

HBI Conversations: A Unique and Intimate Meet-the-Author Program

With the start of 2012, the HBI Conversations program will celebrate 10 years since its founding one sunny day in Palm Beach. Elizabeth Shulman, a leader in the Friedman Commission on Jewish Education of Palm Beach was taking a walk with HBI Director Shulamit Reinharz and said, "I'm bored." Shula asked Elizabeth what she wanted. "To have a serious conversation with a bunch of Jewish women about a well-written and interesting book," she replied. The rest is history. HBI Conversations Program was born and now has 500 members.

HBI Conversations is more than a book group, it's a book group with the author present - a Jewish woman with a new book. HBI Conversations now has 16 groups in 9 locations, and two HBI professionals at the helm – National Director Melissa Grossman and National Coordinator Nancy Leonard.

Grossman stresses that HBI Conversations offers one-to-one interactions between writers and their readers in a relaxed, informal setting. HBI Conversations groups are run autonomously, and books are chosen independently by each group. An unexpected outcome of HBI Conversations is the benefit that the authors tell us they derive from the meetings. And we are happy to report that Elizabeth is no longer bored.

HBI Conversations are located in Boca Raton, FL; Palm Beach, FL; Palm Beach Gardens, FL; Westchester, NY; New York City, NY; Stamford, CT; Howard County, MD; Baltimore, MD, and Montreal.

If you are interested in hosting your own local HBI Conversations group, please contact Melissa Grossman at gmelissa@brandeis.edu.

About the HBI (Hadassah-Brandeis Institute)

The (HBI) Hadassah-Brandeis Institute develops fresh ways of thinking about Jews and gender worldwide by producing and promoting scholarly research and artistic projects.