

*Remarks by Rabbi Arnold D. Samlan, Chief Jewish Education Officer, Jewish Federation of Broward County on Monday, October 29, 2018.*

Shalom.

Good morning and welcome on behalf of the leadership and professionals of the Jewish Federation of Broward County, which serves today as the host of this event.

This Shabbat, our Sabbath, marked the greatest tragedy to strike the Jewish community of America.

The Jewish community that we here at the Jewish Federation serve is a highly diverse one, religiously, ethnically, politically, geographically. Our community members don't look alike and don't vote alike. We are liberal, moderate and conservative, Democratic, Republican and Independent. We are American born, as well as first and second generation immigrants.

In many cases our community members speak different primary languages at home, including English, Spanish, Hebrew and others.

But when responding to needs or to crisis, the diverse elements of our Jewish community come together as we have after the tragic events at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and now again in the days following the murders in a sanctuary in Pittsburgh. And we are blessed with allies from across the Broward community.

We reflect today on the loss of lives and we recommit ourselves to action that will end hatred and violence in our society.

Our community prays for healing of all who were wounded physically and emotionally, May all of us who mourn be comforted and may the memory of those murdered be a blessing forever, inspiring us to acts of love and kindness.

In the words of a Jewish prayer: Although differences in thought and belief divide us, the love of truth and the pursuit of holiness unite us.

We are strengthened by the spirit of friendship among people of various faiths who join us today and who help to increase mutual understanding between us.

We look to a time in our Broward community and our world in which the message of peace and kindness that is at the root of all our religions will be reflected throughout our society.