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**Contacts**

## *Reform Judaism Magazine Names Trinity a Campus of Excellence*

### College is One of 20 Small Schools Seen as Welcoming to Jewish Students

In *Reform Judaism* magazine's 2013 Insider's Guide to College Life Admissions, Trinity College is listed among the "Top 20 Small & Mighty Campuses of Excellence" as chosen by Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

The roster, which includes both public and private schools, appears in the fall 2013 issue of the magazine, though it was published in mid-August and is now widely available.

Of the honor, Lisa Kassow, director of the Trinity College Hillel, said: "It's fabulous. It's really nice to be recognized for our work in building a positive and vibrant Jewish community on campus."

Although Trinity was founded in 1823 and was affiliated with the Episcopal Church, it has been an independent, nonsectarian college since the late 19th century, and accepts students of all backgrounds, ethnicities and faiths.

In choosing which schools made the Top 20 list, Hillel used the following criteria: innovative Jewish programming; a growing Jewish enrollment; a dedicated professional leader; demonstrated support by the college; and a commitment to serve Jews of all backgrounds. In addition, many of the campuses on the list actively recruit Jewish students.

Trinity has a wealth of resources for Jewish students on campus. In addition to the active Hillel organization and the Zachs Hillel House on campus, the Jewish Studies Program offers an interdisciplinary Jewish studies major and minor.

Kassow agreed wholeheartedly with the *Reform Judaism* magazine's assessment of Jewish life at Trinity, adding "we run a boutique Hillel" that can offer programs, opportunities and resources that are first-class and of high quality. It's really a gem of an experience for a motivated student."

She noted that in addition to the usual activities, such as celebrating the Jewish holidays, Hillel offers creatively themed Shabbat (or Sabbath) experiences. For example, a Middle Eastern Shabbat was co-sponsored by the House of Peace. There also was an Indian Shabbat, an Iraqi Shabbat and an Alexandria Shabbat at which a kosher meal was based on Egyptian recipes.

Then there is the Pink Shabbat for breast cancer awareness. The idea came about when Molly Goodwin '09, attended the Hillel Spitzer Social Justice Forum in Washington D.C. as a sophomore, where she met representatives from Sharsheret, an organization that provides women of Jewish backgrounds who are diagnosed with or at risk for breast cancer with the support of peers and health professionals. Goodwin suggested to Kassow that Trinity's Hillel collaborate with the entire campus, through a Pink Shabbat, during October, which is breast cancer awareness month. Today, eight years later, Pink Shabbat is an annual campus-wide event in which organizations join together to raise awareness and funds while participating in Hillel's Shabbat traditions.

"The tools I used to make Pink Shabbat a success – leadership, project management, relationship building, and creativity – are just a few of the skills I nurtured and practiced throughout my time at Hillel," said Goodwin, who currently manages the matching grants program at the Jewish Funders Network in New York City.

At Trinity, there are other innovative activities as well, such as baking the traditional braided Jewish bread, challah, which Hillel then sells during the academic year as "challah for a dallah." The proceeds, said Kassow, go to a charity of the students' choosing.

In May of 2012, the Kassow Hillel Kosher Eatery at Trinity was formally dedicated, marking the first time in the history of the College that students could dine

on kosher food. The culinary addition to the Dining Hall was made possible by gifts totaling more than \$125,000 from individuals and organizations, including the Zachs family, the Samuel Roskin Trust at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and the law firm of Rogin Nassau LLC in Hartford. The eatery was named in honor of Lisa Kassow and Samuel D. Kassow '66, Charles H. Northam Professor of History.

Lisa Kassow said the creation of the kosher kitchen in the center of the main dining facility is a strong indication of the College's institutional support for Jewish students.



**Trinity students display loaves of challah, the braided Jewish bread.**

Also, Kassow has led two trips in recent years, one to the Abayudaya Jewish community in Uganda, where students engaged in a community service project by helping to spruce up a school in need of repair, and another where students – as well as College Chaplain Allison Read and Imam Adeel Zeb – participated in a weeklong interfaith service and study trip to the Caribbean island of Trinidad.

Kassow acknowledged that the College's name can, at first, be off-putting for some Jewish students who are contemplating applying to Trinity but assume that it is affiliated with a Christian denomination. "Jewish parents often remark that the idea of Jewish life at a place called Trinity College is an oxymoron," she said.

But Kassow noted that many colleges and universities across the country were founded by religious orders and are now nonsectarian. She added, "I believe that there has never been a better time for a Jewish student at Trinity College. Hillel and Jewish life are deeply integrated into the fabric of campus life."

For more information about Jewish life at Trinity or about Hillel, please contact Lisa Kassow at 860-297-4195 or at [lisa.kassow@trincoll.edu](mailto:lisa.kassow@trincoll.edu). For information about Hillel, please visit:

<https://www.trincoll.edu/spiritualandreligiouslife/hillel/>