Since its founding, the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education has been committed to honoring the past by recording and sharing the experiences of local Holocaust survivors. In 1994 we conducted a video testimony project, Witnesses to the Holocaust, and later produced Portrait 2000, a photographic exhibit with accompanying narratives focused on personal prewar and postwar experiences.

Last year, to mark 70 years since the first wave of survivors arrived in Kansas City, MCHE invited those not previously interviewed to participate in an extension of Portrait 2000. Working with care manager and translator Sarah Chao of Jewish Family Services, the invitation also was extended to Russian-speaking survivors identified and served by JFS.

As she did for Portrait 2000, professional photographer Gloria Baker Feinstein graciously contributed her time and talent to make this project a reality. Her ability to relate to her subjects, even those with minimal English language skills, is something to behold.

With generous funding from the Flo Harris Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City, MCHE added 19 portraits to the exhibit. Photographed and framed in a style consistent with those from Portrait 2000, the new collection will be on display in the lobby gallery of the Jewish Community Campus from April 14 through May 9. In the future, all of the portraits will be exhibited under the new title, Honoring the Past.

The goal of Honoring the Past is to illustrate the richness of Jewish culture and tradition and to emphasize the resilience and determination of this immigrant group as they began their return to life. MCHE is extremely grateful to those who have shared their stories and allowed us to create this treasure trove of memory.

Go to mchekc.org/survivor-testimonials to access 73 testimonies from local Holocaust survivors, supplemented by links to historical resources that contextualize their experiences.

Check Out These New Titles in the MCHE Library!

The MCHE Library and Archive holds one of the largest collections of Holocaust-related materials in the Midwest. Over 3,000 titles are available for free loan, including books, films and curricula plus an archive of full-length survivor narratives that may be viewed onsite. All you need to receive your library card is a driver's license or school ID.

Visitors may borrow up to four resources for two weeks. Credit cards may be required for some materials. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday or by appointment (rhassig@bluevalleyk12.org) from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday evenings when Blue Valley schools are in session.

Recent Acquisitions

- Auschwitz #34207: The Joe Rubinstein Story by Nancy Sprowell Geise
- The Devil’s Diary: Alfred Rosenberg and the Stolen Secrets of the Third Reich by Robert K. Wittman
- Giants: The Dwarfs of Auschwitz, the Extraordinary Story of the Lilliput Troupe by Yehuda Koren and Eilat Negev
- The Nazis Next Door: How America Became a Safe Haven for Hitler’s Men by Eric Lichtblau
- The Nazi Titanic: The Incredible Untold Story of a Doomed Ship in World War II by Robert P. Watson
- The Prisoners of Breendonk: Personal Histories from a World War II Concentration Camp by James M. Deem
- Sifting through Ashes: Words & Images by Bruce Gendelman and Robert Miller
- Where the Birds Never Sing: The True Story of the 92nd Signal Battalion and the Liberation of Dachau by Jack Sacco

Thank you to Pat and Jack Weed for underwriting the purchase of Volumes I-III of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945 and to Stan Bushman for his commitment to purchase Volumes IV-VII when they become available.
In Tribute

ISAK FEDERMAN • MARCH 14, 1922 – SEPTEMBER 9, 2017
MAY HIS MEMORY FOREVER BE A BLESSING

Isak Federman was a Holocaust survivor—and yet so much more. Like so many survivors, he spoke of living two lives—one as a proud and grateful American—loving husband, father and grandfather, astute and principled businessman, generous supporter of the Jewish community—and another—one that shadowed him, despite his efforts to repress painful memories and to cope with the enormous loss that he and millions of other European Jews suffered.

Isak was charming and clever, smart and self-confident. I knew him to question a $180 expense out of a $250,000 budget or to ask for an explanation of a grant process because, as he said with a signature twinkle in his eye, “Jean, you know I only had an eighth grade Polish education.”

