IN THE NEWS

Capturing Hearts and Minds

20th Anniversary Gala

LEAS program
Many weeks after our 20th Anniversary dinner, I continue to have wonderful feelings every time I think about it, not just because we sold it out with 650 guests, but because of all its different components. We recognized and honored our survivors and many guests, had the initial screening of the video that showcases the Museum (which is now a permanent part of our website) and of course listened to the congratulatory letter from Elie Wiesel and the inspiring remarks from Ella Schmidt and Gloria Feldman.

As I reflect on all the programs and initiatives that have been part of our 2015 calendar, I marvel at how many different constituencies we reach, how many people in the community we impact, how many attitudes we change and how important it has become to continue our good work and inspire others to do so also. Before the events of Ferguson, we could never have predicted how important a role our programs and collaborations would play in helping our community understand the challenges we face and our commitment to help us heal.

Law enforcement officers from around the area are gaining new perspectives as our docents, in collaboration with the Anti-Defamation League facilitators, teach about bigotry, the abuse of power and racial hate. The program is designed to encourage better communication between law enforcement personnel and the community, which today is a greater challenge than ever.

Perhaps one of the most important groups we have hosted was Diversity Awareness Partnership, which held two “Listen. Talk. Learn.” community sessions in our facility. I attended both and was impressed by the wide range of ethnicity, socio-economic backgrounds and perspectives of the attendees. Every attendee (attendance was limited to 35 participants to facilitate dialogue) brought passion to the discussion, a sincere desire to initiate understanding of their “issues” and a dedicated attempt to form alliances to reach a common goal. Most gratifying to me was that at the end of each evening, members of the groups, most who had never met the others, engaged in intense conversations and exchanged contact information in order to meet and continue the quest to reach mutual community understanding.

Director Jean Cavender believes that the HMLC legacy is to continue playing a role in creating a community where hatred and indifference are transformed into understanding and compassion. We strive to do that through all of our programs and make every effort to collaborate with organizations whose work complements our own. In our 20th year, we are part of the vanguard of institutions in St. Louis that will move into the next two decades with a focus on making a difference in our community and I couldn’t be more proud to be in their company.

Sincerely,

Kent Hirschfelder
Chair, Holocaust Museum & Learning Center
HMLC Honored by Focus St. Louis with a What’s Right With the Region Award

Hundreds of people gathered at the Sheldon Concert Hall on May 7, 2015 to celebrate organizations that are having a positive impact on our community. HMLC was selected for their Improving Racial Equality & Social Justice Award. HMLC was honored along with inspireSTL, North County Churches Uniting for Racial Harmony & Justice and the Starkloff Disability Institutes – all organizations fostering the ideals of diversity and inclusion in our community. Thank you Focus St. Louis.

HMLC and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Recognize 10 Years of Collaboration for Law Enforcement and Society (LEAS) Program

On Friday, July 31, 2015 approximately 200 law enforcement personnel, community members and guests from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) gathered at the Chase Park Plaza to recognize ten years of collaboration between the HMLC and the ADL facilitating LEAS. The St. Louis collaboration has had more than 3,000 cadets and veteran officers tour the Museum through this program.

The program was developed by the USHMM and ADL/Washington D.C. and St. Louis became one of their first pilot projects and it is now the longest running. The program is designed to encourage better communication between law enforcement personnel and the communities they serve. Participants are led through discussions that help them examine their own biases and to recognize the important and difficult role of the police in American society today.

The special guest speaker was Charles Ramsey, the Commissioner of the Philadelphia Police Department. Chief Ramsey emphasized the importance of community policing, which requires officers to get to know people in the neighborhoods they patrol as a way to instill trust and build relationships. In 2014, President Obama selected Commissioner Ramsey to serve as Co-Chair of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

Lynn Williams and Marcus Applebaum of the USHMM were on hand to congratulate Karen Aroesty, director of the Missouri/Southern Illinois Region ADL, and personnel of the HMLC who have been engaged in the program since its inception in the St. Louis community.
Capturing Hearts and Minds: Images of Propaganda and Disinformation

The HMLC’s exhibit, Capturing Hearts and Minds: Images of Propaganda and Disinformation, opened in April with a thought provoking presentation by Richard Weiss concerning media literacy and children as targets for propaganda. The exhibition closed on September 20 with a lecture by Dr. Jonathan Wiesen on the complex connection between advertising under the Third Reich and propaganda. The Holocaust Museum’s exhibit was comprised of images and artifacts, all drawn for the Museum’s archives. The HMLC exhibit complemented a traveling exhibit on Nazi propaganda on view at the Missouri History Museum, which originated at the USHMM. The HMLC collaborated with the Missouri History Museum on several programs and both exhibits attracted large audiences. Our thanks to the Rubin* and Gloria Feldman Family Education Institute and Larry and Hannah Langsam for their support of this exceptional exhibition.

