



Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

Perspectives On The Federation And The Jewish World

At the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania, this year has been one of change with the retirement of our long-term Executive Director and Office Manager. We welcomed a new Executive Director and Office Manager, and continued to help those in our immediate community and those in need outside of our community but essential to the Jewish community domestically and internationally. We have begun to resume everyday life from the strain of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic that has affected us over the past two years.



*Eric Weinberg,
President, Jewish
Federation of
Northeastern
Pennsylvania*

Our commitment is to support the most vulnerable here in NEPA, Israel, and worldwide. In our network of agencies, we offer various services and support to those most in need. We have laid the groundwork to respond not only to crises like the one in Ukraine but also to natural disasters and the rise in antisemitism in our schools, colleges, and society. As part of the network of Jewish Federations across America, our Federation has assisted by providing thousands of dollars to alleviate these instances of suffering around the globe.

Our mission is “to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel, and perpetuate Jewish life in Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike, and

Wayne counties, and throughout the world.” Our goal is to have the forethought to plan for the future of all our Jewish communities here in Northeastern Pennsylvania. These responsibilities include using a portion of the income from our Unrestricted Endowment Funds as well as all funds raised during our 2022 UJA Campaign to secure Israel and Jewish overseas needs (which are paid to the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) as well as to fund our local and regional affiliated agencies, organizations, academies, and institutions that include the...

- Jewish Community Center
- Jewish Family Services
- Scranton Hebrew School
- Scranton Ritualarium
- Temple Hesed Religious School
- Temple Israel Scranton Religious School
- Temple Beth Israel Religious School
- Temple Israel Poconos Religious School
- Congregation Beth Israel Hebrew School
- Yeshiva Beth Moshe
- Bais Yaakov of Scranton
- Congregation B’nai Harim
- Jewish Fellowship Hemlock Farms Religious School
- Chabad of the Abbingtons
- Bnos Yisroel of Scranton
- Jewish Resource Center Poconos
- Jewish Heritage Connection
- Beth Shalom Academy

In addition, we award grants for several programs and, in some cases, unforeseen expenses to our camps, congregations, and partner agencies. All of which are funded from a portion of the income from the Federation’s Unrestricted Endowment Funds. This use of resources reflects our responsibility to our region, Israel, and the Jewish world to keep Jewish organizations strong and active for not only us but for future generations.

This Annual Report of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania highlights our activities and community involvement over the past twelve months – here in Northeastern Pennsylvania, Israel, and worldwide. Please read it at your convenience because it will help you better understand our role and mission in the Jewish community. It is vital that we all keep abreast of all matters of Jewish concern regarding Israel, the Middle East, Europe, and

the United States daily. We need to remain vigilant because of the challenges we confront regularly, and we can and will not ignore any threats to our people.

With the outstanding leadership of this year’s UJA Campaign Co-Chairs (Cantor Vladimir Aronzon and Mila Aronzon) and their dedicated committee volunteers and solicitors, the Federation’s annual UJA Campaign raised \$971,079. These monies raised are a remarkable achievement and a combined effort of many people despite the economic challenges we face every day. Our motto is every dollar raised is substantial, and each dollar is reinvested into the local community and Israel. The Federation could accomplish none of this without each of you, and we thank you for your support of our annual UJA Campaign. Whether it is the Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Services, one of our Hebrew schools or Yeshiva, or our 34th annual Teen Holocaust Symposium, you have helped our community maintain its connections with our history, culture, and each other. We honor the past, preserve the present and guarantee our future.

We constantly examine new ideas for services that can benefit our community and look for more exciting changes in the upcoming year. The Federation could not achieve all it does without the staff members who work tirelessly every day to meet the high expectations we set for ourselves and help make our community the best it can be each day. The following individuals have my unwavering gratitude for all they do Daniel Chejfec, Dassy Ganz, Marion Olivetti, Mary Ann Mistysyn, our Holocaust Education and Resource Center (H.E.R.C.) consultant, Mary Ann Answini, Mark Silverberg (Executive Director Emeritus), and Dolores Gruber. And finally, we could not accomplish everything we do without the members of our community. You are a valuable resource that we appreciate, and you are the reason I am so optimistic about the future of our Jewish communities here in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

On behalf of the officers, Board of Trustees, and staff, thank you for all you do.

*Eric Weinberg, President
Jewish Federation of Northeastern
Pennsylvania*

MISSION STATEMENT



The Mission of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania is to rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel and world Jewry and to revitalize and perpetuate the Jewish communities of Pike, Wayne, Monroe and Lackawanna counties.

My first six months

It has been six months since I arrived in Northeastern Pennsylvania, and I'd like to share my thoughts. First thought: Do not Move to another city around the time of New Year!! Every move is challenging, but this time I certainly learned that moving to the Northeast at the end of December gives "challenging" a new meaning. I did, however, settled in and survived my first winter in the area. Truth be told – It wasn't that bad.



Daniel Chejfec, Ph.D., Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

I found a community of dedicated volunteers, eager to do what is best for the community – and that was the best welcome I could get. Over the first months, I reorganized my office and computer files to my personal preferences, but I also worked on several areas which the Board clearly mentioned as their main priorities:

1. Transparency: This is an issue that came up during my interview and again when I arrived. There was a need to redesign our bookkeeping and reporting to make sure that the leadership could more clearly understand our financials, and to establish a paper trail system to make sure every expense was properly documented. With the help of our Office Administrator, Marion Olivetti, we are almost finished with this aspect of the changes. While we already increased the transparency as much as we could with the systems in place, the final changes will happen after June 30, when our new Budget comes into effect. Read the Report on Budget and Finances to see the changes we introduced.

2. Technology: Our computer systems were out of date, including Donor Perfect and Quickbooks. This meant that the programs were being only partially used, with many of its features unutilized. We made sure Quickbooks was up-to-date, but the full utilization of the program will happen only over our new Budget cycle,

starting 6/30, because of the need to correlate the old and new bookkeeping systems. Donor Perfect is being updated to the latest version so we can use the program to its full potential.

3. Communications: Our newspaper (*The Reporter*) was not, in my opinion, serving our needs in the way it could. We reduced the number of issues from two a month to monthly, changed to larger fonts, and initiated a campaign to have more local articles from our local organizations. These changes are ongoing, and I hope to see more and more local content as time goes on. We also began the process of changing our website and online communications to ensure all of you, out constituency, is better informed of what we do and have good access to the programs we organize. Some of these changes will not come into effect, for budgetary reasons, until the next Fiscal Year, but some are already in place. What you can expect is to see a weekly email showcasing opportunity for Jewish involvement throughout the community, a more interactive website, and utilization of Social Media.

In addition to the changes mentioned above, I have been visiting our local organizations and participating in religious services in most of them. I am very impressed by the vitality of our community and its rich history.

I was also particularly impressed by the Holocaust Symposium held in May. This is a program that deserves wider publicity and a national spotlight, both of which we are already working on looking to the 35th edition of the program in 2023. You can read a full report on the program in another section of the Annual Report. This program is, without a doubt, one of the jewels in the crown of this Federation and of this community.

I was also impressed by the community wide connections of the Jewish community, which is always an important part of Community Relations. Our CRC Chair, David Fallk, is doing

a great work and I look forward to continue working with him to further the interests of our community.

I have so many people to thank for their support... Our president Eric Weinberg, as well as David Fallk (CRC), Jerry Weinberger, Margaret Sheldon, Esther Adelman, Michael Greenstein, Natalie Gelb, Steve Seitchik, Alan Glassman, Michael Mardo, the entire Board, Allocations Committee, Investments Committee, Grants Committee, as well as our Rabbis and Agency Directors. All of them have been supportive and sharing of their ideas and expectations – all of which is very important to me so I can do my job. I would be remiss if I did not thank specially the staff: Dassy Ganz (Campaign and Federation Programming), Marion Olivetti (Office Manager), MaryAnn Mistysyn (Administrative Assistant), Mary Ann Answini (Holocaust Symposium Coordinator) and Jennifer Novak who, in addition to being President of the JCC, works with our website and online needs.

I am passionate about the work of the Federation, locally, in Israel and around the world. As a Movement, we represent the connection with Jewish communities around the world – Jews with a diverse observance of Judaism, as well as Jews with no observance at all, because as a Movement, we serve every Jew; we see ourselves as part of Am Yisrael, and we see the Jewish people as our family.

In the year to come we are faced with incredible opportunities to do more and further strengthen our local community. A generous donation from Al Reich's Estate is allowing us to plan several important projects which, we are convinced, will greatly benefit our community.

I am looking forward to many years of partnership with our leadership and volunteers to bring our community to the next level. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

2022 UJA Campaign Opening Event Fun For the Whole Family

Sunday, October 10th was a beautiful autumn day, perfect for a family-friendly event sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania to kick off its 2022 UJA Campaign.

Friends of the Federation, old and new, met at *Roba Family Farms* in Dalton, PA to revel in its many outdoor entertainment activities and to enjoy the rustic ambiance of the venue. The Federation subsidized the day-long pass for the many guests who attended, which would have been enough of a treat but, more excitingly, it rented a large tent so that families could relax around the fire pits

with their snacks and share each other's company. The visitors enjoyed refreshments provided by the Federation.

"The toasted marshmallows were a hit! This was the best program!" organizers heard attendees exclaim.

The Federation extends its thanks to the event's volunteer coordinators, under the leadership of Federation's Executive Director Mark Silverberg, who included David and Rhonda Fallk, Jennifer and Ross Novak, Rabbi Dovid Rosenberg and Rebecca Tschampel for supervising the event – an event appreciated by all who attended.



Looking Strategically to the Future

The Al Reich Fund

The Jewish Community of Northeastern Pennsylvania recently lost Al Reich, an individual who left a very deep mark in our community. Beyond his financial generosity to practically all local Jewish organizations as well as Yeshiva University and the Mazon Program, he was also very generous with his time and support to all those who knew him. And he was a forward-thinking leader who wanted the best for our community.

In his will, Al Reich left the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania two million dollars, with the proviso that they should be spent over a ten-year period on projects to benefit the whole

Jewish community and could not be implemented without these additional funds.

The Federation Leadership decided to honor his request by establishing a special committee to look into projects which can, strategically, help our community. The list of projects is an open one, and we hope that people in the community will come up with more possible projects. The projects to be funded with these dollars will need to meet some criteria:

- Projects need to benefit the whole Jewish community.
- Projects cannot be for the benefit of any particular organization to the

exclusion of others.

- Projects that promote participation and involvement.

A fuller list of criteria and conditions will be developed by the committee and publicized in the coming months. As of now, one project under consideration is a Jewish Population Study of Northeastern Pennsylvania to give us a more accurate picture of who we are and where we live. The results of this study will be shared with all local Jewish organizations to help everybody with targeted advertising to promote affiliation and participation.

The committee will welcome

proposals of other projects, especially those aiming to reach out to unaffiliated Jews and young families. All projects will be given consideration, as we believe nobody has the monopoly on new and effective ideas. Building a community is a joint effort, and Al Reich’s generosity is giving us a formidable tool to invest in our future.

Thank you, Al Reich, for your generosity and your leadership. Your presence among us is already missed – but your vision will help us guide the Jewish community of Northeastern Pennsylvania to an even brighter future. *Todah Rabbah!!*

Allocations Committee Report

Our Federation Annual Campaign is our “Kupah,” our war-chest to fund the needs of the Jewish people locally, in Israel, and around the world. We wish to thank all the donors, volunteers and community partners for their contributions.

