

The undersigned Rabbis and Cantors of Westchester County,

members of the Westchester Board of Rabbis and Kol Hazzanim: Westchester's Community of Cantors, are deeply concerned about what we perceive as a growing social problem. We Americans, including Jewish Americans, have often lost our sense of civility in public discourse, which at times leads to demonizing those who disagree with a particular point of view. Such attacks preclude reasonable discussion of complex and pressing issues and polarize society.

The Jewish community reflects this degradation, most often as it pertains to our discourse about Israel. We recognize that Jews hold passionate feelings about Israel with which we are all inextricably bound. However, we believe that it is unacceptable to engage in vitriol against those people with whom one does not agree. May our love for Israel unite us rather than divide us.

A Jewish saying states, "*Derech Eretz Kadmah L'Torah*," proper conduct precedes the Torah. This teaches us that if we hope to appreciate the rest of our tradition's most noble values, we must begin with *Derech Eretz* - good and proper conduct. Respectful speaking and listening - an integral part of good conduct - is essential, even in the midst of a heated argument.

Our tradition establishes respectful speech as absolutely essential by reminding us of the disputes, in Talmudic times, of two opposing schools of thought: Hillel and Shammai. They and their disciples argued brilliantly, and fought passionately, for their respective points of view. But their words were never vicious, or filled with hate.

We call upon the community to always engage in mutual respect. We know, at times, we will have widely differing opinions. But we pledge to emulate the disputes of Hillel and Shammai. Such discussions will be considered virtuous even in the Heavenly Court. In the year ahead, let us resolve to strengthen our commitment to speak of all matters and to one another with kindness, compassion, fairness and respect.

Rabbis: Jaymee Alpert, Cong. Kneses Tifereth Israel; Morris Barzilai, Sinai Free Synagogue, Mt. Vernon; Jonathan E. Blake, Westchester Reform Temple; Sandy Bogin, Jewish Home Lifecare/Sarah Neuman Center; Alfredo Borodowki, Cong. Sulam Yaakov; Andrew Bossov; WJCS; Seth Braunstein, Carmel Academy; Lester Bronstein, Bet Am Shalom; Aaron Brusso, Bet Torah, Mt Kisco; Marcus Burstein, Union for Reform Judaism; Fredda Cohen, New York Board of Rabbis; Andrew Davids, Beit Rabban Day School; Joshua M. Davidson, Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester; Billy Dreskin, Woodlands Community Temple; Jeremy Fine, Beth El Synagogue Center; Carla Freedman, Jewish Family Cong., South Salem; Aubrey L. Glazer, JCC of Harrison; Michael Goldman, Temple Israel Center; Aaron Goldscheider, Mt. Kisco Hebrew Cong.; Howard J. Goldsmith, Cong. Emanu-El of Westchester; Jennifer O. Goldsmith, Rye; Andy Gordon, Scarsdale Synagogue-Temples Tremont and Emanu-El; David Greenberg, Temple Shaaray Tefila of Westchester; Shmuel Greenberg, Young Israel of White Plains; Daniel Gropper, Community Synagogue of Rye; Eytan Hammerman, Temple Beth Shalom of Mahopac; Shoshana Hantman, Halutsim Hebrew School, Robert A. Harris, Jewish Theological Seminary; David Holtz, Temple Beth Abraham; Mitchell M. Hurvitz, Temple Sholom of Greater Greenwich; Jennifer A. Jaech, Temple Israel of Northern Westchester; Paul Joseph, Kehilat Chaverim; Steve Kane, Cong. Sons of Israel-Briarcliff Manor; Molly Karp, Temple Israel of New Rochelle; Barry A. Kenter, Greenburgh Hebrew Center; Stephen A. Klein, Scarsdale Synagogue-Temples Tremont and Emanuel; Douglas E. Krantz, Cong. B'nai Yisrael of Armonk; Shira Leibowitz, Solomon Schechter School of Westchester; Seth M. Limmer, Cong. B'nai Yisrael of Armonk; Chaim Marder, Hebrew Institute of White Plains; Shira Milgrom, Cong. Kol Ami, White Plains; Geoffrey A. Mitelman, Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester; Loren Monosov, Westchester Jewish Center; Jonathan Morgenstern, Young Israel of Scarsdale; Mara Nathan, Larchmont Temple; Jason Nevarez, Temple Shaaray Tefila of Westchester; Beth Nichols, Temple Israel of New Rochelle; Lee S. Paskind, First Hebrew Cong. of Peekskill; Harry Pell, Solomon Schechter School of Westchester; Ely Rosenzweig, Cong. Anshe Sholom; Halina Rubinstein, Irvington; David Saiger, Temple Sholom of Greater Greenwich; Mark Sameth, Pleasantville Community Synagogue; Arnold D. Samlan, Jewish Education Project; David Schuck, Pelham Jewish Center; Fred Schwalb, Hebrew Cong. of Somers; Daniel Schweber, Shaarei Tikvah-Scarsdale; Jeffrey Segelman, Westchester Jewish Center; Dina Shargel, Temple Israel Center; Jeffrey Sirkman, Larchmont Temple; Melvin Sirner, Beth El Synagogue Center; Dan Sklar; Westchester Reform Temple Ned Soltz, Cong. M'vakshe Derekh; Moishe Steigmann, Westchester Jewish Center; Seth Sternstein, Yorktown Jewish Center; Frank A. Tamburello, Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism; Gordon Tucker, Temple Israel Center; Pamela Wax, Westchester Jewish Community Services; Robert Weiner, Temple Beth Am of Yorktown; Scott Weiner; Temple Israel of New Rochelle; Tom Weiner, Cong. Kol Ami White Plains; Amiel Wohl, Temple Israel of New Rochelle; Mara Young, Woodlands Community Temple

