



WINTER 2014

# In the News

ST. LOUIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM & LEARNING CENTER

MAKE A **20**  
DIFFERENCE **YEARS**  
REMEMBER. HONOR. ACT.

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## A Note From Kent Hirschfelder

To those of us who spend a great deal of time dealing with the rewards and challenges of Holocaust education, the phrases “Never Again” and “Don’t Be a Bystander” are frequently heard, and used, as we confront not only the horrors of seventy years ago but the reality of ongoing genocides.

Additionally, new information and research are constantly coming to light. For example, last year the HMLC hosted a lecture on the excavation of the death camps at Sobibor and the museum is currently installing updated, more nuanced information about the Holocaust in Italy.

I confronted stark visual reminders of both history, and history’s unlearned lessons, on a recent trip to Italy and Croatia. In Trieste, Italy I visited a former rice husking factory, the Risiera Di San Sabba, an important if largely unknown internment and transit camp taken over by the Germans in 1943. While primarily used to transfer partisans, political prisoners and Jews to Auschwitz, many people were murdered there and cremated in an oven that had been converted from its prior use, drying rice husks. Part of the memorial created was an outline in the courtyard of that oven and an obelisk built to resemble a smokestack on the exact spot where the crematorium originally stood.

A few days later, I was in Sarajevo, site of the horrific three-year siege in the early 1990’s by the Bosnian Serbs against the Bosniacs, an effort precipitated by deep-seated ethnic hatred. In addition to the many buildings still exhibiting evidence of the extensive mortar shelling and sniper fire, there were grim reminders of the horror of the war on streets and sidewalks and in markets all over the city represented by random splotches of red paint marking the locations where residents of Sarajevo were killed by shelling or sniper fire as they tried to live out their daily lives ... grim reminders of the horrors of ethnic conflict and genocide. And, of course, we were told of the massacre of 6,000 men and boys in Srebrenica in 1995. Tragically, nearly a quarter million people died in the savage ethnic fighting in the 1990’s while the international community remained largely indifferent. Until today, many of the perpetrators have not been brought to justice.

**“Never Again.” “Don’t Be a Bystander.”** Phrases so terribly important and so easily forgotten.

Finally, in 2015, HMLC will officially be commemorating its 20th Anniversary with a dinner at the St. Louis Ritz-Carlton on Sunday, August 9. This will be a special time to REMEMBER and HONOR the work we’ve done together with the survivors, educating students and visitors about the lessons learned from the Holocaust, with a vision of creating a world where hatred and indifference are transformed into understanding and compassion and all people are treated with dignity and respect.

Sincerely,

Kent Hirschfelder  
Chair, Holocaust Museum & Learning Center

### Upcoming Events

#### Sandra and Mendel Rosenberg Sunday Afternoon Film Series

**As a Young Girl of 13: Simone LaGrange  
Remembers Auschwitz**

1 pm—Sunday, December 28, 2014

HMLC Museum Theater

Introduced by Pier Marton

**The Lady in Number 6: Music Saved My Life**

1 pm—Sunday, January 25, 2015

HMLC Museum Theater

Introduced by Robert A. Cohn

### Other Events

**February 17, 2015**

Rubin Feldman\* Memorial Lecture,  
co-sponsored by AISH HaTorah St. Louis

**April 14, 2015**

Exhibition Opening: Holocaust propaganda  
images from the St. Louis archives

**April 19, 2015**

Community-wide Yom HaShoah  
commemoration, held at Kol Rinah  
Congregation

**August 9, 2015**

Save the date for the museum’s 20th  
Anniversary dinner

*\*Of Blessed Memory*

# Letter to the Editor

Below is an excerpt from a letter that was written in response to a blog posted last August by Debbie Schluskel. Replying to her commentary gave me an opportunity to not only correct some historical inaccuracies in her writing, but to address an ongoing and complex debate regarding who does, and does not, deserve the status of being called a "Survivor." In addition, I was (hopefully) able to promote civil discourse and the exchange of differing views in a respectful manner – as is appropriate for the HMLC's environment. – by Dan Reich, HMLC Curator and Director of Education

September 3, 2014



Since last Friday, I have received close to a dozen emails with a vicious attachment-- an August 20th blog regarding a "fake Holocaust survivor" arrested while marching with "rioting protestors" in Ferguson. As several of them came from the St. Louis region, I have chosen to clarify and correct some issues within the vicious personal screed written by Debbie Schluskel, through our local Jewish press.