When Isak passed away on September 9, 2016, at the age of 94, he left a permanent legacy as co-founder of the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education, along with his good friend Jack Mandelbaum, who retired to Florida several years ago. Jack and Isak, along with Isak’s future wife, Ann, sailed to America on the SS Marine Perch, the second ship out of Frankfurt after World War II. After knowing these wise and resourceful gentlemen for several years, I remarked to them that I was surprised they weren’t on the first ship!

Isak and Jack have served as mentors, visionaries, and sources of inspiration for our board and staff, as well as for teachers and students touched by their experiences. I do not take for granted the trust they placed in me as executive director nearly 24 years ago, the business acumen they brought to MCHE, or their dedication to securing the future of the organization.

May Isak’s memory forever be a blessing.

Visit http://mchekc.org/portfolio-posts/federmanisak to listen to Isak’s testimony.

The following statement was co-authored last fall by members of the Association of Holocaust Organizations, a network dedicated to the advancement of Holocaust education, remembrance and research, and was affirmed by over 90 institutions and 70 individuals:

Recent months have seen a surge in unabashed racism and hate speech—including blatant antisemitism and attacks on Hispanics, Muslims, African-Americans, women and the LGBTQ community, as well as other targeted groups. Journalists have been threatened. Places of worship, schools and playgrounds have been defaced with Nazi symbols intended to intimidate and arouse fear. White supremacist groups have become self-congratulatory and emboldened.

As Holocaust scholars, educators and institutions, we are alarmed by these trends. History teaches us that intolerance, unchecked, leads to persecution and violence. We denounce racism and the politics of fear that fuels it. We stand in solidarity with all vulnerable groups. We take Elie Wiesel’s words to heart: “I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation.”

Therefore, we call upon all elected officials as well as all civic and religious leaders to forcefully and explicitly condemn the rise in hate speech and any attacks on our democratic principles. We call upon all media and social media platforms to refuse to provide a stage for hate groups and thus normalize their agenda. And we call upon all people of good conscience to be vigilant, to not be afraid, and to speak out.

MCHE Endorses Statement Condemning Intolerance and Hate Speech
Over the past two years, I have had the honor and privilege to serve as president of the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education’s board of directors. It has been an active and fulfilling time to observe the work of MCHE through teacher education, programs in the schools, involvement in the community and the expansion of our adult education. Please indulge me for a moment as I take a trip down memory lane…

**Members and Audiences**

MCHE reached its highest membership numbers with contributions exceeding $100,000 in the last fiscal year and a 10% growth in membership overall. Attendance at our programs continues to grow as lectures, exhibits, and the free film series draw diverse audiences from throughout the community. The new Lunch and Learn Series, with capacity enrollment, addresses the interest of those wanting more in-depth information about the Holocaust.

**Students and Educators**

The White Rose Student Essay Contest, now in its 22nd year, remains a successful program, generating quality entries from an increasing number of schools. Our Second Generation Speakers Bureau reached a record number of students in 2016 with 5,213 students from 35 schools attending these programs, either at their schools or at the Jewish Community Campus. Teacher education expanded to western Kansas through a workshop at Fort Hays State University.

**Community Partnerships**

MCHE maintains strong community partnerships, including those with the National Archives at Kansas City, the National World War I Memorial and Museum, the Coterie Theater and American Bar Association. In cooperation with UMKC’s School of Law, MCHE offered a film and lecture on the topic of Nazi law.

**Return to Life Concert**

Our Return to Life benefit concert at the Folly Theater last November netted over $46,000. James Murray III, director and conductor of the Northland Symphony, led a 40-piece orchestra in a beautiful interpretation of music played for the prosecution team at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1946 by a group of Holocaust survivors known as the Ex-Concentration Camp Orchestra. I will admit that this event was one of my favorite highlights during my term.

These programs and events reflect the dedicated work by our professional staff. You will not find a more engaged, enthusiastic and committed group!

