

The 38th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust

Reaching approximately 54,800 young people over a period of 38 years!

On May 5 and 6, the Holocaust Education Resource Center proudly presented the 38th Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust to over 1,400 participants! The program has been held successfully since its inception in 1988. Eager students and teachers gathered at the Hilton Scranton and Conference Center for this rare educational opportunity, which proved to be an eye-opening and life-changing event. Survivors and guest speakers were excited for the opportunity to share their testimonies. Such willingness is an outstanding tribute to the program!

In order to have a safe environ-

ment for learning, improved safety measures have

been implemented. In addition to having three Scranton Police Officers, we had Timothy A. Brooks from the Secure Community Network. All participants at the event were given HERC lanyards with identification

See photos from the Symposium on pages 8-9.

tags and a revised bag policy was put into place.

The Hilton served as the setting, bustling with activity, as we welcomed students and teachers from both parochial and public schools. Participants traveled from thirty-four (34) school districts in

five counties. Some teachers and students rode buses in excess of two hours in order to meet and listen to four survivors, five second generation speakers, five third generation and one liberator.

The gold standard of Holocaust education has always been the See "Symposium 1" on page 4

Yom Hashoah event at the JCC features Holocaust survivor Esia Friedman

The Jewish Community Center of Scranton hosted a meaningful and moving Yom Hashoah commemo-

ration on April 13, bringing community members together to honor the memory of the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust and to reflect on the importance of remembrance and education.

The memorial program included

candle lighting in memory of the victims, along with remarks from a variety of speakers including Scranton Mayor Paige Cagnetti. Featured speaker Esia Friedman shared her powerful personal story See "Survivor" on page 2



Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 25, 2026 | 7:00 PM
Scranton JCC | 601 Jefferson Ave

Join us for the Jewish Federation of NEPA Annual Meeting as we thank outgoing President David Fallk, Esq., and welcome David Hollander as our incoming President, with gratitude for his service as Campaign Co-Chair. We also look ahead to the 2026-2027 Campaign with Alex Itkowitz continuing as Co-Chair with Susan Blum Connors.

ON DISPLAY AT THE ANNUAL MEETING:



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The Federation's Campaign 2026-27 chairmen are announced.

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History

A look at the time immediately after Israel declared independence.

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CANDLE LIGHTING

June 5	8:15 pm
June 12	8:19 pm
June 19	8:21 pm
June 26	8:22 pm
July 3	8:22 pm
July 10	8:19 pm

PLUS

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Understanding Alzheimer’s: awareness and prevention for seniors

BY DR. KEN SEBASTIANELLI

Alzheimer’s Disease is a progressive neurological disorder that leads to memory loss and cognitive decline in older adults. This condition affects memory, thinking and behavior, and can present significant challenges for both those diagnosed and their caregivers. While there is no surefire way to prevent Alzheimer’s completely, there are lifestyle changes and strategies that may reduce the risk or delay the onset of the disease.

◆ Healthy lifestyle is key:

First, maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle is crucial. This includes engaging in regular physical activity, which has been shown to improve blood flow to the brain and reduce the risk of cognitive decline. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise per week, such as brisk walking, coupled with muscle-strengthening activities on two or more days a week.

Diet also plays a significant role; a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins, particularly the Mediterranean diet, has been



linked to better brain health.

Additionally, managing risk factors for cardiovascular diseases such as obesity, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol—may also lower the risk of Alzheimer’s, as what’s good for the heart is often good for the brain. Staying hydrated is also crucial as even mild dehydration can impair brain function, affecting concentration and memory.

◆ Stay mentally and socially active:

Mental stimulation and lifelong learning are also important. Engaging in activities that challenge your brain, such as reading, solving puzzles, playing musical instruments,

or learning a new skill or language, can enhance cognitive reserve and potentially delay the onset of Alzheimer’s symptoms.

Social engagement and maintaining strong social connections may also protect against Alzheimer’s, possibly by reducing stress levels and decreasing the risk of depression, both of which are considered risk factors for the disease. Engaging in social activities encourages the use of cognitive skills and emotional regulation, contributing to a healthier, more resilient brain.

◆ Treat your brain kindly:

Lastly, getting adequate sleep, managing stress, and seeking treatment for mental health disorders like depression and anxiety can contribute to overall brain health. Practicing stress-reduction techniques like meditation can also contribute significantly to brain health, aiding memory consolidation and reducing the damaging effects of

stress on the brain.

While these strategies do not guarantee prevention, they offer the best approach currently known for reducing the risk of Alzheimer’s disease. It’s also important to stay informed about new research on prevention, as the scientific understanding of Alzheimer’s continues to evolve, and because early detection can significantly improve the quality of life for those affected by the disease.

Dr. Ken Sebastianelli has served as medical director for Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab, a Jewish Senior Life Community, since 2012. Dr. Sebastianelli is a board-certified Internal Medicine practitioner with Prime Med Medical Group, and is affiliated with Geisinger Community Medical Center and Moses Taylor Hospital. He is also a member of the Medical Executive Committee at Geisinger Community Medical Center.

Survivor. Continued from page 1

of survival during the Holocaust. As a child, Friedman spent more than three years hidden in a cellar by family friends, surviving under extraordinary and dangerous circumstances.

Her testimony provided attendees with a first-hand account of resilience, courage and hope, leaving a lasting impact on all who attended.

The evening served as both a memorial and an educational opportunity

for the community. Open to the public, the program underscored the JCC’s commitment to preserving Holocaust memory and ensuring that the lessons of history continue to be remembered and shared with future generations.



The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Diasporism and Zionism

When the push for Jewish self-determination organized into the Zionist movement in the 19th century, it was not universally adopted by Jews. There was opposition to it from various quarters. The Agudath Israel (Agudas Yisroel), a religious coalition, opposed it on religious grounds. The Jewish Labor Bund, a Socialist Jewish organization, opposed it on ideological grounds. The Reform Movement upheld the “National Affirmation,” which stated that Judaism was only a religion and therefore no National self-determination was necessary. The Assimilationists saw Zionism as a threat to their attempt to just dissolve into the general population where they lived. All these movements had, early on, a representation in America. The Zionist Movement was, by and large, a grassroots popular idea but it represented only a plurality of the Jewish community.

Historical developments in the 20th century profoundly transformed the ideological landscape in the Jewish community. Two thirds of European Jewry were murdered in the Shoah; the Agudas Yisroel, Bund and Reform factions



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

were disproportionately represented among the victims. In addition, the events of the Shoah shook the Jewish world. The independence of Israel in 1948 ignited the imagination and hopes of Jews around the world and over time made Zionism a central element in Jewish Identity. It was, however, the Six-Day War of 1967 that cemented the Jewish support for Israel as a political Jewish State, marginalizing those who opposed it. Psychologist Hanan Nudel called this change “the Israelization of Jewish Identity.”

