



MCHEnews

MIDWEST CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION MAKING A DIFFERENCE SINCE 1993

FALL/WINTER | 2023/2024

Remembering Jack Mandelbaum

OF BLESSED MEMORY • 1927 - 2023

He was living a happy childhood that was interrupted by war. His family was torn apart and destroyed by the Holocaust. His formal education and youth were stolen and replaced by forced labor and a struggle for daily survival. Each of these profound losses made Jack Mandelbaum the person he became. But, as so many survivors did, he chose to live his life working to create something better. As he said, "I have tried to live with tolerance and forgiveness as the themes of my life."

Jack focused first on building his family and business – both of which thrived. He became a prominent figure in the Kansas City community and in the New American Club – the local Kansas City survivor organization responsible for so many of our community's early Holocaust commemorative efforts. Then, after a personal interaction that made him aware of the lack of understanding surrounding the Holocaust, he approached his friend, Isak Federman, and together they worked to

establish the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education in 1993.

Having missed most of their own formal education, it is a profound statement that the founding vision of MCHE was to be an educational outreach center. Jack and Isak envisioned an organization that valued preservation and commemoration, but had a vision forward – empowering next generations with critical information and encouraging action by applying lessons learned to the future. They created the space for MCHE to be both responsive and proactive – features of our work that invite people to be active participants in the process of learning rather than passive consumers of information.

As Jack noted in his biography, *Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps*, "God gave us the power to be good or evil. This is our choice. Because some pick evil, we must work together to recognize and stop it. But while we survivors may lead the charge, we cannot do this alone. It must be the goal of all people. If we will join in this



goal, then there is hope for humanity."

Our work, 30 years after MCHE's founding, honors this commitment to call people into this mission, and we are deeply grateful for the legacy entrusted to all of us by Jack and Isak. May Jack's memory be for a blessing to all.

Visit mchekc.org/testimonial/jack-mandelbaum/ to view Jack's testimony and learn more about his life.



Jack Mandelbaum and Isak Federman



The Role of Holocaust Education in Addressing Antisemitism

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE | JESSICA ROCKHOLD



By now we all know the statistics. There is a steady and disturbing rise in reported antisemitic incidents locally, nationally and internationally

(see page 11, Antisemitism in Schools).

We know that the rise is not just related to an individual's willingness to report the incident. It correlates with a direct increase in the number of incidents themselves. Given that this rise occurred at a time when the field of Holocaust education is well-developed and professionalized, there have been calls to re-evaluate the role of Holocaust education in addressing antisemitism. Some – notably writer and novelist Dara Horn – have gone so far as to question whether Holocaust education contributes to antisemitism.

The Longest Hatred

Antisemitism is a centuries-old hatred. The adage goes that for as long as there have been Jews there has been antisemitism. The degree to which it is visible and tolerated in society ebbs and flows – times of social unrest and discontent always correspond to rises.

Antisemitism has a remarkable capacity to evolve and adapt to the current society and time – always trading on the same tropes, but also always modernizing and remaining relevant to those who promote it. The Nazis gave us the most visible and recognizable example of extreme antisemitism in the Holocaust, so for many there was hope that, though deeply entrenched and centuries old, antisemitism could end if we just taught about the Holocaust.

The Right Questions

Holocaust education is not a panacea for antisemitism – or for any of the other hateful “isms” in our society. Rather, understanding of the Holocaust and the human suffering it caused equips us to ask the correct questions.

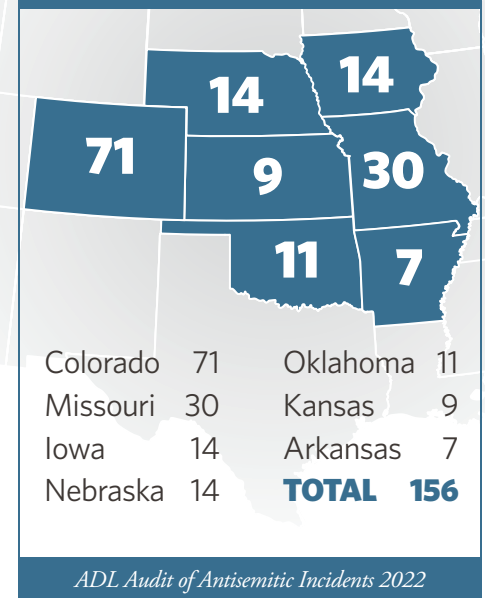
It gives us the awareness and the language to challenge hate – to name it and to seek to rectify it. It gives us a common framework to begin to consider our own ethical and moral responsibility for personally addressing hate – against the Jewish community or any other community.

Holocaust education alone will not and cannot end antisemitism. But it is our job to teach, to have difficult discussions about responsibility, and to strive for a world

with less hate. Grappling with the lessons of the Holocaust and understanding how unchecked hate can destroy our societal structures and create genocidal “otherness” is a critical step in empowering each of us to stand up to such hate when we encounter it.

Education is only one component of success. The rest of it is up to us and our willingness to act.

Reported Antisemitic Incidents in 2022 in States Served by MCHE



MCHE Youth Leadership Academy to Launch in 2024

Throughout the coming year, MCHE is studying youth leadership programs of other Holocaust and education centers and consulting with community constituents to create a plan for youth leadership at MCHE.

Our goal is to equip and motivate students to counter indifference, intolerance and genocide — MCHE's mission — and to enroll the first cohort in Fall 2024.

