

# An End to Hate Crimes through unified interactions and response

THE THEME OF QUEENS JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL EVENT

Photos by Walter Karling



**LEFT:** Congresswoman Grace Meng • **MIDDLE:** QJCC President Michael Nussbaum. • **RIGHT:** Free Synagogue of Flushing. • **LOWER RIGHT:** Representatives from Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York (KCS)

On Monday evening, April 25 at the Free Synagogue of Flushing, Asian and Jewish community members got together to hear about the state of hate crimes and related legislation in New York, especially in the Asian American and Pacific Island, AAPI, and Jewish communities. The event was coordinated by the Queens Jewish Community Council, QJCC, in conjunction with StandWithUs and the Free Synagogue of Flushing. The event was part of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, JCRC-NY's "Partners Against the Hate" (P.A.T.H.) Forward funding from the Mayor's Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (OPHC), to innovate community-based approaches in dealing with hate crime prevention, and ultimately creating community relationships that holistically work together in finding solutions in challenging hate in New York and its neighborhoods.

Congresswoman Grace Meng was the event's Keynote speaker. Ms. Meng Highlighted the passing of her COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act which is geared toward combating the spate of hate and violence against the AAPI and other communities. Ms. Meng secured \$30 million to address related issues. Congresswoman meng's talk was personal and endearing, as she noted how her own children, not used to facing such victimization, unknowingly laughed off a verbal attack aimed at them.

Other speakers included QJCC President Michael Nussbaum who explained the impetus for the

night's event as being the fact that a hateful act against any person for their ethnicity, place of origin, skin color, sexual preference etc., is an act of hate against all of us. He said more efforts between communities are in the planning – and said an event between QJCC and the Seikh community is being planned for June.

Cantor Alan Brava, Executive Director of the Free Synagogue and QJCC Board member, introduced the event, welcoming all participants to the synagogue which is a registered National Historic site over 100 years old, located in what is now the heart of the Asian community of Queens in downtown Flushing.

Rabbi Bob Kaplan, Executive Director of The Center for Community Leadership at JCRC-NY and a New York City Commissioner for Human Rights, who oversees JCRC-NY's PATH Forward grant, spoke of the importance of tolerance and of working together. Avi Posnick; Regional Director of StandWithUs, spoke about that organization's efforts to fight anti-Semitism, and work against hate in general.

Rabbi Mayer Waxman, Executive Director of QJCC, remarked on how "an event like tonight's has its clear positives – it is empowering, it is educational, it is about communities banding together, and it highlights the government support there is against hate; support from our Mayor, from our Congressmembers, from the Queens DA's office and support from NYPD, just



to name a few. However, an event like tonight's is also a stark reminder that the reason there is so much support against hate, is the despicable fact that there is so much hate out there that we need to unite and rally against."

Three people spoke who were each seemingly attacked for their appearance addressed the crowd. Joey Borgan, a Long Island born-and-raised yarmulka-wearing proud Jew who was attacked on the streets of New York during an anti-Israel event spoke about how he never thought such a thing would – or could – happen to him. Noel Quintana, an American originally from the Philippines told the audience about how he was unprovokedly slashed across the face with a box cutter in the subway. Eunhee Chang, who is originally from Korea, told, through a translator, the story of how a group of people attacked her, and how the owner of the pizza store in front of which the attack occurred and his son stepped in to help her. Eunhee and the two good Samaritans ended up getting stabbed.

The program then provided a platform for the Queens leaders who professionally fight hate crimes to discuss the laws in place and what is done to address such infractions. Judge



**LEFT:** Avi Posnick • **MIDDLE:** Detective Calvin Li, Lieutenant Robert Delaney, George Grasso, Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters in the Queens Supreme Court, Police Officer Philip Weisbord, President of the Shomrim Society, and Deputy Inspector Andrew Arias, head of the Hate Crimes Task Force. • **RIGHT:** Eunhee Chang, Joey Borgan, Noel Quintana, and Rabbi Mayer Waxman