The question of who is, or isn't, an authentic "Holocaust survivor" is complex. We at the St. Louis Holocaust Museum and Learning Center define a survivor as someone who lived and suffered under Nazi occupation. This definition was informed by the official terminology used by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in Washington, DC: "... any person,

Jewish or non-Jewish, who was displaced, persecuted, or discriminated against due to racial, religious, ethnic, social and political policies of the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. In addition to former inmates of concentration camps, ghettos and prisons, this definition includes, among others, people who were refugees or were in hiding." Likewise, Yad Vashem, the national Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, defines survivors, as "Jews who lived for any amount of time under Nazi domination, direct or indirect, and survived." Clearly, those rescued through kindertransports meet the above criteria.

By creating her own personal designation of who is a survivor, Ms. Schluskel dishonors and discredits thousands of other individuals who were torn away from their families, suffered displacement and sometimes abuse and neglect in their new, unfamiliar surroundings. Most never saw their parents again, as was the case for the target of her vitriol, who lost both parents, and other family members in Auschwitz. To learn more about this subject, I highly recommend the film, *Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories From the Kindertransport*. Should we assume that the writer would similarly delegitimize Jews who survived in hiding or with hidden identity, at constant risk of betrayal or exposure? They too "never saw the insides (sic) of a concentration camp," Ms. Schluskel's narrow criterion.

Ms. Schluskel was so intent on hurling vulgar insults that factual information was lost to her childish name-calling. For example, in addition to incorrectly identifying the location of the subject's arrest, (downtown St. Louis, not Ferguson) she repeatedly refers to Jews "gassed in ovens" or "cooking in ovens," no doubt for dramatic effect. One would expect a grandchild of a survivor, or a responsible journalist, to know that ovens were not used for gassing victims, but for burning corpses. Ms. Schluskel obliquely questions the subject's Judaism – numerous vile comments to her piece definitely do. This survivor, born of a Jewish mother, would meet the highest Halachic standards for being a part of the Jewish people – regardless of her political views and activism.

The author's hysterical, hyperbolic style and numerous inaccuracies distract the reader from the issues and political activism that the writer has every right to disagree with, or abhor. Instead, Ms. Schluskel misdirects the conversation through her shameful lack of civility.

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## Save the Date Sunday, August 9, 2015

HMLC will recognize its **20th Anniversary** with a dinner event at The Ritz-Carlton and we are happy to announce that Ladue News has agreed to be our exclusive media sponsor. Our dinner theme will revolve around the words REMEMBER. HONOR. ACT. – MAKE A DIFFERENCE. These words embody the sentiment that we try to impart each and every day through our programs, lectures and collaborations.



LADUE NEWS

# HMLC Kicks Off its Twentieth Anniversary Year with an Event to REMEMBER and HONOR

The HMLC held a 20th Anniversary Kick-Off event on October 12 for approximately 100 invited guests to REMEMBER and HONOR the 20 years of service provided by the St. Louis Holocaust Museum and Learning Center, for members of the local and surrounding communities and the region.

Co-chaired by Joseph and Sandra Lehrer, Lew Fischbein and Kate Gibbs, guests from different interfaith communities experienced the museum's appeal to various cultural backgrounds, through the Museum's many exhibits, including the interactive exhibition entitled ***Change Begins with Me: Confronting Hate, Discrimination and Ethnic Conflict*** in our post-Holocaust world today.

The event is the first in a series of events and lectures in which the museum will be highlighting its anniversary. St. Louis is home to one of only 20 Holocaust Museums in the United States. The museum will officially commemorate its 20th anniversary with a dinner being held at the St. Louis Ritz-Carlton on Sunday, August 9, 2015. The museum will have hosted more than half a million visitors during its 20 years of existence by August of next year.



*Joseph and Sandra Lehrer, Kate Gibbs, Dr. Lewis Fischbein, Co-Chairs*

Photos courtesy of Ladue News/Diane Anderson



*Mark and Betsy Dow and Missy and Greg Hill*



*Ann Schwetye and David Gutmann*



*Bob, Emily, Nancy and Ted Koplak*



*Mike Pressimone and Gene Dobbs Bradford*



*Jean Cavender, Director of HMLC, with Carol Staenberg and Myrna Meyer*

# Holocaust in Salonika

A near-capacity crowd gathered in the HMLC theatre on Sunday afternoon, September 21, to hear Dr. Devin Naar discuss the “Holocaust in Salonika.” Once the largest and most vibrant community in Europe, the Jews of Salonika, a major port city in northern Greece, suffered one of the highest mortality rates of any Jewish population during the Holocaust. Dr. Naar drew on ten years of archival research in Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), Greek, Hebrew, French and German, as well as his own family history in his presentation of the little known history of the destruction of this Jewish community, once known as the “Jerusalem of the Balkans.”



