



# Free Loan

## M A T T E R S

Spring - Passover 2008 / Nisan - Pesach 5768

A Publication of Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa

### Leah's Story

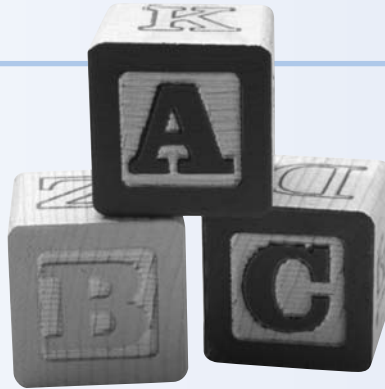
#### You Helped Me Build a New Life

I contacted TJFLC five years ago when everything in my life seemed about to fall apart. I was distraught in every way – financially, emotionally, physically and spiritually. Everything was out of place for me as the result of the breakdown of my marriage.

I was battling through an ugly divorce, trying to deal with a lot of pressing financial issues. My car had a broken heater and I couldn't afford to fix it, so I kept blankets on the back seat to keep my kids warm. My ex cut off everything – heat, phone, cable, internet – all without letting me know. Creditors were calling our home day and night. I had children, who needed my strength and support, and I had important bills to pay but I really had no money.

I knew a little bit about Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa's application process and the need for guarantors. I wasn't sure if it was right for me, but I was desperate. Once I started TJFLC's application process, everything moved right along. Yes, perhaps the process of asking my friends and family to act as my guarantors was a little awkward because I am a very private person, but once everyone agreed and all of the forms were signed, it was all very quick.

I returned to the TJFLC office to hand in my signed application, guarantor forms and supporting documents, and then waited for my Tuesday evening interview. The two people who interviewed me were nice and understanding during what was a very difficult situation. I was nervous about how I was presenting myself, and I hoped they would have compassion for my family. I was so grateful the next day when I was told that my loan was approved! It all worked out for me



and within a day or two, everything was in place.

I can tell you that my TJFLC personal loan was very helpful. I can say that it helped buy me a little peace of mind, but these words aren't strong enough to describe the impact of that money

on my life. Let me just say that TJFLC's \$5,000 meant the world to me!

*Leah's story is a composite based on actual experiences of TJFLC clients.*



## Evgeni's Story

### Rich in Everything but Money

After four years of living in Canada, having arrived as an immigrant with my wife and two teenaged children, I felt my earnings as an employee were not in keeping with my background, qualifications and ability. After all, prior to arriving in Canada, I had earned a degree in Electrical Engineering in Israel and had since qualified as a licensed Industrial Electrician and Maintenance Industrial Mechanic. I realized that 'going out on my own' would give me the opportunity for greater earnings to keep pace with the increasing demands for my children's education and an improved lifestyle for my family.

I knew how to provide good service and I knew what tools are necessary to get the job done. I had the skills, the background and the confidence: I was rich in everything but money. TJFLC became my window for opportunity.

During my interview with the two TJFLC volunteers, I explained my business goals and showed them copies of all



the relevant documents. I listed my projected expenses, which I thought were very reasonable, and the interviewers seemed to agree with my assessment of the situation. I hoped they could see that I was being realistic with my business plan and that I had really researched the market in the GTA.

I left the interview with a good feeling. I had done my best to sell myself and now it was up to the TJFLC Loan Committee. Luckily for me, when I called for the loan decision the next day, it was 'thumbs-up.'

It's been over a year now since I received my TJFLC business start-up loan. Although there have been some challenges since the day I picked up my \$10,000 loan cheque, I am pleased to say that I have made every single loan payment on time. I am proud of myself and I am proud of our community; the community that believed in me and in my dreams of owning my own business. You helped me so that I could help my family. This is the greatest gift I have ever received.