We hope to attract young leaders to create a diverse group involving youth from urban, suburban and rural areas that is inclusive, racially and culturally diverse, and open to all faith practices.

Stay tuned for updates as we work to build something new!



It is alarming and can be discouraging to read Anti-Defamation League statistics that show antisemitic incidents and acts of hate on the rise in the United States. Crimes fueled by bigotry and intolerance occur so

frequently that incidents like the horrific Jacksonville shooting of three people of color with a gun emblazoned with a swastika soon fade from the news. Another comes along.

Frightening as the statistics are, at the risk of sounding Pollyanna, I can find reason for optimism in the situation. We are in a better position to confront this problem than in the past because we remember, we see the problem today, and we have the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education.

No More Illusions

My family's story is one of German Jews who thought of themselves as assimilated. They enjoyed centuries of good relations with non-Jews, and many said that Hitler and the Nazis would fade away. All four of my grandparents plus other family members were among the Six Million killed in the Holocaust by the Nazis.

American Jews may be even more assimilated today than the German Jews of pre-World War II. However, in the face of contemporary articulations and acts of antisemitism, few suggest that it will fade away on its own. We embrace the lessons of the Holocaust, which teach that we must push back now, tomorrow and without relent.

And that's the source of my optimism and enthusiasm for the work of MCHE! The founders of MCHE had the foresight

A Hopeful Eye on an Alarming Situation

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE | STEVEN E. COLE

to create an organization that would use education to fight bigotry, hatred, intolerance and antisemitism. Instead of creating a museum, MCHE operates in schools and the community, teaching what happened in the Holocaust – the early signals, how it evolved, and how inaction or inadequate action allowed it to grow into the largest genocide in history.

MCHE's founders saw that, ultimately, fighting antisemitism does not protect just Jews but upholds values of equality, justice and tolerance for all.

Educate Broadly

The founders of MCHE recognized that recounting to ourselves what happened under the Nazis cannot prevent a recurrence in the future. So, they made it our organization's mission to educate the broader population by working in concert with courageous community partners.

Many members of MCHE's team, Board of Directors, and Council of Advocates are not Jewish. Participants in our first European Educational Trip come from churches and synagogues. Educators from Lone Jack, Missouri, to Gentry, Arkansas, to Olathe, Kansas, make MCHE's lesson plans, materials and speakers a part of their curriculum. Military commanders invite us to speak to their groups as do community leaders like the clergy of the Church of The Resurrection.

MCHE's founders saw that, ultimately, fighting antisemitism does not protect just Jews but upholds values of equality, justice and tolerance for all. Thus, it is forever incumbent upon us to reach and teach the broader community.

Thus we encourage you to attend our programming and bring friends, particularly those who lack background in events of the Holocaust. Maintain your membership and increase your financial support, if able. Being involved in MCHE means that you will help us reach more people, get more partners, and thereby ensure that the oft-cited phrase "Never Again" is a reality, and we live in a society where people of all backgrounds can live in peace without fear of discrimination or hatred.

For an in-depth look at the impact of MCHE over the last year, please see our annual report section in this issue.

IMPACT

KC to DC 2023

PROGRAM UNITES TEACHERS FROM ACROSS KANSAS AND MISSOURI

The 17 middle and high school teachers who participated in KC to DC 2023 came from urban, suburban and rural districts across Kansas and Missouri — places such as Arma, Easton, House Springs, Monett, Noel and Sullivan.

LEARNING AND LESSON PLANS

The geographic diversity of these teachers underscores MCHE's work to reach beyond Kansas City and make meaningful connections throughout the Midwest. We call the program KC to DC because important educational sessions happen in KC under the leadership of MCHE's Dr. Shelly Cline and Laura Patton.

Participants commit to an educational session and a rigorous homework assignment during the month of June. They attend another educational session in late July and create a Holocaust lesson plan suitable for their own classrooms. The lessons from this year's teachers will be available on our website by the spring semester for all educators to use.

USHMM GUIDED TOURS

The highlight of the program is a trip in July to USHMM in Washington, D.C., which is generously supported by Sam Devinki. This year, the teachers benefited from guided tours of both the museum's permanent exhibition and *Americans and the Holocaust*, the museum's current temporary installation. In addition to learning, the time the teachers

spend together in D.C. helps them develop professional and personal connections that will continue to support their teaching.

Interested in participating? The program will be offered again in Summer 2025. Watch our website for application information and follow our other professional development opportunities through the next year!



Educators gather for a photo with the MCHE team and Sam Devinki before touring *Americans and the Holocaust*.

“Laura, Shelly and Sam have gone above and beyond to be the best resources I have ever known, and being in the presence of these educators as well was an absolute honor. Thank you so much for everything!”

— Nicole Myers, Valley Middle School, House Springs, Missouri



Participants visit the Tower of Faces commemorating the community of Eisiskes, Lithuania, which was destroyed in *Einsatzgruppen* actions in 1941.



Educators view damaged Torah scrolls in the *Kristallnacht* section of the permanent exhibition.

Auschwitz Fellows in Poland

AREA EDUCATORS GAIN INSIGHTS, STRATEGIES AND NETWORK

Two MCHE-nominated Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Foundation (ABMF) Fellows joined 31 educators from across the U.S. for a week-long study trip to Poland in July.

This is the second year that MCHE has partnered with ABMF on its Fellowship program, which provides participants firsthand experiences as well as opportunities to connect with educators from across the country. Our regional educators, Elijah Moore and Ashley Young, were generously funded by Bank of America.