The new ideological configuration worked very well for decades and transformed the attitude of some of the Jewish communal organizations and movements in America. The American Jewish Committee, originally opposed to Zionism, embraced the Jewish State. Segments of the Orthodox Jewish community became supporters of Israel. The Reform Movement, which once upon a time was dominated by the

American Council for Judaism (a Classical Reform group opposed to the idea of Jewish peoplehood) became an ardent supporter of Israel and even created ARZA (American Reform Zionist Association)

The push to promote “Diasporism” (the idea that Jews should live in the Diaspora) became marginal but did not disappear. Groups like the “Arbeter Ring” (“Workmen’s Circle”) and segments of the Orthodox community – among others – continued to advocate it. Their efforts to expand their ideological footprint in Jewish life were largely unsuccessful because of, among other things, the close alignment of Israeli and U.S. positions, which secured bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress and wide support among non-Jewish Americans.

Then came the antisemitic explosion of October 8, 2023. I’m not going to go here into where it came from, but I will give you my take on what it did to the Jewish community. The increasing use of the “Israel/Palestine” issue as a litmus test to participate or even belong in liberal coalition where Jews had been traditionally very active, did not start on October 8th, but it accelerated then. Many liberal Jews found themselves politically homeless. Some of the

See “Zionism” on page 4

Federation announces Campaign 2026-27 chairmen

The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania has announced the chairmen of the Federation’s Campaign 2026-27.

Alex Itzkowitz is a real estate investor, developer, third-party manager and community leader dedicated to strengthening Jewish communal life through philanthropy, education and strategic growth initiatives. He serves on the boards of the Scranton Jewish Cemetery Association, Jewish Resource Center of the Poconos, Chabad of the Mountains and Teach PA, and is actively involved in supporting institutions such as Beth Shalom Synagogue, Beth Shalom Academy and other community organizations. As Campaign chair



Susan Blum Connors



Alex Itzkowitz

for the Jewish Federation, Alex focuses on expanding engagement and building sustainable support for the Jewish community locally, in Israel and around the world.

Outside of his professional and communal work, he enjoys spending time with his wife, Ruth, and their four children, and organizing community-building outdoor activities, including ice fishing and skeet shooting.

Susan Blum Connors is the daughter of the late Murray and Fern Blum, and the granddaughter of the late Paul and Nettie Blum and Morris and Marion Kaplan. Born and raised in Scranton, she has one sister, Eileen Coyne, and is the wife of the late former Scranton Mayor Jim Connors.

They are the parents of one daughter, Elizabeth Hemphill (wife of Matt Hemphill), and two sons, Zachary and David. They also have five granddaughters, Dr. Maggie Maguire (wife of attorney Brian Maguire), Quinn MacDonald (wife of Dr. Jake MacDonald), attorney Tricia Hemphill, twins Avery and Aylah Connors, and

See “Campaign” on page 7

DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming Reporter issues.

DEADLINE	ISSUE
Monday, June 8.....	July
Monday, July 13	August
Monday, August 10.....	September
Monday, September 14.....	October

Congregation B’nai Harim in Pocono Pines, PA, is hiring a part-time administrator for a hybrid 10-15 hours/week position. The job includes administrative functions, such as maintaining accurate membership records, payments and donations. The candidate must learn and maintain ShulCloud, the synagogue’s operating system. Updating the website and using Canva graphic software are important features of the job. The administrator will support the president, rabbi, treasurer, bookkeeper and committee chairpersons, as needed. For more information and the complete job description, please email Susan Aufhauser, President, at susanbnaiharim@gmail.com.

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Symposium 1.....Continued from page 1

personal, lived experiences from the mouth of a Holocaust survivor directly to an attentive listener. First-hand accounts of those who suffered the horrors of Nazi persecution remain the bedrock for understanding how the Holocaust impacted individuals, families and entire communities

Hearing directly from Holocaust survivors offers students a powerful and often transformative learning experience. Survivors’ personal accounts have the capacity to create an emotional and human connection to history, and to foster empathy and deepen understanding of the Holocaust in ways that textbooks or literature alone cannot.

As the number of living Holocaust survivors declines, second and third generation speakers, who are the children and grandchildren of survivors, play a vital role in preserving and sharing these histories. Their testimonies not only carry forward the stories of their parents and grandparents, but may also reflect on how those experiences have shaped their own identities and world views. These intergenerational accounts offer students a deeper understanding of

the Holocaust’s long-lasting impact and illuminate the ways in which identity, resilience and memory are passed down and honored over time.

Students and teachers came 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 Annual Teen Symposium continues to exceed that goal far beyond our vision and expectations.

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.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The in-person Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust was a two-day program that was scheduled from 8:50 am to 1:30 pm, with programs that focused on the Holocaust, the causes, the development and the consequences. The overwhelming highlight for all attendees was meetings with survivors of the Holocaust, children and grandchildren of survivors, and a soldier of the liberation.

Each day, 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 13 years, is a retired Scranton School District teacher and dedicated director of the planning committee for the Holocaust Education Resource Center.

On Wednesday morning, Mrs. Connors was joined by our very special guest, the Most Reverend Joseph C. Bambera. The bishop

eloquently shared a message of tolerance, acceptance and hope with the audience.

Unfortunately, Governor Josh Shapiro was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. However, he recognized the importance of the Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust and wanted to participate. Therefore, he created a short video for the attendees about the alarming growth of antisemitism and the importance of being an upstander.

Next, a very short film was shown about a \$25 million initiative to battle antisemitism called #StandUpToJewishHate using a blue square emoji as its main feature. The blue square is sized at 2.4% of the screen or other surfaces to symbolize Jews making up 2.4% of the population, yet being victims of 55% of religiously motivated hate crimes.

Created by the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, the blue square emoji is being introduced as a symbol of solidarity with the Jewish people as part of the #StandUpToJewishHate campaign. The campaign is designed to raise awareness for the fight against antisemitism, specifically among See “Symposium 2” on page 10

Zionism.....Continued from page 3

policies of the Israeli administration put further pressure on these groups and alienated them. Younger Jews, for many of whom campus life was their daily reality, were particularly vulnerable to this pressure. Jewish socialist anti-Zionist groups saw this as an emerging market for their ideas and took advantage of it.

