



**Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center: More Than 2,600 People Gather at Spirit of Hope Benefit in support of Dialogue, Tolerance and Education**

**TORONTO, ONTARIO--(Marketwire - May 31, 2010)** - A cross section of Canadian society gathered tonight in Toronto to show its support for a future without racism, hatred and intolerance. The 2,600 strong audience, which included business leaders, educators, public officials, community groups and students, gathered at the Spirit of Hope Benefit, an annual event introduced in 2004 by Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC) to support the Center's programs in tolerance promotion, education, justice and human rights. The event featured an open discussion with Elie Wiesel and Sir Salman Rushdie, two remarkable men who have experienced the darkest effects of hatred, racism and intolerance.

"Simon Wiesenthal Center has been instrumental in sharing important lessons from the past to audiences around the world, and for this I am grateful," said Elie Wiesel. "I am delighted to be here with you to participate in such an open exchange on the theme of hope – that precious gift we all wish to leave for our children."

In line with its focus on education and community outreach, FSWC invited more than 500 students from Toronto-area high schools to participate in the unique experience.

"For a seventh straight year, the Spirit of Hope Benefit has given us additional confidence in our ability to build a better future with the help of a committed group of supporters," said Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean and founder of Simon Wiesenthal Center.

The benefit is the primary source of funding for FSWC and is expected to raise some two million dollars this year. Programmes offered by FSWC include student education and subsidies, Tools for Tolerance Programmes for Educators and Police officers, and Holocaust Remembrance initiatives. A complete list of programmes can be found in the About Us section of [www.fswc.ca](http://www.fswc.ca).

"On a daily basis our team is out in the community reminding people that hate and intolerance have no place in society," said Avi Benlolo, president and CEO of FSWC. "Thanks to the financial support of caring donors, our programs will continue to flourish well after our generation passes the torch."

According to FSWC leadership, an education that is based on tolerance, universal solidarity and respect for human dignity is at the heart of our quest for peace.

Persons interested in helping to fund FSWC programs can do so by visiting [www.fswc.ca](http://www.fswc.ca).

**About Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies**

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies is a Canadian human rights organization dedicated to fostering tolerance and understanding through community involvement, educational outreach and social action. The Center currently has over 25,000 members across Canada, and confronts important contemporary issues including racism, antisemitism, terrorism and genocide. Visit [www.fswc.ca](http://www.fswc.ca) for more information.

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