

# INTRODUCTION

## TJ LEYDEN

At this time, will you please take a moment to turn your cell phones to “silent” or “off” and refrain from text messaging during the program in consideration of our speaker and our audience. Thank you.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am (leadership position or organization), and it’s my pleasure to welcome you.

This program is sponsored by (list organizations).

Our speaker tonight is TJ Leyden. TJ became a neo-Nazi skinhead at the age of 15, and he spent the next 15 years as a promoter, organizer and recruiter for the white supremacist movement. At one point, he had more than 29 tattoos of swastikas and other Nazi symbols covering his body. He spent holidays and family vacations at white supremacist events. He committed violent acts against Jews, Blacks, Latinos, homosexuals and other minority groups on a regular basis. He even hung a Nazi flag over the crib of his newborn son.

Then, a life-changing moment turned him away from hate. Since then, he has abandoned the movement, and has gone in the other extreme direction.

Now, TJ is one of the nation’s most powerful spokespersons for tolerance. He has spoken at a White House conference on hate crimes at the invitation of the President. He even worked for the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles for over five years as a member of their anti-hate task force. He has been featured in *Time Magazine*, an episode of CBS’s “48 Hours” and several episodes of the “Gangland” series on the History Channel.

How can a man turn away from a life of hate that defined him for so long? And, what can we learn from his experiences that will help to combat hatred in our community?

You are about to find out.

Please join me in welcoming TJ Leyden.