

*** For Immediate Release ***

Video Series Shows Challenges Facing Jewish College Students

The project, initiated by the Ruderman Family Foundation, brings testimonies of students harassed by anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli activity, as well as questions of Jewish identity and communal belonging on campus

Boston, MA, **DATE** – In a new video project initiated by the Ruderman Family Foundation, Jewish students from across the United States share their experiences on campus, in the face of anti-Semitism and anti-Israel harassment, as well as their feelings and thoughts about their Jewish identity. The project includes seven short videos, each featuring a student on a different campus who openly talks about his or her Jewishness, and the challenges he or she faces as a Jewish student in 2019.

Elisa Ceasar, a student and pro-Israel activist at City College of New York openly talks about threatening letters she received from Palestinian activists. She shares the unfortunate experience when she found Swastikas spray-painted on the door of the campus Hillel, which she heads.

In another video, Alec Rabin, who plays baseball for the University of Wisconsin Superior, describes his life as the only Jew on campus – with the nearest synagogue and congregation a five-hour drive away from him. Additionally, he recalls how his grandfather fought for the US Army in World War II, and shares his stories from the liberation of European Jews in concentration camps – and how they shaped his Jewish identity.

From Brandeis University, Shoshana Finkel describes her experience as a legally blind student and the challenges facing young people with disabilities on campus. At the same time, she shares the diverse and vibrant Jewish life on campus, with social gatherings, pro-Israel events and multiple prayer options.

Nathan Bentolila talks about the rampant anti-Israel activities at Berkley University and the attempts by Jewish students to represent their side of the story. At the same time, Azriel Ottenwalder shares the unique challenges as an openly gay and proudly Zionist student from the Dominican Republic, and his rejection by both the LGBTQ community and Latino students on campus for being pro-Israel.

“American Jewish students face unique challenges, both in maintaining their Jewish identities and their support for Israel. The young men and women who spoke on camera represent the future leaders of American Jewry, and as a community, we need to listen to them and explore how we can better support them,” **said Jay Ruderman, President of the Ruderman Family Foundation.** “The Israeli public is unaware of the amount of energy and commitment it takes Jewish students to remain proud of their Jewishness and supportive of Israel. Thankfully, many students persevere in the fight to uphold these values. If Israelis are to better connect with the Jewish community in the U.S., it is imperative that they understand the challenges they face on a daily basis, and the amazing work they do fighting anti-Semitism and anti-Israel bias.”

All videos are [available here](#)

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About the Ruderman Family Foundation

The Ruderman Family Foundation believes that inclusion and understanding of all people is essential to a fair and flourishing community.

Guided by our Jewish values, we support effective programs, innovative partnerships and a dynamic approach to philanthropy in our core areas of interest: advocating for and advancing the inclusion of people with disabilities around the world; modeling the practice of strategic philanthropy worldwide; and fostering a more nuanced understanding of the American Jewish community among Israeli leaders and its public. RFF continuously works towards strengthening this relationship, including Knesset Missions in New York City and Boston to further educate Israeli politicians on American Jewry and a Ruderman-sponsored Master's program at the University of Haifa on American Jewish Studies.

The Foundation provides funding, leadership, expertise and insight in both the United States and Israel, with offices in both countries.

For more information, please visit www.rudermanfoundation.org