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The JCC in Scotch Plains is hosting Step Up for Israel, a grassroots education and advocacy program

Scotch Plains – The JCC of Central New Jersey, located at 1391 Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains, is hosting Step Up for Israel beginning on Wednesday, February 1 at 7:30 p.m. and running through the spring.

Step Up for Israel, a free five-part film mini-course, is a grassroots education and advocacy initiative intended to give participants factual knowledge about Israel and the confidence to feel proud of Israel and inspire others to feel the same.

The first film is *Crossing the Line* on Wednesday, February 1. It is an in-depth view of the anti-Israel movement on campuses. This documentary demonstrates the blurring of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic lines.

The next is *A State is Born* on Monday, February 27. This film examines the legitimacy of the State of Israel through an overview of its history.

On Monday, March 26, the feature is *Searching for Peace*, which examines the specific issues important to both the Israelis and Palestinians in the peace negotiations with a focus on the validity of the claims and desires of each.

Israel and the West, on Tuesday, May 1, takes a look at the common values and threats shared by Israel and the Western world.

Finally, on Tuesday, June 5, *Communicating for Israel* will be shown. Viewers will learn effective communication tools and messages to speak on Israel's behalf.

All films are at 7:30 p.m., and all include a post-film discussion. Elliot Mathias will lead the discussion on February 1 and Natalie Elgrabli will lead all others.

Elliot Mathias is the Founder and Executive Director of Hasbara Fellowships, a leading pro-Israel campus activism organization working with over 100 universities across North America. Hasbara Fellowships trains and supports university students to defend and promote Israel on their campuses.

Natalie Elgrabli is currently the Israel Emissary (schlichah) for the Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey. In this role, she is an Israeli community representative who serves as a cultural and educational link between the people in our local community and the people of Israel. Natalie served in the IDF from 2002-2004 as a Casualties' Officer and is currently a captain in the reserve.

This program is co-sponsored by the Community Relations Committee of Metrowest & Central in partnership with the Jewish Community Relations Council, Jerusalem Online University and Hasbara Fellowships.

For more information, contact Amy Warsh, Cultural Arts & Education Director, at 908-889-8800 x205 or awarsh@jccnj.org or visit www.jccnj.org.

The JCC of Central New Jersey is located at 1391 Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains. The JCC of Central New Jersey is a constituent agency of the Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey, United Way of Greater

Union County and the Westfield United Fund. Financial assistance is available for membership and various programs.

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