Deciding the best way to distribute those funds to achieve maximum effect in accordance with our legal and fiduciary requirements is one of the most important parts of what we do as a Federation. The committee takes the job very seriously and dedicates many hours to review the allocations requests from the community.

The committee divides itself into four teams and each team is assigned to review the requests of some of our local partners, and discuss them with the agencies and organizations. Based on their discussions, each team comes up with a recommendation on the allocations for their assigned agencies, which is brought up at the general Committee Meeting. At the general meeting of the committee, the recommendations of each of the teams is review and discussed. The committee also discusses the National and Overseas portion of our allocations. After the committee agrees on a recommendation, that recommendation is presented to the Board of Trustees of the Jewish Federation, which has the ultimate responsibility for the distribution. A list of our allocations is published with this report.

Our National and Overseas allocation provides for the funding of our Washington Office, which

has been responsible among other things for lobbying the federal government for Security funds and, at the beginning of the pandemic, for the assignation of a part of the PPP loans specifically to nonprofit organizations. The Washington Office also speaks on our behalf to legislators on a variety of issues of concern to our community, including Antisemitism and the U.S.-Israel relationship. Of course, the majority of our Overseas dollars go to help overseas Jewish communities as well as marginal populations in Israel. Our main partners in our work in this area, are the Jewish Agency for Israel, the Joint Distri-

bution Committee, ORT, and the Israel Trauma Coalition – all of which have been actively present helping people in Ukraine during the current conflict.

We wish to express a deep appreciation to the volunteers who

dedicated their time and efforts to this important task: Esther Adelman, Janet Holland, David Yehuda Fink, Natalie Gelb, Murray Glick, Michael Mardo, Jay Okun, Elliot Schoenberg, Alma Shaffer and Steve Weinberger. To all of them, *Kol HaKavod!*

LOCAL/REGIONAL/ISRAEL & OVERSEAS ALLOCATIONS

\$715,865.56 of the 2022 Annual Federation Campaign, were allocated as follows:

National and Overseas Allocation.....	\$229,166.00
Scranton Jewish Community Center.....	\$173,000.00
Jewish Family Services of NEPA.....	\$ 92,758.00
Scranton Hebrew Day School.....	\$ 83,000.00
Yeshivah Beth Mosheh.....	\$ 34,454.67
Jewish Resource Center of the Poconos	\$ 25,841.00
Bais Yaakov of Scranton School.....	\$ 14,356.11
Jewish Discovery Center.....	\$ 14,356.11
Beth Shalom Academy.....	\$ 11,963.43
Jewish Heritage Connection.....	\$ 9,570.74
Temple Hesed Religious School	\$ 7,200.00
Temple Israel of Scranton Religious School.....	\$ 5,850.00
Bnos Yisroel School.....	\$ 5,742.44
Jewish Fellowship of Hemlock Farms Religious School.....	\$ 4,500.00
Congregation Beth Israel of Honesdale Religious School.....	\$ 3,150.00
Scranton Ritualarium	\$ 957.07

A different way to look at these numbers is:

National and Overseas needs	\$229,166.00
Outreach and Social activities.....	\$222,767.85
Jewish Education.....	\$170,216.65
Social and Supportive Services.....	\$ 92,758.00
General Ritual needs	\$ 957.07



To get Federation updates via email,
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Community Relations

Year in Review Report

BY DAVID I.FALLK, CHAIRMAN LOCAL AND STATE

During the past year the Federation responded to a number of anti-Israeli letters to the editor in the *Scranton Times-Tribune*, and also took the opportunity to explain the nature and endurance of anti-Semitism. In addition, an effort has begun to be pro-active and to point out the many inventions, programs, and events that paint Israel in a positive light and bring benefits to the entire Middle East and to the world in general and not just the Jewish people.

The Federation is also a member of the Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition, a group of Jewish Federations from around Pennsylvania that lobbies for our common interests in Harrisburg. This year, the Coalition was able to secure more grants and funding for security for our Jewish institutions, and also secured an extension of the EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program) program which allows credits on state income taxes to be paid directly to charitable institutions.

In May, our Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC) was able to resume an in person gathering of the Holocaust Symposium. This year over 1,300 high school and junior high students were able to meet and hear stories from Holocaust survivors, liberators, and children of survivors.

Also in May, a religious extremist, who does not believe in the separation of church and state and who believes that America is and should

be a Christian nation was nominated for governor. We will be watching his campaign closely.

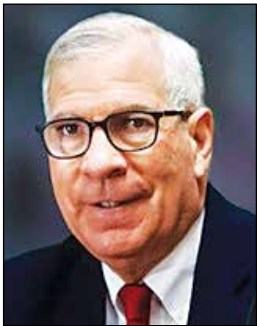
NATIONAL

We continue to monitor the disturbing trend of anti-Semitic incidents which, according to organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League has grown to record levels. Jews are being attacked on the streets of New York and elsewhere.

With the expansion and dominance of social media there is also a trend of conspiracies to blame Jews for all of the ills of the world. This is not new. Old tropes using words like “puppet masters,” “globalists,” “internationalists” have been revived and become more commonplace.

Conspiracists and hate filled groups like the Goyim Defense League have become emboldened to spread literature that blames Jews for the pandemic, vaccine mandates, and for the war in Ukraine and its consequences among other things.

Perhaps the most dangerous conspiracy trope is the “great replacement theory” that was on display during the tiki torch march in Charlottesville, Virginia several years ago. Unfortunately, that theory that appeals to and energizes white supremacists has been promoted heavily by certain media stars. That theory posits that white Americans, particularly white men, are being replaced by people of color who are being



David Fallk, Esq.
Chairman, Jewish
Community
Relations
Committee

encouraged by Jews, among others, to immigrate to America and flood our nation’s borders. The ADL and the Southern Poverty Law Center, along with law enforcement agencies have labelled significant portions of the white supremacy movement as terroristic.

With the rise of anti-Semitism, the position of envoy for anti-Semitism in the American government has become highly important. Last year, President Joe Biden nominated professor Deborah Lipstadt for that position. Unfortunately, although she was highly qualified for that position, her nomination was held up by a single senator’s objections. Only recently was the impasse broken and her appointment was approved by the senate foreign relations committee and the full senate.

INTERNATIONAL AND ISRAEL

The war in Ukraine continues to dominate the news and to have impact on the Jewish community. Russian President Vladimir Putin has attempted to paint Ukraine as neo-Nazi even though its two top leaders are Jewish. The humanitarian crisis that Russia’s war created sent many Jewish agencies into action.

Israel, as it had in many previous areas of danger and human need, delivered a team to set up a field

hospital. Israel also opened its doors to both Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants, including Holocaust survivors and righteous gentiles who saved Jews during World War II.

In Israel itself, the governing coalition was able to pass a budget, avoiding the need for another election, but has run into internal divisions that threaten its continuation.

The situation with Iran remains difficult and dangerous. Since the pullout by the United States from the JCPOA agreement, Iran has taken actions to continue to enhance uranium production to levels that far exceeded the agreement. These actions have shortened the breakout time for Iran to possibly produce a nuclear weapon. As of this writing, talks continue with Iran, through intermediaries but have failed to get Iran to rejoin the agreement and to stop its enhancement activities. The main sticking point involves the United States’ insistence that the Revolutionary Guard be labelled a terrorist organization.

Meantime, Iran continues to supply weapons and advice to its surrogates in Syria and Lebanon, and Israel continues to attack facilities that harbor those weapons.

CONCLUSION

The Community Relations Committee will continue to monitor events at all levels, keep our community informed, and will continue to promote the interests of the Jewish community and Israel.

Virtual film festival films

BEN GURION, EPILOGUE

The film brings to life a lost interview with one of modern history’s greatest leaders, David Ben-Gurion. It is 1968, he is 82 and lives in the desert. Ben-Gurion’s introspective soul-searching provides a surprising vision for crucial decisions Israel needs to make today. and thought-provoking insights about the role of leaders in today’s complex world.

SHOELACES

Shoelaces tells the story of a complicated relationship between an aging father and his special-needs son. Through its portrayal of a relationship full of love, rejection and co-dependency, **Shoelaces** questions the importance of human

connection and if life is even possible without it

THE MUSEUM

The Museum is a film that seeks to explore the Israeli soul through the galleries, storerooms and visitors of the Israel Museum, Israel’s most important cultural institution.

RABIN IN HIS OWN WORDS

Told entirely in Rabin’s own voice through a combination of rare archival footage, home movies and private letters, his personal and professional dramas unfold before the viewer’s eyes - from his childhood as the son of a labor leader before the founding of the State of Israel, until the horrific moment when his political career

and life were suddenly brought to an end.

A LULLABY FOR THE VALLEY

Artist Elie Shamir paints the view from his studio balcony – fields stretching to the horizon, ancient oak trees, and a generation of farmers that is disappearing from the vistas of the Jezreel Valley. Filmed over the course of ten years, **A Lullaby for the Valley** focuses on the fascinating figure of Elie Shamir and his paintings. As time passes, like the endless fields of the valley, they are transformed before our very eyes.

BORN IN JERUSALEM AND STILL ALIVE

While walking down Jerusalem’s

Jaffa Road, Ronen (Yossi Atia) overhears a tour guide offering a sanitized version of his hometown’s recent history. This inspires him to begin his own tour, giving tourists a droll take on the absurdity of everyday life during the terrorist attacks of the 1990’s and 2000’s.

ACROSS THE LINE

Hananel, a young religious Jew, is hurrying home for Shabbat. An unexpected encounter with Mundir, an unwanted and stubborn Palestinian hitchhiker, leads Hananel on a series of mix-ups that eventually teaches him a lesson in communication, friendship and love.

OUR NATURAL RIGHT

Over seven decades ago, the

members of the People’s Council sat down to draft the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel. Today, the grandchildren of the Council return to the hall in Tel Aviv where the document was signed. Who are the descendants of the people who established the state? What do they think of it today? Can they agree on one correct path for Israel? Natural Right raises once again the issues upon which the State of Israel has yet to decide, over seventy years after first attempting to do so.

AN AVERAGE LIFE

When Avi Cohen is told by the Central Bureau of Statistics that he is the most average man who ever lived, his life is turned upside down.

RENEWAL

Contemporary ballet and environmental ac-

tivism do not often go hand in hand. The Vertigo Eco-Arts Village, however, is a place where dance and ecology come together. Investigating sustainable living, the film provides tangible examples of accessible ecological practices – all while asking larger questions about art, family, and nature. How do we continue to sustain ourselves?

GOLDA

Shortly before her passing, Golda Meir was interviewed for Israeli television. After shooting ended, the cameras kept rolling, recording an intimate talk with the first and only woman to ever rule Israel. As she lit one cigarette after the other, Golda spoke freely, pleading her case for her term as Prime Minister – five turbulent years that secured her place in history, albeit at a high personal cost.

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NEPA Federation Celebrates Israel

BY IRENE STOLZENBERG, TEMPLE BNAI HARIM

On Sunday May 22, after not being held for two years, 40,000 people including 24 NEPA residents gathered on Fifth Avenue in NYC in support of Israel at the Celebrate Israel parade.

