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ETHNIC
UNDERSTANDING

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SUMMER 2010

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 26-New York, NY
Rabbi Marc Schneier and Imam Shamsi Ali, spiritual leader of the Islamic Cultural Center of New York, will host a visiting delegation of 20 student leaders from universities in Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon. The students are participants in a joint program sponsored by the Dialogue Institute at Temple University and the U.S. Department of State to explore U.S. history, society, and institutions with a special focus on religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue.

July 28-Washington, DC
Rabbi Marc Schneier will deliver the invocation at the Salute to Leadership luncheon at the National Urban League's Centennial Convention.

August 3-Vienna, Austria
Rabbi Marc Schneier will be delivering the keynote address at the first annual Muslim Jewish Conference to be held at the University of Vienna.

October TBD-Brussels, Belgium
FFEU sponsored conference on Muslim Jewish relations in Europe featuring European rabbis, imams and scholars from both the Jewish and Muslim communities.

October 19-21- Doha, Qatar
Rabbi Marc Schneier will serve as a keynote speaker on the topic, "The family: the heart of raising and sustaining the new generation" at the Eighth Doha Conference for Interfaith Dialogue.

November 5-7-Around the world
Weekend of TwinningSM of Mosques and Synagogues across the U.S., Canada, Europe, Latin America, Australia and South Africa.



Once again, Rabbi Marc Schneier named one of **The 50 Most Influential Rabbis in America** for seeking "to strengthen relationships between ethnic communities in the United States."

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FFEU PRESIDENT ADDRESSES OSCE CONFERENCE ON DANGERS OF ISLAMOPHOBIA

On June 29, at the invitation of the Government of Kazakhstan, **Rabbi Marc Schneier** presented a keynote address on Islamophobia at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Permanent Council's Plenary in Astana. At the conference which is the world's largest regional security forum with 56 participating members, Rabbi Schneier led the panel discussion on Islamophobia and was the first rabbi to ever address this subject at this prestigious forum. In his remarks, Rabbi Schneier stated, "I am taking this stand against Islamophobia today exactly because my understanding of Jewish ethics and the lessons of Jewish history dictates to me that I should be there for my Muslim friends at a time of peril for them." Rabbi Schneier also met with Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Mr. Kanat Saudabayev** who praised FFEU's work in reaching out to the Muslim world and building bridges of understanding.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MEET WITH FFEU LEADERSHIP



On Thursday, June 10th, **Rabbi Marc Schneier** and **Russell Simmons** hosted 31 African American and Jewish high school students from St. Louis during a visit to New York City. The students, members of a youth leadership development organization called Cultural Leadership, engaged in conversation with Rabbi Schneier and Russell Simmons to discuss strategies for dismantling racism, anti-Semitism, and bigotry in their communities.

FFEU SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Walter Ruby, FFEU Muslim Jewish Programs Officer has been sought out to represent the organization at several events. They include:

- **May 25 ~ New York, NY** - Walter joined interfaith leaders at a public forum by Community Board One (CB1) in lower Manhattan to lend support to the initiators of Cordoba House, the proposed Muslim community center two blocks north of Ground Zero.
- **June 21-23 ~ Winnipeg, Canada** - Walter addressed the interfaith leaders of the G8 nations at the 2010 World Religions Summit. Serving on a panel focused on peace and security, he highlighted FFEU's ongoing efforts which have created an international movement of Muslims and Jews committed to communication, reconciliation and cooperation.
- **July 4 ~ Chicago, IL** - Walter took part in a panel discussion on Muslim Jewish Relations at the Annual Convention of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).

RABBI SCHNEIER ATTENDS WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION

On Thursday, May 27, **Rabbi Marc Schneier** attended the first ever White House reception celebrating Jewish Heritage Month. The event, hosted by **President Barack Obama** and **First Lady Michelle Obama**, boasted a "Who's Who" of American Jewish leaders in the arts, music, sports, the space program and other social arenas. Rabbi Schneier noted that FFEU's outreach to the Muslim world is in concert with President Obama's agenda in this respect.

INAUGURAL MUSLIM JEWISH HEALTH FAIR IN QUEENS, NY



Dr. Regina Smolyak, a Jewish ophthalmologist gives an eye exam to a Muslim woman at the Queens Muslim Jewish Health Fair

On Sunday, June 6th, FFEU organized a first time event dedicated to strengthening ties between Muslims and Jews by jointly providing free health screenings to uninsured New Yorkers. The Queens Muslim-Jewish Health Fair, co-sponsored by **FFEU**, the **Jamaica Muslim Center (JMC)** and the **Bukharian Jewish Congress of the USA** and Canada, brought together Muslim and Jewish doctors, dentists and medical technicians.

NATIONAL SURVEY SALUTES SUCCESS OF WEEKEND OF TWINNINGSM

A report issued on May 19 by the Los Angeles-based **Center for Muslim-Jewish Engagement (CMJE)**, confirmed that the Weekend of TwinningSM of Mosques and Synagogues has succeeded in stimulating grass roots Muslim-Jewish dialogue and cooperation in North America and beyond. The CMJE report, was based in part on a survey of mosques and synagogues which participated in the 2nd Annual Weekend of TwinningSM in the U.S. and Canada in November 2009. The numbers speak for themselves. "The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding—the organization responsible for the annual Weekend of TwinningSM—has created the largest Muslim-Jewish initiative to date," and the survey noted that 70% of the mosques and synagogues that participated have developed ongoing relationships beyond the twinning.



Walter Ruby with Imam Abdul Hai Patel, Director of Interfaith Relations, Canadian Council of Imams