

## UWO students take interfaith roadtrip with plans for more

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Written by --

Monday, 29 March 2010

LONDON, ON – Students at the University of Western Ontario enjoyed a recent interfaith experience that explored the role of women within Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The free program, the Abrahamic Roadtrip, was founded three years ago by Hanna Alubaid, Bianca Canave, Itsham Yousaf and Marty Rotenberg, the student representatives of the Centre for Catholic-Jewish Learning at King's University College. It has since grown into an annual program featuring topics such as Environment and Religion and this year's Women and Faith.

With more than 30 students participating in this voluntary program, "it has been our biggest and most successful trip so far," said Rotenberg, who co-led the trip with the other student representatives.

He explained that part of the reason it was such a success may have been because the featured speakers were all women of faith themselves and shared their own unique personal experiences with the group. The students visited London's Chabad House, Brescia University College's chapel and the London Muslim Mosque, where they listened to presentations from Rebbetzin Nechamie Silberberg, co-director of the Chabad House; Dr. Colleen Hanycz, the principal of Brescia University College, and Sister Farah Al-Dahar, a professor of sociology at Fanshawe College.

Despite the differences in the customs and beliefs of the three religious traditions, they presenters emphasize similar values and strong faith. The Centre for Catholic-Jewish Learning is in the process of officially incorporating Islam into its mandate.

Bianca Canave, the Catholic student representative, noted that "historically the relationship between Catholics and Jews has not been positive. However, much has changed since the Holocaust and the Second Vatican Council in the mid 1960s."

There is hope that Jewish-Muslim and Catholic/Christian-Muslim relations in London can benefit from the relationship, which has already been established between the Jewish and Catholic communities. The work of the centre has been perfect for getting community members, students and faculty members of the university interested in and open to dialogue about the common thread within all faiths.

Canave said that her interest in joining the centre stemmed from a desire to use "religion as a tool for peace instead of a roadblock for hope."

Since most participants think that this roadtrip was the most successful thus far, and with a calendar of events that includes an coming interfaith Passover Seder experience, it seems as though they are doing just that.

Last Updated ( Wednesday, 14 April 2010 )

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