

Jewish Community Joins Together to Say No to Domestic Abuse

When 19 agencies from Shalom Park and the Charlotte area joined forces to sponsor "It's Not Kosher to Do Nothing," it was unprecedented. But when more than 70 people came to hear Rabbi David Rose speak about Domestic Abuse in the Jewish community, it was downright amazing.

Rabbi Rose is the chair of Jewish Women International Clergy Taskforce on Domestic Abuse and the founder and director of JDiscover. He spent two days in Charlotte speaking out against domestic abuse in our communities and training people to recognize the signs.

As Jews, we are often in denial that abuse even exists in our community. Rabbi Rose himself for many years didn't even have it on his radar. But when he heard an anonymous letter from a Jewish woman in his congregation who spoke of abuse and mentioned that her own rabbi didn't know how to

deal with it, he realized that he needed to learn more about it. He has become an expert.

Rabbi Rose began Sunday morning in a session for men only. He feels men, especially, need to learn the signs because, according to his statistics, 95% of abusers are men. They can, with proper information, be advocates and the first line of defense against abuse.



Todd Gorelick, president of JFGC, Rabbi David Rose, Marsha Stickler of Shalom Bayit-NC, and Adam Bernstein, president of Tempel Beth El.



Clergy Training Workshop took place on November 2nd. Seen here are (top, left to right): Rabbi Michael Shields, Cantor Elias Roovhvarg, Rabbi Judith Schindler, Rabbi Micah Streiffer, Rabbi Shlomo Cohen, Rabbi Yoseph Groner; (bottom, left to right) Rabbi David Rose, Rabbi Josh Brown of Winston-Salem. Not pictured but in attendance: Rabbi Faith Cantor and Rabbi Chanoch Oppenheim.

In the evening, the main program, "It's Not Kosher to Do Nothing," began with Todd Gorelick, president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, welcoming the crowd. "Tonight we have one common mission," Gorelick said, "to ensure that there is no place for domestic abuse in our community."

Temple Beth El president Adam Bernstein then introduced Rabbi Rose, reading first the TBE Resolution on Domestic Abuse which, according to Rabbi Rose, is one of only a few adopted by congregations nationally. "As Temple Beth El president and someone who has personally worked for many years to combat domestic violence," Bernstein said, "I am proud of our Board resolution and to see these programs happening as a reflection of our intent to address this problem in tangible and meaningful ways."

In addition to pointing out the signs of possible abuse, Rabbi Rose showed a selection from a documentary about abuse in Jewish families, "When the Vow Breaks." The shocking stories mesmerized the audience. Then, to add to the power of his statement, he showed a selection from another

documentary, "When Push Comes to Shove," about Jewish teenagers who are victims of abuse. It does, indeed, happen in our community, and we cannot afford to ignore it.

The capstone of Rabbi Rose's tenure here was a half-day clergy training session with nine rabbis and cantors from Charlotte, Lake Norman, and Winston-Salem.

Marsha Stickler, chair of Shalom-Bayit-NC which, along with Jewish Family Services co-hosted the event, closed Sunday night's program with a plea to the community to be welcoming to victims. "People won't come forward to say 'I am a victim' unless they know they are believed and can be helped and protected, and that takes a concerted effort on the part of the entire community. That means developing a lifeline for people."

In order to formalize all Rabbi Rose has taught this community, takes you. Please call your synagogue or sponsoring agency and ask how you can help end domestic abuse in our community. For more information on domestic abuse in our Jewish community or if you are in need of help, see www.shalombayit-nc.org. ☆

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