

A Celebration of the Journey of Jewish and Hispanic Cultures

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Consul General of Israel in New York Ambassador Ido Aharoni addresses the crowd at SAR Academy in the Bronx during a celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month and the Jewish Holiday of Sukkot. (Credit: Israeli Consulate)

At what first seemed a coincidence of the calendar, two communities met at the Salanter Akiba Riverdale (SAR) Academy Monday, October 6, to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Sukkot and National Hispanic Heritage Month. The timeliness of the shared celebration highlighted the important contributions made by both the Hispanic American and Jewish communities in New York City, and honored the personal journeys that both communities have endured as they share their unique culture and heritage with the New York area.



From left: Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, Congressman Eliot Engel, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr., Consul General of Israel in New York Ambassador Ido Aharoni and Council Member Andrew Cohen, pose for a photo at SAR Academy in the Bronx during a celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month and the Jewish Holiday of Sukkot. (Credit: Bill Weitz)

In attendance were members of both the local Hispanic and Jewish communities, as well as distinguished guests, such as Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.; Congressman Eliot Engel; New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito; New York State Senate Co-Leader Jeff Klein; New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera; New York State Assemblyman Marcos Crespo; New York State Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz; New York City Council Member Andrew Cohen; Consul General of Israel in New York Ambassador Ido Aharoni; and Executive Vice President & CEO of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, Rabbi Michael S. Miller, among others.

The event—sponsored by the Consulate General of Israel in New York, the Office of Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and JCRC-NY—highlighted the Jewish and Hispanic peoples' experiences with migration, and underscored how each community's exodus has uniquely shaped them today.

“There are many parallels between our Jewish and Hispanic cultures that we must celebrate and embrace, and in a city like New York, it’s imperative that both communities support one another,” said Congressman Eliot Engel (D-Bronx & Westchester). “As the Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the AJC Latino Jewish Caucus, I am committed to further strengthening the ties between our two communities. Together, we can advance our common goals and our shared vision for the future.”

Consul General of Israel in New York, Ambassador Ido Aharoni remarked, "In celebrating the holiday of Sukkot this year, we not only reflect upon the story of the migration of the Jewish people and the temporary dwellings they lived in, but we also

remember the difficult personal exodus so many Latinos faced when immigrating to the United States."

"Just as the Jewish people in Israel carried with them their heritage and culture, so too have the Latinos who have come to this country," Aharoni added. "Both of our communities have understood that preserving a rich heritage while building a new home is paramount to ensure a meaningful future."

Said Brenda Torres Barreto, Director of the New York Regional Office of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, "I bring greetings from the Honorable Alejandro Garcia Padilla, Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is proud to be the home of the largest Jewish community in the Caribbean. Our histories have been intertwined since the start of our history, and they continue to be. Today, we celebrate both of our cultures, experiences, beliefs, and values; and, I join you as a show of continued commitment to collaboration and support. Thank you again for your kind invitation."

Said Rabbi Michael S. Miller, Executive Vice President and CEO, Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, "Sukkot is a joyous festival made all the more jubilant by the coming together of family and friends in the sukkah, a temporary dwelling with a thatch roof commemorating the 40 year journey of the Children of Israel during Biblical times from slavery in Egypt to nationhood in Israel, the Promised Land. The sukkah is also viewed in Jewish tradition as a singular symbol of peace, Sukkat Shalom. As Jews celebrate their spiritual heritage, we are doubly blessed to peacefully gather together in the sukkah this evening with sisters and brothers from the Hispanic community, who has experienced their own journeys, as they celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month. May the festival of Sukkot continue to serve as a binding force bringing Jews, Hispanics and New Yorkers of all faiths and ethnicities closer together."