*Dr. Devin Naar and Sarijane Freiman*

Dan Reich, HMLC Curator and Director of Education, commented that even after seventy years, new research is coming out and adding to our knowledge of the Holocaust. “This is especially true about the effect of the Shoah on Jewish communities in Sephardic countries, such as Greece, North Africa and Italy. Dr. Naar’s research and insights truly shed light on this important aspect of Holocaust history.”

Dr. Devin Naar, an alumnus of Washington University in St. Louis, is currently the Marsha and Jay Glazer Assistant Professor in Jewish Studies and Assistant Professor of History at the University of Washington, Seattle. This program was sponsored by the Rubin\* and Gloria Feldman Family Education Institute of the Holocaust Museum and Learning Center.

*\*Of Blessed Memory*

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## HMLC Hosts lecture on “The Holocaust, The Vatican and The Jews”

On Tuesday, October 28, a capacity audience heard Dr. Susan Zuccotti discuss the complex subject of the response of the Catholic Church, and Pope Pius XII in particular, during the Holocaust. Zuccotti’s extremely nuanced presentation suggested that the controversies swirling around this situation had no clearly distinct answers. Careful examination of the Pope’s “silence” reveals that significant ambiguities exist. Zuccotti maintains that while both Pius XI and Pius XII could have taken stronger stands and intervened on behalf of the Jews of Italy, many priests, nuns and other Catholics acted on their own to rescue Jews by hiding individuals in convents, monasteries or other shelters. A lively question and answer period revealed just how complex and open to interpretation this subject remains.



*Elizabeth Sharzer, Ellen Gale, Dr. Susan Zuccotti, Dr. Arthur Gale, Richard Gale and Dr. Marcia Gale*

Dr. Zuccotti’s decades-long research in the area of the Holocaust in Italy and the role of the Vatican during this period has produced numerous publications, including *The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue, and Survival* (1987), and *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy*, (2000), both of which have received critical acclaim.

This program was generously sponsored by Dr. Arthur Gale and his family, in loving memory of Marilyn Gale. In brief introductory remarks, Dr. Gale noted that the horrors of the Holocaust must be studied in the hopes that some atrocities will never happen again.



## Rudy Oppenheim

The family of Rudy Oppenheim z"l would like to thank all of our friends who donated to the Holocaust museum in his memory. The Holocaust Museum and Learning Center was an important part of his life and we appreciate everyone's support during this difficult time.

*May his memory be for a blessing. Frances Oppenheim, Judy & Matt Beizer, Marcia & Jerry Esrig, Ellen & Kevin Cordes, Mark Oppenheim*

## The Josties Visit HMLC

On Monday morning, October 13, HMLC received a call from a family from Milk River, Alberta, Canada asking for a guided tour for their family that same afternoon. Fortunately, Irl Solomon came to the rescue and we had the honor of hosting this family singing troop who were in between music gigs in St. Louis, MO and Elgin, IL. The group's tagline for the group is Sharing God's Faithfulness through Music. This was a first visit for all the family members to a Holocaust Museum and all found it to be a very powerful experience.



## Legacy Donors

***People leave their mark on the world in many different ways***

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Your support, no matter the size of the gift or method of giving, changes a life. It may be today, tomorrow or years from now that your donation will provide the opportunity for someone to learn the history and lessons of the Holocaust. Whenever it happens, it will be because you cared enough today to think about tomorrow. Have you considered leaving a legacy gift to the Holocaust Museum? For more information, contact Museum Director Jean Cavender at 314-442-3715 or [JCavender@JFedSTL.org](mailto:JCavender@JFedSTL.org).

*\*Of Blessed Memory*

# The Power of Nazi Propaganda

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will be opening its traveling exhibition entitled State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda on Saturday, April 11, 2015 at the Missouri History Museum. HMLC has been working very closely with the staff of the history museum to collaborate on several programs which will be presented during the run of that exhibition, which will end September 7, 2015. In addition, HMLC will be opening its own exhibition about propaganda with materials derived from our own museum archive. That exhibition opens on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 at 7 pm and will be on view until September of 2015. We hope you take time to see both exhibitions.

## Call for Artifacts and Memorabilia

Survivors, veterans and descendants: Please consider donating memorabilia relating to the Holocaust or pre-WWII life, documents, immigration papers, or artifacts brought back from the war. Those crumbling papers and military souvenirs, so important to a parent or grandparent, would be a welcome addition to the HMLC's archival collection. Documents and artifacts would be respectfully preserved.

Some limitations based on size and volume. Call Dan Reich at 314-442-3714 or email [DReich@JFedSTL.org](mailto:DReich@JFedSTL.org) for further information.

