



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Pedro dos Santos

Pedro dos Santos of Or Shalom's membership committee is often found hard at work behind a great stack of books and research files. He is sessional lecturer of Portuguese at UBC and is currently working on his PhD in education in applied linguistics. The first member of his family to pursue a doctorate, he's looking into how best to prepare international students for their first year in Canadian universities using a language not their own.

Born and raised a Catholic in Brazil, Pedro learned from senior family members that there was a history of Jewish practices in his own family. At age 24, curiosity led him to connect with the local Jewish community. "I got to know the Ashkenazi contingent so well," he cracked, "I learned to love gefilte fish."

The Exploring Judaism course was Pedro's first contact with Or Shalom and Rabbi Hannah. "I loved the lessons and how the rabbi introduced each topic, with lots of reflection and interesting material."

Fellow Brazilian Daniel Knoll, Pedro's partner for 12 years, is an instructor at SFU and is also a PhD student. Some time ago the two decided to leave Brazil. "It was mostly the prejudice and homophobic mindset towards the LGTBQ community that made us leave," said Pedro. Nowadays, when they hear of Brazilians coming to live in Canada, Daniel and Pedro consider it a *mitzvah* to assist them in resettling and finding their feet here.

Being invited to march in Vancouver's Gay Pride parade in 2017 and 2019, remarked Pedro, "was a dream coming true for us."

Pedro loves heavy metal music and its history. Next time you see Pedro ask about the heavy metal music scene in Brazil and in Europe. While in Denmark he was particularly struck by the Viking culture and "the many things I hear in Viking metal."