

As you may already know, there have been appearances of swastika graffiti in our schools, both in Hillsdale and nearby. As your Mayor, I speak for the Hillsdale governing body in assuring everyone that such actions and the discriminatory and hateful sentiments they represent have no place here in Hillsdale. The swastika graffiti is closely identified with a totalitarian, anti-Semitic, and racially discriminatory ideology which is 100% contrary to the values Hillsdale residents embrace. The discovery of such symbols has caused fear, concern and anger within our community. It also engenders embarrassment, despite the fact that they are the acts of a few juveniles who do not represent the values of the schools or the community. The various school administrations and local law enforcement departments are working to ensure that the individuals responsible for these actions are identified and appropriately dealt with.

We are a community where tolerance of cultural and religious backgrounds is celebrated as a strength. I am a firm believer that having a frank and open educational discussion about the Holocaust and the social/political events that preceded it is necessary in our schools, community places, and at home. Our young people must learn from the past. With the disappearance of aging Holocaust survivors who can bear witness to the past, the responsibility falls to our educators and the community at large. The Hillsdale governing body will be exploring with the other Pascack Valley towns what role our municipalities can play in that effort as we seek to coordinate with local & regional school administrators, educators, and local clergy of all faiths.

We recognize that unfortunate events such as these may continue to happen—the fight against ignorance is continual--- but through the educational efforts of our entire community, it is a fight that must be engaged.

Mayor John J. Ruocco

Dec 13, 2018