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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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The Durham/Chapel Hill Jewish Federation Statement on the Palestinian Solidarity Movement Conference

Durham, NC – October 6, 2004 - The Durham/Chapel Hill Jewish Federation and its Jewish Community Relations Council have issued the following statement in regard to the upcoming conference of the Palestinian Solidarity Movement to be held October 15-17 at Duke University. The Federation is the umbrella organization for Jewish communal activities and agencies; the Community Relations Council includes representation from all Jewish organizations in the Durham/Chapel Hill area.

The Durham/Chapel Hill Jewish Federation supports the right of the State of Israel to exist within secure, internationally recognized borders, neighboring a Palestinian State. The stated guiding principles of the Palestinian Solidarity Movement not only fail to denounce terrorism but firmly and clearly challenge Israel's right to exist.

Although The Durham/Chapel Hill Jewish Federation values academic freedom, believes in the rights to free speech and assembly, and understands Duke University's decision to allow the conference, sponsored by a registered University student group, the organizers' guiding principles do not lead us to believe this conference is being held in the true spirit of academic dialog.

We appreciate the Duke administration's statement that they do not support the goals of the conference. We also applaud Duke University President Richard Brodhead's statement that the University will not divest from Israeli companies that may be in its investment portfolio. In addition, we support their efforts to meet with conference planners to review their responsibilities and to endeavor to ensure the safety and security of their students and faculty.

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The Federation recommends that the community support the Freeman Center for Jewish Life at Duke in their initiative for a comprehensive program to involve students in dialog about the conflict in the Middle East. We encourage participation in its Joint Israel Initiative, which will take place during the conference weekend, as well as throughout the academic year. For additional information about these programs visit the Freeman Center web site at <http://fcjl.studentaffairs.duke.edu/>"

The Durham Chapel Hill Jewish Federation is the central address for the local Jewish community and the umbrella agency for the Jewish Community Center Without Walls, Jewish Family Services and Jewish Community Foundation. Direct services include programming, education, counseling and referral, and building community through philanthropy.

The mission of the Durham Chapel Hill Jewish Federation is to strengthen and enrich the Jewish Community locally, in Israel and throughout the world. Our fund raising supports educational, social service and charitable programs that promote the Jewish values of K'lal Yisrael (taking responsibility for one another), Tzedakah (charity and righteousness), and Tikkun Olam (repairing the world).