IMPACT
HOLOCAUST CENTER OF
PITTSBURGH
REPORT
2022-2023
The mission of the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh is to connect the horrors of the Holocaust and antisemitism with injustices of today. Through education, we seek to address these injustices and empower individuals to build a more civil and humane society.

As stewards of Holocaust history, we keep the stories of Holocaust survivors, victims, and rescuers alive for future generations, remembering the past, while building relationships across communities, endeavoring to end antisemitism, racism, and prejudice today.

Our work centers on providing school-based and community-at-large educational programming; conducting community-based work, often in collaboration with partner organizations; and engaging in remembrance work, which is achieved through annual legacy events, as well as maintaining and sharing the stories of local Holocaust survivors and descendants of survivors.
LIGHT Programs

87 LIGHT programs, including after-school community programs, field trips, in-school programs, leadership summits, and teacher trainings, had a total of 10,221 direct participants. There are 23 active schools within the LIGHT Network from 13 school districts, giving 16,000+ students access to a LIGHT Coordinator.

Combatting Antisemitism

Worked with over 500 individuals, piloting new programs and developing relationship-building initiatives that help Jews and non-Jews to deepen their understanding of antisemitism and carve new pathways for taking collective action against it.

Generations Speakers

Our Generations Speakers Bureau reached 4260 individuals through engaging presentations that include factual, well-researched, personal accounts of a Holocaust survivor and inspire meaningful conversation. Of those, 2469 were K-12 students who attended a presentation at their school. Generations speakers spoke at 67 schools, libraries, organizations, and events locally, they also presented to groups in West Virginia, Ohio, New York, and California.

Butterfly Project

Through our annual Butterfly Project Grants program, we were able to subsidize the cost of 24 Butterfly Project painting kits for 732 students at 12 schools in 6 counties in Pennsylvania and West Virginia. Funding for Butterfly Project Grants comes from The Lipsman Family Endowment Fund in memory of Charles and Hilda Lipsman.

QUICK STATS

Generations Speakers

| Individuals Reached by Generations Speakers | 4,260 |

LIGHT Programs

| Individuals Participated in LIGHT Programs | 10,221 |

Butterfly Project

| Individuals Participated in educational programming | 16,000+ |

Combatting Antisemitism

July 2022 - June 2023
SPECIAL EVENTS

Jul 28, 2022: Fiberart International 2022 Artist Robin Bernstein

The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh and the Fiberarts Guild of Pittsburgh Inc. co-sponsored an event with Fiberart International 2022 Artist Robin Bernstein, hosted by Brew House Association. Trained as a painter, Bernstein has worked with string and wax as her primary medium for the past 15 years. Bernstein’s presentation focused on her Beauty & Terror series, 18 brilliantly colored and detailed fiber “paintings” depicting stories of the Holocaust, crime, terror, and redemption and courage. Bernstein was introduced by Marcel Lamont Walker, the lead artist and coordinator of CHUTZ-POW! SUPERHEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST.

Sep 14, 2022: Generations Speaker Series with Emily Loeb

As a part of the 2022 RADical Days, Emily Loeb told the story of her grandmother, Ilsa Dahl Cole, in-person at Chatham University. Ilsa who was born in 1916 in northwest Germany. She was raised in a small farming community and attended a Catholic high school before the Nazis rose to power in 1933. Emily shares her story of survival and emigrating to America, sharing Ilsa’s reflections of a changing society as antisemitism spread throughout Germany.

Sep 28, 2022: Generations Speaker Series with Lee Goldman Kikel

As a part of the 2022 RADical Days, Lee Goldman Kikel shared the story of her father, Mieczyslaw (Melvin) Goldman, in-person at Chatham University. In the decade before Melvin’s arrival in the United States in 1950, he saw his home destroyed, his family torn apart, his health ruined, and nearly everyone he had ever known murdered in the death camps of the Third Reich. His survival of the years in the ghetto and Auschwitz, his long and slow recovery, and his attainment of a somewhat normal life were miraculous. Perhaps even more miraculous was his refusal to let his experience destroy his faith in God or his love for humanity.

Nov 17, 2022: Garden of Eden

Starting in 2004, the Pittsburgh Darfur Emergency Coalition (PDEC) actively promoted awareness of war and genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. One of the local leaders at the height of the advocacy effort, was Ismail Omar, an immigrant from Darfur who never stopped fighting to make a positive change in his home country. One year after his passing on November 17, 2021, we held "The Garden of Eden: Remembering Ismail Omar and ‘Save Darfur’ Now," a program to honor his legacy. We invited the community to join us online to learn about the extraordinary work of Ismail Omar and the current situation in Sudan and what is needed now.

Lee Kikel signing copies of Perseverance: One Holocaust Survivor’s Journey from Poland to America

Photo by Nick Haberman
Jan 26, 2023: Pink Triangle Legacies

We partnered with Repair the World Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh Jewish Studies Program to host a talk and book signing by Dr. Jake Newsome. Dr. Newsome told the dynamic and inspiring history of the LGBTQ+ community’s original pride symbol by tracing the transformation of the pink triangle from a Nazi concentration camp badge into a widespread emblem of queer liberation, pride, and community. Drawing from unexplored archival sources and original interviews, Dr. Newsome showcased the voices of LGBTQ+ Holocaust victims and a rich tapestry of queer lives who found meaning in the pink triangle in a post-Holocaust world.