“This experience has given me new insights to share with my students and a renewed drive to show why we must never let campaigns of hatred surface and succeed again,” said Moore.

“In addition to the insights I have gained, I have also acquired a network of passionate, knowledgeable colleagues with whom to collaborate and share educational strategies, lessons and experiences.”

The fellows met in Warsaw where they visited the former Warsaw Ghetto to see remnants of the ghetto wall, the *Umschlagplatz*, the Jewish cemetery, and the ruins of the resistance headquarters at Mila 18. Fellows also spent time in the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which details centuries of Jewish life in Poland, and the Jewish Historical Institute, which houses the *Oneg Shabbat* Archive. There they saw artifacts and documents hidden by those who lived in the Warsaw ghetto.

The group traveled to Krakow where they visited Kazimierz, the Jewish district and the former Jewish ghetto, before continuing on to Oswiecim. They spent an intensive two days at the Auschwitz I and Birkenau sites, walking the grounds, visiting the conservation labs, and participating in workshops led by the museum’s educational staff.



Elijah Moore and Ashley Young on the ramp just inside the main gate at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Holocaust Educator of the Year 2023-2024

Nominations are not due until Friday, March 1, 2024, but it is not too early to begin thinking about the Holocaust Educator of the Year (HEDY).

The HEDY recognizes an educator — currently teaching the Holocaust in grades 7 through 12 — who demonstrates excellence in the following areas:

- Pedagogy — This teacher employs research-based, best-practice methods of Holocaust instruction specifically and teaching generally.
- Continuous Learning — This teacher actively pursues professional development as a Holocaust educator by attending lectures, workshops, courses — online and in-person — and by reading. This teacher inspires students to learn about the Holocaust beyond the classroom.
- Historical Knowledge of the Holocaust — This teacher strives to provide historically accurate information during instruction and model the practices of good historians in class activities.
- Walking the Talk — This teacher demonstrates commitment to applying the lessons of the Holocaust in creating a more just and peaceful world today.

Nominations for HEDY may come from colleagues, administrators, parents, current students, former students, school board members, community members — anyone who has knowledge of a teacher’s commitment to Holocaust education. Teachers may nominate themselves.

We encourage the nomination of teachers who frequently engage with MCHE programs.



Nominations are due by March 1, 2024
at mchekc.org/educator-of-the-year.

DONATIONS RECEIVED JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

THANK YOU for your support which resulted in our largest membership year in the history of the organization. We cannot do it without you!

Please visit mchekc.org/membership to use the enclosed envelope to become a member, renew your membership for 2024, make a general donation, or give a gift membership.

LEGACY GIFTS

Make Holocaust education part of your enduring philanthropic legacy by including a gift to MCHE in your will, your trust, or by beneficiary designation. Contact Jessica Rockhold at 913-327-8191 or jessicar@mchekc.org to become a legacy donor.

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*Of blessed memory

IMPACT

Annual Report | Fiscal Year 2023

MIDWEST CENTER FOR
HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

IN MANY WAYS last year was the first of “new normal” at MCHE, after the pandemic and after the Auschwitz exhibit. It represents the end of a whirlwind three years of incredible change, growth and seizing new opportunities.

The pace of our educational programming has not slowed since the Auschwitz exhibit closed – a remarkable achievement for our small and dedicated team and a necessary sustained pace to meet the increasing demands for our services and programs.

As we head into the next phase of our work, having marked a significant anniversary and the closing of a major project, we are focused on ensuring that every program we offer – every class we teach – upholds the second mandate in our mission, which is to apply the lessons of the Holocaust.

The importance of the history we teach continues to open doors. Now we work to ensure that the sustained impact of lessons of this history resonate throughout the Midwest.

Jessica Rockhold, Executive Director

THIS YEAR WE ...

Delivered **81 Rosh Hashanah bags** and marked **103 survivor birthdays** including a **95th birthday for Gitla Doppelt**.



Participated in the **Kansas and Missouri Holocaust Commissions**. Co-chaired the Kansas Commission where we plan the **Kansas Holocaust Commemoration** each spring. Served on the **education subcommittee** responsible for **supporting the Holocaust education mandate in Missouri**.

Held **30th Anniversary Special Programming and Events**

- Hosted initial **I Witness Programs**
- 6 pre-trip learning sessions** leading up to our **first European study tour**
- Awarded **Inaugural Holocaust Educator of the Year**
- Awarded **Inaugural Ruthie Research Grant**

Hired **Laura Patton** as our Program Associate responsible for **outreach to our 7-12th grade learners** and building relationships with professional educators **throughout the region**.



Celebrated the **Emmy Nomination of all these delicate sorrows**.

