

ACTION ALERT from Greater Philadelphia ZOA

ALERT: On the evening of Monday, May 15, those who care about the well-being of the Jewish People and Israel – and the importance of factual information rather than propaganda in America’s schools -- have an opportunity to have a positive impact at the meeting of the Lower Merion School Board. The meeting is scheduled to begin at **8 p.m. (please arrive earlier)** at 301 East Montgomery Ave Ardmore, PA 19003. We encourage you to attend and to inform others. Please forward this email and/or share its contents.

Your presence and voice are needed at the Lower Merion School Board meeting in light of an event that took place at Gladwyne Elementary School in March. At the school’s “Cultural Heritage Night” there was a display for “Palestine.” (The Lower Merion School District, according to its website, considers “Palestine” a country. You can see a screen shot below.) The display featured Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) flags; it asserted that Jerusalem is the capital of “Palestine;” it asserted that the Israeli town of Rameh (about 20 miles west of Tiberias) is in “Palestine;” it included a likeness of a cartoon character closely associated with the promotion of both BDS and the destruction of Israel; and it included praise for a singer who in turn has praised murderers of Jews and who has endorsed the destruction of Israel. See images below. Note there was a straightforward display for Israel as part of the event.

To be clear: The PLO flag is a hate symbol. It represents the murders and maiming of thousands of Jews in attacks that continue today – attacks that are financially incentivized and rewarded through what is known as “Pay to Slay” by the PLO/Palestinian Authority. That flag represents the denial of Israel’s right to exist and the right of Jewish people to have self-determination and peace in our historic and legal

homeland. The PLO flag is no less offensive or hurtful than would be a Nazi flag or a Confederate flag. The “Palestine” display in effect wipes Israel off of the map, and it distorts and misrepresents both historical and contemporary facts. Promotion of Jew-hatred or those who endorse Jew-hatred must have no place at a public school or frankly anywhere in decent, civil society. Schools must be places where facts matter and where propaganda is given no quarter.

At a time when there has been a meteoric rise in Jew-hatred; attacks against Jews; and incitement against the Jewish People, Zionism and Israel -- tolerance for Jew-hatred, promotion of Jew-hatred and the mainstreaming of anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel manifestations must be clearly and strongly rejected. School faculty, administration and other staff must be educated about these issues so that they can recognize hate symbols, hate speech and outright lies. They must be made sensitive both to the Jewish community’s concerns – and the predatory nature of much of the Palestinian-Arab campaign. Please see more details below under “Background.”

ACTION: Please attend the Lower Merion School Board meeting this **Monday, May 15**, at 301 East Montgomery Ave Ardmore, PA 19003. **The meeting begins at 8 p.m. Please plan to arrive early.** If you are a Lower Merion Township resident, you are entitled to address the board and raise concerns. It is our understanding that you must register to speak at the meeting. We understand that those registered to speak will each have three minutes to address the school board members.

If you opt to speak, please emphasize the points in this action alert and your own knowledge about the Palestinian-Arab war against the Jewish People. Please be respectful and civil. We want to be productive and constructive.

We encourage you also to email the acting superintendent, Ms. Shafer (the email address for her assistant is laperad@lmsd.org), and to each of the members of the school board. A list of school board members and their email addresses is at: <https://www.lmsd.org/board>
If applicable, please mention that you are a Lower Merion resident, and/or of you are a Lower Merion alum. Please copy Greater Philadelphia ZOA on the email you send. If you receive a reply from LMSD officials, please forward that to us at office@zoaphilly.org.

Please let others know about the school board meeting and what transpired at Gladwyne Elementary School’s “Cultural Heritage Night.” Please forward this ACTION ALERT to your email lists. Thank you in advance.

PLEASE NOTE: Whether or not you opt to speak at the meeting, at the meeting and in emails that you send, please be respectful and civil. We want to be productive and constructive. We can be firm without being confrontational. Please be concise in remarks and in emails.

BACKGROUND: Greater Philadelphia ZOA learned about the “Palestine” display at Gladwyne Elementary School’s “Cultural Heritage Night” shortly after the event. We wrote to the Gladwyne principal and acting school district superintendent to express our concerns on behalf of both the Jewish community and the pro-Israel community. We copied each member of the school board via email. We explained why much of the “Palestine” display was both alarming and factually incorrect, and we offered to provide training to faculty, administration and staff.

We noted in part There is no place today called “Palestine” that is recognized by the United States. We stated: “We call on officials of Gladwyne Elementary School and the Lower Merion School District to

disclaim their endorsement of the “Palestine” exhibit – which is implied since it took place in the school and was part of an official school event.

“We further call on school and school district officials to invite ZOA to offer sensitivity training and corrective information to staff about Israel, Zionism and the Palestinian-Arab war against the Jewish People – and the consequences of that war on the Jewish People.

“We also call on the school and the school district to institute guidelines and checks to make sure that propaganda and misinformation asserting defamatory and dangerous claims and hate symbols against Jewish people are never again allowed on the premises of any school in the district.

