

# The Charlotte JEWISH news

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## 2012 Main Event Features Rabbi Brad Hirschfield

What do Jena Coen, Andrew Klein, Stacy and Todd Gorelick, and Scott Menaker all have in common? They've all been touched by the words of Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, speaker for the 2012 Main Event.

According to Scott Menaker, co-chair of The Main Event, "I had the privilege to learn and study with Rabbi Hirschfield when he was Scholar in Residence for the JCC Association. He was engaging, entertaining, and brought a sense of meaning to his message that was applicable to our everyday lives. I am very excited that he is coming to Charlotte and I know he will attract a large audience with his message for Jews from all walks of life."

Jena Coen and Andrew Klein, native Charlotteans and members of the Bernstein Leadership Group, recently had the opportunity to study with Rabbi Hirschfield, scholar-in-residence for their Bernstein Leadership Retreat held at Wildacres. "Rabbi Hirschfield teaches the importance of an individual's Jewish identity as well as the importance of a united local and worldwide Jewish community. I was personally inspired by Rabbi Hirschfield to define what Judaism means to me and to live a Jewish life that honors and enriches that definition. I am excited that Rabbi

Hirschfield will be back in Charlotte, as the Main Event speaker, to share his words of tolerance and acceptance with our entire community," said Jena Coen.

Andrew Klein described his experience by saying, "When it comes to appreciating one's Jewish identity, Rabbi Brad Hirschfield taught me more about myself in 28 hours than perhaps anything I learned during my 28 years on this planet. As the guest speaker at our Bernstein Leadership Group's Shabbat Retreat, Rabbi Hirschfield deconstructed our Jewish identities, bringing to light the core values, traditions, and collective memories that our seemingly diverse group of Jews has in common. Rabbi Hirschfield taught me that we can choose to accept everyone equally, and that a pluralistic view of Judaism is the right approach. Rabbi Hirschfield leads by example, and his love for all Jewish people, regardless of affiliation or background, is highly contagious. He has so much wisdom to share, and the opportunity to hear him should not be missed."

Rabbi Hirschfield was selected as the scholar-in-residence for the Bernstein Leadership Retreat and ultimately The Main Event speaker because of his enthusiastic endorsement by Stacy and Todd

Gorelick. In Israel last year as part of a select group of young leaders chosen by JFNA, Stacy and Todd learned with Rabbi Hirschfield who was the scholar-in-residence for their week long experience. "Our friend, Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, changes lives. He changed ours. Brad helped us to think about the world, and our Jewish place in it, in new and different ways. He taught us to look

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— Andrew Klein

at every situation, whether thorny or hopeful, through the eyes and life experiences of others. We learned from Brad that differences, even deep differences, when built on shared moral values, can be the Jewish People's greatest strength. If you hear Brad's message, you cannot help coming away a more thoughtful Jew and a better person. Brad's friendship reaches our hearts, and his wisdom nourishes our souls," explained Todd.

The most widely attended event of the season, The 2012 Main Event, co-chaired by Scott Menaker and Steve Menaker, will be held on Thursday, January 26, at 7:30 PM at Temple Israel. Tickets are \$36 each and can be purchased online at [www.jewishcharlotte.org](http://www.jewishcharlotte.org) or by phone 704-944-6757. A book signing and dessert reception will follow the program.

Rabbi Hirschfield will talk on the topic "Celebrating Diversity and Creating Unity in the 21st Century." Listed four years in a row in *Newsweek* as one of America's "50 Most Influential Rabbis," and recognized as one of our nation's leading "Preachers and Teachers," by *Beliefnet.com*, think tank President, talk show host, interfaith activist, and diversity expert Brad Hirschfield is the author of *You Don't Have To Be Wrong For Me To Be Right: Finding Faith Without Fanaticism*.

The only rabbi featured on ABC's "Nightline UpClose," Hirschfield offers a unique perspective on the American spiritual landscape and political and social trends to audiences nationwide. A popular media guest on such shows as "The Dennis Miller Show" and "Lars Larson," he has appeared on CNN, PBS, MTV, and NPR. He is a regular commentator for The Huffington Post, a frequent contributor to Fox News Opinion and a columnist for *Newsweek/Washington Post.com*

Rabbi Hirschfield is the President of CLAL – The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, a leadership training institute, think tank and resource center committed to religious pluralism and the healthier use of religion in American public life.

At the Main Event, you will have the opportunity to make your pledge to the 2012 Annual Campaign "Doing a World of Good." Every single day the Jewish Federation saves lives, builds community and makes the world a better place. With one gift, you can make a world of difference. Please visit our website to



Rabbi Brad Hirschfield

Jena Coen, Arlene and Milton Goldstein, Stacy and Todd Gorelick, Bari and Jeff Gorelick, Roz and Marty Husney, Jenn and Michael Koss, Cary Bernstein and Alan Kronovet, Randi and Justin Lan, Alison and Jack Levinson, Elise Menaker, Risa and David Miller, Jill and Ed Newman, Rhonda and Andy Nicholson, Wendy and Lee Pake, Susan and Bernie Sandler, Larry Schwartz, Karen and Jeff Turk, Eleanor and Morton Turk, Debra and David Van Glish and Judie and Michael Van Glish.

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte is to raise and distribute funds to



Rabbi Hirschfield (front row, far left) with the Bernstein Leadership Group.

learn more about the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte.

For more information about the Main Event, please contact the Federation office at 704-944-6757, Scott or Steve Menaker, or any of the members of the dynamic Steering Committee: Lee and Jeff Bierer, Lisa and Barry Blau,

support and enrich the lives of Jews locally, nationally, in Israel and worldwide. Through education, planning and community building, the Federation's mission ensures that Jewish values, goals, traditions and connections are preserved for current and future generations. ✪

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