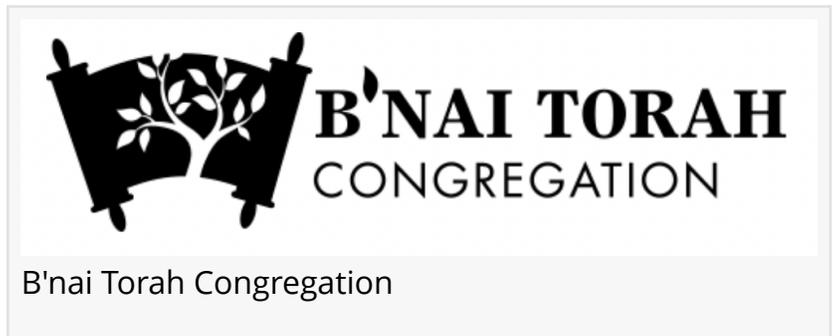


Boca Raton Interfaith Youth Association (BRIYA) Commemorates Holocaust Remembrance Day with Visit to Holocaust Memorial

Twenty BRIYA Teens Met with a Holocaust Survivor and Gained Insight on the Importance of Preserving History

BOCA RATON, FL, UNITED STATES, February 26, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Twenty members of the Boca Raton Interfaith Youth Organization (BRIYA), a teen association made up of students

from a variety of religious backgrounds and inspired by the adult Boca Raton Interfaith Clergy Association (BRICA), visited the Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach earlier this week. The participating students were from various religious institutions, including B'nai Torah



“

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Cathy Berkowitz, Education Director of B'nai Torah Congregation

Congregation, the largest conservative synagogue in Southeast Florida, St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, and others. BRICA is comprised of interfaith leaders and community members from a variety of religious traditions – including Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and more – in Boca Raton.

The group's outing to the Holocaust Memorial, which was led by Cathy Berkowitz, Education Director of the Mirochnick Religious School at B'nai Torah Congregation, and Gena Vallee, Director of Outreach and Pastoral Support of St. Gregory's Episcopal Church, is a testament to the power of remembrance and cross-cultural understanding. Funded by the Schertz Education Fund, the

excursion provided an opportunity for BRIYA teens to meaningfully engage in commemorating International Holocaust Remembrance Day, an international memorial day each January 27 that commemorates the victims of the Holocaust, while learning amongst their peers.

“We unfortunately live in a world where people are quick to judge those who they don’t understand,” said Cathy Berkowitz, Education Director of B'nai Torah Congregation. “Through BRIYA, we are encouraging young people to take the time to learn about each other’s religions while teaching the next generation about atrocities that took place during the Holocaust so that they will never be repeated.”

Students also had the opportunity to meet with a Holocaust survivor, who generously shared her story, and provided a poignant reminder of the importance of preserving history and bearing witness to the resilience of the human spirit. Guided by Holocaust Educator Jack Rosenbaum through the Holocaust Memorial, the group also gained valuable insights into the memorial's significance, navigating it with reverence and understanding.

Following the visit, the teens gathered for lunch at a vegan restaurant, where they shared a meal while engaging in a discussion about dietary restrictions observed by various religions. Finally, the day concluded with a serene stroll along the boardwalk, providing an opportunity for reflection on the experiences shared and the lessons learned. According to Berkowitz, the impact of the outing was palpable on the teens, leaving a lasting impression and reinforcing BRIYA's mission of working towards long-term peace through action.

B’nai Torah Congregation Rabbi David Steinhardt, who is one of the founders of BRICA, first brought the idea of a youth organization to his fellow BRICA members after realizing how powerful the group’s connection was. “Providing a venue and an opportunity to youth who are active in their parishes, congregations or the mosque, allows them to view the world and others



BRIYA



BRIYA Members

through a more sensitive lens," Rabbi Steinhardt said. "The members of BRICA have brought this program to their respective communities, and specifically the youth, and the work has been enthusiastically carried forward. I am confident each and every participant has been enriched by this experience."

To learn more about B'nai Torah Congregation and its interfaith programs go to <https://www.btcboca.org/interfaith/>.

About BRIYA

BRIYA, a teen association that was inspired by the adult Boca Raton Interfaith Clergy Association (BRICA). BRIYA was founded the fall of 2018 under the supervision of Cathy Berkowitz, Education Director of B'nai Torah Congregation and Regena Vallee, Director of Youth Ministry and Outreach of St. Gregory's Episcopal Church. The BRIYA Programs focus on tikun olam, Chesed, tzedakah, social action, how we must treat the stranger: You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt. BRIYA is a space where teenagers can take their ideals and hopes and put them into action. Learn more at <https://briyaunited.org>.

About B'nai Torah Congregation

B'nai Torah Congregation is the largest conservative synagogue in Southeast Florida with over 1,300 membership families. It is a close-knit, multi-generational, modern, and egalitarian synagogue, which offers diverse services, programs of worship, learning, tzedakah, social action, and social activities. B'nai Torah Congregation creates a perfect outlet for arts, culture, and learning, and we are home to several schools of Jewish education. The synagogue, which offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities that will enrich the synagogue experience, is a tremendous and vibrant center for tzedakah acts and projects that touch thousands of people. Learn more at <https://btcboca.org>.

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