

Holocaust Education Month Activities

By Mina Cohn,
Director, CHES Committee

The Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship (CHES) offered a full complement of activities in November 2016 in observance of Holocaust Education Month.

On November 3, Library and Archives Canada played host to an Ottawa first: a symposium for children of Holocaust survivors. Dr. Paula Draper, Holocaust historian and interviewer for the Spielberg Foundation, and Dr. Paula David, University of Toronto Professor of Gerontology and Clinical Practice, led seminars for 80 participants. Dr. Diane Afoumado, an expert on the St. Louis, discussed her work at the tracing services at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Local children's author, Kathy Clark, shared her experiences as the child of Holocaust survivors. Comments from the audience indicated a strong desire for more such events, and demonstrated that Second Generation survivors appreciate the opportunities to connect with



November 9 - The Grumach Family Tallit, rescued from a burning Berlin synagogue during Kristallnacht



November 9 - HEM Launch (From Left to Right) Pascale Claveter, recipient of the Arie Van Mansum Award, with Ria Euverman and Marg Harris, daughters of Ari Van Mansum, and Mina Cohn.

one another.

On November 8, the Polish embassy in cooperation with CHES, and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, hosted a lecture by Professor Dariusz Stola, Director of POLIN Museum. Over 200 people attended this lecture at the Polish embassy. Professor Stola spoke about the new POLIN Museum in Warsaw, discussing the location and architecture of the museum, and the role of the museum in reconnecting with the 'Great Forgotten Past' of the Jews in Poland. POLIN has been awarded the title of "European Museum of the Year 2016", the most important museum award in Europe.

On November 9, the anniversary of the infamous *Kristallnacht*, the Night of Broken Glass, the official launch of Holocaust Education Month took place at Kehillat Beth Israel. The keynote speaker for this near-capacity audience was University of Toronto Professor Emeritus, Michel Marrus, noted Canadian historian of the Holocaust. He stressed the importance of accurately teaching the facts of the Holocaust, the significance of remembrance, commemoration, and of paying due attention to the testimonies of Holocaust survi-

vors. Two single-marked *tallitot* that had been rescued from the ruins of a Berlin synagogue were on display, bearing witness to the horrors of Kristallnacht. The Arie Van Mansum Award for excellence in teaching about the Holocaust



November 13 - From left standing in front, Judith Lermer Crawley, Berel Rodal, Mina Cohn, Cheryl Aroosi. Standing in the back are Kenjiro Monji Ambassador of Japan and his wife.

in the classroom setting was awarded Educator Pascale Clavette who teaches Grade 8 at Ecole Gisele Lalonde.

On November 13, at the Kailish Mital Theatre, Carleton University, a gripping dramatization, *Decision: Visa for Life*, about Japanese hero, Chiune Sugihara, was staged, in partnership



November 16 - Mina Cohn presenting Cantor Kraus with a copy of his testimony.



November 16 - Tova Clark sharing her story.



November 24 - Teachers' Workshop.

with the Embassy of Japan. Sugihara was stationed as Vice-Consul in Kaunas, Lithuania, during World War II. Despite the protestations of his government, Sugihara issued more than 6,000 transit visas to Lithuanian Jews desperate to escape the grip of the Nazis. Setting the play in context, local resident Berel Rodal vividly described how Sugihara rescued his father. During the question-and-answer period following the presentation, two other children of survivors present in the audience, explained how their families found refuge in Japan and later in Shanghai thanks to Sugihara's efforts. One week later, the Japanese Embassy screened the movie, *Persona Non Grata*, a new Japanese movie about Sugihara. More than 120 people attended this event, sponsored by the Embassies of Japan, Israel, and Latvia.