The day was unusually warm with a clear blue and white sky acting as a backdrop for the many israeli flags being waved. The Theme for this year’s parade was”Together Again.”

Following behind a lively marching band and walking immediately in front of NYC Mayor Eric Adams encouraged the NEPA contingent to walk at a brisk pace as they stepped to the lively music playing all around them allowing the group to beat their marching best from previous years by 15 minutes. People of all ages lined the street to cheer on the marchers and to indicate their support for Israel.

The diversity of Jewish groups walking, cheering, singing and dancing varied from Jewish Day School children, to the Ambassador to the U.N.’s entourage to synagogues, dance groups and Jewish service groups was a reminder of the diversity and simultaneous unity of the people of Israel.

The walkers representing the NEPA Jewish Federation were Daniel Chejfec, Federation Executive Director, Dassy Ganz, Assistant Director, Neil Weinberg, Al Tragis, Vladimir and Elizabeth Aronzon, Gary and Devon Rosman, Asher, Mindy, Ella, Sara and Adi Grossman, Rivka Menachem, Bracha and Uri Levi, Chana Menarchuk ,Marge Harnett, Irene Stolzenberg, Phyllis Miller, Roberta Pineiro, Lea Dunner, Ronni Terr and Frieda Entner.

The parade usually takes place the first Sunday in June but was moved up this year to accommodate the holiday of Shavuot.

Mark your calendar now for June 4, 2023, and plan to join next year in this wonderful parade and celebration of the state of Israel.



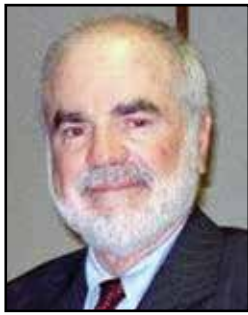
Budget and Finance Committee Report

I would like first to thank the members of the Budget and Finance Committee for their time and efforts: Donald Douglass, Alan Glassman, Murray Glick, Rabbi Sandhaus, Elliot Schoenberg and Alan Mertz.

This year we have restructured the budget in order to achieve a more transparent presentation which will allow for an easier tracking of income and expenses. We projected an income of \$1,169,974; \$980,000 from our Annual Campaign, and the balance from a

series of grants. Our expenses, which include Salaries, Benefits, Administration, Communications, Marketing, Programs (including the Holocaust Education Symposium) and advocacy, come to \$454,108.

The proposed budget involves substantial changes in the use of electronic and printed media to communicate our message. We have also included necessary expenses to bring



Steven Seitchik,
Chair, Budget
and Finance
Committee

our software and hardware up-to-date after a number of years this has not been done.

We are especially grateful to the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, as well as the Schwartz-Mack Foundation for their financial support, which help us provide for the needs of our local community as well as Jewish communities in Israel and around the world.

Investments Committee Report

The Federation's Investments Committee is responsible for the management of endowments set up by community members for the benefit of the Jewish Community of Northeastern Pennsylvania. Our community has been blessed over the years with the commitment of many people to the Jewish future in our region.



Margaret
Sheldon,
Chair,
Investments
Committee

As of March 31, 2022, the committee is responsible for the administration of \$17,144,410. These funds include \$11,811,086 in Federation-owned funds. These Funds, over 127 in total, fall into several categories:

- a) Perpetual Annual Campaign Endowments: (P.A.C.E. Funds) are funds whose annual yield is intended for the Federation Annual Campaign; their value amounts to \$8,021,029
- b) Unrestricted Endowments Funds: The yield of these investments has been used, and will continue to be used, to provide grants in support of local Jewish organizations as well as specific programs. These grants include funding for capital projects as well as innovative and creative programs through Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike and Wayne Counties. Their value amounts to \$5,516,883.

c) Restricted Endowments: The yield of these funds is designated for specific purposes by the donors, according to their wishes. These designations are, however, within the mission of supporting Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania. These funds amount to \$838,232 as of March 31.

d) Philanthropic Funds: They differ from the prior category in that the donors designate, every year, the way the money is to be spent. As of March 31, our portfolio includes \$768,266 in Philanthropic Funds.

e) Special Strategic Fund: It is a fund established with money received this year from the Al Reich Estate, intended to be spent over a ten-year period on projects that benefit the whole Jewish community and which could not be implemented without these additional funds. The initial amount of this fund is \$2,000,000.

The Committee is responsible for managing the investments to ensure maximum possible return while preserving the integrity of the funds.

The current agreement for the PACE funds stipulates that the annual distribution will be 4.5% of the total value of each account. The basis

for the calculation has been, traditionally, the balance of each fund at the end of the calendar year. The investment market volatility of the last few years led the committee to change the basis of calculation to 3-year rolling average (an average of the December 31 balances in each of the three preceding years) to reduce large swings in the amount available for the Annual Campaign.

The committee meets quarterly to review the performance of the investments and the asset allocations, which include large growth, large value, mid-value, small cap, non-U.S. equity, fixed income and short-term investments.

You can also be a part of this efforts. Setting up a fund is easier than it seems at first glance. You can set up your own fund by contributing cash securities, Real Estate, Life Insurance, IRA Pension plan, establishing a charitable remainder trust or a grant from a private foundation. Some of these donation instruments can also result in additional tax benefits. And there is, of course, the extra benefit of ensuring Jewish life in Northeastern Pennsylvania in perpetuity.

My thanks go to the people who invested their time and expertise to help us provide for the community by serving in the Investment Committee with me. They are Donald Douglass, David Fallk, Alan Glassman, Murray Glick, Michael Greenstein and Alan Smertz.

Grants Committee Report

The Grants Committee of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern PA furthers the mission of the Federation to "rescue the imperiled, care for the vulnerable, support Israel, and revitalize and perpetuate the Jewish communities of Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike, and Wayne counties and the world" by awarding grants to our local Jewish constituents to help them fund necessary or emergency capital projects and innovative, community-based programs.



Esther Adelman,
Chair, Grants
Committee

That being said, we require a formal application, and then meet to discuss the merits and expected outcome of such projects/programs. Most requests are handled on a one-time basis; large requests are generally considered for multi-year payouts. Decisions are made by committee vote after considering all aspects of each request.

Funding for the Grants Committee is provided

by the income from the Unrestricted Endowment Fund; therefore it changes annually. For 2022, there was approximately \$153,650 available. Since requests are received at various times of the year, we are careful to distribute our funds in a timely manner.

Because of circumstances that arose this year, we have adjusted our awards process to accommodate grants of \$2,000 or less by making the applications less involved, and by sending the information to the committee via e-mail for discussion and eventual voting.

Grants awarded, to date, in 2022, include the following:

- JCC Purim Carnival: \$1,000
- Federation Passover program: \$2,500
- Hebrew Day School subsidy for conference participation: \$750
- Jewish Resource Center (Granted \$100,000

over 10 years for new building, with \$20,000 paid in previous years): \$20,000 (doubled to help with high renovation costs)

Camp Moshava (Orthodox camp near Honesdale): our standard \$1,500 security grant

Temple Israel of Scranton: \$25,000 over two years for roof replacement

At this time, there are several others pending.

Thank you to the dedicated members of the Grants Committee:

William Fiegleman, Lynne Fragin, Natalie Gelb, Alan Glassman, Geordec Pollack, Rabbi Samuel Sandhaus, Steven Seitchik and Steven Weinberger.

Esther Adelman, Chair

Check out the Federation's new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook



Nominating Committee Report

This year’s Nominating Committee was chaired by Michael Greenstein and consisted of Esther Adelman, Richard Fine, Natalie Gelb, Janet Holland, Alma Shaffer and Elliot Schoenberg.



Michael Greenstein,
Chair,
Nominating
Committee

The Committee first met on March 24 by Zoom and reviewed the needs for this year’s nominations for officers as well as Board members for the Federation Board of Trustees.

One of the issues discussed was the need to reduce the number of members of the board to improve its functioning. As the Bylaws stipulate a maximum number of members but not a minimum, the Committee felt it was OK to begin that process without need to wait for a Bylaws revision. At the request of the Executive Director it was also decided to appoint a volunteer Secretary.

In accordance with the Bylaws of the Federation, the following slate of nominees was presented to the Board of Directors, which approve

the slate to be presented at the Federation Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 23.

OFFICERS:

- President: Eric Weinberg
- Vice President: Elliot Schoenberg
- Treasurer: Jerry Weinberger, Esq.
- Assistant Treasurer: Dan Marcus
- Secretary: Donald Douglass, Esq.
- Assistant Secretary: Geordee Grable Pollock

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

- Nominated for one-year terms ending on June 30, 2023:
 - Kenny Ganz
 - Bill Fiegleman
 - Doris Koloski
 - Larry Milliken
- Nominated for three-year terms ending on June 30, 2025:
 - Bernice Dinner
 - Molly Rutta
 - Shlomo Fink

Continuing Board Members whose terms expire on June 30, 2023:
Richard Fine
Robert Hersh
Reece Oslinker

Continuing Board Members whose terms expire on June 30, 2024:
Marian Beckhorn
Alex Gans
Natalie Gelb
Michael Mardo
Rabbi Samuel Sandhaus
Alma Shaffer
Alan Smertz
Steve Weinberger

David Fallk will continue as the Chairman of our Community Relations Committee and our representative to the Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition.

Cantor Vladimir and Mila Aronzon agreed to continue as Co-Chairs of the 2023 UJA Campaign.

Our work in Ukraine

Jewish Federations of North America are proud to announce that our emergency fundraising campaign for aid to Ukraine has topped \$64M (as of May 31, 2022). Funds have been allocated to Thirty-five NGOs that are operating on the ground in Ukraine and neighboring countries, including our core partner agencies, The Jewish Agency for Israel, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), and World ORT. They are using these funds to provide housing, clothing, cash assistance, medical attention, mental health services, life-saving rescue operations, security, and transportation to refugees, including those who are making Aliyah.

- To take just some striking examples from the work that two of our partners, the JDC and Jewish Agency are doing:
- 44,000 people have been served through the JDC
 - 2,837 people have received medical assistance
 - 12,645 people have been evacuated to other countries
 - 2,200 people have been treated using telemedicine at Israel’s field hospital
 - 11 emergency hotlines have been set up
 - Over 12,500 olim have come to Israel from Ukraine and Russia
 - 18 facilities have been operated at five border crossings to assist the refugees

- Thanks to Jewish Federation funds, thousands of Ukrainian Jewish refugees joined Passover seders and celebrated their freedom.
- The Jewish Agency hosted seders in Warsaw, Budapest and Romania with Ukrainian refugees, as well as seders in Israel with new Ukrainian olim.
 - The JDC hosted a total of nine seders in Moldova, Hungary and Poland. JDC also organized more than fifteen online seders for Jews in Ukraine who were unable to leave their homes.
 - Thousands of special haggadot in Russian and Hebrew were sent by JDC and the Jewish

Agency for use at the seders, in partnership with Jewish Federations, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation’s PJ Library, and Israel’s Ministry of Aliyah and Integration.

Funds raised are also supporting the Jewish Federations’ creation of a first-of-its-kind central volunteer hub that will recruit and place hundreds of skilled volunteers over the coming months to provide much-needed services on the ground through our partner aid organizations. Over 30 of these volunteers have already been deployed to Budapest, Warsaw and the Poland-Ukraine border.

