



Youngstown Area Jewish Federation

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE. THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

Contact:
Elise Skolnick
Director of Communications,
Youngstown Area Jewish Federation
330-746-3250, x187
eskolnick@jewishyoungstown.org

Executive Vice-President Andrew Lipkin Press Conference Statement on Security Issues

Thank you all for being here.

I am Andy Lipkin, the executive vice-president of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation. With me today are Rick Marlin, president of the board of the federation; Rob Elston, federation security director; Mike Rawl, JCC director; Bonnie Deutsch Burdman, Federation community relations director; and Elise Skolnick, Federation director of communications.

At approximately 5:30 p.m. yesterday, Rob Elston received a call from a law enforcement colleague to inform him of a concerning post that was discovered on Instagram. The concerning material was posted on July 11 of this year by someone with the Instagram name ira_seamus. We subsequently learned that ira_seamus was an on-line pseudonym for James Patrick Reardon.

The post contained a video of a man shooting what appeared to be a firearm with the capability of discharging multiple rounds in a short time span. The caption of the post states, "Police identified the Youngstown Jewish Family Community shooter as local white nationalist Seamus O'Reardon."

Rob immediately contacted Mike Rawl. Mike and Rob then immediately notified the Youngstown Police Department, the Liberty Police Department and the FBI. Mike also immediately spoke with me, Rick Marlin, JCC Board President Alan Mirkin, Bonnie Burdman, and Heritage Manor Director Cristal Vincent. He then briefed the leadership of the local synagogues – El Emeth in Liberty, which also houses the Children of Israel Congregation, Rodef Sholom in Youngstown, and Ohev Tzedek in Boardman. We arranged for extra uniformed security personnel to be stationed at the JCC and at all the Synagogues.

Later in the evening last night, I convened a meeting with Rob, Mike, and Bonnie to further discuss the developing situation. We remained in constant contact with the FBI and local law enforcement throughout the night and today, leading up to the arrest of Mr. Reardon. I want to

stress that we know of no other threat to the Jewish Community or to any of our agencies at this point in time. Nonetheless, I have directed that we maintain the additional level of security for the near future.

While we have no comment about Mr. Reardon and the criminal justice process that will determine what charges might be brought against him, I want to stress today that this is a clear example of everything going right. The system worked. We take very seriously the need to be vigilant to ensure the safety of all members of the local Jewish community, as well as all members and guests of our Jewish Community Center and our other agencies. Security has become a vital part of the mission of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation, a mission from which we will never waver.

I am so very grateful to the local FBI and law enforcement for their swift and strong response to this matter and for their continued willingness to keep the lines of communication open at all times. It is because of their efforts that a very positive resolution to this matter has occurred. The positive result here is a clear example of the importance of monitoring social media to identify credible, hate-fueled threats before they are acted on.

I am tremendously appreciative of all the leadership of the Jewish Federation – Rick Marlin and others – who strongly support our mission and provide us with the capacity to do all the good work we do on behalf of the community. I also want to acknowledge the members of my staff who, without hesitation, stepped up immediately and professionally to address this situation. While we would not normally be here today or working on the Sabbath, the circumstances obviously required our immediate attention.

We would like to thank the following agencies for their help in this matter.

1. New Middletown Police
2. Youngstown Police
3. Liberty Police
4. Department of Homeland Security
5. Federal Bureau of Investigations
6. The Secure Community Network
7. And our colleagues in both the Pittsburgh and Cleveland Jewish communities.

Thank you.