MCHE maintains a strong financial position thanks to

the support of our members, which once again is the **highest total** in our **30 years**



a **Legacy Donation Challenge Grant** from MCHE benefactors

Karen and Mike Herman, who matched up to **\$50,000** in new memberships through 2023.



support from our **grant agencies**



In honor of our **30th anniversary** in 2023, we look back at the **most significant event in MCHE history in each year.**

- 1993 – MCHE incorporated
- 1994 – *Witnesses to the Holocaust* project recorded 48 witness testimonies
- 1995 – Isak Federman Holocaust Teaching Cadre formed
- 1996 – Initiation of White Rose Membership Society
- 1997 – I Witness program launched featuring Holocaust survivors
- 1998 – MCHE Library opened
- 1999 – MCHE's first website launched
- 2000 – Portrait 2000 Survivor Recording and Photo Project
- 2001 – Publication of *From the Heart: Life Before and After the War – A Mosaic of Memoires*
- 2002 – Mosaic of Memories Classroom Slide Show created
- 2003 – MCHE's 10th Anniversary featuring Dudu Fischer
- 2004 – Kansas City Together Law Enforcement Training Program launched
- 2005 – Educational partners to KC Public Television for *Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State*
- 2006 – *The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936* exhibition in partnership with the American Jazz Museum and Negro Leagues Baseball Museum
- 2007 – Together We Remember Student Program launched
- 2008 – 15th Anniversary Speaker Series
- 2009 – *Witnesses to the Holocaust* Documentary Series produced
- 2010 – *Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race* exhibition in partnership with the National Archives at Kansas City
- 2011 – MCHE's 18th Anniversary Celebration – *To Life!*
- 2012 – Publication of *Collective Voices – a Second Generation* writing project
- 2013 – Extensive teacher education programming
- 2014 – *Witnesses to the Holocaust* Archive launch online. *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda* exhibition in partnership with the National Archives at Kansas City.
- 2015 – Graduate certificate with UMKC and other partner universities launched
- 2016 – *Return to Life* Concert
- 2017 – Expansion of the Portrait Project with addition of 22 survivors
- 2018 – 25 events to mark 25 years
- 2019 – Daffodil Project installed around Memorial to the Six Million
- 2020 – Launch of online learning and regionally available programming
- 2021 – *Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.* in partnership with Union Station Kansas City
- 2022 – Inaugural year of Auschwitz Legacy Fellowship Program
- 2023 – I Witness Anniversary Series, European Study Tour

AWARDS & CELEBRATIONS

Inaugural Holocaust Educator of the Year

ANGELA GOTTESBUREN, LONE JACK HIGH SCHOOL, LONE JACK, MISSOURI

Excerpts from Angela's Acceptance Speech May 1, 2023

It is a great honor to be standing before you as the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education's first Holocaust Educator of the Year...

When it comes to teaching about the Holocaust, I hold Elie Wiesel's words close to my heart: "To hear a witness is to become a witness." I use his words as my guidance for teaching and learning about the Holocaust. I have had the great honor of meeting several Holocaust survivors, and their stories are engraved in my heart. Oftentimes, history seems very far away to young students, but I try to make it come alive to them by sharing the personal stories of survivors and victims...

The Midwest Center for Holocaust Education, and even more specifically, Jessica Rockhold and Dr. Shelly Cline, have helped me grow as an educator...The Holocaust education provided by the Center has not only increased my knowledge on the topic; it has also moved me toward a deeper understanding. Most importantly, the Center has allowed me to educate my students about the Holocaust and give them a clearer picture of the men, women and children who were deeply affected by the terrible machinations of Nazi policy.

To read Angela's entire speech, please go to <https://mchekc.org/holocaust-educator-of-the-year-honoree-2023/>



Angela Gottesburen (center) with Lone Jack's 2023 White Rose Finalists.

Ruthie Research Grant Awarded

RESEARCH EXPLORES NAZI-ERA ART LOOTING AND RESTITUTION

In May, MCHE awarded its first Ruthie Research Grant to Beatrice Levine. Beatrice is pursuing a master's degree at the University of Kansas in art history. Her research focuses on Nazi-era looted art and the process of returning these works to their rightful owners. She holds a BA in art history and completed a Certificate of Holocaust Studies from KU.

The Ruthie Graduate Research Fund, named in honor of benefactor Ruthie Abend Tivol, supports a graduate student's travel costs incurred to further their research. With this grant, Beatrice traveled to the University of Denver to attend the Nazi Era Provenance Research Training Program, which focused on art collection ethics. Students learned the fundamentals of tracing the provenance of Jewish-owned art to museum collections.

"This opportunity not only allowed me to further my academic research, but also to learn vital information to help survivors and their families navigate restitution efforts still ongoing today. I am extremely grateful to MCHE and Ruthie Tivol's generosity for their support and investment in burgeoning Holocaust research."

— BEATRICE LEVINE

Beatrice's research, "Nazi-Era Art Looting and the Status of Art Restitution Today," explores what steps the art world is taking to facilitate restitution and search for masterworks still missing today, examines the history of Nazi looting, and questions where the art world is excelling and where it is failing in its efforts to return looted works to their rightful owners.

MCHE REACH

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

\$156,000

in membership income from over

460 Individual and Organizational members, the highest membership total ever

in MCHE's 30-year history.