On November 16, at Carleton University, participants and donors had the opportunity to view a 30-minute excerpt of the survivors' interviews videotaped in the summer of 2016. This viewing was the culmination of a major project accomplished by CHES: the videotaping of the testimonials of ten local Holocaust survivors. Those who participated include Elly Bollegraaf, Tova Clark, Judy Young Drache, Jessica Fiksel, Vera Gara, Dr. Agnes Klein, Raoul Korngold, Cantor Moshe Kraus, Kati Morrison, and David Moscovic. The ten half-hour testimonial films are available on the CHES website <<https://carleton.ca/ches/resources/ottawa-holocaust-survivors-testimonials/>> as

well as the Carleton YouTube. The videos include 2-minute sound bites that can be used in today's educational settings.

On November 24, at Temple Israel, In keeping with our commitment to educating future generations about the Holocaust, CHES hosted its first Teachers' Workshop. The theme was the Nuremberg of Hate and the Nuremberg of Justice and commemorated 80 years since the imposition of the Nuremberg laws, and 70 years since the Nuremberg trials. The workshop opened with an address by the Hon. Irwin Cotler, former Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and Chair of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights. Professor Cotler inspired the teachers and guests with his message on the lessons of the Holocaust. Teachers from local school boards, Ashbury College, the University of Ottawa Teachers' Education Program, and Temple Israel Religious School practiced challenging and enriching teaching activities designed for the classroom environment. The teachers appreciated the quality of the handouts and were eager to implement these teaching strategies in their own classrooms. OCDSB teacher Patrick Mascoe explained his outstanding "Tolerance Initiative" program to the teachers. His former student, Sofia Mirzayee, described how Mr. Mascoe's program affected her own life. Mr. Mascoe's project involved pairing his mostly Muslim students with their counterparts in Hillel Academy.

CHES' mandate is to offer year-round educational programs and activities in order to promote a deeper understanding of the history and legacy of the Holocaust. Its purpose is to combat prejudice and racism and promote respect for diversity, social justice and human rights. This objective is even more critical in light of the recent wave of hate crimes perpetrated in the Ottawa area towards religious institutions.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day Ceremony, January 27, 2017



Audience at the Commemoration of the Liberation of Auschwitz.

By Marion Silver, Secretary,
CHES Committee

On January 27, 2017, a capacity crowd filled Ottawa City Hall's Jean Piggott Hall, to commemorate the 72nd anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The Partnerships between CHES, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, the Embassy of Israel, the Wallenberg Citation Initiative, and the Embassy of Romania, worked to create this special event. The audience included Holocaust survivors as well as diplomats representing many embassies, as well as elected officials from the Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governments.

Master of Ceremonies Daniel Stringer called upon Cantor Pinchas Levinson to open the event with the singing of "Oh Canada" and then, introduced Mayor

Jim Watson. Mayor Watson affirmed Ottawa as an open, welcoming, and inclusive city and warned of the dangers of racism and stereotyping. He referred to the recent rally held at Machzikei Hadas to underscore Ottawa's determination to combat intolerance and hatred.

Ontario Attorney General Yasir Naqvi opened his remarks with the sober reminder that anti-Semitism still exists, and that hatred of any one group is equivalent to hatred of all. He also highlighted the rally at Machzikei Hadas, noting that a peak moment occurred when all the faith leaders present gathered together on the podium and declared their commitment to work together to ensure a society of acceptance and respect for all.

Lisa McLeod MPP, Nepean-Carleton, told the audience that she first learned about the Holocaust by reading, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, when she was the

same age as Anne Frank. She recalled, to resounding applause, that the Ontario Legislature voted to reject calls for BDS* and emphasized the importance of learning from history.

Catherine McKenna, Federal Minister for the Environment, brought greetings and a message of solidarity from Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. He urged Canadians to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust in order to ensure that such a travesty never happens again. As well, Ms. McKenna hailed the importance of the video testimonials of survivors recently completed by CHES and declared that forgetting the dead would be akin to killing them a second time. She implored Canadians to

take a stand against anti-Semitism, racism and prejudice.

