



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACTS:

Rusty Kennedy, CEO, OC Human Relation

Rusty@ochumanrelations.org 714-317-6788

Alison Edwards, Deputy Director, OC Human Relations

Alison@ochumanrelations.org 714-293-4902

A History of Fighting Anti-Semitism

The OC Human Relations Council has been one of the leading non-profit organizations in the fight against anti-Semitism since our inception in 1991. For 26 years we have documented and responded to every anti-Semitic hate crime and incident reported in Orange County. We are partners with the Anti-Defamation League in this battle against anti-Semitism and hate crime against all. We work with OC synagogues, American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Federation and Family Services and others to learn of anti-Semitic incidents, educate about hate crime, and raise awareness in the larger community about this form of insidious bigotry.

Over the 26 years we have documented hate crimes and incidents in OC, supported victims, trained law enforcement, and advocated legislation against hate crime, the Jewish community has been one of the top three targets of hate crime. This sad truth is a major concern of OC Human Relations and we work in schools and communities to spread education to undermine this hate and bigotry. We were among the original sponsors of the ADL's World of Difference initiative, hosting its release in OC, as well as other ADL programs to teach tolerance and combat anti-Semitism.

We host a panel on hate crime every year with our collaborative partners when we release the annual hate crime data assembled with information from all law enforcement agencies and dozens of community organizations. We always include a spokesperson from the ADL on this panel to keep the awareness of anti-Semitism high in the minds of OC residents as we seek to eliminate all hate crime and bigotry.

We foster interfaith relations through a variety of initiatives and always include prominent Jewish community leaders, Rabbis, and Jewish organizations, among diverse faith representatives.

Orange County Training Was Not Anti-Semitic

We were invited to co-sponsor a teacher training in Orange County about Islam and the Arab World.

Given the spate of hate targeting Muslims and Arabs, among other victims this year, it seemed a good idea to promote understanding of these diverse communities.

We are not affiliated with the training that occurred in Los Angeles, or the materials that may have been distributed by presenters or others. The section on Israel and Palestine was not presented by the same person in LA and OC, nor were the same materials.

We are aware of the presenters in Orange County, and the curriculum that we reviewed along with the OC Department of Education before supporting this training. A small portion of the first day reviewed Israel/Palestine relations from the perspective of a Palestinian American. It was personal and respectful and did not endorse the boycott or divestment of companies doing business with Israel. It was not an anti-Israel rant, and the presenter did not speak or promote anti-Semitism.

The second day of the training is not covering this issue at all. We are monitoring the training with a representative of the Jewish Federation and Family Services today and will take appropriate action if there are any concerns.

While we do not believe anything anti-Semitic was taught in these workshops, we are well aware that in vetting any presenter, it is important to gather all the information about their approach, biases and backgrounds. We pledge our continued vigilance in this endeavor as we explore issues of tension in our world. Any presenter or organization that would deny the existence of another, be intolerant or have a clear and insidious bias against another would not be welcome at an OCHR sponsored event. In particular, Middle East issues are nuanced and complicated and we vow to educate ourselves on those nuances as we move forward.

Additional Teacher Training on Judaism and Jews Would be Beneficial

This training was not presented as a dialogue or balanced forum. It was presented as a training by Muslims and Arabs about Muslims and Arabs.

It is not a complete education, it just represents some perspectives. Additional training about Judaism and Jewish communities would be a great addition, and OC Human Relations would support that education as well.

Internet Claims of Anti-Semitism in OC Training are Not True

Controversy and politics complicate Israel/Palestinian issues, and at times legitimate views fuel rumors that have no or little basis in truth. This may be the case here.

The non-profit OC Human Relations Council agreed to support the training that has taken place in Orange County, we have not reviewed and are not aware of what may have been presented elsewhere. We did not endorse the views of the presenters elsewhere, nor approve of all of the materials that may have been distributed on the literature table in trainings outside of Orange County. We do not believe that this training is a complete education. OC Human Relations will

work with our partner organizations to provide additional teacher training that enables educators to better understand all sides of this issue.

Above all, we believe all people have a right to live free from discrimination and violence, and education about each other is one effective avenue to combat hate and bigotry.