## A Thank You from Jonathan Samuels

This past summer, I embarked on an incredible trip with Ramah to Poland. I was slightly nervous at first because of the gravity of the trip; it seemed like it would just be a whole lot of crying. We spent 10 days traveling the country visiting various cities, camps, cemeteries, and mass graves. It was a very strange feeling being there. I couldn't even come close to imagining what it was like to actually be there during the Holocaust, nor did I want to. But the weirdest part was that I was completely emotionless the majority of the time. I expected to experience sadness and even anger, but all there was, was numbness. Nonetheless, I learned a ton about what Jewish life was like in Poland before the Nazis destroyed their bliss, as well as their subsequent murders.

Not all of Poland was sad and numbing though. There were many times we went to old synagogues and sang and danced in them. It was so cool, as my tour guide said, "To bring Jewish life back where it once thrived." My favorite part of the whole trip was doing Havdalah in the old Jewish square in Krakow. All 120 of us gathered in a circle and started to sing the prayers and many Poles and tourists stopped and watched us. Some even videotaped us. One old lady joined our circle and sang along. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my entire life. The happy part of Poland made me enjoy it a little more than I expected and allowed me to leave Poland happy about our survival from the Holocaust rather than sad about our destruction.

I decided to go on this trip mainly because my grandfather was a survivor of the Holocaust. He grew up in Speyer, Germany, and when he was six years old he moved to the United States to escape the Nazis before things got bad. I wanted to know what people his age had gone through and what he may have experienced had he not been able to leave.

I am very grateful that the Holocaust Museum of St. Louis could give me a generous scholarship for my journey through Poland. It truly was a life-changing experience and it is something I will never forget. Without their help, my trip would not have been possible and I would not have been able to learn all of the invaluable lessons I did. Thank you.



# Thanks to all our Donors

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#### IN HONOR OF:

**Bette Abeles' Special  
Birthday**  
Lynn & Steve Spewak

**Elaine Alexander winning  
two first-place awards in  
the Missouri Professional  
Communicators  
Communications contest**  
HMLC Staff & Friends

**Ilse Altman's 90th Birthday**  
HMLC Staff & Friends  
Vicki & Louis Fine

**David Atkin's 80th Birthday**  
Gloria Feldman

**Lorraine & David Atkin:  
Happy & Healthy New Year**  
Gloria Feldman

**Herb & Marge Bilinsky's  
60th Wedding Anniversary**  
Ron & Paula Meyer  
HMLC Staff & Friends

**Barb & Dan Bindler's 50th  
Wedding Anniversary**  
Marcee & Merle  
Silverstein

**A Speedy Recovery for  
Robert Byers**  
Noma Simon

**Continued Recovery & Good Health for Jean Cavender**

Joy Lending  
Sondra Dobinsky  
Paul & Susan K. Goldberg

**Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Chapel's 60th Wedding Anniversary**

Ilse Altman

**Hedy Epstein's 90th Birthday**

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**Ben Fainer**

Alton Godfrey Kiwanis Club  
Living Word United  
Methodist Church Men's Ministry

**Gloria Feldman's Birthday**

Sabin Wealth Management Group of Wells Fargo Advisors

**Dr. Lewis Fischbein & Ms. Kate Gibbs**

Nanette Stevenson  
Shirley Snitzer

**Marilyn Fox's 80th Birthday**

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**Mr. & Mrs. Leo Newman**

**Sarijane Freiman giving a tour to the Rubin Trip to Israel Group**

Rubin Trip to Israel Group

**The Marriage of Andrew & Nikki Goldfeder**

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Marcia Cohen  
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Sonia Dobinsky  
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Jim, Lisa, Ryan Deutsch & Family  
Lois Rubin  
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Shirley Wise

**Nikki Goldfeder's new position as Guidance Counselor at Parkway Northeast Middle School**

Rhoda Grimsky  
**Toddy Goldman receiving the Unsung Hero Award**  
Lillian Deutsch

**A Speedy & Complete Recovery for Tom Green**

Myrna & Jay Meyer  
**Judy and Dr. Bob Hellman receiving the Unsung Hero Award**

Lenny Kohn, Rosemary Cooper & Your Friends at Kohn's

**The Marriage of Joshua & Amanda Hertz**

Edna Dell Weinell  
Ken & Joyce Parke  
Janice & Mark St. Ivany  
Shirley & David Asselmeier

