




## Newsletter - January 2026

### Upcoming Events



#### Suncoast Jewish Alliance and Temple Emanu-El January 8<sup>th</sup> Joint Program

Mark your calendars and plan to attend this program on book banning. Follow this link to register:

<https://www.sarasotatemple.org/event/social-justice---book-banning.html>



Temple Emanu-El Social Justice Committee  
& the Suncoast Jewish Alliance present:



## BOOK BANNING: GET THE FACTS, NOT THE FICTION!

**Thursday, January 8, 2026 | 7:00-8:30 pm**  
Benderson Family Hall, 151 McIntosh Rd, Sarasota, FL

Join us for a presentation featuring a panel of experts as we discuss the current forms of state-driven censorship in the United States. Especially in the form of book banning, this issue has direct effects on students, educators, librarians, and readers of all ages. Learn what it means for the future of free expression and the impact on religious freedoms.

Our panelists will shed light on the legal and practical implications of this issue. They will explore the relationship with the First Amendment and the impacts upon access to reading choice. As well, each panelist will share what they feel each of us can do to address this topic.

**FEATURED PANELISTS:**

- Jill Lewis-Spector, Co-chair of the League of Women Voters, FL Education Action Team
- David Brostrom, Organizer of the Right to Read Festival, Venice 2024
- Anne Wissinger, 35-year multi-faceted career in the book industry
- Uzi Baram, Professor Emeritus, New College of Florida

**QUESTIONS?**  
Contact Michael Resnick at  
Mjresnick2723@gmail.com

**Register by January 6 at**  
[www.SarasotaTemple.org](http://www.SarasotaTemple.org)



**Sunday, January 25, 2026, 5 pm  
at the home of Felicia and Joel Servetz**

**We will celebrate our accomplishments, elect our new Board of Directors, approve changes in our bylaws, enjoy a potluck dinner and be entertained by Cantor Neal Taibel and Julie Friedman.**

**RSVP to [suncoastjewishalliance1@gmail.com](mailto:suncoastjewishalliance1@gmail.com) by January 18th for directions and what you can bring for the potluck dinner.**

**If unable to attend in person, use the following Zoom Link  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82534731808>**

**Please bring nonperishable food items that we can take to the  
Immigration Justice Coalition.  
See the last page for lists of what is needed.**

*The Alliance has a few leadership positions open. If you want to  
know more, contact Norman: [suncoastjewishalliance@gmail.com](mailto:suncoastjewishalliance@gmail.com)*



*Over 40% of our 2025 members have already renewed for next year! If you have not already done so, it is time to renew your annual membership. Dues are still \$18 per person. Additional contributions enable us to expand programming. Renew and donate on our website: <http://suncoastjewishalliance.org/join-%26-donate> or mail your check to Suncoast Jewish Alliance, P.O. Box 5244, Sarasota, FL 34277*

## Living Room Conversations



Lucas Martinez, Emily Bernstein and Uzi Baram led the ADL program hosted by Karen & Paul Kade

Our Living Room Conversations and potluck dinners have been very popular programs. LRCs are provided for Alliance members and are held in members' homes. We make an effort to keep our groups small enough to encourage interactions among our speakers and members. Kudos to Uzi Baram, Alliance Program Chair, for organizing these events and Karen Kade, Member-at-Large, for handling the potluck arrangements. At the December Living Room Conversation, representatives from the Florida Anti-Defamation League gave an update on antisemitism in Florida as well as national trends.

**Would you be willing to open your home for a future Living Room Conversation and potluck dinner? Let us know at [suncoastjewishalliance1@gmail.com](mailto:suncoastjewishalliance1@gmail.com).**

Watch for your invitation to the February 15, 2026 Living Room Conversation.



