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Announcing the *Faces of Israel* Film Release March 24, 2009 – Riverdale YM-YWHA

Faces of Israel: A Discussion About Marriage, State, and Religion in the Jewish Homeland will debut in a screening at the Riverdale YM-YWHA on March 24, 2009. The film poses a series of questions about hot topics surrounding what it means to live in both a Jewish and democratic state, and offers a variety of answers to these questions through the lens of the Israeli marriage process. *Faces of Israel* is an exciting, educational, and interactive documentary intended for a wide audience, from synagogue-goers to university and high school students to unaffiliated members of the Jewish community.

The documentary was filmed, edited, and produced by Amy Beth Oppenheimer, a recent graduate of Johns Hopkins University with a strong interest in questions surrounding religion and state in Israel. "I have received very positive feedback about *Faces of Israel*, and hope that the film will spark dialogue across the spectrum about the issues it presents," said Oppenheimer.

She continued, "While previews of *Faces of Israel* have drawn attention from communities across the country, I am pleased to debut the film in my hometown of Riverdale."

Amy began filming *Faces of Israel* in early 2007, capturing interviews with Israelis ranging from openly gay secular university students to Ultra-Orthodox Jews, including Israel's Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi. While Amy had no formal training in film, through perseverance and many sleepless nights, she produced a feature-length documentary that has been called "powerful... mature... honest... sophisticated," and "a must see."

The film presents an unbiased, yet no-holds-barred discussion of questions surrounding religion and state in Israel, focusing on the marriage process and other related issues. It has been endorsed by a wide spectrum of Jewish leaders such as Rabbi Basil Herring (EVP, Rabbinical Council of America), Rabbi Gordon Tucker (Conservative movement), Rabbi David Ellenson (President, Hebrew Union College), Rabbi Avi Weiss (Hebrew Institute of Riverdale), and Blu Greenberg (founder, Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance).

The debut screening will be followed by a cross-denominational panel including Rabbis Julia Andelman of Congregation Shaare Zedek, Yosef Blau of Yeshiva University, and Steven Burton of Congregation Shaarei Shalom. The panel will be moderated by Rabbi Seth Farber, founder of ITIM.

For more information, visit www.facethemovie.com