*Of Blessed Memory

Exhibit on Refuge in Shanghai on view at HMLC

The HMLC’s current exhibit, An Odd and Improbable Tale: Jewish Refugees In Shanghai, will be on view through March 5, 2016. Approximately 18,000 German and Austrian Jews fled to Shanghai before the outbreak of WWII. Shanghai’s status as an “open city” made it the only available option for many. This exhibition, drawn from the HMLC Archives, tells the stories of those who found Shanghai to be a safe haven from the impending threat of the Holocaust. The exhibit was curated by Diane Everman, HMLC and Jewish community archivist and Dan Reich, HMLC curator and director of education. Various programs will be presented throughout the run of the show, which is supported by the Rubin* and Gloria Feldman Family Education Institute of the Holocaust Museum and Learning Center, the Regional Arts Commission and International Studies & Programs-University of Missouri-St. Louis.

*Of Blessed Memory

Dr. Arthur Gale Lecture

On October 18, 2015, the HMLC hosted the 2nd Annual Lecture sponsored by Dr. Arthur Gale and his family in loving memory of Marilyn Gale. Dr. Warren Rosenblum, Professor of History at Webster University, presented a thought provoking lecture on the destruction of civil liberties and democracy in Nazi Germany. A large and enthusiastic audience responded with great interest to Dr. Rosenblum, who gave a nuanced presentation and challenged several accepted concepts regarding the role of democracy in Germany during the late 19th/early 20th century, the Weimar Republic and during the rise of National Socialism. Special attention was given to the role of German doctors who, in pursuit of “racial improvement,” laid the groundwork for mass murder.
Letter from Illinois School for the Deaf

We wanted to say thank you for helping us coordinate our field trip to the Museum. Your flexibility was greatly appreciated when we had to switch dates, and your hospitality was immeasurable. We appreciate you lending the auditorium to us in order to eat lunch prior to our visit. Several of my students are chomping at the bit to read the books you donated to us, (donated to HMLC by Kent and Debbie Hirschfelder), and for that, we are extremely grateful. Enclosed is a donation to the St. Louis Holocaust Museum and Learning Center so that it may continue to provide the opportunity for students and adults to learn about a part of history that will never be forgotten. We can’t express enough gratitude for the time Pam Bye and Mendel Rosenberg took with us. Their knowledge and experience is invaluable and as Mendel reiterated, cannot be taken away.

Sincerely, Kate Van Valey, Educator at Illinois School for the Deaf

A Generous Gift to the Museum

The HMLC recently received a powerful artifact, a young boy’s shoe from Auschwitz, from a generous donor. Shoes have become a poignant symbol of the Holocaust, reminding us of the millions of individuals who once wore them. This tattered shoe, with evidence of multiple repairs, was worn by a boy who was murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The shoe is a gift of Yaakov (Jackie) Handeli, himself a survivor of Auschwitz. Born in Salonika, Greece, Mr. Handeli currently lives in Jerusalem.

Thanks to Our Friends at Booksource

Neil Jaffe and our friends at Booksource were gracious enough to supply HMLC with several hundred books at a generous discount. The books were selected and purchased by Kent and Debbie Hirschfelder, who wanted to donate books that focused on the history and lessons of the Holocaust and books that reflected stories from the Rwandan and Bosnian genocides. They are being given to schools from around the region when they visit the Museum.

As Kent stated in making this donation:

"It is important that the Museum’s efforts continue to educate students on the continuum of history over the past 70 years, teaching them about the failure of our society to learn from the past and put in place the laws and behaviors that could lead to the prevention of hatred and ongoing genocide."

They Risked Their Lives – Poles Who Saved Jews During the Holocaust

On October 29, 2015, child survivor Felicia Graber spoke at the HMLC in conjunction with the exhibit, They Risked Their Lives – Poles Who Saved Jews During the Holocaust. Mrs. Graber shared the powerful story of how she and her family survived the Holocaust with the help of Righteous Polish Christians.

They Risked Their Lives was generously sponsored by the consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Chicago. The St. Louis installation was supported by the Rubin* and Gloria Feldman Family Education Institute of the HMLC.

*Of Blessed Memory

August 20, 2015 was truly one of the most meaningful events in the 20 year history of the Holocaust Museum and Learning Center. Approximately 650 people attended a dinner recognizing HMLC’s years of service to the St. Louis community and region. As only one of 20 museums in the United States, HMLC has visitors from a multi-state area and is on track to have hosted one half million visitors by the end of 2015. Mike Bush graciously emcee’d the event. The dinner program featured a film about all the programs the Museum has to offer, remarks by Ms. Ella Schmidt of John Burroughs School, who wrote about how her visit to the Museum changed her life and Mrs. Gloria Feldman.

Mrs. Feldman spoke publicly about her experience as a Holocaust survivor for the very first time. She called for those in the audience to follow their passions, continue their support of the Museum and to keep Holocaust education alive in order to battle hate and discrimination in our society. Mrs. Feldman was given a Visionary Award by HMLC for her efforts to foster Holocaust education through the Rubin (Of Blessed Memory) and Gloria Feldman Family Education Institute. The Institute was established in 2014 and has enabled HMLC to increase the number of programs and exhibits facilitated annually.
Thank you for making our 20th Anniversary Dinner a success.

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Some limitations based on size and volume. Call Dan Reich at 314-442-3714 or email DReich@JFedStL.org for further information.

*Of Blessed Memory
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