

“Understanding BDS”: IAJF Empowers College Students



On August 8th, the Iranian American Jewish Federation of New York (IAJF) joined together with Stand With Us, Sephardic Heritage Alliance, Inc. and United Mashadi Jewish Community of America to co-sponsor the powerful educational program “Understanding BDS and How to Respond.” This event for college and college-bound students was designed to help students further understand and defeat the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. In attendance were 150 students, community members, local politicians and community leaders. Speakers for the evening included New York State Senator Jack Martins, Executive Director of Stand With Us Shahar Azani and Avi Posnick, managing Director of the Northeast Region of Stand With Us. They spoke passionately about the legislative efforts being made to counter the BDS movement, the importance of conveying positive images of Israel to counter the negative ones that students will encounter, the need to know one’s rights and reaching out to people who are in a position to help when one is confronted with a difficult situation.

In addition, a panel of student leaders from Stand With Us – a recent graduate of North Shore Hebrew Academy High School, a student at Pace, and the tri-state area campus coordinator – discussed Stand With Us’s role on campus and led a Q&A session. These student representatives gave compelling and personal descriptions of the reality of anti-semitism and the BDS movement on campus, addressed issues and events that students will encounter, explained tactics of the BDS movement and gave advice on handling specific situations. Students left the event empowered, armed with helpful information and resources, practical strategies and a strong feeling of support from the community and the sponsoring groups that they will carry with them to their campuses.