Cantors/Hazzanim: Dana Anesi, Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester; Uri Aqua, Beth El Synagogue Center; Ellen Arad, New Rochelle; Devorah Avery, Temple Israel of Northern Westchester; Chanin Becker, Scarsdale Synagogue-Temples Tremont and Emanuel; Gerald Cohen, Shaarei Tikvah-Scarsdale; Erik Contzius, Temple Israel of New Rochelle; Melanie Cooperman, Community Synagogue of Rye; Ellen Dreskin, Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester; Gadi Elon, New Rochelle; Mo Glazman, Cong. Kol Ami; Jamie Gloth, Beth El Synagogue Center; Margot E. B. Goldberg, Temple Beth Abraham; Jonathan Gordon, Woodlands Community Temple; Randy Herman, Bet Torah Cong, Mt. Kisco; Hayley Kobilinsky, Cong. B'nai Yisrael; Janet Leuchter, Greenburgh Hebrew Center; Rachel Littman, Temple Beth Shalom of Mahopac; Fredda Mendelson, Larchmont Temple; Jacob Mendelson, Temple Israel Center; Jeffrey Shiovitz, Cong. Sons of Israel-Briarcliff Manor; Israel Singer, JCC of Harrison; Alexis Sklar, Cong. Kneses Tifereth Israel; Alan Sokoloff, Westchester Jewish Center; Elizabeth Sternlieb, Sinai Free Synagogue, Mt. Vernon; Meredith Stone, Cong. Emanu-El of Westchester; Rika Timman, Crestwood; Sarah Zemel, New Rochelle.

Produced by

**The Westchester Board of Rabbis, Kol Hazzanim: Westchester's
Community of Cantors and the Westchester Jewish Council.**

In cooperation with UJA-Federation of New York.

For more information, contact the Westchester Jewish Council at info@wjcouncil.org or 914-328-7001 or visit www.wjcouncil.org.

List of signatures compiled as of January 26, 2012.



Synagogues listed for identification purposes only.