ONLINE REACH



Youtube:
297,900
views for 70,300
hours of watch time



Facebook:
2,553
followers



Website:
32,695 users
for 85,956 page
views

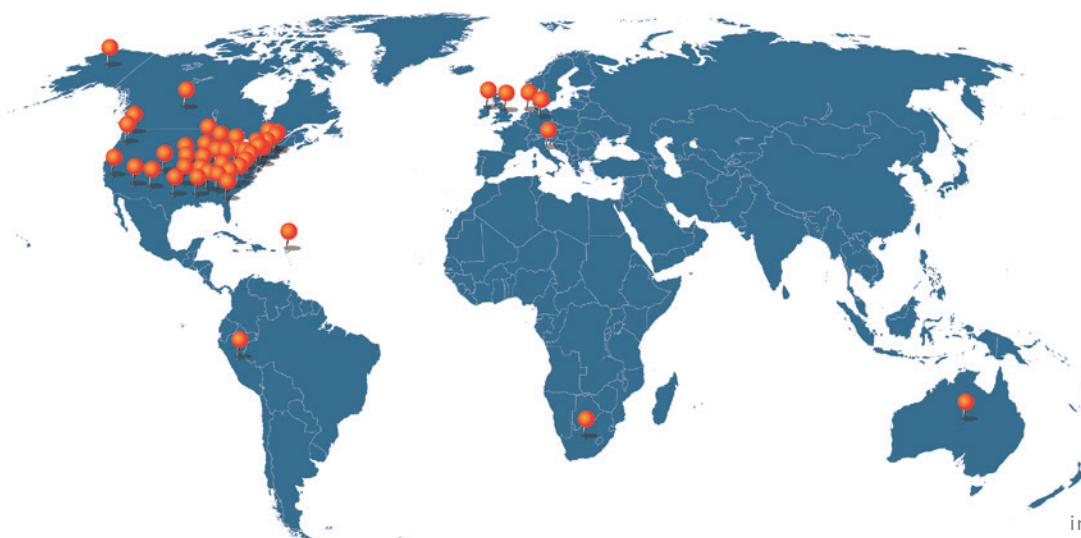
PHYSICAL REACH

Direct participation in MCHE educational programming from the **U.S.** and **internationally**.

Alaska	Florida	Massachusetts	New York	Texas
Alabama	Georgia	Michigan	North Carolina	Virginia
Arizona	Illinois	Minnesota	Ohio	Washington
Arkansas	Indiana	Mississippi	Oklahoma	West Virginia
California	Iowa	Missouri	Oregon	Wisconsin
Colorado	Kansas	Nebraska	Pennsylvania	
Connecticut	Louisiana	New Jersey	South Carolina	
Delaware	Maryland	New Mexico	Tennessee	

Australia	Great Britain	Italy	The Netherlands
Canada	Ireland	Peru	US Virgin Islands
Germany	Israel	South Africa	USA

+ 113
countries
in every corner
of the globe have
connected with our
online resources.



The incredible pace of our educational programming has not slowed since the Auschwitz exhibit closed. As an example — in one 12-hour stretch on April 25, MCHE was conducting programming in Hays, Salina, Overland Park and Leavenworth. Three of those four programs were in-person.

PROGRAMS

And Looking Ahead

Completing our **European Study tour** and **preparing for the next**

Completing our **flipped lecture series** for **classroom use**

Developing programming in support of the second and third generations, further engaging them in our mission

Hosting a **Yahad-In Unum Institute** for educators in 2024



WHAT THEY'RE SAYING ...

"Jewish Experiences cherishes our close connection with the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education. As the Jewish Experiences team continues to expand, we have continued to come back to MCHE seeking opportunities for partnership and collaboration. This past year we've teamed up to provide educational resources to the cast of Vilna: A Resistance Story and engaged both Dr. Shelly Cline and Jessica Rockhold to present at events like Day of Discovery and the Acclaimed Author Series, amongst other ventures.

It is more than our shared visions for building a community of understanding and tolerance that bring us together. The MCHE team has become valued thought partners, colleagues, and friends in our work to engage the KC Jewish community in unique and innovative ways."

— ETHAN HELFAND,
DIRECTOR JEWISH EXPERIENCES,
A COLLABORATION OF JEWISH FEDERATION AND THE J



"I cannot put into words how impactful it was listening to Sonia talk about her hardships in her life. Having read many Holocaust books, I have never experienced a survivor sitting in front of me telling me the story from their own perspective.

I was in shock and awe the entire time I would hear her speak. I was able to feel her pain through her impactful story. For as long as I will live, I will never forget Sonia's story. Sonia was truly a bright light in a sea of dark, and I feel honored that I got to hear her story."

— ALAINA SWEANY,
STUDENT AT MILL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL,
I WITNESS PARTICIPANT



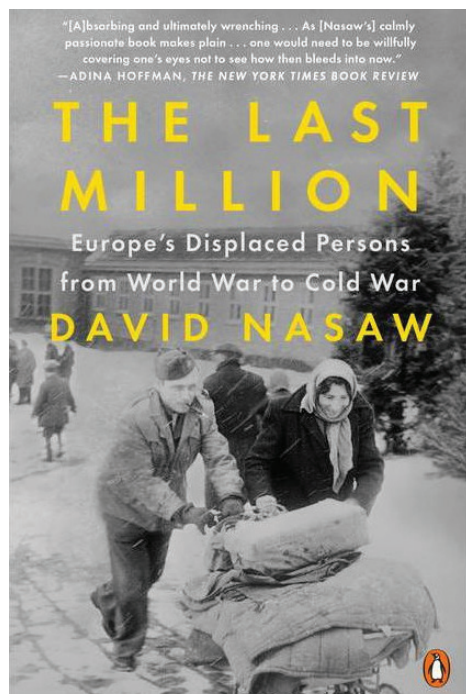
Midwest Center for Holocaust Education
5801 West 115th Street, Suite 106
Overland Park, Kansas 66211-1800



J.E.D.I. Award Recipient
Justice – Equity
Diversity – Inclusion
Perspective Group, LLC
Lawrence, KS

Common Book Discussion

JOIN THE MCHE COMMUNITY IN READING AND DISCUSSING *THE LAST MILLION: EUROPE'S DISPLACED PERSONS FROM WORLD WAR TO COLD WAR* BY DAVID NASAW



Although Germany surrendered in May 1945, the aftershocks of the war did not end with the German capitulation.