For some anti-Zionist Orthodox groups, the hostility to Israel in America came to be seen as a confirmation of their own bias. Some groups within the Reform and Conservative movements started to see their relationship with Israel

as opposed to their commitment to *tikkun olam*, a central element of the liberal Jewish religious establishment in America. Some Jews reacted by rejecting the centrality of *tikkun olam*, others felt alienated from established religious institutions and others yet rejected the Israel connection.

The media, in its drive to capture advertising through circulation, airtime and click-bait, tends to emphasize controversy and what was called once upon a time “Yellow Journalism.” In our case, this had the effect of legitimizing marginal

Jewish positions and amplifying their voices, giving the impression that they are larger than they actually are. This strengthened marginal groups as potential homes for those community members who perceived the rise in anti-Jewish hostility in America as a threat they don’t understand and for which they long to find some easy explanation.

The result of all this is a community which is becoming increasingly fractured and in which the spaces for dialogue and consensus building are rapidly shrinking. Since talmudic times, and maybe even farther back, one of the strengths of our people has been the ability to agree to disagree and to live, with all our differences, under the same tent. That is changing and threatens not

only the unity but the viability of the American Jewish community.

I never made a secret of my strong support for the Jewish right to self-determination and for the State of Israel. I also made it clear I am a strong supporter of local Jewish life and Jewish education. As a student of Jewish history, I don’t believe we can turn back the clock – nor do I believe we should – on the achievements of Zionism and Israel or their impact on Jewish Identity. I do believe, as well, that we need to restore our ability to argue across ideological divides without abandoning the tent or setting up a separate shtetl. Let us work together to restore the “Unity in Diversity” which allowed the Jewish people to live and thrive through the tempests of history.



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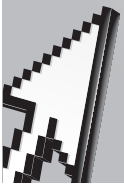
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From Israel’s declaration of Independence to the first truce

(Seventeenth article of history series)

BY DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

As soon as Israel declared Independence, it opened its doors to the Jewish refugees and survivors of the Holocaust, many of whom had been captured by the British and interned in the prisoner camps in Cyprus. Others were still lingering in the Displaced Persons Camps of Europe. They were a diverse group speaking different languages and most of them deeply traumatized by their experience in the Nazi camps. Israel took them in and many of them joined the Hagannah in defending the newborn state. This presented significant difficulties of communication in the field of battle.

As the Declaration of Independence was being read in Tel Aviv, a significant concern of the Jewish leadership was the situation in Jerusalem. The large Jewish population of Jerusalem was short in food and supplies, isolated from the central part of the country with Arab militias controlling the Tel-Aviv Jerusalem road. Another concern was the entry of the surrounding Arab armies into the war in support of the two Palestinian militias.

To solve the issue of the isolation of the Jerusalem Jewish population,

Ben Gurion ordered the Hagannah to develop an alternative road. A retired American Army Engineering Corps colonel called David (“Mickey”) Marcus took control of the project, developing an alternative road dubbed “Burma Road” after the Burma-China road developed by the allies in World War II. This road gave the Jewish forces a secure access to Jerusalem, re-supplying the beleaguered population. Ironically, after finishing the road, Mickey Marcus was killed by friendly fire from a sentry who did not speak English nor Hebrew.

The problem of the entry of the surrounding Arab nations into the war became more pressing, as the Secretary General of the League of Arab States stated in a message to the UN that the Arabs intended to form a “Unified Arab State of Palestine” and refused to recognize the independence of the Jewish state. All this while thousands of Arab troops flooded the country.

While the Jewish troops were more or less OK with light weapons, many of them manufactured in clandestine factories in *kibbutzim* over the years, they lacked any form of military transportation,

tanks or air force. The balance of troops was also significantly stacked against them, although this would begin to change with the incoming Holocaust survivors and Jewish volunteers from around the world.

The Yishuv, however, organized very fast. In December 1947, the Jewish Agency organized the “Sherut Avir,” which became after independence the Israel Air Force. While their hardware was no match for the Arab Air forces, they had very experienced personnel, mostly volunteers from South Africa and the U.S. with combat experience. The purchase of 25 Czech Avia S-199s began to shift the balance in the skies.

While the Hagannah (restructured as the Israel Defense Forces or IDF) was in disadvantage in weapons, it also counted with experienced personnel who had served in the Jewish Brigade in Italy during World War II. These experienced soldiers were able to organize the officers’ corps and the supply lines for the IDF. The IDF lost control of

the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem on May 28, 1948. It did, however, stop the Syrian Army at Degania and the Egyptian Forces at Yad Mordechai.

The Jewish forces initially also faced deep divisions and conflict between the Hagannah, the Irgun and the Lehi. Menahem Begin, commander of the Irgun, signed an agreement to incorporate its forces into the IDF. In this context, Begin informed Ben Gurion that a ship with weapons from Europe, purchased by the Irgun, would arrive in Israel. He wanted these weapons to be distributed to the former Irgun units. The ship was scheduled to arrive in May, but eventually was delayed and arrived in June. Ben Gurion was determined to distribute the weapons among the IDF regardless of whether the units had been Irgun or Hagannah. When the ship (the *Altalena*) arrived on June 20th, the former Irgun and Hagannah forces confronted each other at Kfar Vitkin, where the ship was landing. Yigal Yadin, in charge of the Hagannah

See “Truce” on page 11

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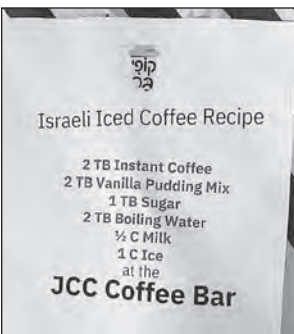
JCC celebrates Israel’s 78th birthday with fun treats and programming



The Jewish Community Center of Scranton celebrated Yom Ha’atzmaut with engaging and meaningful programs for participants of all ages throughout the building. Children in the JCC’s Early Learning Center enjoyed fun and educational activities focused on Israel, helping them learn about Israeli culture, traditions and the significance of the holiday in an interactive way. Older adults participating in the Morris Mertz Wellness Café were treated to a special Israeli iced coffee bar, where they gathered for conversation, connection and learning about Israel while enjoying the popular Israeli-style beverage. In addition, a lobby coffee station invited members and guests to stop by, experience Israeli iced coffee and take part in learning more about Israel and its culture.

The celebration brought the community together in a warm and festive atmosphere while highlighting the JCC’s commitment to Jewish culture, education and community engagement.

Special thanks to JCC Jewish Education Specialist Miriam Raven and the students of Beth Shalom Academy who helped implement these wonderful programs.



