



2015 Year in Review



**Shoresh is the Hebrew word for “root.”
Grounded in Canadian soil, Shoresh helps community members get back to their Jewish roots!**

A MESSAGE FROM SHORESH

“To be a Jew means to wake up and to keep your eyes open to the many beautiful, mysterious, and holy things that happen all around us every day.”
– Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, *Honey from the Rock*

This past year has been one of countless “wow” moments!

Here are just a few of our favourite awe-some moments from 2015:

- **Launching Bela Farm** at Taking Root and revealing our ambitious 7-year plan including our **20 acre native reforestation project** and **20 acre perennial bee pasture**;
- **Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua** of Vaughan **visiting Shores’s Kavanah Garden**;
- Having **Risa Alyson Cooper**, Shores’s Executive Director, featured in the **Canadian Jewish News** as one of **24 Jews Who Are Changing the World**;
- Selling all **1000 jars of Bela’s Bees honey** we harvested with the help of over 30 community members.... in **just 1 week** (and just in time for Rosh Hashanah)!

For a more complete look at the “wow” that Shores brought to our community this year, keep reading.

To our incredible community of staff, volunteers, program participants, and donors, thank you for all of the ways you have supported us this past year. Every day we become increasingly aware of how the food we eat and choices we make shape our relationship with the land, our community and our own bodies. **Shores offers a Jewish response to these issues – one that seeks to inspire active and meaningful change in our community.**

Looking forward to growing with you all in 2016!

With deep gratitude and a profound sense of awe and wonder,



Andrea Most
Chair, Board of Directors



Risa Alyson Cooper
Executive Director



Sabrina Malach
Director of Community Outreach

2015 BY THE NUMBERS...

30

FAMILIES RECEIVING WEEKLY SHARES OF FRESH ORGANIC VEGETABLES THROUGH THE KAVANAH CSA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EVERDALE FARM

360,000

HONEY BEES AT BELA FARM

INFINITE

moments of

“WOW”

200 VOLUNTEERS

1600 VOLUNTEER HOURS

2000 PARTICIPANTS

THAT’S 4000 HANDS THAT GOT DIRTY THIS YEAR!

4300 social media followers

450 POUNDS

FRESH LOCAL ORGANIC VEGGIES
DONATED TO TZEDKAH

5

new gardens

1000

JARS OF BELA’S BEES HONEY

36 community partners

MILLIONS of native wildflower
seeds saved for pollinator habitat

ABOUT US

VISION

A regional Jewish community that embraces responsible stewardship of creation as a core feature of Jewish identity and is actively committed to environmental sustainability.

MISSION

To inspire our community to act as responsible stewards of the earth by nurturing a sense of awe and connection through Jewish experiential education and action.

CONTEXT

Shoresh's programs and activities respond to three key challenges facing our community:

ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS. Our natural world is in a state of crisis as a direct result of our personal lifestyle choices, and the effects of environmental degradation are being felt in devastating ways around the globe.

POVERTY AND HUNGER. For the 6th year in a row, GTA food banks have seen over one million visits. Within our own community, over 24,000 Toronto Jews are living below the poverty line. The number of vulnerable community members is steadily growing, with the majority of them lacking access to fresh, local, organic, healthy food.

JEWISH DISENGAGEMENT. Individuals from across Jewish spectrums, young adults in particular, are struggling to find engaging and meaningful experiences that strengthen their Jewish identity and facilitate community building.

VALUES AND OUTCOMES

As a Jewish charity, we respond to these complex imbalances in our world through educational programs and actions grounded in Jewish ethics. The following core values guide our programs, spaces, ventures, and working processes, and represent the outcomes we aspire to achieve through our work of *Tikkun Olam*, repairing the world.

MAH RABU! HOW GREAT! Foster a sense of awe and wonder of the natural world in order to inspire responsible stewardship of Earth and its resources.