“Jewish Federations are unique in the key role we are playing both in providing tremendous amounts of aid to refugees as well as advocating for refugee resettlement,” said Jewish Federations of North America President and CEO Eric Fingerhut. “This crisis will unfold in ways which nobody can predict, but what is sure is that Jewish Federations will continue to play a frontline role in the response and long-term strategy development in order to alleviate suffering and help refugees rebuild their lives.”

The Jewish Federations of North America are proud to announce the creation of a first-of-its-kind central volunteer hub in support of refugees fleeing the brutal war in Ukraine, that will recruit and place hundreds of skilled volunteers over the coming months to provide much-needed services on the ground through our partner aid organizations.

The effort is in partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and IsraAID. In addition to recruitment and placement, the hub manages a structured program for volunteers, coordinating lodging, transport, and logistics to ensure that the volunteer force can be focused and effective.

The focus of this initiative is on Russian

speakers with backgrounds in early childhood education, social work or mental health professions, but there are plans to expand to non-Russian speakers down the road as needs on the ground change.

The initial group of 30 volunteers consists largely of refugees and second generation refugees who are now returning to the same part of the world they or their parents fled from, this time to offer aid and healing. They flew to the Ukraine border and remain on the ground in shifts of two to four weeks.

Recruitment focuses on the large network of agencies and organizations that are beneficiaries of Jewish Federation grants for programming to engage Russian speaking Jews in Jewish communal experiences. Other organizations have also joined the effort to recruit the needed skill sets, including the JCC Association of North America, COJECO, the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies, and The Jewish Education Project.

“Jewish Federations are uniquely positioned to create a centralized North American volunteer structure for this crisis, bringing together our extensive relationships with the network of organizations on the ground and our large network of Russian speaking Jews across North America,” said Sarah Eisenman, Chief Community and Jewish Life Officer at Jewish Federations of North America. “There is a pressing need for skilled volunteer support, yet in a fast-moving crisis it can be difficult to map the needs and recruit the right people to match those needs. We’ve stepped in to meet the moment and bring together the organizations with those eager to serve.”

Olga Markus, Director of Russian Speaking Jewish Engagement at Jewish Federations of North America, added, “As a former refugee myself, I am proud to see how Russian speaking Jews in North America are responding to the

Ukraine crisis through a variety of measures, including volunteering on the border. For refugees from the former Soviet Union, this is a meaningful opportunity to ‘pay-it-forward’ and I am proud to help lead this aid relief.”

Jewish Federations have raised over \$50 million for Ukraine aid. Funds have been allocated by both The Jewish Federations of North America and individual Federations through our partner agencies The Jewish Agency for

Israel, The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and World ORT, as well as United Hatzalah, Hillel International, Nefesh B’Nefesh, HIAS, Israel Trauma Coalition, Hadassah Medical Organization, Chabad, and Shma Yisrael.

The 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust becomes a 4-Day Event!

Record setting numbers for 2022 – Over 1,400 registered!

Anticipation and excitement permeated the air as the children and their teachers returned to the Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust. After two exceedingly long years, wrestling with the restrictions and the ravages of COVID-19, we were able to gather once again at the Hilton Scranton with our Liberator and Survivors for this Holocaust eye-opening and life-changing event for all participants. Students, teachers, facilitators and especially our Survivors revelled at the opportunity to be together after being forced to interact for two years via Zoom presentations. Holocaust education needed to continue as the pandemic raged on but it wasn’t the same as experiencing living history with Survivors.



*Mary Ann Answini,
Director of
HERC*

There remain troubling gaps in Holocaust awareness while survivors are still with us; imagine when there are no longer Survivors here to tell their stories. We must be committed to ensuring the horrors of the Holocaust and the memory of those who suffered so greatly are remembered, told, and taught by future generations.

With Holocaust Survivors ageing, it is our responsibility to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust do not die with them. Anti-Semitic acts, now a daily occurrence, pose a real threat to the Jewish communities.

The Holocaust Education Resource Center of the Jewish Federation of NEPA has a very specific goal: to combat prejudice, bullying, bigotry, and antisemitism happening all around us by translating the horrors of the Holocaust into a lesson that can make this world a better and safer environment for everyone. America, as a society, is comprised of people of diverse religious, ethnic, cultural, and racial backgrounds.

Education is the first step toward understanding the complexity that is human diversity and creating social change.

We continue fighting back using our most powerful tool – education – as we share the increasingly urgent lessons of the Holocaust. As an organization committed to personalizing the Holocaust so that students can learn the consequences of racism, ethnic cleansing, and intolerance, the Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust and HERC look to history. We know that silence, apathy, ignorance, and indifference are the enemies of a pluralistic global community.

The 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust was designed to establish the Holocaust as an important and relevant topic in American society and it continues to exceed that goal far beyond our vision and expectations. Students and teachers come to gain insight into the power of the individual, the responsibilities of citizenship, and to probe into what it means to be a member

of a global community. As the Holocaust recedes in time, the symposium committee is dedicated to ensuring that students of future generations continue to find lessons to apply to their lives from this history.

The 2022 event was one of the best-received Annual Teen Symposiums on the Holocaust in our 34-year history! Students and teachers, who were able to participate in the Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust at the Hilton Scranton and Conference Center, were given a rare educational opportunity. The Hilton served as the setting, bustling with activity on May 10th and May 11th, as we welcomed eager students and teachers from both parochial and public schools. Participants traveled from thirty school districts in five counties, including two schools from New York. Some teachers and students rode busses in excess of two hours in order to meet and listen to six survivors, two Second Generation speakers, and one liberator. Such willingness is an outstanding tribute to the program!



Breakout sessions for students.

Teacher Continuing Education Opportunities

The 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust continued with an additional day in order to provide educators with an enlightening professional development opportunity (providing *Act 48* hours) which addressed the implementation of *Act 70* of 2014 Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Violation Education. The program was specifically designed for teachers of English, Reading, Language Arts, and Social Studies (grades 6 through 12) and was coordinated by the Holocaust Education Resource Center, NEIU 19 and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

We firmly believe we can best guide educators by continuing to support them to teach hard histories responsibly and accurately. A study

of the Holocaust provides immense insight into the dangers of allowing hate to escalate and it is vital that educational practices do not attempt to skew or minimize any aspect of this historical event. The “how” in Holocaust education is as critical as the “what.”

The course was divided into two parts:

Part 1 - Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Violations Education was offered for two (2) Continuing Education credit hours on Monday, May 9th, from 6-8 p.m. via Zoom with the assistance of HAMEC, the Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center. This session provided information for any educator or administrator concerning the implementation of *Act 70* of 2014



L-r: Ann Arnold, second generation survivor; Mark Schonwetter, survivor; Sara Ergott, teacher; and Paul Grabowski, principal of Tunkhannock Middle School.

Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Violation Education.

Elaine Culbertson, executive director of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Descendants, provided specific information on her mother's story of life in a death camp and her survival in Nazi-occupied Poland. This material-built content is designed for educators who teach this very complex subject and make it relevant to today's world. The program prepared educators to teach the Holocaust in a way that stimulates engagement and critical thinking while providing opportunities for students to see the relevance of this complex history to their lives.

Mrs. Culbertson also addressed the curriculum guidelines and materials to support meeting the goal of *Act 70* which is "to provide children with an understanding of the importance of the protection of human rights and the potential consequences of unchecked ignorance, discrimination and persecution..." Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 Act of June 26, 2014, PL 776, No. 70.

Geoff Quinn, Education Director for HAMEC, hosted the event from the Holocaust Museum in Philadelphia and Mary Ann Answini, Director of the Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania, served as Facilitator.

Part 2 - The 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust welcomed educators who could not attend with their students and gave them the opportunity to experience the events of the 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust on either Tuesday, May 10th, or Wednesday, May 11th, and to earn four (4) Continuing Education credit hours.

A satellite Holocaust program was held on Tuesday morning, May 10th, at the Tunkhannock Area Middle School. Mark Schonwetter and Ann Arnold spoke with over 400 attentive middle school students, who welcomed them with a song and original poems. We extend special thanks to Sara Ergott, middle school language arts teacher and Sue Bugno, Tunkhannock Area Middle School principal, for having arranged this wonderful event.

Area superintendents, principals, teachers, and school board members made every effort to work around the budget issues and testing windows for the PSSA and the Keystone Tests in order to provide their students with the opportunity to become witnesses to the Holocaust. We are humbled and extremely grateful for their outstanding support, which allowed students to participate in the Annual Teen Symposium, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the Hilton Scranton & Conference Center.

The 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust reached a total of over 1,400 students, teachers, and special guests with a program that works to enhance the teaching and learning of the lessons of the Holocaust, to promote the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect, and to encourage students to speak up and act against all forms



Students from East Stroudsburg North led by teacher James Ware.

of bigotry and prejudice.

"The world is a dangerous place. Not because of those who do evil, but because of those who stand by and do nothing." Albert Einstein

The in-person portion of Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust was a two-day program that was scheduled from 8:50 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. with programs that focused on the Holocaust, the causes, the development, and the consequences. The overwhelming highlight for all attendees was the personal face-to-face meetings with Survivors of the Holocaust and soldiers of the liberation. Intimate group settings were created rather than large venues for the students to hear the testimonies of the survivors, who candidly shared their experiences and followed up with answers to audience-initiated questions. The program provided all participants with the increasingly rare ability to experience "living history" in a very personal setting, rendering a moving and emotional impact. Each guest speaker has his/her unique testimony, which often encompasses memories of close family and friends. Some remained sole Survivors; others were lucky to survive and reunite with one or more surviving family members. They provided a journey into the fears, emotions, and experiences that cannot be found in history books.

Many teachers were overwhelmingly impressed that, despite great trauma and private pain, each speaker tried to impress on their young listeners the need to shy away from prejudice, bullying, labeling, and negative behavior toward their peers and other individuals. These Survivors built new lives after living through unimaginable hardship, and they became contributing members of society, who share messages of hope and light. Each of the speakers truly served as a positive role model for these young adults in a very personal setting, creating a close connection and making a powerful impact on the students.

A major highlight of the day was the distribution of kits for each teacher and student to utilize when returning to their classrooms. Teachers were gifted with two books: "Salvaged Pages" and "Child Survivors of the Holocaust." It is our sincere hope that these books will enrich the Holocaust curriculum and classroom libraries. PRISM, The Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators, published by the Rothman Foundation, was

also distributed. The beautiful periodical is filled with stories and poetry, designed to enhance Holocaust lessons written by teachers for their students. Another important addition to the material distributed was "The Guidelines for Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Violation Education." This document was designed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in response to *Act 70* of 2014 amending the Act of March 10, 1949 (P.L. 30, No. 14) July 2015.

Survivor/Liberator biographies were also included in the teacher education packets to continue the discussion of the testimonies when the students return to their classrooms.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, donated the DVD, "Days of Remembrance," packed with pertinent information for each educator. All books and teaching materials were gathered into beautiful tote bags designed and graciously donated by Susie and Jim Connors.

The Holocaust program began with a warm welcome by Susie Connors and the recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Connors, who has graciously served as the Master of Ceremonies for the Holocaust Symposium for the past ten years, is a retired Scranton School District teacher and dedicated director of the planning committee for the Holocaust Education Resource Center.

