

Students learn how to recognize campus anti-Semitism

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Before the school year ended, recent high school graduates of Scheck Hillel Community School in North Miami Beach learned ways to respond to campus anti-Semitism if they encounter it in college.

Susan Tuchman, director of the Zionist Organization of America's Center for Law and Justice, provided a presentation where she educated the Jewish students about being pro-active Israel advocates and their rights through Title VI of the Civil Rights Act during Scheck Hillel's "College Preparedness

Week."

In an interview, Tuchman said there were three key parts to the presentation.

"First, I wanted students to have some basic legal knowledge, to help them recognize when anti-Semi-

tism might cross the line into criminal conduct and when anti-Semitism might amount to a violation of their civil rights under federal law," she explained. "Second, I wanted students to be aware of situations they may well face both in and out of the college classroom, and to offer them construc-

tive strategies for responding to those situations. Finally, I wanted students to know that they're not alone if they face a problem on campus. There are resources like the ZOA ready to

help and support them."

Tuchman said that when students face or witness anti-Semitism on their campuses, it's crucial that they report it, even if it's hard for them to speak up or afraid to do so.

Sharona Whisler, executive director for ZOA's Florida Region, noted, regarding Tuch-



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man's efforts: "ZOA's Center for Law and Justice dedicates a tremendous effort to addressing the problem of campus anti-Semitism. In fact, it was ZOA that led the landmark development in getting protections for Jewish students recognized under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The Title VI protections are helpful if students know how to recognize anti-Semitism and understand their rights."

Two recent Scheck Hillel graduates who will attend college in New York commented on Tuchman's presentation.

Daniela Hanono mentioned that Tuch-

man taught them a lot and said to be prepared for anti-Semitism on college campuses.

"If I participate in pro-Israel events or general campus programs, I'll be aware of potential signs of hate. If I do experience anti-Semitism in college, I will have taken the steps she taught us to pursue action against anti-Semitism."

Uriel Epelbaum said: "What stood out the most was the fact that being Jewish isn't just a culture and not just a religion; it's also an ethnicity and we have the right to defend ourselves legally against discrimination protected under the

14th Amendment."

Rabbi Joshua Spodek, Scheck Hillel's head of Judaic studies and Hebrew language said: "Through Scheck Hillel's Israel advocacy educational experiences, partnered with organizations like AIPAC and ZOA, our students learn how to develop relationships with political leaders and public officials."

"If a [college] professor or other school community member acts in an anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist way, they'll have a trusted person to turn to right away," Spodek continued.

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