**Keith and Aviva Siegel were abducted from their Kibbutz Kfar Aza home October 7<sup>th</sup> by Hamas. We will forward you the announcement about you can meet with them at the Ora, hosted by The Jewish Federation of Sarasota Manatee.**



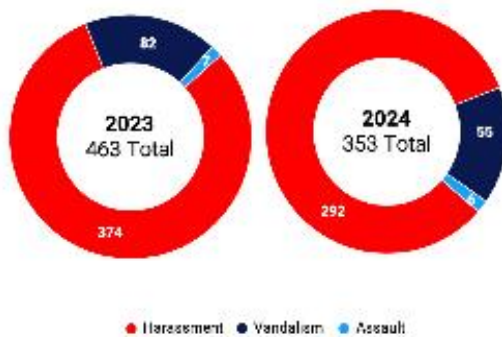
## Antisemitic Incidents in Florida in 2024



"Antisemitic incidents across the state mark a disturbing trend. While we welcome any decrease in the overall number of incidents, the significant rise in Israel-related antisemitic activity highlights the formidable challenges faced by the Jewish community."

-Daniel Frank, ADL Florida Regional Director


Antisemitic Incidents | ADL Florida  
↓ 24% down between 2023 and 2024



Data from the ADL Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2024



## Zionist Organization of America Invitation



ZOA FLORIDA INVITES YOU TO A

**A PRE-RELEASE  
SCREENING**

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 27<sup>TH</sup> 6:00-7:30PM EST**

**NEW COLLEGE  
Sainer Pavilion**  
5313 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota, FL 34234

TICKETS: \$18  
SPONSORSHIP: \$180  
INCLUDES 2 TICKETS AND RESERVED SEATING

[WWW.ZOA.ORG/EVENTS](http://WWW.ZOA.ORG/EVENTS)

Questions? Contact Allison Zur: [azur@zoa.org](mailto:azur@zoa.org)

**A Collective  
Descent  
into  
EVIL**

Top scholars, analysts, and journalists uncover the ideologies and strategies driving the barbaric enemies of Jews and Israel, as well as Western civilization. In doing so, they clarify what is at stake and what must be done to defeat these evil forces.

**THE LETHAL OBSESSION WITH  
JEWS AND THE JEWISH STATE**

After the film, we will have a discussion with the writer and director of the film, Gloria Z. Greenfield

**A FILM BY GLORIA Z GREENFIELD**

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### StopAntisemitism's 2025 Campus Antisemitism Report

One of our Alliance members shares this annual report about antisemitism on U.S. college and university campuses. "More than 140 campuses saw orchestrated protest actions, many supported by outside organizations with clear political agendas, synchronized messaging, and unified demands. These demonstrations have nothing to do with "free speech," they are about actions: encampments, mob intimidation, property."

Note that most of the liberal Ivy League colleges that promote DEI (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion) got an F rating. Most of the schools that earned an A rating were in the South. Read the full report here: <https://stopantisemitism.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-College-Report.pdf>

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## Netflix Releases an Antisemitic Film

Iron Lion Zion is an activist group combating BDS and antisemitism. They are sharing information about an attempt to revive the horrendous blood libel that has harmed Jews for centuries. In the Jordanian film, *Farha*, IDF soldiers are seen murdering a Palestinian family. The film is set in 1948 during the Palestine Mandate and tells a story of a teenage Palestinian girl who witnesses IDF attacks in her village. The production claims to be "inspired by true events," however this is a lie.

After you read this commentary, consider signing your name, and sharing this with as many people as you can.

<https://actionnetwork.org/letters/netflix-remove-the-antisemitic-blood-libel-film-farha?source=direct> link&



## Sarasota's School Board needs History Lesson

Norman Olshansky, Guest columnist

Sarasota Herald-Tribune, Dec. 28, 2025

- The Sarasota County School Board has implemented a new policy to begin its meetings with a prayer.
- The policy states there will be no guidelines or limitations on the content of the invocation.
- The article's author questions the policy's motivation and its potential conflict with the separation of church and state.
- Concerns are raised about the possibility of proselytizing or offensive language during the invocations.

A new Sarasota County School Board policy calls for a prayer at the start of board meetings.

The policy's opening paragraph states that the purpose of the invocation is "to assist Board Members in setting their minds to a higher purpose and to ease their task of governing the school district."

The policy also states that "no guidelines or limitations shall be issued regarding the invocation's content..."

In addition, it states that neither the board nor its employees will interrupt the invocation or dismiss the Speaker based on the content of the invocation

What if the speaker goes into a racist, Islamophobic, anti-Catholic or antisemitic rant?