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Abe Foxman, 86, longtime ADL head and Holocaust survivor, for whom fighting Jew-hatred was “deeply personal,” dies

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Abraham Foxman, a Holocaust survivor and national director of the Anti-Defamation League from 1987 until 2015, died on May 10. He was 86 years old.

“America and the Jewish people have lost a moral voice, a passionate advocate for the Jewish people and the state of Israel, and a remarkable leader,” stated Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO and national director of the ADL. “Abe Foxman was an iconic Jewish leader who embraced the ideal of an America free from antisemitism and hate and who strongly believed that these scourges could be defeated if good people opposed it.

“In his storied career, Abe transformed ADL while confronting antisemitism and hate – from both left and right – opposing the global rise in antisemitism, holding world leaders accountable and working to ensure that Israel was Jewish, secure and democratic,” Greenblatt stated. “Abe’s voice was heard, and listened to, by popes, presidents and prime ministers, a voice he used wherever Jews were at risk.

“Abe Foxman spoke on the global stage with moral authority and clarity and was relentlessly dedicated to his pursuit of a world without hate,” he added. “Abe understood the pow-

er of words. He often said that the Holocaust did not begin with bricks and mortar and gas chambers, but rather, it began with words. From this foundational principle, he made education and anti-bias training a cornerstone of ADL’s work, just as ADL would stand in opposition to hateful rhetoric and violent bigotry, whatever its source.”

William Daroff, CEO of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, told JNS that he had known Foxman for a quarter of a century. “Throughout that time, he was extraordinarily generous as a mentor and adviser to me. He offered guidance and encouragement at many phases of my career, including during my time at the Conference of Presidents,” Daroff said. “Abe combined toughness and warmth in a way that few leaders can. He expected seriousness, spoke with moral clarity and pushed younger leaders to think bigger about our responsibility to the Jewish people.”

It stood out to Daroff that Foxman “never treated the fight against antisemitism as abstract or academic. For him, it was deeply personal, rooted in his own life story as a Holocaust survivor,” he told JNS. “Yet he carried that experience not with bitterness but with purpose. Every



Abraham Foxman, then-national director of the ADL, in 2009. (Photo by Miriam Alster-Flash90)

conversation with Abe Foxman reinforced the idea that leadership requires courage, urgency and the willingness to speak out when others remain silent.”

Isaac Herzog, president of Israel, called Foxman a “legendary leader of the Jewish people, a champion of justice and equality and a longtime, dear friend of mine. ... Coming into a world at war, the Holocaust shaped Abe’s character and defined his mission: combating antisemitism and hypocrisy, calling out racism and bias, speaking up for the Jewish people and the Jewish democratic Israel,” Herzog stated. “His story, of rising from the ashes, is our story, the story of our people.”

Foxman’s decades running the ADL “positioned him as a prominent, distinguished force in the American Jewish community and a bridge between Israel and the Dias-

pora,” the Israeli president said. “He was a passionate Zionist, a humanist and an outspoken, wise friend.”

Gideon Sa’ar, Israeli foreign affairs minister, stated that Foxman was a “towering voice against antisemitism,” who “devoted his life to defending the Jewish people and strengthening the bond between Israel and Jewish communities worldwide.

“On behalf of the state of Israel, I extend my heartfelt condolences to his wife Golda, family, friends and all at the Anti-Defamation League,” the minister stated.

Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ) stated that Foxman was a “friend, courageous voice of reason,” who “dedicated his life to the fight against antisemitism, wherever or whenever it reared its ugly head.”

Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-NY) stated that “Abe Foxman led the ADL for nearly 30 years and never stopped fighting antisemitism and hate.”

“Abe spent his life serving his communities and he will be missed,” stated the office of Letitia James, attorney general of New York.

“What a profound loss,” wrote Deborah Lipstadt, former U.S. special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, and Dorot professor of modern Jewish history and Holocaust studies at

See “Foxman” on page 15

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Seen at the 38^h Annual Teen



Survivor Maude Dahme



Survivor Ruth Hartz



Survivor Peter Stern



2G Speaker Sandy Berenbaum



2G Speaker Michele Blask



2G Speaker Jane Elias



Students took a break for lunch.



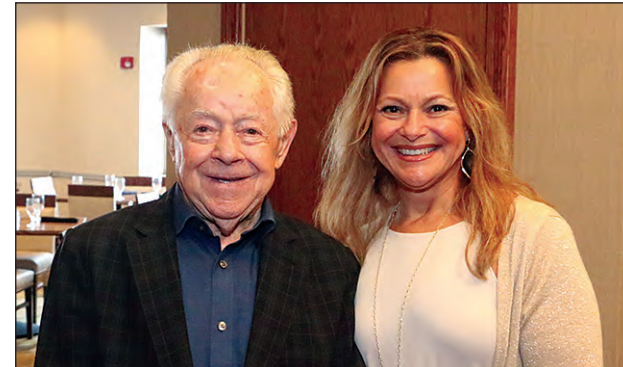
Students filtered out of breakout rooms for lunch.



Students arrived at the Symposium.



On May 5 and 6, the Holocaust Education Resource Center proudly presented the 38^h Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust to over 1,400 participants.



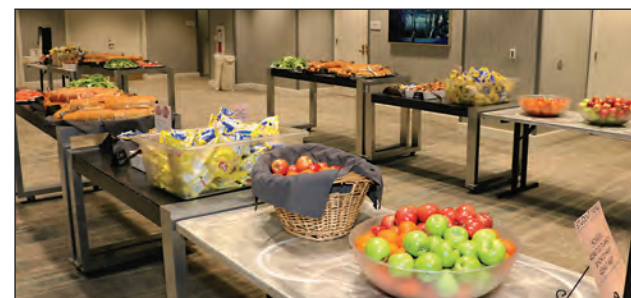
Survivor Mark Schonwetter and his daughter, Ann Arnold



Mary Ann Answni, Director of HERC



The room was packed with students.



Some of the lunch options.



Pins for the #StandUpToJewishHate campaign.

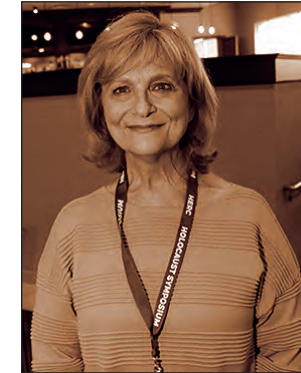


Students heard the testimony of the late Liberator Alan Moskin in a video from a previous Holocaust Symposium.



