

April 30, 2020

Dear Hillel Family,

Week 7. That is how I have come to count the days since I began sheltering in place with my family. While some joke about losing track of hours and days, I chose to simply count the weeks. Seven weeks since our staff has gathered for daily check in's and organized our 'to do lists'. Seven weeks since our building was filled with loud voices and laughter from students as they ate, studied and hung out together. Seven weeks since we hugged and ate the fruity Mike and Ike candies that have become symbolic of our oneg-pre-Shabbat snack.

So, I'm just gonna say it. I miss my staff —like our Israel Fellow Shaked Ram and her daily complaints about the impossible Milwaukee winter. I miss our students-- like Robert Larson, who unknowingly hums outside my office and interrupts my train of thought while I am working. Or Matty Powell, with her throaty laugh, as she plops down on a chair in my office just to chat. I miss my visits with our gracious donors and sharing the wonderful opportunities our students are experiencing because of their generosity. I miss gathering with my amazing Game Night co-chairs as we started to plan for Year 3 of our signature friend raiser. I miss.

And yet, I am grateful. Grateful that our staff is healthy and strong, and continues to amaze me with their creativity to find meaningful ways to bring Jewish life in a virtual space to our students. Grateful for the amazing support of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation under the leadership of Miryam Rosenzweig and Moshe Katz. Grateful for my Hillel International colleagues as we navigate these times of uncertainty together. Grateful for my supportive friends and family as we laugh over Zoom and share recipes and must see TV shows.

In this week's Parsha Acharei-Kedoshim we hear of many mitzvot (divine commandments) from the prohibition of idolatry, giving of charity, honesty in

business, honoring of parents and sacredness of life. Included is the dictum which the great sage Rabbi Akiva called a cardinal principle of Torah, and of which Hillel said, "This is the entire Torah, the rest is commentary"--"[Love your fellow as yourself.](#)"

I find this message particularly fitting as next week Hillel International will be launching its' first ever [Global Giving Week](#). Hillel Milwaukee will be participating in this global unity fundraiser and all gifts made from May 4-8 will be **matched dollar for dollar up to \$2500 per gift**. We know these are challenging times for many, but this is a grassroots campaign and no gift is too small. So if you are able, please consider fulfilling a mitzvah, and showing your support to Hillel Milwaukee, so that we can one day in the near future return to campus vibrant and strong. So I can lament with Shaked over the dreary winter. So I can learn the tune that Robert is singing. So I can share a laugh with Matty and then return a call to a gracious donor.

Until then...I miss. I am grateful.

Shabbat Shalom,

Julie Schack
Executive Director