Setting the tone for the day, the poignant film "Children Remember the Holocaust" was then introduced and viewed by the audience. Narrated by Keanu Reeves, the film begins with life prior to the Holocaust and continues through the post-liberation period. It is a film that uses photographs and footage from the Holocaust years with voice-overs that are the literal words of children and teenagers taken from personal diaries and memoirs. In the last part, it touches on survivor guilt syndrome, how difficult it was to find and reunite family members, the hospitalization and recuperation of the ill, and the immediate vow made by many who survived to tell the story for those who did not survive. The audience was silenced by the impact of the words and images of the film.

"What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander." Elie Wiesel

Unfortunately, the day before the symposium, Mr. Alan Moskin informed us that he was not strong enough to travel to Scranton this year. Because his presentation is so profound and saved in our archives, we decided to share the 2019 video with the students. Alan Moskin was a World War II combat veteran, who served in the 66th Infantry, 71st Division of General Patton’s 3rd Army. Beyond serving in heavy battles, Alan became a liberator of the Gunskirchen Concentration Camp, a sub-camp of Mauthausen. Alan, now in his mid-90s, is particularly skilled in transporting his listeners back in time to feel and see what he is describing whether telling stories of his war buddies or of the horrors the soldiers encountered when they entered the camp. These were, he said, unmatched by anything previously encountered in the worst of combat. He described the compassion and care they tried to offer to all the victims, who barely looked human after their mistreatment. He credited the many medics with doing the greatest job. His presentation was candid, moving and extremely well received. He also enumerated and stressed positive actions people can take to prevent such atrocities from occurring again. The video presentation concluded with a thunderous ovation of appreciation for Mr. Moskin.

Next, participants were divided into small breakout groups. They were guided by facilitators to various conference rooms of the Hilton Hotel, where they were introduced to their guest speakers. On May 10th and May 11th, there were a total of seven separate groups, with students from each participating school represented in each of the various venues. Student attention and emotion were clearly evident in every room. Sessions concluded with applause, hugs and

selfies with Survivors.

We incorporated two new additions to the Holocaust program with the introduction of two second-generation speakers. In the Electric City Ballroom, Jane Elias shared the story of her beloved father Beni Elias, a Bergen-Belson Holocaust Survivor, and Sonia Sandhaus, who shared the testimony of her dearly departed parents, Karola and Marcus Edelstein. Both did a commanding job sharing the testimony of their loved ones.

The survivor testimony sessions were followed by lunch for attendees in the Casey Grand Ballroom, the Electric City Ballroom, and the Casey Prefunction Area. Survivors, Liberators, and Facilitators enjoyed lunch together in Trolley’s Bistro.

Featured in the closing event, also known as the Abe Plotkin Memorial Lecture on the Holocaust and Social Justice, was the moving testimony of Mark Schonwetter, a young Jewish boy in Poland, who survived the Holocaust, along with his mother and sister, by hiding in the forests as well as in the homes of righteous Polish families. The only way they would survive, was if they stayed ...*together*.

Over the last few years, Mark and his daughters, Ann Arnold and Isabella Fiske, have been sharing his story of survival with adults of all ages as well as students all over the Northeast. In 2016, Ann put her father’s story in writing and published her first book, “Together A Journey for Survival.”

The wrap-up at the conclusion of the day by Mrs. Connors included a reminder to all

Lessons on the Holocaust continued in the classroom

Discussions on Symposium and the lessons of the Holocaust continued Thursday, May 13th, in every school district especially North Pocono Middle School. For the first time in the history of the Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust, we captured the sometimes-raw student reactions, sharing, and discussions in the classroom. The children were anxious to share the Survivors’ stories and the impact the symposium had upon them.

WVIA captured the dialog and questions of the eighth grade students with Mr. Jason Sepkowski, 8th grade Social Studies teacher, during his 2nd and 3rd period classes. The dialog of their experiences with Alan Moskin’s testimony and the Survivors was truly moving and enlightening. It once again reinforced the importance and impact of the Holocaust Symposium. This truly was “A Child’s Journey into the Holocaust”

Virtual Component of the Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust held on Thursday, May 12th

The Holocaust Education Resource Center remained committed to teaching and supporting educators by also providing a virtual component to the Annual Teen Symposium on Thursday, May 12th. This provided three additional Survivor testimonies to the classroom, as well as, providing an opportunity to schools that were unable to attend the in-person Holocaust Symposium due to COVID-19 restrictions or budgetary constraints in different school district. Featured Holocaust survivors were Daniel Goldsmith, Maritza Shelley, and Ruth Zimbler.

With the assistance of Joanna Arruda, Manager of the Speakers Bureau at the Museum of Jewish Heritage, we were able to procure several presentations of Holocaust Survivors. In addition, The Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center from Philadelphia, along

with their President, Chuck Feldman, Education Program Director, Geoff Quinn, and Dr. Ruth Almy played pivotal roles in creating this additional opportunity for students and teachers.

Students and teachers were directed to register with the Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center. Registration was free but limited to 500 devices per session. After individuals completed the registration process, they were emailed an invitation to attend the Webinar presentation. Teachers were provided complete biographies of each presenter and wove the digital sessions with the Holocaust survivors into lesson plans for their students. These presentations provided additional Holocaust Survivor Testimony to enrich their Holocaust curriculum.

After registering, teachers and students were



Atender moment between survivor Lois Flamholz and facilitator Carol Burke.

participants to fill out the evaluation forms, which are exceedingly important as a source of feedback to the planning committee from the Holocaust Education Resource Center. The Hilton Scranton & Conference Center and the Jewish Federation were warmly thanked for their dedication, generosity, and commitment to this program, which has reached approximately 30,000 young people over a period of 34 years.

The presence of the teachers and students gives us hope: hope of overcoming Holocaust denial and distortion, hope of securing individual rights and human dignity in all societies, and finally, hope that the world we entrust to our children will be kinder and more tolerant than the one we inherited.

a passionate project of the late Mark Davis, a dedicated member of Symposium Committee. In his honor, we completed his vision and this final step.

We extend our gratitude to the administration of the North Pocono School District, Mr. Jason Sepkowski, the 8th-graders and their parents for allowing us to film this very special event.

able to log into the sessions at three different times: 9 am with Daniel Goldsmith, 10:10 am with Maritza Shelley and 11:30 am with Ruth Zimbler, featuring three completely different survivor experiences. Registrants were able log on as a classroom unit or individual students for any/all the webinars. Survivors presented their testimonies for approximately 50 minutes and then took questions from attendees.

Registrations with HAMEC provided us with some initial data on attendance at each session. Because teachers logged in under one email for the simulcast on their Smart Boards, a follow up email was sent at the conclusion of each webinar in order to glean the actual numbers of students viewing the virtual symposium. Presentations averages were between 120 and 225 viewers.

Holocaust Education Resource Center Archives

As Survivors die and the third generation slowly drifts out of the Holocaust’s shadow, education must be fortified with an understanding of applicable lessons and principles that must be derived from the Holocaust. In order to preserve their voices and the moving testimonies, Survivors were taped on Tuesday and Wednesday of the symposium by Mark Migliori, from ECTV for the HERC Archives.

WVIA was also present both days filming and conducting personal interviews with survivors for a documentary to be released sometime next year. It is our hope that these films will be utilized as an educational tool for our community.

For this education to have any meaning, those mechanisms that allowed the Holocaust to take place must be fully understood. History must empower pupils with the understanding of the various choices they must make and the ultimate impact of these choices on society. The survivors humanize and personalize the Holocaust for those of us who cannot imagine what took place.

With strength and dignity our Survivors have been recounting their personal experiences to audiences at the symposium for many years. Survivors, through their moral leadership, intellect, willingness to share, and eloquence, give voice to those who have been silenced forever. By sharing their memories, Holocaust Survivors demonstrate their commitment to teaching new generations that the future can be better than the past. These messages from Survivors serve as a warning and an inspiration. They have devoted their lives to fulfilling the promise “Never Again” for all future victims of genocide.

A Survivor fears that he or she may be the last to remember, the last to warn, the last to tell the tale that cannot be forgotten, that must be told in its totality, before it is too late. - Elie Wiesel

Perhaps the following can provide insight into the breadth of the experiences for both students and teachers in attendance. It is our sincere hope that all the participants will be changed forever and will continue to share the knowledge, wisdom, and testimonies of the nine survivors and liberators with their peers, siblings, and parents to eradicate hatred and evil in society.

Our honorable guest speakers were:
SURVIVORS

PAUL BELLER

Paul Beller escaped the fate of the nearly 1.5 million children killed by the Nazis when he was included among 50 Jewish children rescued by a Philadelphia couple whose story was told in a recent HBO documentary, narrated by Alan Alda, “50 Children: The Rescue Mission of Mr. and Mrs. Kraus.”



*Paul Beller,
survivor*

In 1939, Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus traveled to Europe, found the youngsters, arranged visas for them, and brought them from Vienna to the United States, where the couple placed them

with foster families. Of those children, who ranged from 5 to 14 years old, was Paul Beller. “They picked 25 girls and 25 boys,” said Beller. “The criteria were that you had to be mentally and physically in good health, and you had to be willing to travel without fear and emotional attachment to your parents.”

Beller, who was born in 1931, said his family had a relatively good life – his father was in the plywood business – until the 1938 Anschluss between Germany and Austria, when the Jews had their rights taken away overnight, followed soon afterward by deportations to the death camps.

Anti-Semitism and political maneuvering led to a death of the kind of courage that was needed to affect the rescue of Jews in Europe, but the Krauses, who were Jewish themselves, somehow seized the notion that they should go to Nazi-occupied Austria and attempt to extract as many Jewish children as they could. Gilbert Kraus transferred to the children visa numbers that had been issued but never used by their original recipients. The couple then assumed legal guardianship and personal responsibility for the children. They found foster parents who would agree to adopt the youngsters if their parents didn’t survive.

The Krauses and the 50 children set sail in May of 1939 on the USS President Harding and arrived in New York Harbor on June 3. During the voyage the children were prepared for their new home with lessons in American citizenship and culture and English, but still had free time.

The youngsters spent the summer at Camp Brith Shalomville, run by the Brith Shalom, a benevolent association in Philadelphia, which supported the Krauses. After the summer, Beller went to live with Philip and Emily Amram in a Philadelphia suburb for a year until his mother arrived with his grandparents. His father, a Polish citizen, had gone into hiding and was later detained by the British as he tried to sneak into Palestine. However, he was able to join his family in 1946.

“The Amrams treated me like a son and I’m still in contact with their two children,” said Beller, who moved with his family to Manhattan and attended the City University of New York and graduate school at New York University. He worked in Medicare administration in Baltimore for 40 years and now volunteers as a Medicare counselor at senior centers.

He and his wife, Glenda, have been married 56 years and have three children, seven grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

LOIS FLAMHOLZ

Lois Flamholz (nee Weiss) was born in Zdenova, Czechoslovakia, where she lived with her parents, sister and two brothers. In 1939, the Hungarians took over control of the surrounding area and in 1944; German SS soldiers entered the



*Lois Flamholz,
survivor*

town and ordered the Hungarian police to round up all the Jews.

They were sent to a ghetto in an abandoned brick factory in Munkach, where they stayed for 6 weeks, after which the Jews, including Lois’s family, were loaded into cattle cars and transported by train to Auschwitz. When they exited the train, Dr. Mengele was there. As each person exited the train, he pointed at them to go left or right. Lois was sent in one direction and was separated from the rest of her family forever.

