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For Immediate Release

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Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding Takes a Stand for Peace

Produced First Virtual Gala Live From New York City - Hosted by Comedian Chuck Nice, honoring Netflix's Hasan Minhaj, Joyce S. Dubensky and Marcy Syms

New York, NY, June 15, 2020: In the epicenter of the United States' Coronavirus outbreak and now, more than ever in the wake of protests and riots, the work of the Tanenbaum | Center for Interreligious Understanding is crucially urgent.

Last month, Tanenbaum broadcast the first-ever PEACE MADE POSSIBLE Virtual Gala, celebrating the work and achievements of exceptional leaders and visionaries committed to building a world where religious differences are respected. Tanenbaum is committed to promoting justice and building respect with its supporters and partner organizations to combat hate and extremism, and stands with community members directly impacted by oppressive systems. A world where religious differences are respected is also a world where racial differences are respected.

The event streamed live on May 27th –and over 350 gala guests tuned-in live! Due to coronavirus concerns this year, patrons joined in the festivities from the comfort of their own homes – posting selfies and participating in a Zoom Happy Hour with the staff. The evening was filled with the celebration of outstanding honorees, comedy and music. Participants showed their support for the critical work of fighting prejudice and building a more just world for people of all faiths and none, through thousands of dollars raised.

Tanenbaum's 2020 Gala: Peace Made Possible Honorees and Host:



Media Bridge Builder Award — Hasan Minhaj

Comedian, actor and host of Netflix's Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj. Hasan represents a generation of young performers who are reclaiming their Muslim heritage in a post-9/11 world.

As a first-generation immigrant, Minhaj is outspoken about the various intersections of his identity as an American-Muslim of Indian descent who regularly shares how his faith impacts his life and incorporates his experiences into his comedy and work.

Hasan's willingness to analyze issues concerning Muslims in comedic ways actively combats religious tropes and contributes to positive representations of Islam in the media. His popularity allows people of different backgrounds to see that they too can be successful and embraced for who they are, without having to hide parts of themselves.



Visionary Award — Joyce S. Dubensky, CEO, Tanenbaum

Tanenbaum’s CEO, Joyce Dubensky, has directed its dramatic expansion, adding new initiatives to each of Tanenbaum’s core programs.

Her dynamic leadership transformed Tanenbaum from a well-regarded U.S. institution to an internationally recognized thought leader. After 18 years of leadership, CEO Joyce Dubensky is the recipient of the Visionary Award. Dubensky decided that it was time to step down from her tenure at organization in order to begin her next life chapter.

Her devotion to Tanenbaum’s mission—combating religious bigotry and building a world that respects difference – is unmatched.



Philanthropic Bridge Builder Award — Marcy Syms

Marcy Syms is a champion for social justice and has been an unwavering supporter of Tanenbaum and the educational work for over 20 years.

Much of what Tanenbaum’s accomplished in its work with teachers and educators is due to the support from Syms and the Sy Syms Foundation.



Host — Chuck Nice

Comedian and actor Chuck Nice is the host of HGTV’s Buy Like a Mega Millionaire, The Juice on Veria Living and The Hot Ten on Centric.

On radio, he gets to explore science as cohost of Star Talk Radio with his friend, Dr. Neil DeGrasse Tyson. He is a regular on The Today Show.

Leaving Tanenbaum in Capable Hands

Fortunately, Tanenbaum did not have to look far for an outstanding successor. Reverend Mark E. Fowler was unanimously chosen by the Board of Directors to begin the new chapter for the organization. Fowler has worked closely with Dubensky for the past 13 years, including for the past five years as the organization's Deputy CEO and Joyce's partner in leading the organization.

In response to the concern of the world's new normal in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fowler shared, "The global impact of the pandemic has added great stress to the cause of peace and justice, understanding and respect. Tanenbaum provides solutions to these seemingly insurmountable problems."

Tanenbaum works with our Corporate Members to ensure that employees of all religions and none have their beliefs respected in the workplace. Our Corporate Members represent over 4 million employees around the world, and we're honored to partner with them in implementing policy reviews and training; creating faith-based employee resource groups; and providing thought leadership to the global employment community.

Tanenbaum acknowledges the support of corporations and sponsors including AllianceBernstein, Allstate Insurance Company, Amazon, ARC Excess & Surplus LLC, Dr. Georgette Bennett and Dr. Leonard Polonsky CBE, Boehringer-Ingelheim, Bridgewater Advisors, Chadwick Eilig, Justin Foa and Candida Moss, Foa & Son, EmblemHealth, Ernst & Young, Barry Friedberg and Charlotte Moss, GlaxoSmithKlein, GW&K Investment Management, TJ Haynes-Morgan and Michael Morgan, Amy and Robert Heller, David and Hermaine Heller, Lalique, Libra Group, Hoover Milstein, Pfizer, Sara Pandolfi & Co, Skadden, Arps, Slate and Meagher and Flom, The Russell Berrie Foundation, The Sy Syms Business School, The Sy Syms Foundation, Target, Holly & Michael Weiss and Yeshiva University.

The organization is also extremely grateful for the support of its Co-Chairs and Committee Members, Dr. Georgette F. Bennett & Dr. Leonard S. Polonsky CBE, Angelica Berrie, Russell Berrie Foundation, Justin Foa, and Ilan Kaufthal. Bee Season Consulting LLC has returned again for another year as the special events production and fundraising company.

Tanenbaum's supporters are encouraged to donate by texting 347-970-2803.

For more information contact Tanenbaum's Communications Manager, Dasha Tanner, at dtanner@tanenbaum.org or (323) 828 - 0386.

Tanenbaum is a secular, non-sectarian nonprofit that systematically dismantles religious violence and hatred through Peacemakers in armed conflicts and by tackling religious bullying of students, harassment in workplaces and disparate health treatment for people based on their beliefs. More information about Tanenbaum's offerings can be found here: <https://tanenbaum.org/>

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