

New Community Program Unites Service, Education, and Human Dignity

MINEOLA, NY, UNITED STATES, January 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chabad of Mineola Launches Student Dialogue Program to Foster Respect and Civil Discourse

Mineola, NY — In response to rising social polarization, increased antisemitism, and a growing breakdown in civil discourse, Chabad of Mineola has launched a new educational initiative designed to bring high school students into meaningful, respectful conversation across differences.

The program, titled “Ask a Rabbi: Faith, Identity & Respect in a Diverse Society,” is a one-hour interactive experience that invites students to engage directly with Rabbi Anchelle Perl in an open, student-led dialogue. The initiative is offered both as an on-site field visit at the synagogue and as an in-school program, at no cost to participating schools.

“This program is not about persuasion or belief,” said Rabbi Anchelle Perl, director of Chabad of Mineola. “It’s about restoring something our society is losing—the ability to ask honest questions, listen respectfully, and engage one another as human beings, even when we disagree.”

During the program, students tour a cultural and religious space, learn about Jewish history and symbols, and participate in an open “Interview the Rabbi” question-and-answer session. Students are encouraged to ask any question—about religion, identity, stereotypes, antisemitism, ethics, or current social tensions—within a moderated and respectful environment.

The initiative is intentionally designed to align with civics, social studies, and character education goals. There is no worship, prayer, or religious instruction, and the program does not seek to influence students’ personal beliefs or practices.

Educators have increasingly expressed concern that students lack opportunities for constructive dialogue, particularly on sensitive or controversial topics. This program aims to address that gap by modeling civil discourse in real time.

“Most stereotypes persist not because of hatred, but because people don’t have access to real conversation,” Rabbi Perl explained. “When students are given permission to ask—and see

disagreement handled calmly—it changes how they think about each other.”

Rabbi Perl brings extensive civic and educational experience to the program. He is the founder of the widely recognized Good Deed Awards for Long Island Teenagers, which honors altruism and civic responsibility among students of all backgrounds. He serves as a Commissioner on the Nassau County Human Rights Commission, is a member of the Ethics Committee of the Town of North Hempstead, and sits on the Faith Council of the Nassau County District Attorney. He is also the popular host of a weekly Sunday radio program broadcast from Nassau Community College.

The program is hosted at Congregation Beth Sholom – Chabad of Mineola, located at 261 Willis Avenue, Mineola, and can also be conducted on-site at participating schools. There are no fees or expenses of any kind.

Schools and districts interested in scheduling or learning more are encouraged to contact Chabad of Mineola directly.

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