Mina Cohn, Director of CHES, reiterated Cotler's statement that although Jews were murdered in Auschwitz, anti-Semitism did not die there. Ms. Cohn went on to explain the "We Remember" campaign, the largest ever organized commemoration on social media. She encouraged everyone to post their picture holding the sign, "We Remember", on social media with the hashtag #We Remember.

Israeli Embassy Representative Shlomit Sufa, explained that she grew up in Israel hearing stories about the Holocaust and always wondered why nothing was done to stop it. She said that in the continuing face of human suffering, we must commit ourselves to instilling the values of tolerance and decency. The lessons of the

Continued on next page.

Holocaust must include fighting bigotry and racism in all its forms.

This year, Romania is the Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Adrian Ligor, the Chargé d'Affaires from the Romanian Embassy, said the Alliance is committed to research and increasing awareness of the Holocaust. This is especially critical as the rising tide of intolerance increases the erosion of human rights.

Keynote speaker David Kilgour acknowledged the presence of Vera and George Gara, Cantor Kraus, and Ottawa-raised Canadian Jew Alex Polowin. The latter was made a member of the French Légion d'Honneur for his service during World War II. Mr. Kilgour quoted the late Elie Wiesel and illustrated how he devoted his life to perpetuating the memory of the 6 million as well as

his fight on behalf of Soviet Jewry. He insisted that we must remain united against hatred and indifference and against nations that promote intolerance and racism. He cited the sad fact that only 4,000 Jews were allowed into Canada between 1938 and 1945.

Violinist Rlitsa Tcholakova entertained the audience with two folk dances, one from Romania and one from Latvia. Strains of Klezmer heritage could be heard in these moving selections.

At the conclusion of the event, a photo of the audience holding up We Remember signs was taken.

* Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) is a Palestinian-led movement for freedom, justice and equality. BDS upholds the simple principle that Palestinians are entitled to the same rights as the rest of humanity.

CHES Committee Update

CHES is pleased to welcome three new members: Sheila Robertson, Muriel Korngold-Wexler and Gonen Sagy who all promise to enrich the work of the committee. CHES committee members are a dedicated group of volunteers committed to safeguard the memory of the past and to educate future generations. The committee represents a broad range of professionals with educational and community experience. Membership on the CHES committee is open to new members. To support CHES please visit carleton.ca/ches/donate-to-ches

Meet CHES Committee Member and Holocaust Survivor Elly Bollegraaf

If someone observed that I have led at least a double life, if not more, they would be correct. I have been splitting my time in various diverse and important preoccupations, which I have performed simultaneously. Science pulled me in one direction, while social issues took me in another. Thus, I pursued and managed to make myself as useful as I could in both. I wanted my life to be meaningful and count for something while on earth. It had to be that way.

That as a Jewish child in The Netherlands I had escaped the clutches of the Nazis was a fact I was always aware of. My life had been preserved by having been hidden by good people. I had escaped the annihilation that the majority of my extended family had not. This reality compelled me subconsciously to take on important and critical issues, to be useful to society, and to make a difference to the world by my presence.

Always intrigued by science, I pursued an education that would permit me to

work in areas I viewed as important. I succeeded in this, in part by my own choices, but also because of indirect forces that propelled me to take on increasingly demanding challenges. My lengthy career included analysis and research in Microbiology, head of National Salmonellosis Surveillance, and Influenza Surveillance in Epidemiology, and eventually, as a Scientific Evaluator of Medical Devices.

My involvement in Holocaust Education and Remembrance was not overshadowed by my career choices. This involvement started very early on because my conscience would not let it be otherwise. I joined the Ottawa Holocaust Remembrance Committee in the early 1980's and remained an active member until mid-2015. I participated in all its endeavours. I produced the Ottawa Holocaust Documentation Book, which includes case histories of over 70 Holocaust Survivors living in Ottawa and information on additional survivors



from 35 children about their survivor parents. I have written numerous articles for the Ottawa Jewish Bulletin, on the Committee's events and Holocaust-related subjects.