After five weeks at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Lois was sent to a nearby work camp. In late January 1945, as the Russian army approached, the entire Auschwitz camp complex was evacuated. On February 1, 1945, Lois’s work camp was evacuated, and she and her fellow prisoners were forced to join the “Death March” to Bergen-Belsen in Germany, which began a 6 week ordeal.

In April 1945, British troops liberated the camp. The Red Cross sent Lois and three surviving cousins to Sweden. Through a remarkable set of circumstances, Lois’s uncle, then living in New York, managed to locate her in Sweden and arranged for her to come to the U.S. in 1948.

Lois moved to New York where she met her future husband, Sol. The two were married and raised two sons and a daughter.

Lois remains active in the Monroe Township Jewish community, and regularly speaks about her Holocaust experience at schools and other institutions.

RUTH K. HARTZ

Ruth Hartz was a 4-year-old, hidden child during the Holocaust in southern France. During that time, she had to change her name to Renee to hide her Jewish identity.



*Ruth Hartz,
survivor*

In addition to being sheltered by an ordinary French farm family, she spent six months in a small Catholic convent to avoid capture by both the Vichy French Police and the Gestapo. When informants told the authorities that the nuns were hiding Jewish children, the Mother Superior was forced to lie to keep Ruth and the other children safe. Only the Mother Superior knew that the children were Jewish. The other nuns thought they were just orphans. Ruth remembers that the convent had blue windows so authorities could not see inside, and that the chapel had a trap door where the children would hide when hunted.

Through unusual good fortune, Ruth and her parents survived the war and returned to Paris shortly thereafter. Ruth eventually graduated from the Sorbonne University with a degree in Biochemistry. In 1958, she came to the United States where she married and raised a family. She became a teacher of French language, literature and culture at the Springside School in Philadelphia where she worked for 22 years.

In 1999, she published her childhood memoir, “Your Name is Renée,” and in 2005, a French translation, “Tu t’appelles Renée.” She is also the director and producer of “A Legacy of Goodness,” a DVD about her rescuers.

MARK SCHONWETTER

The only way they would survive, was if they stayed ... *together*.

Sala Schonwetter lived the perfect life. Married to the man of her dreams, mother to two beautiful children, and a member of one of the most respected families in town; she had it all. The year was 1939, and the world was about to change. In a heartbreaking instant, she traded her secure life, for one of unspeakable hardship, and danger. Nothing more than hunted prey, she relied on her inner strength and indomitable will to keep her children alive. But would it be enough? One thing she knew for sure, she and her children would live or die *together*.

Manek (Mark) was 6 years old when his world collapsed. At first, he failed to see it but reality came into focus when his loving mother was forced to beat him to save his life. Suddenly thrust into a new role as man of the house, would he be able to keep his family safe?

As a young Jewish boy in Poland during World War II, he spent the war years in hiding with his mother and sister in the Polish countryside. As a war of nations thundered around him, Mark’s story displays the magnificent strength of a mother’s love and the incredible courage of good people during the worst times.

After the war ended, the family temporarily stayed in Poland. However, they immigrated to Israel in 1957. Due to a lack of job opportunities, Mark decided to move to the U.S. in 1961 with the backing of his mother’s relatives and only five dollars to his name.

Unable to speak English, he nonetheless obtained work at a jewelry factory, where he swept floors under the supervision of a man who spoke Yiddish. He soon learned English and rose through the ranks in five years to become the factory manager. Within five more years, he had the opportunity to purchase another company, Lieberfarb. Mark turned it into a successful wedding ring and bridal company, which he owned and ran for over forty years. He took the American Dream to heart and built a life in his adopted country. Mark feels blessed to have had a lifetime.

PETER STERN

Peter Stern was born in Nuremberg, Germany in March 1936. His father, Artur, was an auto mechanic and a vocational school instructor. His mother helped raise Peter and his younger brother, Sam, in a building that housed four other families and shared



Mark Schonwetter, survivor

a kitchen. One of his first vivid memories was walking home with his father and stones were being thrown at them by a group of young boys not much older than him. Peter could not understand why this was happening or why people stood by and watched it happen.

In 1941, his family was deported from Germany to a holding camp in Latvia that was surrounded by frozen water, though no fences, guards patrolled the perimeter. In the spring of 1942, they were transferred to the Riga ghetto and were crammed into a room with other families. He remembers always being cold and from his window he could see people being moved onto trucks. Within a few weeks they moved to a small building outside the ghetto, and this is where Peter tried to learn his ABCs but at the same time learned about fear and death. He was six years old. His father continued to work as an auto mechanic for the Germans though he was not paid.

In the beginning of 1943, they were transferred to a work camp deeper in Russia. One day while working on a damaged electricity transformer, the Russian army attacked the camp and Artur saved a German officers life. This changed the course of the family’s experience. The officer arranged for the Stern family to be hidden in the Riga prison, rather than be returned to the ghetto. In January 1944 the family was once again put on a truck and deported back to Germany where Artur was imprisoned in the Buchenwald concentration camp and died. Karolina, Sam, and Peter were transferred to Ravensbruck concentration camp and then, in the face of an Allied advance, moved to Bergen-Belsen. They were liberated by the British on April 15th, 1945 and were moved to buildings previously occupied by German soldiers.

Peter, Sam, and Karolina were moved back to Nuremberg, Germany in the fall of 1945 and lived in a building that was once a home for the Jewish elderly. From there they moved to a displaced persons camp in Munich, Germany and then another camp in Bremen. On January 7, 1947, they were able to immigrate to America with the help of distant relatives who lived in Atlanta, Georgia. They arrived in New York City on January 27th. In 1954 Peter graduated from high school, then attended University of Missouri and received a degree in metallurgical engineering. He is married and has two sons and grandchildren. Peter and his wife Julie recently moved to the Philadelphia area.

DOROTHEA SZCZESNIAK

A little girl of 6 smiled at the camera, marking her first day of school, but it was a fleeting smile, covering a multitude of fear and uncertainty. Dorothea was unable to attend public school and was forced to attend a Jewish school wearing a Star of David. Children would try to hide the star out of fear of the Hitler Youth, who would chase them with stones. They lived in constant fear and humiliation.

It was in 1938, when Dorothea was 9 that her



Dorothea Szczesniak, survivor

family fled from Germany. “We sneaked into Belgium illegally. We were not rich. We had no money. We had no papers,” she said. They fled only with whatever they could carry, running for their lives. They discovered the wonderful and welcoming Belgian people as they made it their new home.

Their reprieve was short lived because the German invasion began. An elderly woman, whom they had befriended, found two rooms in the house where she lived for the family. The landlord willingly agreed to hide them there. Her parents had the room downstairs, and Dorothea and her sister (Daisey) had the small room right next to their friend’s apartment.

“One morning the Gestapo came and apprehended her parents. They proceeded upstairs, speaking German to the young sisters. Though she knew German, Dorothea pretended not to understand. It was then that their friend opened her door, saying, “These are my grandchildren. I take care of them because my daughter is working, and they are late for school.” The neighbor grabbed their school bags, placed them in their hands, and pushed them out the door. Because the Nazis believed them, they walked out past their parents, took the trolley car and went to a friend’s house. They stayed one week before being placed in hiding with one family and Dorothea was placed in hiding with another family. Though living in the same community, the young sisters were now separated. Dorothea, 13, was taken in by Michael and Tanya Schugalte, a kindly couple, who’d lost a child; while her sister, 11, was moved from family to family.

March 15th was the last time they saw their parents. They were sent to Maline, Belgium, a temporary holding area, before being put on a “death train” to Auschwitz in Poland, an extermination camp. According to information from the Red Cross, her mom died two months later at 43, and her dad a mere 39 years old died shortly afterwards in November.

The arrival of British and American soldiers changed everything. It was their liberation! It was a wonderful day for the 16-year-old and so many others. Dorothea stayed with her foster family until 21, when she moved into her sister’s home, renting a downstairs room.

She found jobs cooking and cleaning, before becoming a girl Friday in a tailor shop. Dorothea followed her heart and began studying voice. She attended the Conservatory of Brussels, where she studied for four years, becoming an accomplished opera singer.

Her love of music is how she met her Ukrainian husband, Orest. She was applying for a singing job at a Ukrainian night club. He was a displaced person, who had run away from the communists. Both were like survivors.

“I could not speak a word of French, so we communicated in German. He had already filed his papers to come to America because his brother was a sponsor. When we got engaged, he said, ‘I want to get married and then put your name on my papers.’ Waiting for a Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish visa took at least two or three years. No one wanted to go back to the communist country.

When I went with him to the American Consulate to put my name on the paper, a lady asked me, ‘Where were you born?’ I said, ‘In Germany.’” The wait list was much shorter. Luckily, there was a new law that the husband could go to America on his wife’s visa. “I teased him all my life, saying you married me for the quota ... I got my visa right away. So, within a year, we came to America.”

The couple arrived in Long Island, New York in 1953 with their six-week-old son, Michel. Orest settled in as an auto mechanic, while Dorothea continued singing with the Long Island Opera Showcase.

Many years have passed since that dark day when the Gestapo came for her parents. Time has not dimmed the sorrow felt by a 13-year-old little girl who loved and lost her mom and dad. “I tell you honestly; sometimes I think about that little girl that I was at that time. And I cry for that little girl, because of all the things that I was deprived of: my parents, an education, a normal life of freedom. But it could have been much worse. I could have been in a camp.”

How fortunate I was that my life was saved. “I don’t forget it. It’s part of my life, part of my past, but I will not let it destroy me. I’m not going to let the Nazis destroy my life twice.”

**SECOND GENERATION HERITAGE
TESTIMONY
BENI C ELIAS, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR
(DECEASED), SHARED BY JANE ELIAS
(2ND GENERATION)**

Beni C. Elias was born in 1928 in Salonica, Greece, and grew up in the nearby city of Kastoria with his parents, two brothers, and two sisters. Kastoria was home to a Sephardic Jewish community numbering nearly one thousand people, which included Beni’s immediate and extended family. In addition to Greek, the family spoke Ladino (or Judeo-Spanish) in the home.



Jane Elias, second generation survivor

After Kastoria was occupied by the Germans in late 1943, Beni and his family were deported to Auschwitz. He was ultimately liberated from Bergen-Belsen.

While living in Sweden after the war he learned that his older sister, Lena, was the only other member of the immediate family who’d survived. After four years in Sweden Beni moved to Israel, then back to Greece, and later to the United States.

In New York City he got work in the garment industry, beginning as a floor sweeper, and eventually started his own import-export business, which he owned and operated until his retirement. He met and married Betty Cohen, with whom he had two daughters. Sadly, Betty passed away in 1968 after a long illness. A few years later, Beni met his future wife, Varda, while on a trip to Israel. They had one daughter, Jane, who is honored and proud to have the opportunity to share Beni’s story. Beni

passed away in 2010, but his legacy and his indomitable spirit endure.

Jane Elias embarks on a journey of self-discovery through her poignant relationship with her father, Beni, a Greek Jew, who survived Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. Jane Elias hits the right notes in her sensitive and observant portrayal of her father Beni, who (barely) survived the camps. She shows him hovering over his only offspring like she’s a fragile doll, always worrying about her safety, and obsessed with her getting married (i.e., continuing a family line the Nazis very nearly wiped out).