Millions of lost and homeless concentration camp survivors, POWs, slave laborers, political prisoners and Nazi collaborators in flight from the Red Army overwhelmed Germany, a nation in ruins. British and American soldiers gathered these refugees and attempted to repatriate them. But after exhaustive efforts, there remained more than a million displaced persons left behind in Germany.

The Last Million would spend the next three to five years in displaced persons camps, temporary homelands in exile divided by nationality, with their own police forces, synagogues, schools, newspapers, theaters and infirmaries.

In *The Last Million*, historian David Nasaw tells the gripping yet until now largely hidden story of postwar displacement and statelessness. By 1952, the Last Million were scattered around the world. As they crossed from their broken past into an unknowable future, they carried with them their wounds, fears, hope and secrets. Nasaw illuminates their incredible history and, with profound contemporary resonance, shows us that it is our history as well.

The community is invited to read *The Last Million* and join MCHE historian Dr. Shelly Cline for a book discussion February 29, 2024 on Zoom. Registration is available at mchekc.org/commonbook. Dr. Nasaw joined us in September for a program, which is available on video at mchekc.org/videos under Holocaust History.

FALL/WINTER PROGRAM CALENDAR

Please visit mchekc.org for complete details and to register for programs.

OCTOBER

October 10-22

European Study Tour



October/November/December

Lunch and Learn Series - Postwar

NOVEMBER

November 7

I Witness

November 9

Kristallnacht
Commemoration

November 16

Exploring the Essay for Educators

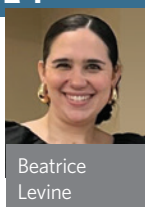


Erika
Schwartz

JANUARY 2024

January 4

Tivol Scholar
Presentation
by Beatrice Levine



Beatrice
Levine

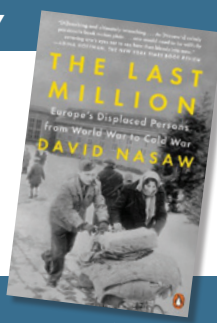
January 22

International Holocaust Remembrance
Day Commemoration

FEBRUARY

February 29

Common Book
Discussion:
The Last Million by
David Nasaw



MARCH

March 1

Holocaust Educator
of the Year
nominations due



MAY

May 5

Yom Hashoah



JUNE

June 24

Operation Barbarossa Commemoration



Ponary, Lithuania

June 24-25

Yahad-In Unum Institute for Educators



In the Room with Survivors

I WITNESS SERIES TESTIMONIES REACH MORE THAN 1,700

Throughout 2023, MCHE has hosted monthly conversations with local Holocaust survivors. These rare opportunities to hear a survivor speak in person have focused on the testimonies of some of the region's youngest survivors – people who experienced the Holocaust as very young children in a variety of countries and in a variety of circumstances. In many cases, we have interviewed individuals who have not spoken publicly before.

The I Witness series is expected to have reached more than 1,700 people by its conclusion in November, including many students and people who traveled from other states to be part of this experience.

"This is an experience that cannot be had in any other way," said Jessica Rockhold, MCHE Executive Director. "You can learn these histories, but you will not have the same experience as being in the room. It becomes something so deeply personal and meaningful when you have met a survivor, and that is something that people who come to this series will take away with them."

We invite the public to join us for the last speaker of 2023 on November 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the Social Hall at the Jewish Community Campus. Registration is free and available at mchekc.org.



Survivors Invited to Speak

Any Holocaust survivor who would like an opportunity to share their story in an I Witness conversation setting is encouraged to contact Jessica Rockhold at jessicar@mchekc.org or 913-327-8191.

A special thank you to the survivors who gave so generously of their time and testimony this year through the I Witness: Conversations with a Survivor series, marking MCHE's 30th anniversary.



Adela Dagerman

ADELA DAGERMAN – Adela kicked off the series in April on *Yom Hashoah* and shared about her life in Hungary before it was forever changed

by her deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau.



Alice and Tom Lewinsohn

ALICE AND TOM LEWINSOHN – Alice and Tom shared their experiences seeking refuge from Nazi Germany — Alice as a baby emigrating to the United States and Tom as a slightly older child making the journey to Shanghai where he and his family survived the war.



Steve Sherry

escape Nazi persecution.

STEVE SHERRY – Steve was a baby during the Nazi occupation of Vienna, which began in 1938. He recalled the story of his family's emigration to the United States to



Peter Newman

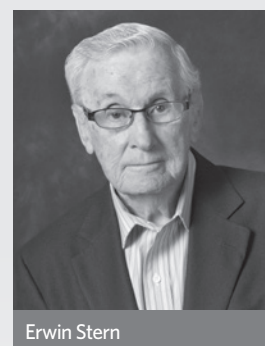
refugees in Oswego, New York.

PETER NEWMAN – Peter shared his experiences of fleeing Vienna and eventually being granted refuge as part of a group of nearly 1,000 Jewish



Sonia Warshawski

SONIA WARSHAWSKI – Sonia recounted her experiences in the Międzyrzec Ghetto before deportations that took her to Majdanek, then Birkenau, then Bergen-Belsen.



Erwin Stern

his sister escape to France before immigrating to the United States.