**Helane Isaacs' Special Birthday**

Dr. & Mrs. Robert S. Cohen

**Toby Katz's 80th Birthday & to Get Well**

Art & Fran Poger

**Jeff Kramer's Birthday**

Robert & Phyllis Berman

**Ken & Nancy Kranzberg receiving the Arts and Education Council's 2015 St. Louis Arts Award for Excellence in Philanthropy**

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**A Speedy & Complete Recovery for Paul Kravitz**

HMLC Staff & Friends

**A Speedy & Complete Recovery for Shirley Kronemer**

Gloria Feldman

**Hannah & Larry Langsam being honored by Miriam School**

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**Phil & Bonnie Levens: Mazel tov on Judy's honor and thank you for a lovely evening**

Gloria Feldman  
**Roland Levi's 75th Birthday**

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**Liz Mayer's Special Birthday**

Marge Fenster  
Wally Mayer & Rosalie Rotenberg

**Paul Mendelson's Birthday**

Martin & Barbara Poleski

**Sara Moses speaking to the Rubin Trip to Israel Group**

Rubin Trip To Israel Group

**Michael Oberlander being elected President & Chairperson of The Repertory Theatre of St. Louis**

HMLC Staff & Friends  
**Rudolf Oppenheim: You're in our thoughts & prayers**

Kurt & Dee Herrmann  
Myrna Meyer  
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**A Speedy Recovery for Marci Pass**

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**Joyce & Mitchell Podolsky's 50th Wedding Anniversary**

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Margo & Frank Miskit

**Mendel Rosenberg: You did a beautiful job on your Haftorah reading on Rosh Hashanah**

Gloria Feldman

**A Speedy Recovery for Steve Rosenblum**

Jerry & Joan Kaskowitz

**Florence Schachter being chosen by LeadingAge Missouri to receive the 2014 Employee of the Year Award in the Management Category**

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**Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Schachter's Wedding Anniversary**

Ilse Altman

**Carolyn & Neil Schechter's Wedding Anniversary**

Gloria Feldman

**Richard Senturia receiving the Community Leadership Award from St. Louis Kollel**

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**A Speedy & Complete Recovery for Joan Silber**

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**Joan Silber: I'm thinking of you fondly and wishing you and Sherman a Happy New Year**

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**A Speedy Recovery for Merle Silverstein**

Lois Trembot

**The Boys' and Girls' Soccer Teams of Springfield Southeast High School**

Pablo Rubin de Celis

**Marcia Sterneck's Birthday**

Gloria Feldman

**Dr. Joey & Judy Tauber: In appreciation for the wonderful dinner and the most delightful evening spent in New York**

Renée Hartstein

**Ceil Tobin's Birthday**

Ilse Altman

**A Speedy and Complete Recovery for Leo Wolf**

Gloria Feldman

**Marvin Wool's Birthday**

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**Purchase a brick paver to be placed in the Holocaust Museum Kopolow Memorial Garden**

- Inscribe the name of a loved one
- Honor special lifetime events
- Memorialize family members

Please contact Jean Cavender at 314-442-3715 or JCavender@JFedSTL.org

Return this form along with your donation to: Holocaust Museum & Learning Center, 12 Millstone Campus Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146

## 2015 Friends Campaign

**I want to join the FRIENDS of the Holocaust Museum and Learning Center as a:**

- \$1,000 Guardian of Remembrance  \$125 Sustainer  \$18 Student  
 \$500 Benefactor  \$36 Young FRIEND (age 40 and under)  
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Check enclosed in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Make payable to FRIENDS of the Holocaust Center)  
 MasterCard  VISA  Discover?  I will cover the 2.5% processing fee

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**I want my/our name(s) listed in the FRIENDS Newsletter and other acknowledgments to read:**

**I am interested in:**  information about remembering the Museum in my estate plans

a tour of the Museum  volunteering at the Museum





# HOLOCAUST MUSEUM & LEARNING CENTER

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**MORE THAN  
30,000**

visitors tour the museum annually, 99 percent of whom are not Jewish; yet 99 percent of our funding is from the Jewish community

Most visitors are students from more than



**500**

schools in Missouri, Illinois and states such as Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Wisconsin and Mississippi



The museum has a self guided audio tour available for visitors who want to stroll through the Museum at their own pace

The museum provides specialized training to more than



**3,000  
CADETS AND VETERAN  
OFFICERS**

sent to us by area law enforcement agencies. The curriculum was developed in collaboration with the Anti-Defamation League

Each year since 2004, more than



**700**

students have submitted prose, poetry or a piece of art reflecting what they have learned about the Holocaust to be judged in HMLC's Art and Writing Contest

The museum trained more than



**2,000  
MISSOURI  
TEACHERS**

in Holocaust education during the last seven years. Those teachers reach more than 32,000 students every year