What if the speaker starts to proselytize to make believers who are not of their faith?

Are prayers that are particular to one religious group appropriate for a diverse audience?

Private and personal prayer is the right of everyone under the First Amendment.

However, bringing prayer into public meetings, which are attended or viewed by people of many faiths, can be problematic, especially when they are not ecumenical in nature.

The very first invocation under the Sarasota County School Board's new policy was a prayer that only specific denominations of Christianity would find appropriate.

We would ask this: What is the real motivation behind this new policy?

Members of the Sarasota County School Board have been promoting efforts to bring their own faith into the schools in various ways.

What will be next?

Will Bibles be distributed?

Will prayers be conducted at the beginning of classes?

Will clergy chaplains that the state has authorized be used as counselors in the schools?

Will public support be given to parochial schools?

Our Bill of Rights, which is part of the U.S. Constitution, starts with the First Amendment.

Our Founding Fathers made it clear that there should be a separation of church and state.

Indeed, Thomas Jefferson coined the phrase "separation of Church and State."

James Madison went further and warned that "government involvement with religion could lead to the corruption of religion, threatening of liberty, coercion and favoritism.

Maybe the Sarasota County School Board needs to go back to school and take a civics history lesson.

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We urge you to write about your concerns to Terry Connor, Superintendent of Sarasota County Schools ([terry.connor@sarasotacountyschools.net](mailto:terry.connor@sarasotacountyschools.net)) and the board:

Click here to [Email All School Board Members](#)

Phone: (941) 927-9000 ext.31147  
1960 Landings Boulevard  
Sarasota, Florida 34231

Bridget Ziegler, Chair  
Robyn Marinelli, Vice Chair  
Liz Barker  
Tom Edwards  
Karen Rose  
Kathy Tomkins, Admin Asst  
Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP, attorneys



## Volunteer Opportunity: *Save Democracy for All*

The Suncoast Jewish Alliance continues to collaborate with the Social Justice Alliance of the Florida Suncoast to offer the *Save Democracy for All* conference on March 28, 2026. SJAFS is a group of 23 faith-based and lay organizations and individuals working to empower communities, advocate for policies to protect democracy through free and fair elections, civil dialogues, humane immigration policies, public education, equity and justice. Contact Julie if you can help during the planning, food procurement, and ushering on the day of the conference: [suncoastjewishalliance1@gmail.com](mailto:suncoastjewishalliance1@gmail.com).

### Community Outreach

The Alliance has held several community outreach programs ("Ripped from the Headlines") most recently at Temple Beth Sholom, the Cascades Jewish Club, and at the Bay Plaza Condominium. In late January we will engage with congregants at Temple *Kol Ami* in Tampa. If you would like the Alliance to provide a program and speak to your group, contact: [suncoastjewishalliance@gmail.com](mailto:suncoastjewishalliance@gmail.com)





Donate and Make Sure No Neighbor Goes To Bed Hungry

## "FOOD FOR OUR NEIGHBORS" FOOD DRIVE



We are hosting a food drive to collect essential items for local families and individuals in need. Every donation brings us closer to building a hunger-free future.

### Where to Donate:

**Food Drop-off Location**  
Church of the Trinity MCC  
7225 Lockwood Ridge Rd.,  
Sarasota, FL

**Collection Dates**  
Sunday: 9am-1pm  
Mon - Thur: 9am - 5pm

**Monetary donations**  
<https://ppay.co/cC9NSoZuIG0>

Scan QR Code

### Non-Perishable Food

- Rice
- Beans
- Oil, salt, sugar
- Maseca, flour, tortilla shells
- Pasta, pasta sauce
- Peanut butter
- Juices (incl. kid's)
- Cereals, Pancake, Syrup
- Oatmeal
- Bread, hotdog buns, bagels
- Chips

### Childcare Essentials

- NIDO Milk
- Baby wipes
- Diapers sizes 1 - 7

### Household Goods

- Body soap
- Dish soap, Laundry detergent
- Toothpaste
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels, Napkins
- Aluminum foil