If there ever is a question regarding the relevance of Holocaust education in today’s society, the current climate of antisemitism, hatred, and bigotry illustrates the ongoing need for the work of MCHE. Frequent bomb threats at Jewish institutions, desecration of Jewish cemeteries and swastika graffiti in communities across the country indicate that hatred against certain groups in our society is ever-present.

**My Mother’s Message**

The mission of the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education is “to teach the history of the Holocaust, applying its lessons to counter indifference, intolerance and genocide.” We have not only the opportunity but also the obligation to shape the behavior and character of our children by teaching them to recognize and respond to various forms of hate and prejudice. We must empower our youth not to remain complacent or silent. In the words of the late Elie Wiesel, “We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

My mother used to end her talks to students with this comment, “You do not have to love everyone, but you must not hate.” It is my hope that the continued work of MCHE will help relay her message to current and future generations.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to serve this wonderful organization.
TO OUR GENEROUS MEMBERS • CURRENT AS OF MARCH 15, 2017

Please use the attached envelope to become an MCHE member, to reactivate a lapsed membership, or to renew your current membership.

Memberships received between now and June 30, 2017, will be recognized in both our fall donor listing and by level in next spring’s newsletter and will be current through June 30, 2018. Italics indicate memberships due for renewal in June. Others are current through December 2017.
MCHE Website Features New Podcasts

MCHE has added two recent programs to its menu of available podcasts:
- Return to Life, a commemorative concert held at the Folly Theater in Kansas City, Missouri, on November 6

Remaining Films in MCHE’s Free Series Explore Remembrance

Jealous of the Birds • April 26
Some 15,000 Holocaust survivors remained in Germany after World War II. How could they stay? Jealous of the Birds was born from this pivotal question. Filmmaker Jordan Bahat’s quest for an answer begins with a desire to understand the choices made by his own grandparents. Through interviews with survivors, their children and other Germans, he explores what it means for victims to live among perpetrators and for children of those perpetrators to deal with the guilt borne from the crimes of their parents. It reminds us that choices of the past create legacies that play out across families, nations, cultures and generations. (Running time: 78 minutes, English, German with English subtitles.)

Remember • May 24
The drive for revenge and accountability are at the heart of this suspense-filled fictional account. With the aid of a fellow Auschwitz survivor (Martin Landau) and a hand-written letter, an Auschwitz survivor struggling with memory loss (Christopher Plummer) embarks on a cross-country odyssey to find the former Nazi responsible for the deaths of his family members. This film is sponsored by Dr. Kori Street. (Running time: 95 minutes, English – Rated R for strong language.)

All films will be shown in the Jewish Community Campus Social Hall. Advance reservations are encouraged by calling 913-327-8196 or emailing rsvp@mchekc.org with full contact information. Those making reservations by noon the day prior to each film will be seated at 6:30 p.m. Walk-ups are welcome and will be seated at 6:45 p.m. Movie snacks will be provided.

There is no charge for these programs or refreshments, but donations at the door are always appreciated.

Generous underwriters for this year’s series are the Norman and Elaine Polsky Family Charitable Foundation (patrons) and Marsha and Michael Weaver (supporters).
Echoes and Reflections — a curriculum created with the combined resources of Yad Vashem, the USC Shoah Foundation and the Anti-Defamation League—is an educational program designed for the 7th-12th grade classroom. Participants in this workshop will receive a complimentary copy of the Teacher Resource Guide and explore the content of the curriculum through primary sources, survivor testimony, literature, photography, art and artifacts. Registration is available at mchekc.org/echoesandreflections/.

The Holocaust is often seen and taught as an event with a singular perspective. By personalizing this history, we can understand how the same historical event impacted individuals in unique and varied ways. This series of three-hour workshops examines the experience of the Holocaust through various perspectives of those who lived through it.

Topics include Jewish Life in the Ghettos of Occupied Poland, Jewish Life in the Camps, Perpetrators of the Final Solution, and Holocaust Liberators. Participants will learn from short lectures, extensive primary source analysis and seminar-style discussions of the content. A registration fee of $10 per session or $30 for the four-part series includes materials and morning snacks. Registration is available at mchekc.org/perspectives.