ERWIN STERN – Erwin was a small child in Austria living a happy life until *Kristallnacht*. His rescue was aided by the O.S.E Children's Aide Society, which helped him and



Judy Jacobs

JUDY JACOBS – Judy shared her experiences as a child in Budapest before being taken to Bergen-Belsen as part of the Kastner Transport.



Erika Schwartz

surviving in hiding in Budapest.

ERIKA SCHWARTZ – Erika is our final scheduled speaker and will share with us her experiences of being born into occupied Hungary and

MCHE Members Tour Central Europe

PRE-TRIP EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS PREPARE PARTICIPANTS

Twenty MCHE members have been gathering monthly since March in preparation for two weeks of travel this October through Central Europe with Jessica Rockhold and Dr. Shelly Cline. The group will visit key sites in Munich, Prague, Krakow and Budapest associated with the Holocaust and World War II.

"The high-quality pre-trip educational sessions have provided background knowledge that would be impossible to absorb while on the trip," said MCHE Board President Steve Cole. "The information presented will make what we see and hear at each stop much more meaningful."

Led by Cline and Rockhold, the sessions focused on reading and studying each location on the itinerary and were offered in a hybrid format so that participants outside the metro area could attend.

"Not only have the sessions taken my Holocaust study 'to the next level,'" said Gerald Rinaldi of St. Louis "but they've allowed the tour group members to be friends, not strangers, from day one of the tour."

EXPERT GUIDES

MCHE crafted an itinerary that explores the rise of the Third Reich, resistance efforts against the Nazis, and the escalation of the war against the Jews. While many in the group are most interested in seeing the former site of Auschwitz-Birkenau, others

describe Terezin or Jewish sites in Krakow and Budapest as the most anticipated stops of their European experience.

Though particular areas of interest varied, participants were in resounding agreement that they opted for this particular tour because of Shelly and Jessica's expertise. As former MCHE President Joyce Hess put it, "What better tour guides for a trip like this than MCHE! Their knowledge and insight for this type of tour is invaluable! The personal insights of Jessica and Shelly help us understand what went on in those places then and now."

TRAVELING WITH MCHE

Several of those traveling with MCHE are members of the second and third generation and will be seeing locations directly tied to their family history.

For Evy Tilzer this was an important reason to travel with MCHE. "They know my story and my parents' story, and it would be a benefit to go with those who know all about our background."

Laurie Horn noted that this journey was a way to honor her family that perished during the Holocaust. In addition to those traveling for family history, others such as Elizabeth George see this as an opportunity to connect this history to the present. Elizabeth said that she wanted "to use this new knowledge to counter some of the willful ignorance I see today."



Sites in Munich and Krakow that will be visited on the tour.

European Study Trip 2025 Registration for MCHE Members Coming Soon!

SAVE THE DATES - SEPTEMBER 6-18, 2025

The memory of the Holocaust is woven into the fabric of modern Europe. This tour experience highlights these layers and gives you a deeper understanding of this history. Notable sites include: Jewish Museum of Berlin, Sachsenhausen, Warsaw Ghetto, Treblinka, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Vilna Ghetto, and Holocaust Museum of Lithuania.



International Holocaust Remembrance Day Commemoration



Featuring Dr. Maria Zalewska – Executive Director, Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Foundation

**January 22, 2024
6:30 p.m.**

Jewish Community Center Social Hall

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly designated January 27 — the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau — as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. On this day, the UN urges the world to remember the victims of the Holocaust and to participate in educational programs to help prevent future genocides.

In honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, MCHE will host Dr. Maria Zalewska, Executive Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Foundation, as our featured presenter. Complete details will be available in the coming weeks at mchekc.org.

This presentation is free and open to the public. Reservations are requested by emailing rsvp@mchekc.org.

Lunch and Learn Explores Journey of the Surviving Remnant

IN-PERSON AND ZOOM OPTIONS

In-person on Thursdays, October 26 - November 30 | 12:00 p.m.

Board Room | 5801 West 115th Street | Overland Park, Kansas

Remote access (Zoom) on Fridays, October 27 - December 1 | 12:00 p.m.

For those who survived the Holocaust, liberation was a complicated event. It marked the end of their physical imprisonment, but the impact of the Holocaust on their lives was far from over.

Now in its eighth year, our 2023 Lunch and Learn series, “Liberation and Beyond: Postwar Journeys of the *Sh'erit ha-Pletah*,” will chart the journey of this surviving remnant as they began to rebuild their lives and families. Topics include: end of the war, liberation, displaced persons camps and leaving Europe.

Lunch and Learn is designed for adult learners to delve into specific topics with the support of lectures, light reading and robust

discussion. Tailored to meet the scheduling needs of professionals, this group is composed of working adults and retirees who come from a diverse set of experiences, making for exceptional conversation.

In-person sessions will meet weekly on Thursdays at 12:00 p.m. starting October 26. Remote access (Zoom) sessions will meet on Fridays at 12:00 p.m. starting October 27. Classes will not occur the week of Thanksgiving. A registration fee of \$50 is required. For complete details visit mchekc.org/lunchandlearn or contact Shelly Cline at shellyc@mchekc.org.

Kristallnacht Commemoration 2023

FROM DEMOCRACY TO DICTATORSHIP



**Democracy Destroyed:
The Transformation of Germany and the Path to the November Pogrom**
Featuring Dr. Shelly Cline, Historian, MCHE

examines the critical months following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in 1933 and the subsequent years of transformation in Germany. It details how the government sought to erode the civil rights of Jewish Germans and how this legal assault led to coordinated, nation-wide, physical attacks on the night of November 9, 1938.

