

Press Release

Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect
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Christchurch, Pittsburgh, and Charleston Religious Leaders Join to Address Acts of Terrorism

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Hatred tears us apart, but if we can rise against it together, not only can it also unite us, but make us stronger.

The Anne Frank Center's mission has always been to educate and inspire future generations to build a world based on mutual respect. Now, in response to the disturbing and growing world-wide trend of religious- and race-based violence, the center continues to bring together communities that have been affected by acts of hatred and terror.

Four years ago this coming Monday, June 17, the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, became the scene of what was at the time the deadliest mass shooting at an American place of worship—nine people were murdered and three others injured.

Three years later, on October 27, 2018, the Tree of Life *Or L'Simcha Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was targeted; eleven people were fatally shot and nine injured. It was the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in American history.

Just three months ago, on March 15, the Al Noor Masjid and Linwood Islamic Centre in Christchurch, New Zealand, were the targets of two connected acts of terrorism. Fifty-one people were killed, and another 50 injured. It was the deadliest mass shooting in New Zealand history.

"It's a series of assaults on humanity with increasing frequency," says Elisa Rapaport, Chief Operating Officer of the Anne Frank Center, "bolstered by the careless comments of public figures who don't appreciate what they're inciting."

This coming Monday, June 17, Reverend Eric S.C. Manning of the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church; Rabbi Jeffrey Myers of the Tree of Life *Or L'Simcha Synagogue; and Imam Ibrahim Abdelhalim of Al Noor Masjid will in unison receive the Interfaith Unity Award at the Spirit of Anne Frank Awards in New York City.

Through the award, the Anne Frank Center wishes to acknowledge the unspeakable tragedies these leaders and their congregations have witnessed in the midst of prayer, as well as the mourning shared by millions around the world, but also the spirit of solidarity that has emerged. Such contemplation is especially important as we approach what would have been Anne Frank's 90th birthday on June 12, 2019. It is an opportunity to reflect on how much, and how little, has changed in the eight decades since World War II.

"Still reeling from the series of attacks around the world, a bond has formed and people are united," says Sharon Douglas, the Anne Frank Center's Chief Executive Officer. "Beyond Christian, Muslim, or Jewish identities, we are first and foremost human."

If you would like to schedule interviews with any of the honorees while they're in New York, please contact us at gala@annefrank.com.

Other 2019 honorees include: SAFA Human "Writes" Award winner Jack J. Hersch and SAFA Legacy of Hope Award winners Pieter & Susan Kohnstam.

Scholarship and Education award winners for 2019 include: SAFA Student Scholars Masaraat Asif, Emily Herrmann, Emilia Peters, and Grace Schuler; and SAFA Teacher-of-the-Year Robert Lurie.

Full honoree bios are listed at annefrank.com/safa

The 23rd Annual Spirit of Anne Frank Awards will be held in New York City at the Edison Ballroom on Monday, June 17. To register, volunteer, or make a contribution in honor of any of the honorees, visit 2019afc.givesmart.com. Holocaust survivors attend free of charge. For more information, please contact us at gala@annefrank.com.

What is done cannot be undone, but one can prevent it happening again.
—Anne Frank

About the Anne Frank Center:

The Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect offers educational programs, traveling exhibits, and theatrical performances to share the impact of the message of Anne Frank's diary by promoting respect for all humanity.

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