Bags were provided for Teacher Materials from HERC

Symposium on the Holocaust



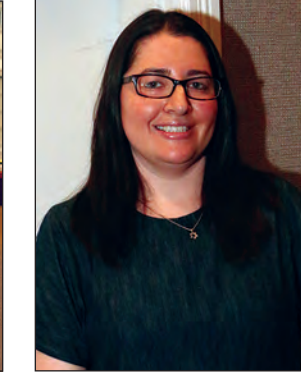
2G Speaker Linda Jaffe



2G Speaker Dina Lichtman



3G Speaker Joel Belfer



3G Speaker Farah Kraus



3G Speaker Jenn Mann



3G Speaker Ariel Mara Schwartz



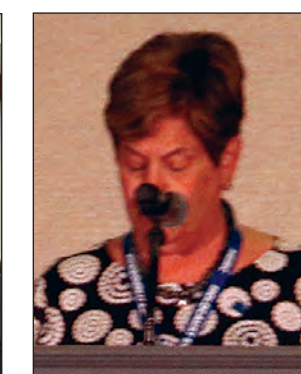
3G Speaker Joan Shavit



3G Speaker Melissa Shore



Daniel Chejfec, Executive Director of Jewish Federation of NEPA color



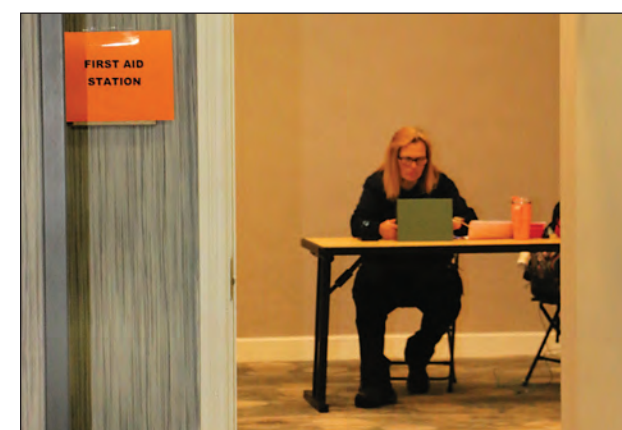
Susie Connors, Master of Ceremonies



Bishop Joseph C. Bambera and Survivor Ruth Hartz



Students heard Liberator Alan Moskin's testimony in a video from a previous Symposium.



Collen Knecht staffed the First Aid Station.



Survivor Maude Dahme spoke to students.



Governor Josh Shapiro addressed the students in a video address.



Survivor Mark Schonwetter spoke to students.



2G Speaker Dina Lichtman spoke to students.



"Children Remember the Holocaust" film



Above: The Gates of Auschwitz - Work Set One Free.

At left: Teacher Materials provided by HERC

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 Contact person: Cheryl Badner, Congregation Administrator
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 570-253-2222 • fax: 570-226-1105

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 Rabbi Daniel J. Swartz
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 570-344-7201 • website: www.TempleHesed.org
 E-mail: templehesed@comcast.net
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 Circle Saturdays at 11:30 am

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 Rabbi Daniel M. Zucker • President: Debbie Smith
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 (one block off Rt. 191 (5th Street) at Avenue A)
 570-421-8781 • website: www.templepoconos.org
 E-mail: tipoc@ptd.net
 Friday evening Shabbat 6 pm; Saturday morning Shabbat
 10:30 am

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Affiliation: United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
 Rabbi Daniel A. Bubnis, rabbibubnis@templeisraelscranton.org
 Cantor: Vladimir Aronzon
 President: Louis Nivert, metal1@comcast.net
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 & Fri., Zoom only at 7:30 am; Shabbat and festival morning
 services at 9:30 am

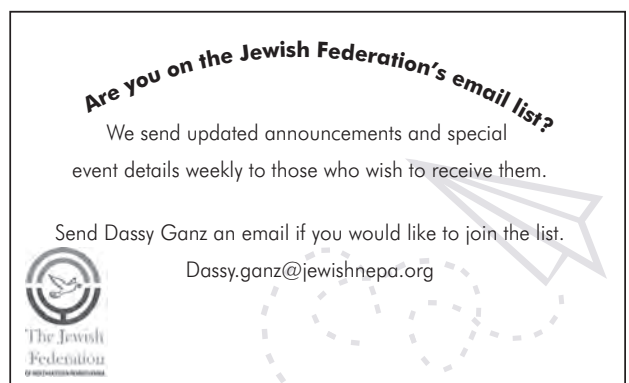
Symposium 2 Continued from page 4

non-Jewish audiences, and to help all Americans understand that there is a role for each of us to play in combating a problem that is unfortunately all too prevalent in communities across the country today. The campaign is encouraging people to download the blue square and share it widely. The foundation generously donated 2,000 pins, one for each attendee at the Holocaust Teen Symposium.

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.

Although Alan Moskin, a liberator, was no longer with us, his profound presentation was saved in our archives. Our committee overwhelmingly decided to share his powerful video with the students and it continued to resonate with them.

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, Mr. Moskin became a liberator of the Gunskirchen Concentration Camp, a sub-camp of Mauthausen. He was particularly



skilled in transporting his listeners back in time to feel and see what he was 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. In the video, he 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's message.

“When you listen to a witness, you become a witness.” – Eli Wiesel

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 5 and May 6, there were a total of thirteen (13) separate groups, with students from each participating school represented in each of the various venues.

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 fears, emotions and experiences that cannot be found in history books. Student attention and emotions were clearly evident in every room. Sessions concluded with applause, hugs and selfies with survivors.

Holocaust survivor Maud Dahme joined our
See “Symposium 3” on page 12

The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

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The Federation is asking members of its communities to support its “*Friends of The Reporter*” Campaign which seeks to raise \$5,000 to assist in funding the newspaper.

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The Reporter is the primary intercommunal newspaper of the Jewish communities of Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties. Supplementing synagogue newsletters, bulletins and e-mails, *The Reporter* is issued to hundreds of Jewish households throughout our region. Over the past several years, the publishing cost of the newspaper has increased dramatically although the newspaper continues to be provided at no charge to members of our Jewish communities in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Federation has assumed the financial responsibility of funding the newspaper at a cost of \$23,990 per year and asks only that its readers assist it in raising \$5,000 as part of its “*Friends of The Reporter*” Campaign to offset a small share of these expenses.

Your gift to fund our regional Jewish newspaper matters a great deal to our readers and we would be very grateful for your financial support.

As always, your comments, opinions & suggestions are always welcome.

With best wishes,
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Campaign.....Continued from page 3

one great-grandson, James Connors Maguire, who was born on May 12, 2026.

A 1968 graduate of Scranton Central High School, Susan received her bachelor of science degree in elementary and kindergarten education from Penn State University in 1972, a master of science degree in elementary education from the University of Scranton in 1974 and received her early childhood certificate from Marywood University in 1988. She taught in the Scranton School District for 34 years before retiring in 2006.

