

# Hamilton Jewish News

SERVING HAMILTON WENTWORTH AND AREA

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AGREEMENT #40007180

## Record number attend Asper Washington trip

WENDY SCHNEIDER,  
ELAINE LEVINE, MADELEINE LEVY

On Sunday, May 27, 57 students from diverse backgrounds and schools in the Hamilton area will assemble at Temple Anshe Sholom for a graduation ceremony marking an experience they have all shared. As part of the ceremony each student will receive a Memorandum For Personal Responsibility, that will serve as a contract between them and their consciences and a reminder that they have a personal responsibility towards the world community.

The students will have recently returned from a life-changing experience: A trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., made possible through a partnership between the Hamilton Jewish Federation and the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program. David Asper, Executive Vice President of CanWest Global Communications Corp. and Chairman of the National Post, will be on hand, representing the Asper family to present each student with their Memorandum.

The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program was founded in 1997 in Winnipeg. Conceived as a program to promote tolerance and sensitize Canadian high school students to the consequences of racism, in 2000 it became a national initiative inclusive of students from diverse backgrounds. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights, scheduled to open in 2010 in Winnipeg, was inspired and motivated by the extraordinary impact of The Asper

Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program

Hamilton's Jewish community has participated in the bi-annual program since 2001. In 2005, for the first time, four students from Hamilton's Black community participated in the trip. This year, a record 57 students took part in the program, 40 of whom were recruited by the community's Asper Foundation chair, Madeleine Levy and UJA Federation staff member, Elaine Levine, from the Hamilton Wentworth Public and Catholic school boards and from Hamilton-based SISO, Settlement and Integration Services Organization.

The total cost for this ambitious program was \$68,000. However, through the generosity of the Asper Foundation, Hamilton Jewish Federation, Erwin Jacobs Jacob's Endowment Fund, Paratus Investor's Corporation, RBC Foundation, ScotiaBank, TD Canada Trust, BMO Bank of Montreal, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board, SISO and Effort Trust this program was made possible.

To ensure that this vital program has the financial resources to continue to reach out to Hamilton's students in the future, the funds raised from the Perlasca Tribute, organized by Ms. Levy and philanthropist Mary Romeo, as part of FestItalia (an astonishing \$48,000) was placed in a UJA Federation managed endowment fund, whose sole purpose is to ensure the participation of children from outside the Jewish community.

Ms. Levy had no difficulty convincing both the Hamilton Wentworth District Public and Catholic School Boards to help with recruitment. "They saw it as an extraordinary opportunity for anti-racism, human rights and Holocaust education", she said. This program is all about transformation. They believed in this program so strongly, that six teachers from the Public and Catholic school boards were selected to be chaperones on the trip.

While other Canadian communities focused their recruitment efforts on one particular school, we were more interested in issues of equity and access and a broad spectrum of school representation.

The response from the students was overwhelming and eighteen area high schools par-



Pictured above is most of the Hamilton delegation of 68 who participated in the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. in early May

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ticipated in the program with the most ethnically diverse group of students that ever participated in the program.

Hamilton's delegation, the total number of which including chaperones, was 68, was part of a 250-student Eastern Canada delegation from Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nepean, Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Windsor.

As preparation for the Washington trip, students were required to participate in 18 hours of educational sessions on Human Rights and Holocaust education and devote 16 hours of their community service hours toward a program in the area of social justice. Among the most moving aspects of the sessions here in Hamilton, according to Ms. Levy, were presentations by a member of the Japanese Canadian community who had been interned in a Canadian concentration camp during WWII, a Rwandan genocide survivor and a Holocaust survivor from Hamilton.

On behalf of all the chaperones, Madeleine and Elaine reflect on how the students em-

braced the mandate of this program with respect and sensitivity beyond our expectations. "To see how these students changed from the day they first walked into the classroom to the time they boarded the bus to return to Hamilton has been truly inspirational and a life-changing experience for all. It gives us a great sense of hope for the future that these students took this journey together, bonded as a group and now are committed to stand up and stand firm for global rights and freedoms."

The graduation provides the students, on one hand, closure to the formal part of the program, and on the other hand, the sense that they are now beginning a new life of greater understanding and tolerance.

The entire community is welcome to attend the graduation ceremony, which will take place on Sunday, May 27 at 7:00 pm at Temple Anshe Sholom. Please join us as we recognize these outstanding young men and women. Photos and student reflections will be posted on our website shortly, at [www.jewishhamilton.org](http://www.jewishhamilton.org).

You are cordially invited to the  
UJA Federation of Hamilton's

## **Asper Foundation Human Right and Holocaust Studies Program Student Graduation**

This is a celebration of community initiative in bringing a shared multi-cultural, school board wide supported collaboration of students, studying human rights and Holocaust education together.

**Sunday, May 27, 2007 at 7:00 p.m.**

Temple Anshe Sholom  
215 Cline Avenue North Hamilton

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**David Asper**

Executive Vice-President  
CanWest Global Communications Corporation  
Chairman, National Post

UJA Federation Annual General Meeting

will be held prior at 6:15 p.m.

Refreshments following program

Kashrut observed

Thank you to our generous supporters: The Asper Foundation, UJA Hamilton Jewish Federation, Erwin Jacobs Endowment Fund, Paratus Investor's Corporation, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board, RBC Foundation, Effort Trust, ScotiaBank, TD Canada Trust.

