



bernard betel centre



THE BERNARD BETEL CENTRE FOR CREATIVE LIVING

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2029

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Since its humble beginnings in 1965 as a part-time program, tens of thousands of seniors have come to see The Bernard Betel Centre for Creative Living (The Centre) as their home away from home. In 1982, The Centre opened its doors at its present Bathurst and Steeles location. Approximately 2,000 members, from 53 different countries, plus additional community participants, join more than 90 Betel programs each week.

As we look to the future, we will use this strategic plan as our North Star - a road map for the next three years.

Our goals remain steadfast and rooted in our vision, mission, and values.

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES:



VISION

A community that enriches lives and connects adults 55+ to support healthy aging.



MISSION

We provide exemplary health, wellness, educational and cultural programs for adults 55+ in a safe and welcoming environment.



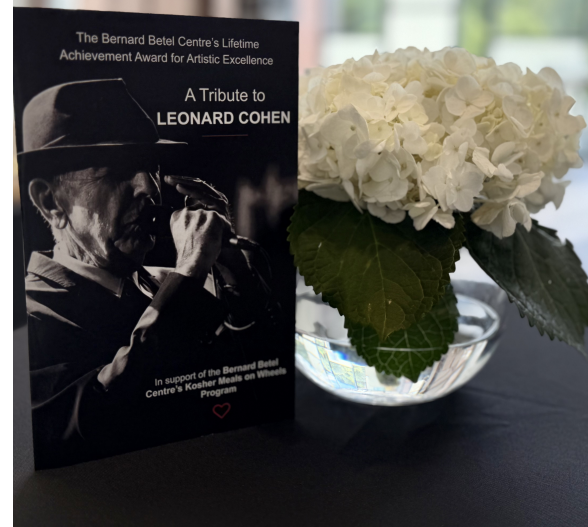
VALUES

We are driven by the Jewish values of community, compassion, creativity, dignity, responsibility, and respect.



Our Community

In preparing this strategic plan, we conducted research using the 2021 Canadian Census and our database on members, clients and program participants. We also held many focus groups and interviews to seek further insights.



Jewish adults 65+ comprise almost 25% of the Jewish population in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area. The 45-64-year-old cohort makes up nearly another 25%. This shows us demand for The Centre's services will remain strong, and that we need to focus on the emerging needs of these demographics.

We also know that many Jewish adults 65+ face multiple vulnerabilities, including poverty, social isolation, and mental and physical health challenges. With these findings, and more, in hand, we developed the below strategic directions.

Key Findings for **Toronto and the GTA**



While the 2021 census shows the total size of the Jewish population in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) has been stable over the past decade, the composition has changed considerably and is projected to evolve for the foreseeable future.



The number of Jewish seniors (65+) has increased significantly since the last census, now comprising **23.6%** of the Jewish population. Just under **10%** are over 75. Almost **30%** of those 75+ are Holocaust survivors. Looking ahead, the 45– 64-year-old Jewish cohort comprises a further **23.5%**. This signals a continued growth in demand for The Centre's services.



The age profile doesn't tell the whole story. In 2021, just under **4,000** members of the Jewish population 65+ were living below the poverty line. Living alone (**53%** of adults 65+) presents a further challenge as it can increase the risk of social isolation and decreased mental and physical wellness.



While continuing to serve our core members (those 75-84), a key focus for this strategic plan is to understand the emerging needs and wants of Jewish adults between the ages of **45 - 64**.



Our full strategic plan provides a more comprehensive look at what has driven the development of our strategic directions and how we will work to achieve successful implementation of these directions.



1.

Build Strategic Partnerships to Extend Our Reach and Capacity

The needs of adults 55+ are varied and are impacted by age, physical health and socioeconomic status. To address these needs, we will:

- Evaluate the need and opportunity to expand health and wellness services
- Secure additional financial resources from existing and new funders

2.

Develop a Hub and Spoke Community Presence

The Centre will adopt a hub and spoke model for expansion. This incorporates:

- Bringing in-person programming to satellite locations through expansion into areas where our target demographic lives, such as York Region, downtown and mid-town Toronto
- Maintaining and expanding online and virtual programs that are essential to reach members, and potential members, across a wider geography

3.

Engage a Younger Population 55+

- With sustainability in mind, we will engage people at the younger end of our target demographic

4.

Modernize the Organization's Engagement and Visibility

The Centre will meet the needs of members, potential members, staff and volunteers by:

- Adopting and advancing The Centre's digital infrastructure to support programs, services and operations
- Improving online engagement for both younger and older segments of the population
- Making greater use of digital outreach and analytics for improved marketing and fundraising
- Nurturing a culture of innovation to enhance programming and engagement



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Next Steps

As we implement the strategic plan, additional information will be sought to fully operationalize the strategic directions. Our research work will focus on:

- Our identity & brand
- A funding strategy aligned to The Centre's priorities
- A better understanding of target populations and their needs
- An evaluation of required space, infrastructure, and optimal locations for needed expansion

**Enriching
quality of life
for all.
For life!**





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