Susan’s experience as a community leader and volunteer began in earnest after she retired. She is on the board of the Jewish Federation of NEPA where she has served on the allocations and community

relations committees. In addition, she is on the planning committee for the Federation’s Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust and serves as its mistress of ceremonies. Susan was also the 2016-17 chairperson of the women’s division of the United Jewish Campaign.

Her other volunteer duties include being past president of the board and life member of Jewish Family Service of Northeastern Pennsylvania, where she and her late husband were named the inaugural recipients of the Community Matters Award in 2016. Her involvement at Temple Israel includes being 2nd vice-president of the board, chairing the program committee and volunteering with the mitzvah committee. In May 2026, Susan was named the recip-

ient of the Phyllis Strutin Mardo Woman of Distinction. On June 29, 2024, she had her *b’nai mitzvot* along with 10 other adult women. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of Webster Towers, Elan Gardens and ESNAR; assistant treasurer of the Erin Jessica Moreken Drug and Alcohol Treatment Fund; and is an advisory board member of Lackawanna County’s Area Agency on Aging. In 2013, Susan was appointed to serve on Congressman Matt Cartwright’s United States Military Academy Selection Board, on which she continued to serve until 2024. She was the 2015-16 recipient of the Roseann Smith Alperin Award presented by the Junior League of Scranton in cooperation with the Scranton Area Foundation, and on December 29, 2019, was *The Scranton Times* Northeast Woman. In 2021, Susan and Jim received the William E. Cockerill Sr. Memorial Award from the AFL-CIO Community Services and United Way Partnership. Additionally, Susan was honored by the Society of Irish Women in 2023 as its Distinguished Service Woman Honoree. Also in 2023, she and her late hus-

band received the Attorney Robert W. Munley Distinguished Service Award presented by Lackawanna Pro Bono Inc. for their committed service to justice in the community.

Susan also volunteers with the local affiliate of the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network, the Greenhouse Project and the United Way’s penpal program, and holds memberships in the Scranton Federation of Teachers Retiree Chapter, Society of Irish Women, Arc and its Auxiliary, Lackawanna Historical Society, the Lackawanna Federation of Democratic Women, the Lackawanna River Corridor Association, Waldorf Park GAF, and the Friends of Connors Park and Nay Aug Park. For more than 35 years, Susan has worked for various candidates on the local, state and national levels.

When not volunteering or sleeping, Susan is a standardized patient at Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine. She also likes to read, knit and play Mah Jongg, Scrabble and other board games. In fact, Susan appeared as a contestant on “Wheel of Fortune” in 1989 and won \$9,300, as well as a pair of Jordache jeans and a year’s supply of pop-tarts.

Truce.....Continued from page 5

forces, when the *Altalena* refused to surrender, shelled and sunk the ship. Ben Gurion ordered the arrest of 200 Irgun fighters. This episode, while it ensured the unity of the IDF, remained for many years an open sore in Israeli society contributing to the polarization between right and left. Yitzhak Shamir’s faction, the Lehi (Lochamei Herut Israel), remained independent and uncoordinated with the IDF.

At the end of June, U.N. mediator Count Folke Bernadotte presented a formula to end the war and achieved a negotiated solution. His proposal was a redivision of the territory comprising the British Mandate and Transjordan. He proposed the formation of a union with two members, one Jewish and one Arab. Under his proposal the entire Negev

would be part of the Arab member of the union, while the Western Galilee would be part of the Jewish member. Jerusalem would be part of the Arab member, but Jews would enjoy municipal autonomy and access to the Jewish holy sites. Haifa, including the refineries and terminals, would be a free port. Lydda (Lod) would be included in the Arab member of the union, but the airport would be accessible to both sides. Both sides rejected the proposal.

The frail truce collapsed on July 8, 1948. A new round of fighting began, one in which both sides were better organized and had clearer military and political objectives. This second round of fighting would see the Israelis beginning to turn the tide.



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Symposium 3.....Continued from page 10

program this year, along with returning survivors Ruth Hartz, Mark Schonwetter and Peter Stern.

We incorporated several additional presentations to the Holocaust program with the introduction of five second generation speakers. Jane Elias shared the story of her beloved father Beni Elias, a Bergen-Belsen Holocaust survivor; Michele Blask shared the testimony of her dearly departed parents, Hans Nemenoff and Imy Rothmuller; Sandy Berenbaum shared the testimony of Jakob and Edith Goldwasser; Linda Jaffe presented the challenges and the life of Anne Jaffe; and Dina Lichtman spoke of her parents, Roman and Bella Lichtman.

The third generation speakers were Farah Kraus, Alexander Levine, Jenn Mann, Melissa Shore and Joan Shavit, who shared the harrowing testimonies and resilience of their beloved grandparents.

The passing of time means the passing of the first generation survivors, leaving the responsibility to the second, third and fourth generation survivors to keep the memories and lessons of the Holocaust alive. Each speaker had a unique story and 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 and the Electric City Ballroom. Survivors, liberators and facilitators enjoyed lunch

together in Trolley’s Bistro.

Featured in the closing event was the moving testimony of Mark Schonwetter, who as a young Jewish boy in Poland 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 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 54,800 young people over a period of 38 years.

The presence of the teachers and students gives us hope: the 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.

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

SUPPLEMENTAL TEACHING MATERIALS FOR THE CLASSROOMS

A major highlight of the day was the distribution of kits for each teacher to utilize when returning to their classrooms. Teachers were gifted with a copy of Prism, the Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators. They were also given Ann Arnold’s book, “Together: A Journey for Survival” and Maud Dahme’s book “Chocolate: The Taste of Freedom.” All books and teaching materials were gathered into beautiful HERC tote bags designed and graciously donated by Susie Connors.

Memoirs and diaries offer students a powerful entry point into Holocaust history by inviting them into an act of witnessing. Like other forms of testimony, written accounts – whether in-the-moment diary entries or memoirs written later – provide windows into aspects of the Holocaust and the experiences of their authors that historical records alone cannot fully capture. These resources support educators in teaching with memoirs and diaries. These materials can enrich ELA and social studies classrooms with personal voices that explore the relationship between identity and memory, deepening historical understanding and emotional connection.

Survivor/liberator/speaker biographies were also included in the teacher education packets to continue the discussion of the testimonies when the students return to their classrooms. As we work with teachers, we strive to empower them with tools and resources to confidently teach about the Holocaust in their classrooms.