L'OVDAH U'L'SHOMRAH. TO WORK AND TO PROTECT. Encourage lifestyle choices that support sustainable environmental practices and food systems, preserving the health of our planet for generations to come.

DAYENU. ENOUGH. Avoid wasteful choices and habits to lessen our community's ecological footprint.

TZEDEK, TZEDEK TIRDOF. JUSTICE, JUSTICE YOU SHALL PURSUE. Respond to hunger in our community, and advocate for those most vulnerable to ecological degradation, to ensure equal access to our community's resources.

KEHILLAH. COMMUNITY. Build a more cohesive, pluralistic, and interconnected Jewish community, united by a shared relationship with the natural world.

ZEHUT. IDENTITY. Deepen personal Jewish identity through earth-based Jewish experiences, reconnecting community members with their Jewish roots.



ABOUT US

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Guided by our core values and outcomes, Shoresh's interrelated strategic priorities for 2015-2017 are:

TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION. Shoresh offers a variety of hands-on educational programs at the Kavanah Garden, Bela Farm, and other urban natural spaces, by drawing on and celebrating Jewish traditions and teachings. Our programs cultivate **awe and wonder** of the natural world, demonstrate how intimately **interconnected** we are with the earth and its creatures, and inspire community members to assume **responsibility** for our natural resources.

LEADERSHIP CULTIVATION. Shoresh is cultivating the **next generation of Jewish environmental leaders** through our various leadership opportunities.

RESPONSIVE ACTION. Shoresh offers diverse Jewish approaches to creating a more just and sustainable world, providing numerous opportunities for action so community members can **put their Jewish environmental ethics into practice**.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. To support Shoresh's vision for our programs, spaces, and ventures, we are investing in strengthening and growing our capacity.

KEEP READING OUR 2015 YEAR IN REVIEW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW WE ARE ADDRESSING THESE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES THROUGH OUR PROGRAMS, VENTURES, SPACES, AND PROCESSES.

PROGRAM SITES

Shoresh offers our award-winning hands-on Jewish environmental programs at multiple locations in our community:

KAVANAH GARDEN. Shoresh operates the Kavanah Garden, located on the UJA's Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan. Established in 2009, this beautiful half acre garden is located next to five acres of conservation land. At the Kavanah Garden, children and adults participate in experiential programs rooted in Jewish text, tradition, and values, and designed to elicit experiences of awe in response to the wonders of the natural world.

BELA FARM. Bela Farm is located in Hillsburgh, Ontario, just one hour west of Toronto. In partnership with the farm's owner, Rochelle Rubinstein and her family, Shoresh is stewarding the land and animating the space through educational programs and various farm ventures. Bela Farm offers deep, immersive opportunities for land-based Jewish learning and living, creating for participants sustained connections with self, community, and the earth.

IN THE COMMUNITY. In addition to operating our primary programming spaces at the Kavanah Garden and Bela Farm, Shoresh also offers Jewish environmental programming in schools, synagogues, Jewish Community Centres, community organizations, parks, ravines, and backyards across the Greater Toronto Area. As well, Shoresh hosts numerous public events throughout the year to increase community engagement in Shoresh's activities.

*"There's a lot of places one can go to in life but the Kavanah Garden is one of the best places to visit. You've got everything here: nature, kids, intergenerational connections. Everything that makes life beautiful and wonderful. We can never repay you enough for what you've done for the community."
-Mayor Maurizio Bevilacqua, upon visiting Shoresh's Kavanah Garden*



TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION

KAVANAH GARDEN FIELDTRIPS

This year, **hundreds of students, campers, youth, b'nei mitzvahs, volunteers, and young adults** visited Shoresh's Kavanah Garden to participate in **experiential programs** rooted in **Jewish text, tradition, and values**, and designed to elicit **experiences of awe** in response to the wonders of the natural world. We also hosted **22 weekly community drop-in programs**, designed to give families a powerful and on-going full-season relationship with the Kavanah Garden and its plants, creatures, and stewards.