Those who live through trauma as intense as Beni inevitably pass some of that along to their children. Elias chooses to confront those feelings head-on in her mid-30s by visiting the concentration camps, which have been turned into tourist attractions. She shares that experience with us...alternating with mesmerizing, gut-wrenching tales from the past of Beni’s struggle to not be exterminated in those camps. Elias has chosen to confront those feelings and creates a meaningful tribute to the memory of her dad.

The Holocaust is so inhumanely immense and severe that it takes a special talent to do any story about it justice. Elias pulls it off.

**SECOND GENERATION HERITAGE
TESTIMONY
MARCUS EDELSTEIN, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR (DECEASED), AND KAROLA EDELSTEIN, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR (DECEASED), SHARED BY SONIA SANDHAUS (2ND GENERATION)**

Marcus and Karola Edelstein were born in Poland and married before World War II. They were separated and imprisoned in several concentration camps, including Auschwitz.



Sonia Sandhaus, second generation survivor

Miraculously they survived the war and even more miraculously they found each other afterwards. They became eligible to immigrate to the United States in 1953 after living in Sweden. They had five children. Their first child, Shifra, was murdered by the Nazis as an infant and their son Dr. Phillip Edelstein, died in 2002.

**LIBERATOR
ALAN MOSKIN**

Alan Moskin was born in Englewood, New Jersey, on May 30, 1926. He attended Syracuse University both before and after his military service in World War II and graduated in May 1948. He then attended New York University Law School, graduating with a J.D. degree in June 1951. He practiced law as a civil trial attorney in New Jersey for over 20 years and subsequently worked in the private business sector until he retired in 1991.



Alan Moskin, liberator

Alan presently resides in Nanuet, New York, and speaks extensively to Middle School and High School students as well as a variety of other audiences in Rockland, Westchester, Bergen, Orange, and Fairfield Counties and elsewhere about his experiences as an infantry combat soldier and a “Concentration Camp” liberator.

Alan has two grown daughters and six grandchildren. He presently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Holocaust Museum and Study Center and is also commander of the Rockland/Orange District Council of the Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.

DANIEL GOLDSMITH - ZOOM PRESENTATION



Daniel Goldsmith, survivor

Daniel Goldsmith was born in Antwerp, Belgium to an Orthodox Jewish family. His father was a plumber and his mother a home-maker. He was 8 years old when the German army invaded in May 1940. His family tried to flee to France but was forced to return to Antwerp. In August 1942, his father was placed in a forced labor camp and his mother was forced to sell some of his tools to buy food for Daniel and his sister, Lillian.

After the Nazis raided their street one night in September 1942, arresting Jewish families, Daniel’s mother visited a known resistance movement member and within 48 hours Daniel and Lillian were placed in a Catholic convent. In December, Daniel was moved to a boy’s orphanage and was given a false identification of “Willy Peters.”

The orphanage was raided in May 1944 and Danny, with other boys, was arrested and sent to multiple prisons. On the way to the third prison the boys escape from the train. They ended up in Perwez, Belgium and the local priest hid the children in various homes in the village.

Danny was 12 years old when he was liberated in September 1944. In April 1948, Danny arrived in the United States.

MARITZA SHELLEY - ZOOM PRESENTATION

Maritza Shelley was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1928. The 91-year-old remembered the way that religious divisions were enforced in her city even before the war, starting with children on the playground. When a newcomer arrived at school, the first thing the children in her class would do was determine their religion, she said. After that, the kids stuck to their own religious groups, rarely developing close relationships with children of other faiths.



Maritza Shelley, survivor

After the Nazis invaded Hungary in 1944, Shelley and her sister were selected to perform forced labor in grueling conditions, digging ditches to try to stop Soviet tanks from entering

Budapest. She was allowed to return to the city’s Jewish ghetto briefly and reunite with her mother – but a roundup occurred, and Budapest’s Jews were sent on a death march to a concentration camp, she said.

Through the boldness and quick-thinking of her mother, they were able to reunite with Shelley’s sister during the death march, escape by hiding under a bridge when the soldiers were not watching, and hitchhike back to Budapest with a Nazi convoy – somehow convincing the Germans that they were not Jewish. The family used false papers to stay in Budapest until the end of the war.

Shelley emphasized that the anti-Semitism emerging in the U.S. today cannot be compared to the systemic, organized mass atrocities perpetuated against Jews during the Holocaust.

“The extermination of the Jews was on such a mass scale, it was relentless, it was so sudden with no place to escape,” she said. “It’s true that there were incidents of anti-Semitism and pogroms in the past but when we talk about the Holocaust that was different.”

Shelley moved to New York City in 1947. She said she has experienced anti-Semitism in this country, but that it was mostly verbal and not as violent as what is happening today. When she first heard about the Pittsburgh massacre, Shelley said she had a hard time accepting that it was real. Hearing about vandalism at synagogues and on school campuses breaks her heart, she said.

“I’m convinced that all this has to do with the general atmosphere in the country since the last election,” Shelley said. “That people who do these acts feel encouraged or feel free to do the acts.”

For most of her life, only close family members knew about Shelley’s experiences as a Holocaust survivor. But recently, she has felt compelled to share her story with the world, specifically with people who are not Jewish.

Shelley often speaks to students visiting New York City’s Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, telling them what she had witnessed and experienced during the Holocaust. She encouraged the teens to not only make friends from other faiths, but to also learn more about those traditions — perhaps by attending a seder with a Jewish friend or fasting with a Muslim friend for Ramadan.

Despite everything she’s witnessed, Shelley is still hopeful about the future.

“I’m an optimist, in spite of everything,” she said.

RUTH ZIMBLER - ZOOM PRESENTATION

Ruth was born in Vienna in 1928. On November 10, 1938, during Kristallnacht, The Night of the Broken Glass, she and her brother Walter watched the destruction of the largest synagogue in Vienna from their apartment. Glass littered the streets, but Ruth re-



Ruth Zimble,
survivor

calls not the smashed windows but the smoke.

Then a 10-year-old in Vienna, she remembers standing outside her home with her brother and an older relative and watching the family’s synagogue burn to the ground. Nearby, firefighters stoically watched the fire swallow the building, only lifting their hoses to keep the flames from spreading to nearby, presumably non-Jewish homes.

“We couldn’t have known it at the time, but it was the beginning of the end,” Zimble says.

Historians consider the pogrom to be the curtain-raiser to the Holocaust in Europe. But the attack was especially shocking for Zimble, who had previously led a privileged life in the heart of the Austrian capital.

Born to dad Markus, a social worker, and mom Hella, a sought-after seamstress, Zimble and her younger brother Walter grew up in relative prosperity. During the 1930s, when the world was still recovering from the Great Depression, Zimble’s family had a nice, upper-middle-class home attached to the city’s largest synagogue and maintained by their housekeeper, Marie.

Zimble remembers herself as an ordinary city kid – speaking German at the local public school she attended, going to Hebrew school in the afternoons and playing outside with her friends.

But everything changed in the spring of 1938, when Hitler, chancellor of Germany since 1933, marched into Vienna. “It was the last time the gentile kids played with us,” says Zimble, adding that her beloved teacher of four years arrived at school the next day wearing a swastika.

The months that followed brought fear and indignities. At the local library, where Ruth spent so much time, the librarian she’d known forever stopped letting her check out books.

“[She told me,] ‘You’re a Jew,’” Ruth says. She responded, “But I was a Jew two weeks ago.”

One day, she remembers, she was playing with her best friend Sylvia when a man in a full-length leather jacket knocked on the door and demanded the key to the synagogue library. Marie told him he was scaring the children and asked him to leave. Decades later, Zimble would recognize the visitor as Adolf Eichmann – the Nazi official in charge of deporting Jews to concentration camps.

The horror came to a head at dawn on Nov. 10, 1938, when Zimble awoke to panicked whispers. More than a dozen adults were gathered in her living room; she heard someone say, “Take the kids out of here.”

By that evening, she witnessed what would become known as Kristallnacht: stores and businesses destroyed, “men and boys ripped from their homes.”

Those included her father, who, along with her housekeeper, was arrested and hauled into the police station. He was one of 30,000 men and boys rounded up for concentration camps in the direct aftermath of Kristallnacht. Most were slaughtered, but Markus was one of the lucky

ones: At Dachau, 300 miles west of Austria, the Nazis put him to work processing paper, then released him a few days later.

Meanwhile, Zimble, her mother and her brother were staying with a family friend in Vienna, barred from re-entering their home. “The Nazis decided they wanted to close it off,” she says. “They decided to shut us out.” When they were finally allowed to return 10 days later, it had been completely looted.

A few tense weeks later, Zimble’s parents decided Austria was no longer safe for the children – and made the painful decision to send them abroad to an institutional camp, which countries outside Nazi control were setting up to save persecuted children.

A relative who took Zimble and Walter to the train station told her, “Kiss the walls. You’re never going to see them again.” In December 1938, the siblings boarded a train packed with other children fleeing the pogroms in Central Europe. The ride would later become known as Kindertransport, or children’s train, for its young inhabitants. Although many of their fellow passengers were headed to Britain, the siblings disembarked in Holland, where they were sent to a government-donated manor home in the Hague. There, Dutch nurses took care of all the Jewish children, whose clothes were deloused upon arrival.

“We felt safe – sort of,” says Zimble, who wrote letters to her parents and turned 11 that coming February. Meanwhile, her father was trying desperately to arrange passage for the family to America.

On October 16, 1939 – six weeks after World War II officially broke out – Zimble and Walter boarded a boat in Rotterdam and set sail for America. “There was no looking back,” she says.

After a 10-day journey, Zimble and her brother arrived in Hoboken, NJ, on Oct. 26, 1939. There, they stayed with a family friend; their parents, miraculously also safe, joined them three weeks later.

The family then moved to Williamsburg, and Zimble’s life gradually began to return to normal, or as normal as was possible. In 1950, at age 22, she graduated from Brooklyn College with a Bachelor of Arts degree; at 29, she met her husband, Milton Zimble, a Bronx-born WWII vet, through family friends. They married in 1958 and moved from Brooklyn to Manhattan three years later.

In the mid-’90s, Zimble’s adult daughter started asking her mom about her past. “[She] wanted to see where I came from and I was curious too. I wanted to show [her] where I had been and what I had done.” So they traveled together to Zimble’s childhood home in Vienna – or what was left of it. “It’s a parking lot,” says Zimble, who has two children and six grandchildren. She says the experience was painful, and that she “can’t forgive the people of Vienna. The Austrians are worse than the Germans, who at least try to make amends and give reparations.”

“Whether it’s religion or race, stand up and be strong,” Zimble says. “Know who you are.”

Lessons to be learned from the Symposium

Holocaust education is of enduring significance to the world as a whole because there are infinite lessons to be learned from it regarding human rights. It is important to not only concentrate on educating today's youth of the calculated mass murder of a people, but also to develop their understanding of this horrific era, one that cannot be obtained from textbooks. It is a rare program that allows students and Holocaust survivors to not just interact, but also impact each other. This program does both. This program integrates historical testimonies from Holocaust survivors, who not only want to share their painful knowledge of their experiences, but

also impart their collective wisdom.