Holocaust history matters. A responsible and thorough study of this event can shape the lives of students for the better. Teachers, who are equipped to teach about the Holocaust and antisemitism, can ensure that future generations understand and take positive action from the vital lessons of this history. 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.”

See “Symposium 4” on page 13



Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving

Use this planned giving quick reference guide to help determine the best strategy for achieving your philanthropic and financial goals.

For more information or to discuss these planned giving options, please contact Daniel Chejfec, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of NEPA, 570-961-2300 (x1) or daniel.chejfec@jewishnepa.org.

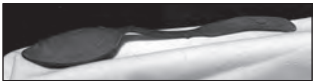
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Receive guaranteed fixed income that is partially tax-free	Create a charitable gift annuity	Current & future savings on income taxes, plus fixed, stable payments
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Give your personal residence or farm, but retain life use	Create a charitable gift of future interest, called a retained life estate	Tax advantages plus use of the property
Make a large gift with little cost to you	Contribute a life insurance policy you no longer need or purchase a new one & designate a charity as the owner	Current & possible future income tax deductions
Receive secure, fixed income for life while avoiding market risks	Purchase a charitable gift annuity or create a charitable remainder annuity trust	Tax advantages & possible increased rate of return
Give income from an asset for a period of years but retain the asset for yourself or your heirs	Create a charitable lead trust	Federal estate tax savings on asset & income tax deductions for deductions for donated income
Create a hedge against inflation over the long term	Create a charitable remainder unitrust	Variable payments for life plus tax advantages
Make a revocable gift during your lifetime	Name a charity as the beneficiary of assets in a living trust	Full control of the trust terms during your lifetime



Symposium 4.....Continued from page 12

HOLOCAUST ARTIFACTS ON DISPLAY FOR ATTENDEES

- ◆ A striped armband with yellow star worn by Jews during the Nazi Era between 1939 and 1945 – The Nazis created this system, as a prelude to deporting Jews to ghettos and killing centers in German-occupied eastern Europe.
- ◆ The M43 German Military Field Cap or Einheitsmutze used by the German Wehrmacht and SS during World War II and obtained by liberators at a Nazi Death Camp.
- ◆ A piece of the Birkenau Crematorium Wall – As Soviet Forces continued to approach, SS Chief Heinrich Himmler ordered the destruction of the Auschwitz-Birkenau gas chambers and crematoria in November 1944. The SS attempted to destroy the evidence of mass killings, and prisoners were forced to dismantle and dynamite the structures.
- ◆ Spoon (burned) – A coveted treasure of inmates in concentration camps. A spoon was a symbol of humanity, as most prisoners were forced to eat what little food they could get without silverware, like animals. The purpose was to dehumanize the prisoners.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BEAR WITNESS?

To “bear witness” to the Holocaust means it validates experiences, it provides a platform for voices to be heard, to be remembered, to be honored and to actively prevent the forgetting of the horrific events, ensuring that the lessons of the past are not lost. It means taking an active role in combating hate speech, racism and discrimination, and promoting tolerance and understanding. It can contribute to a more just and understanding world by acknowledging and remembering events, especially those involving suffering or injustice.

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.”

CONCLUSION

The symposium is designed to engage students’ hearts, minds and consciences as they watch and listen to the voices of survivors and their descendants, challenging them to grapple with the moral and ethical dimensions of the Holocaust and to consider its relevance today.

As we turn the page on the 38th Annual Teen Symposium, the Holocaust Education Resource Center and the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania have recommitted to Holocaust education which is, and has always been, in a constant state of evolution. Our goal is to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive, and to in-

spire 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 Holocaust demonstrates the devastating consequences of prejudice and discrimination, showing how seemingly small acts of bias can escalate into horrific violence and genocide.

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 dwindling rapidly, 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.

We remain committed to providing teachers and students with the resources and training to educate about the dangers of antisemitism and to help students connect with present day issues of hatred, so they can take action to prevent its rise in their schools and communities.

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.

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.

There are many thanks due to many people:

Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania:

Executive Director: Daniel Chejfec, Ph.D.
Federation staff: Mary Ann Mistysyn, Secretary, and Dana Lewis, Business Manager

Support:

The Robert H Spitz Foundation, the Schwartz Mack Foundation, the Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation, the Rabinowitz Foundation, the Chicago Community Foundation, the Scranton Area Foundation, Sare Family Foundation, Sondra G. and Morey M. Myers Gift Foundation, the Kraft Foundation, The Sons of Italy, Loggia Gloria # 815 and the Scranton Kiwanis Foundation.

The individuals who have rendered their generous support are Dennis Dougherty Family, Harris and Janice Cutler, David and Amy Hollander, Susie Connors, Kathryn Bekanich, Sandy and Clarence Lamanna.

Our Honorable Guest Speakers:

Survivors – Maud Dahme, Ruth Hartz, Mark Schonwetter and Peter Stern.

2nd Generation -Jane Elias, Michele Blask, Linda Jaffe, Dina Lichtman and Sandy Berenbaum.

3rd Generation- Alexander Levine, Farah Kraus, Melissa Shore, Jennifer Mann and Joan Shavit.

VIP Guests:

Josh Shapiro, Governor of Pennsylvania (via recorded message)

Bishop Joseph Bambera, Diocese of Scranton
Richard Eckersley the Schwartz Mack Foundation

See “Symposium 5” on page 14

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You will be able to look back and say: “I’m just doing what my People have always done for each other.”

For further information on gifting stocks in payment of your pledge to our Annual UJA Campaign, please contact the Federation at 570-961-2300 (ext. 3) for details.

Symposium 5.....Continued from page 13

Patti Thomas, the Scranton Area Foundation
Rebecca Farrell, the Scranton Area Foundation
Hilton Scranton & Conference Center:
Robert Trotta, General Manager; Kristen Blight, Director of Sales and Marketing; Brianna John, Sales Manager; Sue Coccodrilli, Assistant Front Desk Manager; Lori LeClaire, Banquet Manager; Carson Boyd, Food and Banquet Manager; Chad Gibbs, Chief Engineer; Chrissy Cristo, Housekeeping Manager; and Steve Wesley, of JP Lilley. A very special thank you is also extended to the Hilton dining, reception, engineering, housekeeping and bell staff for their professionalism and assistance. Together, they made the experience at the Hilton a stellar