"The value of the Kavanah Garden is immeasurable in terms of impacting a child's mind and early experiences. Watching the garden grow and being a part of the process from the soil, to seed, to bloom, to harvest...are important rituals for children to know nature and become custodians of the earth as they grow."

-Kavanah Garden Parent Participant

PROGRAMMING IN THE COMMUNITY

From **weekly after-school programs** in schools and backyards across the GTA (including Makom Downtown Afterschool Program and Bialik Hebrew Day School), to **pickling workshops** with 120 Grade 7 students at Robbins Hebrew Academy, to **Urban Teva Adventures** in Cedarvale Ravine with Leo Baeck Hebrew Day School students, to **gardening workshops** with REENA and Jewish Family and Child Services, Shoresh is bringing our **award-winning programs and activities from the Kavanah Garden into our community**.

LEADERSHIP CULTIVATION

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In 2015, Shoresh's diverse and committed volunteers gave over **1600 hours** of their time to support our programs and initiatives. From helping to harvest for tzedakah, to jarring and labelling Bela's Bees honey, to building our Sukkah for the harvest festival of Sukkot, we could not do the work that we do without the incredible energy of our volunteers! Shoresh's volunteer opportunities are **hands-on, relevant, and deeply meaningful**, and give volunteers the opportunity to **explore and strengthen their Jewish identity** while facilitating **sustainable action and community building**.

B'NEI MITZVAH TZEDAKAH PROJECTS

This year we launched our new B'nei Mitzvah Tzedakah Program, designed to give Jewish young adults **meaningful opportunities to contribute to a sustainable future** in preparation for their Bat/Bar Mitzvah. The program includes **hands-on volunteer opportunities** and **creative tzedakah options** to share with the B'nei Mitzvahs' family and friends.



RESPONSIVE ACTION

SAVE THE BEES

In our effort to help **save our pollinator friends**, this year we planted a **pollinator garden** at the Wolfond Centre, **butterfly habitat** at Shoresh's Kavanah Garden, and nurtured and cared for our **6 honey bee colonies** at Bela Farm. In return, our crops were pollinated and we filled over **1000 jars of honey** just in time for Rosh Hashanah! Using social media, we also educated community members about the importance of pollinators and why we as Jews have a responsibility to protect them.

TZEDAKAH

With more than 24,000 Toronto Jews living below the poverty line, Shoresh is working to create **access points for vulnerable community members** to receive **fresh, local, organic produce**. In partnership with Jewish Family and Child Services, we produced over **150 pounds** with and for their clients at Maxie's Garden in Kensington Market. As well, we donated over **300 pounds** of produce to the Kehilla Residential Programme from our bountiful harvests at Shoresh's Kavanah Garden.

"Maxie's Garden was the highlight of my week. This program has been so inspiring and has improved my life in countless ways. Thank you so much for your wonderful mentorship, encouragement and most of all friendship. Had a delicious Greek salad for supper thanks to Maxie's Garden. YUMMY."

-JFCS client and Maxie's Garden participant

CLIMATE ACTION

2015 was the hottest year in historical record. In an effort to do our part to **mitigate climate change**, Shoresh has been **planting trees**, marching in **local climate rallies**, and participating in **inter-faith panels** and discussions to share how **Jewish wisdom can address the global climate crisis**.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

STRENGTHENING AND SCALING UP

This year we have put a lot of energy into creating systems and structures that will allow us to strengthen our existing programs and spaces while scaling up in a way that is realistic and ultimately sustainable. To this end we launched our newly **redesigned website** (check out www.shoresh.ca); drafted a **3-year Strategic Plan** outlining who we are, what we do, why we do it, and how we are going to get our community to say "wow" enough to inspire them to act as responsible stewards of the earth; AND welcomed **three new members to our Board of Directors** along with Jodi Katzeff-Klein, Shoresh's new **Managing Director**.