This commemoration is free and open to the public. Reservations are requested by emailing rsvp@mchekc.org.

November 9 | 6:30 p.m.

Jewish Community Center Social Hall

On the night of November 9, 1938, hundreds of synagogues, Jewish homes, and thousands of Jewish owned businesses were destroyed across Germany and Austria. In addition to this attack on property, individuals were beaten and assaulted in their homes and nearly 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and sent to concentration camps. This violent pogrom became known as *Kristallnacht* — the Night of Broken Glass.

How did a cultured, democratic country like Germany become a dictatorship that unleashed violence on its own citizens? This presentation



Storefront of Jewish-owned business damaged during the *Kristallnacht* (“Night of Broken Glass”) pogrom. Berlin, Germany, November 10, 1938. *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park*



Real World Learning

MCHE INTRODUCES CLIENT CONNECTED PROJECTS ON THE HOLOCAUST

If you type the words “real world learning” into your web browser, you will probably learn a few things quickly. First, that this is a growing movement in education. Second, that Kansas City is a hotbed of activity for real world learning (RWL). And third, that Client Connected Projects are a key component of RWL.

Client Connected Projects solve authentic problems in collaboration with

professionals from industry, not-for-profit and community-based organizations. Through these activities, students work toward attainment of Market Value Assets that signal career and college readiness.

Using Kansas City survivors’ online testimonies and *From the Heart* books, MCHE has created a Client Connected Project for middle and high school students. MCHE also welcomes participation in our

White Rose Research Contest as a way for students to work toward attainment of a Market Value Asset.

Our First Project

Last October, when MCHE Program Associate Laura Patton joined our team, one of her first priorities was to reconnect with school districts in the

aftermath of the pandemic. Many teachers and administrators who had long-standing relationships with MCHE had retired, resigned, or changed positions.

Laura’s outreach led to Emily Wegner, a history teacher in the Lee’s Summit R-7 School District. Wegner invited Laura to attend a History Co:Lab meeting, where she was introduced to local teachers and museum educators who invited MCHE to submit a Client Connected Project. Laura then attended a workshop where MCHE’s project with survivors was featured and presented to educators and RWL district coordinators.

Ready to Partner

MCHE is ready to partner with educators who want to involve their students in RWL.

To learn more about MCHE Client Connected Projects, visit [RESOURCES at mchekc.org](https://resources.mchekc.org). If you have questions or ideas for collaborating with MCHE in real world learning, contact Laura at laurap@mchekc.org.



Educators at the workshop exploring Client Connected Projects

Antisemitism in Schools

MCHE WORKSHOP AIMS TO INVOLVE THE WIDER COMMUNITY

When young people act on antisemitic ideas and feelings, they often do so at school. Swastikas, cartoon drawings and vitriolic messages are inscribed in notebooks. Hate speech and antisemitic memes spread among students via social media. School property is vandalized with hate-filled graffiti. Vulnerable students are subjected to slurs or are “othered” in the social environment of school. We also see equal-opportunity hatred at schools. Young people who perpetrate antisemitic actions often reveal racist and anti-LGBTQ sentiments as well.

INCREASING INCIDENTS

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) tracks incidents of antisemitism in the U.S. and has published its findings annually since 1979. The most recent report for the year 2022 reported 3,697 incidents, a 36% increase from 2021 and “the third time in the past five years that the year-end total has been the highest ever recorded.”

It’s tempting to dismiss ADL statistics as a problem that happens in other places. And it is true that the largest percentage of antisemitic incidents happened in heavily populated states such as New York (580), California (518) and New Jersey (408). Perhaps surprising but nonetheless disturbing, the ADL reported that our western neighbor Colorado experienced 71 antisemitic events in 2022. There were 30 in Missouri, 14 in Iowa, 14 in Nebraska, 11 in Oklahoma, 7 in Arkansas, and 9 in Kansas. That’s 156 antisemitic incidents during one year in states that MCHE serves.

Certainly, school staff must act to provide a safe learning environment for students. But how are they to respond to students who engage in antisemitic, racist or homophobic behavior? These children are not solely a product of their schools. It is incumbent upon their families and communities to work with the schools to create an environment where everyone can thrive.

YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The MCHE team is often called upon to respond in a school community experiencing these challenges. To add to our available tools in this outreach, we are developing a two-hour workshop for school communities to use in addressing incidents of discrimination, hate and violence and to help all constituents see themselves as part of the wider community in which the school is located. We intend to involve students, their families, school professionals and community members. Our goal is for participants to leave the workshop with a better understanding of their community and a broader circle of concern for all of its members.

If you are a school administrator or staff member, school board member or interested patron who would like to talk with us about tailoring a program for your school community, please contact Laura Patton at 913-327-8236 or laurap@mchekc.org.

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** of blessed memory*

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Midwest Center for Holocaust Education

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GIVE THE GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP!

We invite you to share our educational opportunities with the people in your life.

Gift memberships to MCHC are impactful ways to

- **support** an educator at the holidays or thank them at the end of the school year
- **recognize** milestones like Bar/Bat Mitzvahs and graduations
- **share** a family legacy of commitment to education and remembrance — give them to your children and grandchildren
- **honor** the deeper meaning of the holiday season with thoughtful gifts

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!