I organized the Ottawa Hidden Children and Child Survivors Group,

Continued on next page.

which provided members with a much-needed and gratifying opportunity to, for the first time, open up about their war-time experiences. Their participation encouraged several to go public and to speak at schools.

My becoming a member of CHES was a natural progression, as I felt that an even greater and concerted effort was required to keep the memory of the

Holocaust (Shoah) alive. Future generations must not forget the past, and by studying past historical events, and by continually reminding the public and scholars of the dangers of what went on before, society will have the educational background to react and to counter obvious and dangerous trends in society. This will hopefully prevent similar acts of discrimination, unfounded hatred,

and annihilation to happen to different components of society, in Canada and elsewhere.

It is my direct contact and personal knowledge of the Ottawa Holocaust Survivors' community, the various teachers to whose classes I have spoken, and my years of involvement on Holocaust Education, that are an important contribution to CHES.

The Speakers Bureau

Marion Silver,
CHES coordinator for
the Speakers Bureau

One of the goals of CHES is to ensure the continuity of Holocaust education through the active involvement of Holocaust survivors and their descendants.

The Speakers Bureau is comprised mainly of survivors and children of survivors who visit educational institution by invitation to speak about their personal or their parents' Holocaust survival stories.

As a direct result of the teachers Workshop CHES received two new school invitations: St. Peter High School, and Immaculata High School.

CHES Committee member, Elly Bollegraaf, visited St. Peter's High School and shared her story with over 80 students and their two teachers as well as the principal. Elly Bollegraaf lived in Holland, and was born September 19, 1940, five months after the Nazis invaded, in May 1940.

She shared her story of survival and showed pictures of where she grew up, and of family members who did not survive the Holocaust.

Following her visit Scott Searle tweeted "Elly: Thanks so much for the kind



Kati Morrison visiting Immaculata High School

words. I learned a great deal from your presentation and shared stories from your talk with many of my friends and family over the holidays. I am very glad you enjoyed the small tokens of appreciation from our school. Your talk made a tremendous impact on our students and I am very grateful that you took the time. I hope to keep in touch!"

The second visit, by Kati Morrison, was to Immaculata High School

Beth Finn, teacher at Immaculata High School, noted,

"My World Religion class had an incredible hour with Kati. They were both very touched and grateful to her for sharing her life's story. My principal was going to write something for the online

parent newsletter and when it is sent out I will be sure to forward it."

Kati Morrison shared her experience of her visit: "I used the USB of my recorded testimony. It worked out very well. I could follow the pictures in my presentation and show the students a vignette from the testimony. Immaculata students were amazing. I got a package of questions ahead of time, as I had requested; they were very thoughtful. The teachers prepared them well. Beth Finn, the teacher of World Religion who invited me, asked me back for her next class in the spring. It is uplifting to see so many interested teachers and students who want to know what happened."

Phase II Survivors' Testimony Project

As part of phase II of the Survivor Testimony Project, CHES continues to work on developing educational resource materials that will benefit not only teachers and historians but researchers of many disciplines and will create a unique Ottawa base collection of Holocaust testimonies. Additionally, as part of Phase II CHES is editing an interview with the late Dr. Erwin Koranyi.

The longterm development of these materials as education resources is of vital importance to honour the remaining survivors, to give them a voice in our community, and to combat anti-Semitism, racism and to promote tolerance.

To support CHES and its many projects, please visit <http://carleton.ca/ches/donate-to-ches/>

Join us on our virtual venture:



“Like” us on Facebook at
[facebook.com/
ZelikovitzCentre](https://www.facebook.com/ZelikovitzCentre)



Twitter: Follow us on Twitter
[@ZelikovitzC](https://twitter.com/ZelikovitzC)
Or, send an email to
jewish.studies@carleton.ca

Please share your Jewish Studies news about publications (articles and books), events (on campus and in the community), courses, etc. The newsletter is published every early fall with a supplement in early winter when warranted. Send your information to jewish.studies@carleton.ca at any time and it will be included immediately on our web site and in the next issue.