Community in Harmony 2009

On Sunday, 21st June 2009, Pat and Shirley DePass and I took part in the 'Community in Harmony' event held this year at Southend High School for Boys.

The purpose of the event was for different cultural, religious, ethnic and other community groups to get together and celebrate and value our diversity. The theme of course was respect and harmony.

There were stalls and groups from many different cultures and interests, including Christian, Quaker, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and representatives from the Orthodox and Reform synagogues. Jewish Care was also represented.

Our stall had literature and Judaica for people to see, which enabled us to describe some of our rituals and traditions and explain what our faith is about. We also gave out Matzah and Kosher wine. One of the ladies from the Muslim group read out a portion of the Koran in Arabic to me and we wished them Salaam Alaikum (Shalom Aleichem). We spoke with the Christian groups also about tenants of our faith and everyone was very respectful.

The weather was very kind to us and music and food were in abundance. The atmosphere was extremely friendly and pleasant with all groups and visitors taking an interest in what the different faiths and other groups were about.

These events are vital to encourage and facilitate education and communication between different groups in society, which in turn engenders understanding and respect. Without networking and reaching out to each other, misunderstandings and even hostility can develop between groups. I am sure we would *all* welcome harmony as opposed to division.

It was a good day and our synagogue, I hope, was well represented. We look forward to the next event!

Leigh Humpage (SDRS Member).

Many thanks to Pat DePass for providing the photographs used in the montage below.