It is imperative that we continue to nurture the Annual Teen Symposium and develop additional educational experiences that establish the relevance of Holocaust and genocide studies for future generations of a diverse and multicultural population. It is not only our plight, but our responsibility, to preserve this historical memory, and continue to awaken the conscience of the young. It is our duty to not let indifference and desensitization towards one of the world's worst horrific periods, the Holocaust, affect the education

of today's youth. This program strives to make the mandate of "Never Again," not just a mandate, but a hopeful, lifelong reality.

Complacency is not an option. We are fighting back using our most powerful tool: education. You only need to read today's headlines to understand there is a disturbing rise in antisemitic incidents across the United States and the world. We must respond to hate-fueled acts. We recommit to lead in educating people of all backgrounds about the dangers of hate and the importance of fostering mutual respect and understanding.

With deepest appreciation to those who made our 34th annual Holocaust Symposium possible

The success of the Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust is attributed to the dedication and generosity of a great number of individuals, organizations, institutions, corporations, and foundations.

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Federation staff: Mary Ann Mistysyn, Secretary and Marion Ollivetti, Office Manager

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VIP Guests:
Paige Cognetti, Mayor of Scranton
Rick Bishop and Richard Marquart from the Schwartz Mack Foundation
Scott Thorpe from Eckersley & Davis, LLP
Master Sergeant Ty Holmes - Chairperson of the chartering committee for the Lackawanna Chapter of the NAACP Advisory Board, member of the Scranton School Board and Decorated Veteran of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army

Guest Speakers:
Paul Beller, Jane Elias, Lois Flamholz, Daniel Goldsmith, Ruth Hartz, Sonia Sanhaus, Maritza Shelley, Mark Schonwetter, Peter Stern, Dorothea Szczesniak, and Ruth Zimbler, as well as WWII veteran/Liberator Alan Moskin

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Planning Committee:
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Facilitators:
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Photographer: Andrea Rosar

Security:
Chief Tom Carroll of the Scranton Police Department

Patrolman Todd Garvey
Officer Jamie Sofka, Officer Jeff Vaughn, Officer Erica Haines, Officer Dave Mitchell, and Officer Mike Albert

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Colleen Knecht

Media:
ECTV – Mark Migliore
WVIA – Kirsten Smith
WNEP – Courtney Harrison
WBRE 28/WYOU 22– Cody Butler
Scranton Times /Tribune – Jim Lockwood
The Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center along with their President, Chuck Feldman, Geoff Quinn, Education Director and Dr. Ruth Almy, Program Director

Joanna Arruda, Manager of Speakers Bureau at the Museum of Jewish Heritage
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As always, a very special thank you to all school superintendents, principals, and teachers who remain committed to this program.

We are exceedingly grateful to the Hilton Scranton & Conference Center and the Jewish Federation, cosponsors of the 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust, for their overwhelming support.

We sincerely hope that we've given thanks to each of the many people who made this event possible. If a name was inadvertently left out, please accept our most sincere apologies and our gratitude.

Conclusion

As we close the page on the 34th Annual Teen Symposium, the Holocaust Education Resource Center and the Jewish Federation of NEPA have recommitted to Holocaust education which is, and has always been, in a state of constant evolution. Our goal is to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive and to inspire citizens and leaders to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity in a constantly changing world. Holocaust remembrance is more relevant than ever. It serves as a lighthouse, warning us of the danger of extreme racist ideologies.

The survivors of the Holocaust who so courageously shared their stories have taken it upon themselves to relive the horrors they experienced so no one else has to. With the number of living survivors rapidly dwindling, it is more imperative than ever that every person of conscience does their part to educate others on what can come if hatred and evil are left to fester unchecked. Who's going to be the one who spreads their stories? Who's going to take over any survivor's story? It must be you. We are totally, utterly dependent on each one of you.

Antisemitism, and all other forms of racism will never be diminished through silence. Elie Wiesel, in his preface to the novel Night, wrote: "For the survivor who chooses to testify, it is clear: his duty is to bear witness for the dead and for the living. He has no right to deprive future generations of a past that belongs to our collective memory. To forget would be not only dangerous but offensive; to forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time."



Survivor Lois Flamholz with Daniel Chejfec, executive director of the Jewish Federation.

Teacher Reflections on the Holocaust Symposium

“Thank you for organizing such an educational event.”

“ALL of my students were amazed at all the information and the stories they heard. This is an amazing program. I hope to attend next year with even more students. My administration was impressed by the knowledge the students received and are very supportive.”

“Our kids were THRILLED with their day. They got off the bus and couldn’t wait to tell us all about their day!”

“What an amazing experience. They were sad about Alan, they had seen him virtually last year. I do hope he is ok. Students would like to send get well cards.”

“The most helpful part of the day was “Children Remember the Holocaust” for it set the tone and gave the students an understanding of what was to be heard.”

“An excellent, meaningful and well-presented program – a Gold Star!”

“Alan Moskin’s presentation was excellent and authentic.”

“Captivating – the Survivor stories need to be

told and truly heard.”

“The most meaningful part of the day was building an understanding for teaching the Holocaust.”

“I use all of the materials/books as learning stations for my classes. Everything you provide is excellent.”

“I use everything in my classroom. The booklets, books and posters have been invaluable.”

“As a future educator, the symposium has been incredibly helpful in the development of my understanding of WWII and the Holocaust.”

“I found the speakers and videos eye opening and educational. Mr. Moskin’s perspective was appreciated for the detailed account of the camps.”

“There is so much that I did not know.”

“My students were fully engaged on this incredible day.”

“The personal accounts made the Holocaust real for me and my students.”

“I am so grateful for all of the knowledge that was provided, and I will use it.”

“Thank you for continuing to tell their stories. It needs to be told. Holocaust Education must continue.”

“I use all of the materials from past years to further my knowledge and share with my students.”

“The materials and videos provide a good introduction when teaching the Holocaust.”

“Well done as always. All of it is exceedingly helpful for my students.”

“Wonderful, moving and informative. Thank you.”

“Each session was equally informative and profound.”

“Thank you for such a tremendous experience for me and my students.”

“I loved it. I learned so much and a special thank you to the survivors for sharing their stories. It was amazing.”

“This is really a once in a lifetime experience and I am glad that I was able to be here. It was eye opening and insightful.”

“The day gave me a deeper understanding. It is so important that history is not forgotten.”

“I learned a lot about true corruption and the Holocaust. The victims faced such terror.”

“I had a true reality check listening to the traumatizing horrors of the Holocaust.”

Student Reflections on the 34th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust

“Sacrifice and hope were important for survivors to keep alive.”

“I wish that I had more time with the speakers. I loved that I heard from survivors and their family members.”

“I am ashamed of man’s inhumanity to man.”

“This was an amazing opportunity. I got a peek into the feelings of the victims during the Holocaust. ‘We must hug not hate.’ Alan Moskin”

“Today was much more detailed than my classes at school. Great job! The symposium gave great coverage of the Holocaust.”

“People can be very strong if they have the will to survive.”

Holocaust Survivor recordings

ECTV and Mark Migliore graciously provided us with webinar presentations and links to the survivor’s YouTube page to view various testimonies from our HERC Archives. These taped testimonies capture the spirit of the survivors and their devotion to sharing their lives with our students.

- Ruth Hartz: <https://youtu.be/L50DJZE3VcQ>
- Gabriella Major: <https://youtu.be/SGCK3bPU7-Q>
- Alan Moskin: <https://youtu.be/qCDpPTToJ48>
- Maritza Shelley: <https://youtu.be/uo2HsGphmyI>
- Ronnie Breslow: <https://youtu.be/rD1xzwVJ76s>
- Mark Schonwetter: <https://youtu.be/rxos9UMePT4>
- Daniel Goldsmith: <https://youtu.be/uGNzGkWA2-c>
- Peter Stern: <https://youtu.be/lPsvQoGGI9M>
- Ruth Zimler: <https://youtu.be/nfB1AFV2jTw>

SURVIVORS FILMED BY ECTV FROM HERC ARCHIVES

- Sol Lurie, 5/9/17: <https://youtu.be/DrbZZjOkmLk>
- Paulette Wegh, 5/10/17: <https://youtu.be/Ufpyzc2vG0M>
- Sonia Goldstein, 5/8/18: <https://youtu.be/n9ZKkldBqXY>
- Anneliese Nossbaum, 5/8/19: <https://youtu.be/TqvAvO62lqQ>

“Thank you for sharing your stories. The day by far exceeded my expectations.”

“I learned personal information that I would never receive from history books in a classroom.”

“Beautiful presentation of a difficult and ugly truth – the power of truth over evil. The power of resilience was evident in each survivor.”

“I did not know what it was like for the Liberators as they discovered the camps - just incredible”

“Alan Moskin on a scale from 1 to 10 is a 12. Outstanding!”

“Soldiers had no idea what they were going to face as they liberated the camps. The firsthand account was enlightening.”

“Learning about specific stories from the survivors made what I learned in class very real. Their stories are all very different.”

“I did not realize there were so many work and death camps. I learned how terrible it really was.”

“Life in a Ghetto and experiments on Jews I did not know about. I could not imagine these disturbing experiences.”

“I gained insight on the experiences of the victims and the liberators. This was a very thorough program.”

“Thank you so much for showing vulnerability to us as you shared your experiences.”

“I learned about Hidden Children and the hardships these innocent children faced.”

“I learned how horrific the Holocaust was and to be an upstander not a bystander.”

“The presentations were incredible. Thank you for this special opportunity.”

“The thought and feelings shared were incredibly moving. The symposium was a great experience.”

“Do a symposium more than once a year. Younger generations need to know the truth about the Holocaust.”

“I learned about real life struggles in families for generations after the Holocaust. I am so grateful that I attended.”

“Everything was amazing. Survivors shared their excruciating experiences.”

“Firsthand experiences provide me with a better understanding of the Holocaust.”

“I am so grateful to be able to attend this and learn so much about this important time in history. It is so very brave for the survivors to share their stores.”

“I loved the experience today and everything became very real. Books don’t describe what really happened, but survivors do.”

“We are the last generation to experience firsthand accounts and people are already denying the Holocaust.”

“I learned of the impact the Holocaust had on the Survivors, and the disturbing experiences for the Jews and other undesirables.”

“I learned there were wonderful organizations that saved children and brought them to the United States.”

“I wish that I could have heard all of the survivors.”

“I learned of true suffering of the Jews and what the liberators encountered.”

“It is up to our generation not to repeat this horrible past.”

“Wow! Families were forced to take extreme measures to hide from the Nazis.”

“So sad... 1.5 million who died were my age or younger.”

“I gained a much better understanding of the experiences and treatment of the Jews.”

“How brutal the Holocaust really was!”

“I learned from the prospective of an American Soldier of the atrocities of the camp.”

“The fear and the unforeseen events were eye opening. We learned what truly happened.”

“The speaker really impacted the experiences of the day. Very Informative.”

“I knew the background of the Holocaust but not the depth or severity of it.”

“I learned about the emotional toll of the Holocaust on the innocent victims.”

“I learned how difficult survival was firsthand.”

“I loved the survivor speeches, and the movie was the best one about the Holocaust that I have ever seen.”

“The firsthand accounts gave a 100% authentic point of view. Enlightening.”

“The day was absolutely great and I learned a lot.”

“I learned a lot about actual human experiences in the Holocaust. It was real.”

“An amazing experience. I loved it.”

“Oh, the terrible conditions and experiences. I learned how hard survival was.”

“I learned many in depth facts and the Holocaust was gruesome.”