

Milwaukee Jewish Federation: 2016 audit of anti-Semitic incidents

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The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation has just completed its 2016 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents. Mirroring a dramatic rise in anti-Semitism across the globe and increased acts and expressions of bigotry surrounding the U.S. presidential campaign, last year included an extraordinarily high number of local anti-Semitic incidents.

“The rhetoric around the presidential election not only legitimized bigotry against all minorities, as we’ve seen through a variety of statistics, but also included specific coded and overt anti-Semitic expressions. That climate on the national level affects the local community too,” said Ann Jacobs, chair of the JCRC’s Anti-Semitism Task Force.

“We should all be vigilant against this rise in hate and extremism. We see from history that when communities allow people to be targeted based on their race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or other identity markers, terrible things can happen,” said JCRC Director Elana Kahn.

While we know that many incidents go unreported, we have observed a Jewish community that feels increasingly

targeted through harassment, vandalism, and expression, both written and verbal. A few trends are worth noting:

- o We note continued anti-Semitic harassment and verbal expressions among middle

and high school students, which often takes the form of jokes, pranks, teasing and bullying. Last year, there were more reports of anti-Semitism on college campuses.

o There were increased incidents of swastika graffiti on public and private property.

o After many years of more guarded and coded language, we note an increase in outright anti-Semitic slurs.

We will continue to monitor this.

The JCRC strongly encourages individuals and institutions to report all incidents. We ensure full confidentiality.

- Email elanak@milwaukeejewish.org
- Call 414-390-5736

Each reported 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 Board before the final approval process of the JCRC Board.

We are particularly pleased that working collaboratively with schools, law enforcement and national agencies, many of this year's reported incidents were addressed or resolved with positive outcomes.

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.