



David B. Cohen Mayor

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Department of Health & Human Services Human & Volunteer Services Division

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ISRAELI - PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: Can there be Peace? Newton Human Rights Commission Screens Award Winning Film

Israelis & Palestinians – Conversations for Peace, a free public program presented by the Newton Human Rights Commission, took place at Newton Country Day School on November 13, 2007. It featured the film **Encounter Point**, winner of two 2006 Best Documentary awards; it drew an audience of nearly 150 people who watched the film and engaged in a thoughtful post-film discussion sensitively moderated by Rev. Walter Cuenin, now a Chaplain at Brandeis University.

Members of the audience, through their comments and questions after the film, showed an openness and awareness of the film's focus on recognizing the humanity of the other. **Encounter Point** follows the stories of eight bereaved Palestinians and Israelis who have chosen a path of dialogue and reconciliation, rather than revenge, in order to prevent further violence and other families' pain of bereavement.

The filmmakers JustVision, (a Palestinian, an Israeli, and a North and South American team), aimed to portray not the differing political attitudes or strategies that are regularly told in the media, but the untold stories of ordinary people from both sides who experience the conflict every day and yet are trying to transform it in the direction of peace.

Encounter Point is a wrenching and absorbing film that introduces viewers to an Israeli settler, a Palestinian ex-prisoner and bereaved brother, and several bereaved Palestinian and Israeli parents, who are willing to risk their safety and standing to seek nonviolent solutions. Information about the film, filmmakers, and links to other organizations, can be found on the website: www.encounterpoint.com.

The film is the first in the Newton Human Rights Commission's 2007-08 series of programs. The goal of the series is to promote dialogue and openness to discussing differences. The Human Rights Commission meets on a monthly basis and welcomes participation of Newton residents. For more information, contact Beverly Droz, Human Services Director at 617-796-1290 or bdroz@newtonma.gov. Visit www.newtonhumanrights.org.

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