



# Mobile Tour for Humanity brings Holocaust and human rights discussion to Peel

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PEEL — The Tour for Humanity’s journey to raise awareness about human rights and social justice rolled into Peel Region Thursday.

“We know discrimination is a universal issue that can destroy the political, social and cultural foundation on which cities and communities are built,” said Regional chair Emil Kolb. “We congratulate and support the centre for its efforts in bringing this learning initiative to the community.”

Created by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC), the Tour for Humanity is a fully equipped and accessible mobile education centre.

Launched last November, the tour bus aims to inspire and empower participants to “raise their voices and take action against hate to help make the world a better place.”

The mobile centre is travelling to schools and communities across Ontario and on Thursday morning made a stop at Peel Regional headquarters in Brampton. FSWC President and CEO Avi Benlolo, Chair Kolb and members of Regional Council were on hand to officially launch the initiative in Peel.

“The Region of Peel is a growing community and one of the most diverse in Canada,” said Benlolo, addressing regional officials. “The Tour for Humanity is a vehicle to go out into the world and begin a narrative and discussion about the Holocaust. We hope that you will help us spread the narrative in your own communities.”

FSWC is a leading non-profit human rights organization that represents more than 30,000 members in Canada. The group’s mission is to counter racism and anti-Semitism and to

promoting principles of tolerance, social justice and Canadian democratic values through advocacy and education.

Benlolo said the tour's mission is to use lessons learned from the Holocaust to raise awareness about modern day conflicts like Rwanda, Darfur and Syria.

"The Holocaust plays a strong component with who we are," said Benlolo, referring to the mass genocide of approximately six million Jews during the Second World War. "We take the lessons of the Holocaust and (ask) how can something like that have happened? And we apply that to today to combating hate and intolerance."

In addition to Benlolo, dignitaries heard from Holocaust child survivors Joe Gottdenker and Fred Leitner.

Gottdenker shared his experience as a child during the Holocaust. Gottdenker stressed the importance of speaking out against indifference and hatred.

"We can do a lot of small things to make sure that something like that (Holocaust) doesn't happen again," he said.

The mobile classroom features two visual presentations.

The first focuses on Canadian events such as the history of Aboriginal residential schools and the treatment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.

The second is a film focusing on three key areas — the Holocaust, genocide and historical figures such as Martin Luther King, Helen Keller, Simon Wiesenthal and Gandhi.

Each session is about 45 minutes long and can accommodate up to 30 people at a time.

The mobile centre has visited some 60 schools to date.