month to begin my job search and then I only started to be called for interviews after nearly two months. I followed all of Tracey's advice in preparing for interviews such as researching the company, dressing appropriately, being myself and sending a thank you note. All this paid off! I was hired at the end of April and am enjoying my job. Ometz was like a port in a storm for me and I appreciate their valuable assistance. LB"



We wish to express our gratitude to the following **major funders** for their enduring confidence and support

Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal
Harry Baker Holdings Inc.
Centraide of Greater Montreal
Donald Berman Foundation

Emploi Québec
EJLB Foundation
FEDERATION CJA
Future Electronics Inc.
Gustav Levinschi Foundation

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Joel & Marlene King
Kruco Inc
Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles

Public Health Agency of Canada
Sharon Steinberg Foundation
Totalkidswear

With the generosity of individuals, families and corporations, we are able to provide vital programs to the community.

5,000+

CIBC World Markets Children's Miracle Foundation
Estate of Alexander Dworkin
Jewish Community Foundation of Montreal
Michael Szpilberg & Marlene Parkinson
SNF Quebec Metal Recycle (FNF) Inc.
Ville de Montreal

2,000-4,999

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Norman King
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Susan Orenstein Little
Saul Rose
Soft Voyage
Tides Foundation

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Nathalie Elkesslassy
Robert Hecht
Ruth Karpman
Richard King
Davina Mill
David Rubin
Richard Rubin
Dr. Naomi Stein
Mireille & Murray Steinberg

500-999

Kathy Assayag
George Fanaberia
Mizrachi Organization of Canada
Solgusta (1977) Inc.
Stan Zack

100-499

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Vivian Ullman Cohen
Vaad Mishmeres Mitzvos
Richard Vineberg
Lilian Wasser
Jennifer Wise
Dr. Martin Wise

Statement of Operations

For the year ended March 31, 2009

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
Revenues		
Federation CJA	2,792,974	2,707,481
Fee for service	1,022,277	1,265,900
Government grants*	622,474	569,152
Operation Montreal	332,330	312,465
Centraide	320,000	320,000
Donations	346,498	243,136
BDH Community Foundation	200,000	378,000
Interest	5,206	13,777
Total revenue	5,641,759	5,809,911
Expenditures		
Programs		
Salaries and benefits	3,793,426	3,911,475
Contract professionals	341,879	327,096
Activity expenses	376,505	471,442
	4,511,810	4,710,013
Administration		
Salaries and benefits	990,28	826,604
Office and general	186,509	111,015
Marketing	60,840	72,158
Insurance	47,149	57,455
Professional fees	12,218	28,662
Amortization of capital assets	34,163	37,923
	1,331,162	1,133,817
Total expenditures	5,842,972	5,843,830
Excess of expenditures over revenue	(201,213)	(33,919)



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	2009	2008
	\$	\$
* Government grants		
Emploi Quebec	316,385	315,840
PANA	84,072	72,937
PSOC	68,093	58,762
HRSDS	48,565	26,390
Health Canada	44,235	43,530
PILI	12,232	7,642
Other grants	48,892	44,051
	622,474	569,152