

hate and hope in our own backyard

I have been deeply disturbed to learn about a number of hate-filled incidents in our area over the past few days. I have just learned about anti-Semitic Facebook posts by students at Upper Dublin High School as well as graffiti found at a park in Horsham. Then Monday, leaflets were distributed in some Upper Dublin neighborhoods bearing racist slogans and encouraging white residents to 'stand up to' blacks, gays, and Jews. In the face of these vicious messages, coming against the backdrop of increasing acts of hate across the country, it is important that we stand together to say that these incidents do not reflect the values and beliefs of our community and that we condemn these actions with one, unified voice.

To that end, there are two events planned for next week. A community meeting held by the Local Emergency Area Response Network will take place next Wednesday, May 24 at 7:00 at the Upper Dublin Township Building, and an interfaith vigil sponsored by the Wissahickon Faith Community Association will be held on Mondauk Common on Thursday, May 25 from 7:00-8:30. I encourage you to join me in attending one or both of these meetings to send a clear and unambiguous message that Upper Dublin stands united against acts of hate, bullying, and intimidation.

We can also take important steps toward ending hate when we form connections with those from different backgrounds, combating stereotypes and prejudice through knowledge and relationship. To that end I want to invite you to take part in an interfaith Iftar gathering - the name for the meal that breaks the fast at the end of each day during the month of Ramadan. The gathering is sponsored by the Philadelphia branch of the Council on American-Islamic Relations and will include a prayer service, an opportunity for thoughtful engagement across faith traditions, and a traditional Iftar meal. There are a limited number of spots available for this event which will take place on the evening of Sunday, June 11 at Masjidullah in West Oak Lane so please contact me soon if you would like to be included in this opportunity to learn together and bridge divisions.

In the face of those who seek to foment hate and deepen mistrust it is imperative that we all take steps - and take a stand - to promote peace, tolerance, and understanding in our neighborhoods and communities.

L'shalom,



Rabbi Joshua Waxman

Please note that the event at Mondauk is now 7:30 PM.