Acting Superintendent Shafer responded, noting “Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. ...

“Your letter raises several valid concerns and will help inform the District in reviewing its policies and procedures regarding District review and oversight of third parties it permits to use its facilities. I appreciate your offer of assistance to serve as a resource and will share that offer with appropriate administrators, including our Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.”

Greater Philadelphia ZOA then sent a follow-up letter emphasizing our earlier points and adding: “If young children are being taught things that are untrue and/or hateful at home, this must raise serious concerns in your school district. It seems clear to us that this is occurring. It seems also to be the responsibility of the school or school district to address this. Certainly things that are untrue ought to be corrected. If a student was taught at home that the Confederacy won the Civil War for example, that would be unacceptable and presents a problem for the community.”

There was no response to that letter, and Ms. Shafer has not responded to efforts to speak with her by phone. As far as we are aware, the School District and official have yet to apologize nor have they issued a disclaimer. As you can see from the screen shot below, the school district officially continues to refer to "Palestine" as a "country."

See the images below. If you have any questions or would like more information, please call our Office at 610-660-9466.



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GLADWYNE "BUILDS BELONGING" AT CULTURAL HERITAGE NIGHT



Gladwyne Elementary School recently hosted their annual Cultural Heritage Night as students and families gathered on campus to learn about and celebrate the eclectic mix of cultures and backgrounds that help make the Wolves' community such a special place!

The cafeteria was filled with an array of vibrant displays highlighting the many countries where our Gladwyne families have roots, including, but not limited to, Peru, Germany, Romania, Israel, Palestine, France, Australia, China, India and South Africa!

Gladwyne's Cultural Heritage Night serves as a wonderful opportunity

More News



EAGLES GREAT-TURNED-AUTHOR SHARES HIS STORY AT GLADWYNE

Former Philadelphia Eagle Brian Westbrook took part in Author Week at Gladwyne Elementary School

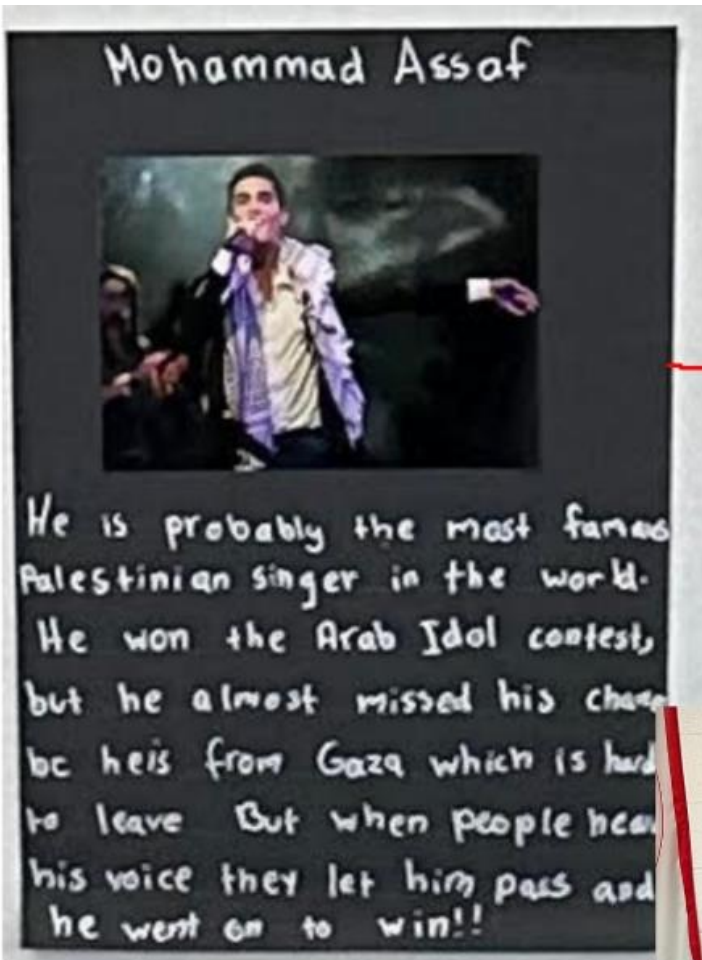


AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR MATT PHELAN VISITS GLADWYNE

"Palestine" is designated as a country



Note: Official Lower Merion School District website



Assaf conveys in his songs that “Jews must be wiped out of Palestine, and replaced with by Palestinian Arabs, only by Palestinian Arabs” according to Israeli investigative journalist David Bedein. According to a video expose of Mohammad Assaf, at least one of his songs “encourages martyrdom, jihad, and a Palestinian state that replaces all of Israel.”



JERUSALEM



Jerusalem is our capital and one of the oldest cities on earth! Over 3 million tourists go there each year.

They visit its famous sites like the Dome of the Rock and the Holy Sepulchre which are in the old city. The old city is surrounded by an ancient 6000 meter wall that you can also walk on!