



## JEA HOLDS 67<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN MARYLAND

The Jewish Educators Assembly, the professional organization of educators in the Conservative movement, just completed its 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at the College Park Marriott Hotel and Conference Center at the University of Maryland. The 4-day gathering brought together congregational school principals and Directors of Congregational Learning, early childhood directors, bureau and agency personnel and family and informal educators from all across North America and Israel.

The theme of this year's Conference was *Social Actin / Civil Discourse* reflecting on the tone in our country. The Conference addressed a wide range of issues relating to the teaching of traditional Jewish values in an atmosphere that seems contradictory. These include use of language, bullying, respect for those with whom we disagree, treatment of women, welcoming immigrants and foreigners and confronting anti-semitism. Our featured panel discussion included Rabbi Jack Moline of the Interfaith Alliance, Rabbi Rachel Grant Meyer of HIAS and Rabbi Lev Meirowitz Nelson of Truah. Deeply moving presentations were made by Rabbi Jeff Myers of Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and Rabbi Aaron Brusso of Bet Torah Congregation in Mt. Kisco New York who's synagogue custodian of over 20 years was deported. We also engaged in Torah L'Shma with Rabbi Ari Israel, Executive Director of Hillel at the University of Maryland.

The conference body experienced "Sustainable Nation", a powerful new film out of Jerusalem U. that demonstrates the innovative and technologically advanced way that Israel manages, conserves and recycles water and how it is teaching these methods to other nations. We honored Barry Krasner, a longtime Jewish educator and specialist who has served the greater Washington DC area for many, many years. The celebration was enhanced by the music of Robyn Helzner. We also learned and laughed with "The Bible Players" a great act to bring to your schools and synagogues.

Our afternoons were filled with workshops presenting new curricular approaches and materials from Behrman House, Shalom Learning, JNF, Center for Israel Education, Legacy Heritage Foundation, Etgar and Etgar Yesodi, Moving Traditions, #OnwardHebrew, and Matan.

Our Conference concluded on Wednesday morning with a presentation by Todd Gillman, Washington Bureau Chief for the Dallas Morning News and an active member of one of our local synagogues. Todd presented a journalist's perspective on civil discourse and civility in our world today.

Our vendors also presented and showcased new ideas and materials. Participants had the opportunity to view new texts, materials and resources as they browsed our exhibitions.

A great deal of networking took place with participants sharing ideas and information over meals and get-togethers, and in the Hospitality Suite. Table-top discussions were also held structured around a variety of education topics.

The conference provides a rich opportunity for professional growth, exploration of new trends and ideas and acquisition of concrete programs and materials to bring home to each school and synagogue.

For more information about the Jewish Educators Assembly contact Edward Edelstein, Executive Director at 516-569-2537 or visit us on the web at [www.jewisheducators.org](http://www.jewisheducators.org).