event for survivors, liberators, faculty, students and adult participants.
Planning Committee:
Denny Bryon, Kathy Bryon, Bill Burke, Carol Burke, Susie Connors, George Conrad, Debbie Demming, Debi Eglesia, Atty. David Fallk, Sandy Fasula, David Hollander, Brenda Hopkins, Doris Koloski, Clarence LaManna, Sandie LaManna, Michael Mardo, JoAnn Martarano, Marie Merkel, Mary Moore, Patti O’Hara, Marian Poveromo, Lou Ann Smacchi, Sylvia Tagert, Bob Tagert, Michelle Walutes, Michael Washo and Steve Weinberger.
Facilitators:
Kim Bochicchio, Denny Bryon, Kathy Bryon, Bill Burke, Carol Burke, Susie Connors, George Conrad, Britt Demming, Debbie Dem-

ming, Debi Eglesia, Atty. David Fallk, Sandy Fasula, Christina Finn, Carey Garvey, David Hollander, Doris Koloski, Clarence LaManna, Sandie LaManna, Michael Mardo, JoAnn Martarano, Marie Merkel, Mary Moore, Patti O’Hara, Lou Ann Smacchi, Sylvia Tagert, Bob Tagert, Michelle Walutes, Rose Warner and Steve Weinberger.
Volunteers:
Philip Answini, Amy Babicz, John Babicz, and Heather Stauffer
Drivers: Neil Weinberg, Ron Kozak and Jack Smith
Photographer: Andrea Rosar
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Sgt. Eugene Groysman, Patrolman Anthony Roberto, Patrolman Nick Philbin, Patrolman Isaac Troutman, Patrolman Ryan Seprish and Patrolman Tyler Michel
Secure Community Network – John Pisner III, Regional Director, and Timothy A. Brooks, Regional Security Advisor
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) – Colleen Knecht
Media:
ECTV – Mark Migliore
WNEP – Jack Culkin

WBRE 28/WYOU 22 – Connor Coar
WVIA – Sarah Hofius Hall
FOX News – Hannah Poggi
Scranton Times/Tribune–Christine Lee
Dave Reckless 3G NY – Descendants of Holocaust Survivors
Chuck Feldman, President of The Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center and Lise Marlowe, Program and Outreach Director
Speakers Bureau at the Museum of Jewish Heritage
Susan Herlands, My Mother’s Delicacies, for her generous donation. The mixed flavors of rugelach embellished lunch for the students, facilitators and survivors.
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 38th 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.

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Israeli judokas won three medals at European Championships

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS)– Israeli athletes won three medals at the European Judo Championships in Tbilisi, Georgia, over the April 19 weekend, including a gold medal in the women’s over-78kg category.

Raz Hershko, 27, beat France’s Lea Fontaine in under a minute on April 19, winning gold for the second time in her judo career, after overcoming Croatia’s Helena Vukovic in the semifinal and Italy’s Erika Simonetti in the quarterfinal. In doing so, Hershko became the

third Israeli judoka to win more than one gold medal at the European championship, after Arik Zeevi and Sagi Muki.

The win marked Hershko’s fifth consecutive medal at the continental tournament. In 2022, 2023 and 2025, she won a silver medal, and in 2024, she secured her first gold.

Originally published by Jewish News Syndicate, www.jns.org/news/israel-news/israeli-judokas-win-three-medals-at-european-championships.

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2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Foxman.....Continued from page 7

Emory University. “Abe Foxman was a fighter for our people and for justice for all. He was my friend, someone to whom I could speak truth. He shall be missed greatly.”

The Jewish Federations of North America called Foxman a “towering voice against antisemitism and a lifelong champion of the Jewish people” with a “extraordinary legacy,” and said, “A Holocaust survivor who transformed personal tragedy into moral courage, Abe dedicated his life to defending Jewish communities, advancing human dignity and strengthening the bonds between people of all backgrounds.”

The American Jewish Committee called Foxman a “towering figure in the fight against antisemitism and hatred. ... Abe brought moral clarity, courage and unwavering conviction to generations of advocacy and leadership,” the AJC said. “His voice helped shape the American Jewish experience and strengthened the global fight against bigotry in all its forms.”

David G. Greenfield, CEO of Met Council on Jewish Poverty, stated that Foxman, a former Met Council board member, was a “dear friend and mentor. ... Abe was one of the great Jewish leaders of the past century,” he said. “He devoted his life to defending the Jewish people, fighting antisemitism, preserving the memory of the Holocaust and standing up for human dignity wherever it was threatened.

“Throughout his life, Abe called

out antisemitism wherever it appeared – on the right, on the left and everywhere in between. He did so with moral clarity, courage and an unwavering commitment to truth,” Greenfield stated. “Public leaders do not always match their public reputations in private. Abe was the rare person whose private kindness, humility and generosity were even greater than his public stature. All who knew him loved him. Abe’s impact on the Jewish people and on our broader society is impossible to measure.”

David Bernstein, CEO of North American Values Institute, told JNS that for decades, Foxman “embodied the spirit of the American Jewish community and helped shape its consensus. ... Those of us in Jewish advocacy revered his sharp wit, intellectual clarity and extraordinary political acumen,” Bernstein said. “He was a towering presence in our communal life, and he will be sorely missed.”

The ADL stated that Foxman was born in 1940 and survived the Holocaust “after he was entrusted to his Polish Catholic nanny, who had him baptized as a Catholic to hide his Jewish identity. He was miraculously reunited with his parents after the war.”

A graduate of Yeshiva of Flatbush, City College of the City University of New York and New York University School of Law, Foxman joined the ADL in 1965, right after law school, and served

as assistant director of legal affairs and then “various roles” before he became national director in 1987, the group stated.

“An outspoken, passionate and tireless advocate for the Jewish people and Israel, Abe served his entire 50-year career at ADL, becoming one of the world’s foremost voices against antisemitism and hate,” the ADL said.

Greenblatt, the ADL leader, stated that Foxman’s “work and philosophy were forged in a remarkable childhood. During the Holocaust, his parents were forced to entrust him to the care of his Polish-Catholic nanny, Bronislawa Kurpi, who

baptized him and raised him as a Catholic for four years,” Greenblatt said. “She sought to retain custody of Abe. Although he lost 14 members of his family in the Holocaust, his parents survived and emigrated to the United States with Abe.”

Foxman is survived by his wife, Golda; children Michelle and Ariel; son-in-law Brandon Cardet-Hernandez; and grandchildren, Cielo, Leila, Gideon and Amirit, the ADL said.

Originally published at <https://www.jns.org/news/u-s-news/abe-foxman-longtime-adl-head-and-holocaust-survivor-for-whom-fighting-jew-hatred-was-deeply-personal-86>.

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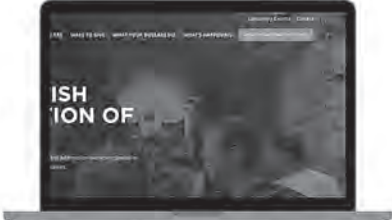
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