



**Jewish Community
Relations Council**
MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION

Jewish Community Relations Council Releases 2015 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents

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The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation has just completed its annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents. The 2015 audit shows a preponderance of anti-Semitic incidents among high school students.

“We are particularly concerned about the disproportionate number of reported incidents in schools,” said Ann Jacobs, Chair of the JCRC’s Anti-Semitism and Constitutional Law Task Force. “It’s clear that we need to do more to ensure that our children learn to embrace the richness of our diverse culture.”

Among the incidents involving youth are:

- A series of incidents of bullying and harassment of a Jewish student at a suburban high school, including name-calling; a class discussion, with the teacher present, about the merits of killing Jews; vandalism on a locker used for his sports team; and a swastika placed in the family’s personal cooler during a school event.
- Threatening messages and swastikas sent via social media to fellow high school students on a predominantly Jewish sports team.
- A vandalism spree involving more than 30 instances of spray painting of hateful messages and property damage. High school students were identified and arrested for the crime.
- A voice mail message left at a Jewish facility by a high school student, saying, “You should have all been killed in the Holocaust.”
- A swastika etched into a desk in an elementary school.

Other incidents included Holocaust denial by an instructor at a local university, and multiple forms of written and verbal expression. JCRC notes the continuation of religiously-motivated anti-Judaism, in which Jewish beliefs and Judaism itself are treated with contempt. Though there has been significant improvement in inter-religious understanding in the last 50 years, in large part due to the 1965 Vatican II document *Nostra Aetate*, negative views of Jews and Judaism persist.

“As far as we’ve come, anti-Semitism continues to show its face in Wisconsin and in

the United States,” said Michael Pollack, JCRC Chair. “In these days of nasty political rhetoric, people are falling back on ethnic- and faith-based bigotry intolerance. We must be better than that.”

“When bigotry and discrimination against one people are permitted to go unchecked, all minorities are less safe,” said JCRC Director Elana Kahn. “The annual audit reminds us of the power of individuals to call out and stop discrimination and hatred, no matter who is its target.”

The JCRC strongly encourages individuals and institutions to confidentially report all incidents. The JCRC monitors and responds to anti-Semitic incidents throughout the year. Each incident is corroborated and reviewed before any action is taken. The audit is reviewed by the JCRC’s Anti-Semitism & Constitutional Law Task Force and the JCRC Steering Committee before the final approval process of the entire JCRC Board.

If you have any questions about the audit, or would like additional resources, please contact Elana Kahn at elanak@milwaukeejewish.org or 414-390-5736.

Attached are the audit and an informational sheet about reporting anti-Semitic incidents.

The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation envisions a just community that reflects American and Jewish values. The mission is to speak as the representative of the Jewish community on issues of public affairs and public policy by convening and mobilizing the Jewish community through education, advocacy, social justice, and support for Israel.