*Evgeni's story is a composite based on actual experiences of TJFLC clients.*



## TORONTO JEWISH FREE LOAN CASSA

Personal, Educational and Business Opportunity  
Loan Committee Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

**Tuesday, April 29, 2008**

**Tuesday, May 13, 2008**

**Tuesday, May 27, 2008**

*3 Weeks to Next Meeting*

**Tuesday, June 17, 2008**

For information about upcoming meetings,  
please contact our offices at 416-635-1217 ext. 277 or [freeloan@ujafed.org](mailto:freeloan@ujafed.org)

# President's Comments

## Steven Friedman

While most Jewish Holy Days revolve around rituals in the synagogue, the *Seder*, the mainstay of the celebration of Passover, is conducted in our family homes. We celebrate Passover by welcoming all members of our community, be they invited guests or needy strangers, as if they were cherished family members.

We are all touched by the variety of unique Pesach symbols – the *Haggadah*, the Seder Plate, the required cups of wine, matzah hidden under a matzah cover, and even matzah ball soup.

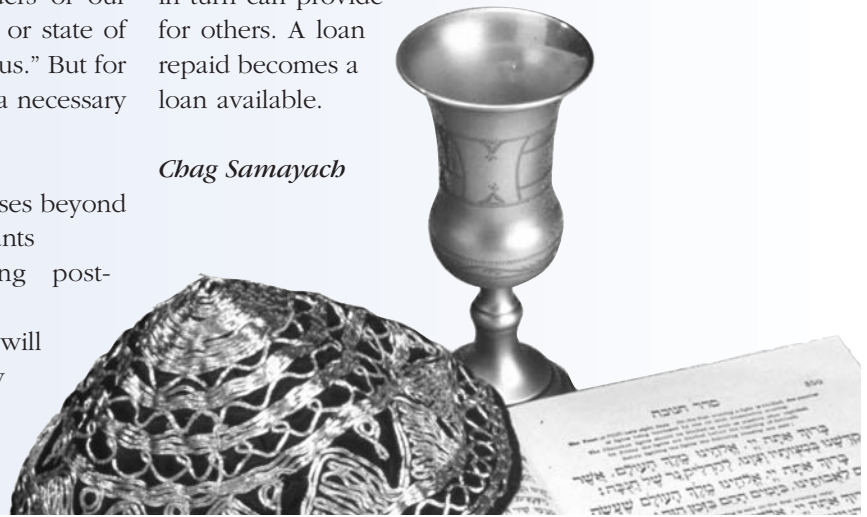
Collectively these Seder symbols are reminders of our passage from slavery to freedom – “the quality or state of being exempt or released from something onerous.” But for TJFLC clients, the inability to purchase or fulfill a necessary need does not equate with freedom.

Thanks to your generosity, TJFLC is able to:

- Help with unexpected personal financial crises beyond the capacity of fixed or low income applicants
- Assist with ever incremental qualifying post-secondary educational costs
- Provide small business start-up costs that will lead to self-employment and self-sufficiency

This Passover 5768, let us remember “All who are hungry, come and eat; all who are needy, come and join the Passover celebration.” We are all family and it is incumbent upon us to provide assistance to our needy with dignity so that they in turn can provide for others. A loan repaid becomes a loan available.

*Chag Samayach*



## IAHFL Membership has its privileges!

*“If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not act as a creditor; charge him no interest...”*

Exodus 22:24

When Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa needed new software to monitor its loan portfolio, we looked for some helpful advice. We wanted to talk it over with a peer; someone else who was in the ‘business’ of lending interest-free funds. Thanks to our membership in the International Association of Hebrew Free Loans (IAHFL), we had more than 40 contacts from which to choose.

The IAHFL, with member agencies in Argentina, Australia, Canada, Israel and the United States, provides interest-free loan agencies with a forum for the exchange of ideas, procedures and other information. While member agencies operate independently, they share a common mission of

offering financial assistance through a variety of interest-free loan programs. Each IAHFL member agency exists “to aid worthy persons in becoming or remaining self-supporting, self-respecting members of their community, by aid of interest-free loans.”