7 YEARS. 7 SPEAKERS. 7 REFLECTIONS.

TAKING ROOT

SHARING STORIES TO GROUND + INSPIRE US ALL

TAKING ROOT: A LAUNCH EVENT FOR BELA FARM

Bela Farm is a rural centre for sustainable, land-based Judaism, situated in Hillsburgh, Ontario, just one hour west of Toronto.

On **Tuesday, October 27, 2015**, over 160 attendees gathered at the Artscape Sandbox to celebrate **Taking Root**, a launch event for **Bela Farm**. In honour of Shoreshe's 7th birthday, and drawing on the deep wisdom of the 7-year Shmita cycle, at Taking Root we **revealed our 7-year plan for developing Bela Farm's programs, spaces, and ventures**. With the help of 7 dynamic speakers (including **Anthony Rose**, Executive Chef and Founder of Rose and Sons; **Debbie Field**, Executive Director of Food Share; Rabbi **Rafi Lipner**, Senior Rabbi of Shaarei Tefillah and Founder of The House; and **Ryan Storm**, 14 year old food blogger), who spoke to the core values that have shaped our vision, Taking Root was about celebrating our past and looking toward the future.



Map of proposed projects and spaces for Bela Farm

7 THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO AT BELA FARM

100 ACRES OF JEWISH-NATURE CONNECTION: Bela Farm will be 100 acres of open green space, fresh air, clean water and deep experiential learning making it the **LARGEST Jewish educational farm** in North America.

20 ACRE NATIVE FOREST: We will plant **16,000 trees** to honour the memories and lifecycle events of our community, sequester carbon to help mitigate climate change, and demonstrate our long-term commitment to the future.

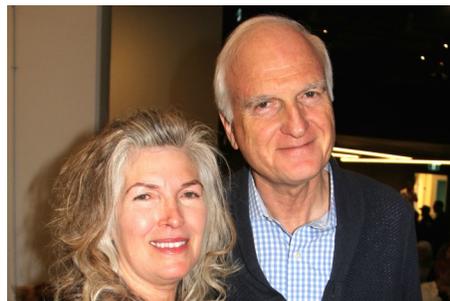
20 ACRE BEE PASTURE: We are planting **2 million native flowering plants** to feed our pollinators and save them from malnourishment and starvation.

10 ACRES OF LOCAL VEGETABLES: Honouring the ethic of **tzedakah** embedded in Jewish agricultural law, we will make sure that everyone in our community has access to fresh, local, organic produce.

30 BEEHIVES: We're **growing our apiary** so we can meet the community's demand for local, raw honey and beeswax candles for Jewish rituals from Rosh Hashana to weddings to Shabbat.

NOURISHING NOSHES: From horseradish and matzah for Pesach to honey for Rosh Hashana, we are excited to bring our field to your table.

IMMERSIVE LEARNING: We will offer a variety of **community immersive programs** and volunteer opportunities, helping all members of our community to connect deeply with people, land and spirit.



SHORESH TEAM

STAFF

Risa Alyson Cooper, Executive Director
Sabrina Malach, Director of Community Outreach
Jodi Katzeff Klein, Managing Director
Claire Lipson, Lead Educator
Gabrielle Herman, Educator

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Government of Canada
City of Vaughan
Mazon Canada



For the **THIRD** time, Shoresh is honoured to be included in Slingshot's 2014/2015 guide profiling the **82 most innovative Jewish organizations in North America!**

Every day we become increasingly aware of how the food we eat and choices we make shape our relationship with the land, our community, and our own bodies. **Shoresh offers a Jewish response to these issues** – one that seeks to **inspire active and meaningful change** within our community.

Please support our work and donate today at www.shoresh.ca/donate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SHORESH, PLEASE CONTACT US AT
416-805-8382 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.SHORESH.CA.