Echoes and Reflections
JUNE 29, 2017 • 9:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM C
JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS
5801 WEST 115TH STREET
OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS

The Kennedy Assassination
Presented by Alexandra Zapruder
26 Seconds: A Personal History of the Zapruder Film
JULY 11, 2017 • 6:30 P.M.
KANSAS CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY, PLAZA BRANCH, 4801 MAIN ST.

Part biography, part family history and part historical narrative, 26 Seconds tells the moving, untold family story behind the Zapruder film footage of the Kennedy assassination and its lasting impact on our world. Alexandra, granddaughter of the late Abraham Zapruder, will discuss the book at a lecture co-presented by MCHE. Reservations recommended: 816-701-3401 or kclibrary.org.

History and Memory:
The Holocaust through Witness Testimony
JULY 11-13, 2017 • 9:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM C • JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS
5801 WEST 115TH STREET • OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS
Approved for Baker University continuing education credit

Alexandra Zapruder, editor of the award-winning book, Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust, will be the featured presenter on day one of this three-day course open to middle and high school educators. Teaching sessions will be followed by activities focusing on a new electronic version of Salvaged Pages and the supporting, interdisciplinary curriculum developed in partnership with Facing History and Ourselves.

Sessions on days two and three, led by MCHE’s director of education, Jessica Rockhold, will approach Holocaust history through primary source testimony, with emphasis on Kansas City survivors included in MCHE’s Witness to the Holocaust Archive. Special attention will be paid to analyzing different types of testimony, determining the role of memory in history and personalizing the Holocaust through effective integration of testimony into Holocaust education.

Complete details and enrollment information are available at mchekc.org/historyandmemory.

Perspectives on the Holocaust
JUNE 19-22, 2017 • 9:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM C • JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS
5801 WEST 115TH STREET • OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS

The Holocaust is often seen and taught as an event with a singular perspective. By personalizing this history, we can understand how the same historical event impacted individuals in unique and varied ways. This series of three-hour workshops examines the experience of the Holocaust through various perspectives of those who lived through it.

Topics include Jewish Life in the Ghettos of Occupied Poland, Jewish Life in the Camps, Perpetrators of the Final Solution, and Holocaust Liberators. Participants will learn from short lectures, extensive primary source analysis and seminar-style discussions of the content. A registration fee of $10 per session or $30 for the four-part series includes materials and morning snacks. Registration is available at mchekc.org/perspectives.
Certificate of Holocaust Studies Adds Undergraduate Track

MCHE and the University of Missouri-Kansas City are pleased to announce the expansion of the Certificate of Holocaust Studies to include a dual degree program, allowing students at UMKC to begin their Certificate study at the undergraduate level. This exciting change will allow for growth of the program and serve as a model for other partner institutions.

An introductory course, required of all students in the Certificate program, will be offered in the fall semester of 2017. This core class will be organized and facilitated by Dr. Andrew Bergerson of UMKC and Dr. Brian Cowley of Park University. The course familiarizes students with a variety of approaches to Holocaust and genocide studies through a review of the most recent research and encourages them to develop their own research interests.

Those interested in learning more about the program, eligibility requirements and application procedures should contact the program coordinator, Shelly Cline, at 913-327-8194 or visit http://mchec.org/certificateinholocauststudies.

Congratulations to Tracy Cobden, a teacher at Raytown High School, who last spring became the first student to complete the Certificate of Holocaust Studies.
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MCHE ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTIONS
HONORING OUTGOING PRESIDENT
JOYCE HESS

TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2017, 7:00 P.M.
JEWISH COMMUNITY CAMPUS SOCIAL HALL

Dessert Reception Following

Invitations will be mailed to all MCHE members in May.
Non-members are also welcome.
rsvp@mchekc.org • 913-327-8196

Visit mchekc.org/mche-newsletter for an online version of this newsletter.