

Forum against hate speech planned for new year

Riverbrook Regional YMCA to host local leaders February 4 | By Anne Young Albanese



Stephen Hudspeth will moderate the "Confronting Acts of Hate in Our Community: Antisemitism, Religious Intolerance, Ethnic Exclusion, Racism and LGBTQ+ Hate" on February 4.

The Riverbrook Regional YMCA (formerly the Wilton Family YMCA Branch) will be

hosting a forum to address hate speech and actions on February 4 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. The forum, titled "Confronting Acts of Hate in Our Community: Antisemitism, Religious Intolerance (Islamophobia), Ethnic Exclusion, Racism, and LGBTQ+ Hate", is free and open to all Redding residents. It is offered in cooperation with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), an organization dedicated to "stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all," according to its website.

The forum will allow attendees to share information on hate incidents and provide a more personal understanding of the impact they can have. It will create a network of support to prevent hate

speech and actions. "The network will continue to meet periodically to follow up on the events from the forum's discussions and implement ways to prevent hate speech and acts of hate from invading our community," said Andrew Bayer, spokesperson for Temple B'nai Chaim's Kulanu/social action group to confront antisemitism and hate.

This ongoing support network will address the development of a coordinated system of responses to future hate incidents. It will also help to ensure support for those who are victims of such acts.

The forum will be moderated by Stephen M. Hudspeth, an adjunct professor in the University of Connecticut's Graduate School of Business where he has served for the past seven years teaching

courses in business law and ethics; securities law and compliance; revolutionary technology law; and data privacy and internet protocol law. He began teaching law at academic institutions after his retirement from large firm legal practices at the end of 2004. Hudspeth is the Chair of the Wilton Interfaith Action Committee and is a recipient of a Who's Who Lifetime Achievement Award.

The event will unite a series of faith leaders and government officials. Some of the participants include Cantor Harriet Dunkerley from Temple B'nai Chaim in Georgetown; Father Reggie Norman from Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Wilton; and Cadence Penthy, Community Education Manager for the Triangle Community Center in Norwalk.

The event will also include a representative from the local Muslim community.

Some potential government officials attending may include Richard Blumenthal, United States Senator from Connecticut; Chris Murphy, United States Senator from Connecticut; and Jim Himes, United States Representative from the 4th district, which covers 17 towns including most of Fairfield County and some of New Haven County. A few of the towns he represents include Easton, Fairfield, New Canaan, Norwalk, Redding, Ridgefield, Weston, and Wilton. Local politicians are also expected to attend.

Additional information will be made available closer to the February 4 event. ■