

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Educating Across Difference: Local synagogue brings Israel and Philly together to explore education against a background of social and cultural divides**

Philadelphia, PA  
September 10, 2017

Germantown Jewish Centre is hosting a panel on Sunday morning, September 10th, focusing on the challenges and benefits of educating children across ethnic, racial, class, and cultural divides. The panel will include a visiting scholar, Lee Gordon, who is the co-founder of a network of joint Jewish-Arab schools in Israel called Hand in Hand that is specifically focused on building connections and peaceful interaction between two communities that are often at odds with each other. (Most schools in Israel serve either Jewish or Arab children but not both.)

The goal of the panel is to draw parallels between the work that Hand and Hand is doing in Israel and the work of private and public schools in Philadelphia to bridge the social and cultural divides that can often separate and cause discord among young people in the city. Otis Hackney, the Chief Education Officer for the City of Philadelphia, will bring his perspective as an educator with deep experience with these issues in Philadelphia schools and now trying to implement change on a larger scale. The panel will also include Judy Groner, head of Perelman Jewish Day School, a dual-language school in the Philadelphia suburbs, and Dr. Sigal Ben-Porath, a professor in the Literacy, Culture, and International Education Division of the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education.

Philadelphia can be a divided city, and the role of the public schools in helping overcome those divisions is of great interest to Germantown Jewish Centre, which has a long history of advocacy for and engagement with the city's public schools. Indeed, as one of the few synagogues located within the city limits (most have moved to the suburbs over the last 60 years), the congregation knows very personally that the vitality and health of Philly's local public schools is crucial to the future of its religious communities. September's panel discussion address questions crucial to helping attendees understand how the issues of educating across divides play out in Philadelphia.

The panel program will be held on Sunday, September 10th at 10:30 AM. The program is free and all are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Kate Lawn at 215-844-1507 x19.

Germantown Jewish Centre is a diverse and welcoming synagogue community that celebrates Jewish tradition in innovative and exciting ways and embraces multiracial, interfaith, and LGBTQ families and individuals. The synagogue is located at 400 W. Ellet Street, Philadelphia, PA 19119.

**Contact:**

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