FARMINGTON HILLS

Professor to speak on role of bystanders at Holocaust Memorial Center on Sunday

By Anne Runkle
arunkle@oakpress.com
@AnneRunkle on Twitter

A widely-cited expert and author will speak at the Holocaust Memorial Center on whether bystanders should be legally required to intervene in events such as campus sexual assaults.

The lecture by Amos Guiora, professor of law at the University of Utah, will be held at 2:30 p.m. Sunday at the center, 28123 Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills. The center requests RSVPs by . Call Laura Williams at 248-536-9605 or email rsvp@holocaustcenter.org. Admission is $10 and $5 for members and college students.

His lecture, “The Crime of Complicity: The Bystander from the Holocaust to Today,” will examine the role of bystanders during the Holocaust and in contemporary society.

Drawing on lessons from the Holocaust, such as the death marches and the German occupation of Holland and Hungary, and how they were dependent on bystander non-intervention, Guiora will share his own family’s experiences as well. He also will bring the issue into current perspective, citing examples such as sexual assaults on campus, along with other crimes where bystanders chose whether or not to act, and the resulting consequences.

He asserts that a society cannot rely on morals and compassion alone in determining our responsibility to help another in danger. He believes the obligation to intervene must be made a law, with non-intervention becoming a crime.

“If you are a bystander and witness a crime, should intervention to that crime be a legal obligation or is moral responsibility enough? These are some of the poignant questions and topics Professor Guiora will address at his lecture on Sept. 10,” said Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, chief executive officer at the Holocaust Memorial Center. “The comparisons to the bystanders of today to those who stood idly by during the Holocaust are striking. This will be a thought-provoking, moving discussion and we are honored to have Professor Guiora speak at the Holocaust Memorial Center.”

Guiora, a native of Israel, served for 19 years in the Israeli Defense Forces as a lieutenant colonel and held a number of senior command positions, including commander of the IDF School of Military Law and legal adviser to the Gaza Strip.

The Holocaust Memorial Center opened in 1984 and is the only such museum in Michigan. For more information, visit www.holocaustcenter.org or call 248-553-2400.