With the advice and support of our friends in the IAHFL, Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa successfully implemented an advanced loan monitoring program, enabling us to provide our major funders with up-to-date client profile information. IAHFL Membership has its privileges!

*For more information on the International Association of Hebrew Free Loans, check their website at [www.free loan.org](http://www.free loan.org).*

# Where Your Money Goes

TJFLC has made a difference in our community for over 84 years. As of December 31, 2007, the agency is monitoring 550 current loans totaling \$ 1,648,974.

## Personal Loans

315 loans totaling \$ 743,053

- This represents 45% of our total dollars outstanding and 57% of our total loans outstanding.

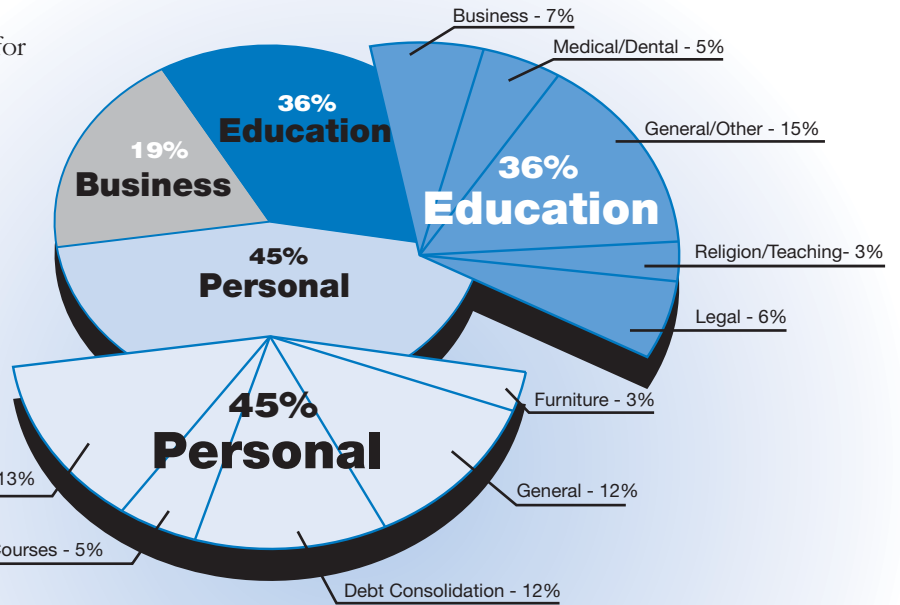
Personal loan totals reflect loans granted to Jewish applicants for a variety of personal needs including furniture, living expenses, family reunification, medical expenses, car-related expenses, camp and tuition fees, debts, housing expenses, dental expenses, compassionate travel, and expenses related to Jewish lifecycle events.

## Educational Loans

166 loans totaling \$ 589,726

- This represents 36% of our total dollars outstanding and 30% of our total loans outstanding.

Educational loan totals reflect loans granted to Jewish students attending post-secondary, Canadian government-accredited colleges and universities. TJFLC provides funding to students who are enrolled in a variety of programs including accounting, business, architecture, engineering, medicine, dentistry, social work, media and the arts, law, sciences and education.



## Business Opportunity Loans

69 loans totaling \$ 316,195

- This represents 19% of our total dollars outstanding and 13% of our total loans outstanding.

Economic Opportunity Business loan totals reflect loans granted to Jewish applicants for business opportunities and economic enhancement purposes.

Through our interest-free loan programmes, **Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa** is fulfilling its mandate of Helping Others To Help Themselves. *With your support*, TJFLC services the needs of our community with compassion and respect.

## Dora's Story

“ In August 2004 I came to Canada with my four children and six suitcases. I had nothing. I knew it would take time before I could find a job and I didn't have enough money to pay any rent. Your help gave me some time to breathe and not long after, I started working. You may not have known at that time how your help made a difference in my life. Without your help I was probably lost. The money helped me to stand on my own feet and start a new life in Canada. I thank you so much for that. I think that the work you do is wonderful.

*G-d bless you*

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United Way  
Toronto

A United Way member agency