Apr 15 & 16, 2023: Perseverance

We partnered with Prime Stage Theatre for our third year of producing original plays in observance of Genocide Awareness Month. The world premiere of “Perseverance” brought to the stage a powerful memoir of healing and renewal at the New Hazlett Theatre. Few visitors to the G&S Jewelry Store in Pittsburgh’s Squirrel Hill neighborhood during the 1960s and ’70s were aware that the cheerful proprietor, Melvin Goldman, had spent his teens enduring the horrors of Auschwitz before arriving as a penniless refugee in postwar Pittsburgh intent on reshaping his family’s destiny.

Adapted for the stage by L.E. McCullough from the book by Melvin Goldman and Lee Goldman Kikel, Perseverance: One Holocaust Survivor’s Journey from Poland to America, this play depicts Goldman’s irressible spirituality, unflagging love for humanity, and perseverance as he worked to replace Darkness with Light, one shop patron at a time. A Special Post-Show Discussion followed the April 15th opening performance with author and Generations Group member Lee Goldman Kikel and L.E. McCullough, led by the Holocaust Center’s Educator of the Year Daniel Shaner. Perseverance was also available for streaming from April 24, 2023 through May 7, 2023.
ANNUAL COMMEMORATIONS

Nov 9, 2022: An Evening with Roger Guenveur Smith: a Kristallnacht program

As a part of the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh’s annual Kristallnacht program, we hosted internationally acclaimed actor, writer, and director Roger Guenveur Smith in-person at Chatham University. During this program, audiences viewed a recorded screening of his one-man play, Otto Frank, followed by a live talkback with Smith. Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh’s annual Kristallnacht program is generously supported by Edgar Snyder.

Nov 9, 2022: The Nazis and the Law: a Kristallnacht program

As a part of the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh’s annual Kristallnacht program, Professor Richard Weisberg gave a lunchtime zoom lecture. Weisberg, a Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law at University of Pittsburgh, discussed how Nazis worked within the framework of a legal system and the dangerous, incremental ways that they were able to carry out the unthinkable horrors of the Holocaust. His talk also focused on the suffering of Jews in France, who experienced a roundup with parallels to Kristallnacht in 1942. This program was recorded and made publicly available on our YouTube channel. Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh’s annual Kristallnacht program is generously supported by Edgar Snyder.

Apr 18, 2023: Yom HaShoah Commemoration

More than 400 individuals joined us online and in-person at Chatham University’s Campbell Memorial Chapel for our annual Yom HaShoah commemoration. A quartet of Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and professional musicians assembled by Flavio Chamis performed at this year’s program. PSO Concertmaster David McCarroll, PSO violinist Dylan Naroff, PSO violist Tatjana Mead Chamis, and cellist Angela Park played pieces written by suppressed composers who were persecuted or murdered during the Holocaust.

We also partnered with two Chatham University students -- Sean McIntosh ’24 and Anna Betar ’25 -- to interview four survivors and one daughter of a Jewish camp liberator. Their film, featuring Moshe Baran, Albert Farhy, Bella Schachter, Same Shear, and Carole R. Zawatsky, was screened at the commemoration.

The program also included a candle lighting ceremony in honor of the six million Jews lost in the Holocaust, with additional candles lit in honor of the Librators, Veterans, and the Righteous non-Jews who risked their lives to save the lives of their Jewish friends and neighbors, as well as a memorial for local survivors who have passed away.

Yom HaShoah was generously supported by Highmark Health, PNC, and The Schmerling and Rocher Families.
Waldman International Arts & Writing Competition

Diane and Hal Waldman started the Arts and Writing contest shortly after the Holocaust Center was founded in Pittsburgh in the early 1980s. Through the years, the contest expanded, and thousands of students have participated. The theme of this year’s competition was "The Power of the Individual: Resistance and Resilience." Students across 12 schools participated, and on May 10, 2023, we celebrated their efforts with our annual awards ceremony attended by students and their families, friends, and teachers.

Generations Speakers Bureau

Our robust, all-volunteer Generations Speakers Bureau, is composed of the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors who have been recruited, vetted, and coached by the Holocaust Center staff and veteran Generations Speakers to develop presentations about their survivor relative’s story. We connect members of our Speaks Bureau with schools, churches, synagogues, businesses, libraries, social groups, and any other organizations wanting to hear a personal account about a Holocaust survivor. With the loss of so many Holocaust survivors in recent years, we understand that engaging the next generations is the best and most effective way to keep the collective memory of the survivors alive.

The Butterfly Project

The international movement aims to paint 1.5 million butterflies to honor the 1.5 million children killed during the Holocaust. As they learn about children lost in the Holocaust, we will challenge the community to embrace difference and to fight against bigotry and intolerance happening now. In years past, we have conducted Butterfly Project sessions with local schools and organizations, including 23 public libraries in 2018. We are now into the third phase of the Butterfly Project: giving schools Butterfly Project Grants to facilitate bringing The Butterfly Project to their students.

LIGHT Education Initiative

LIGHT is an education initiative that connects K-12 students to community members of all ages through themes within human rights and genocide, like being an upstander, making responsible choices, social and environmental justice, kindness and love, and volunteerism and humility.

CHUTZ-POW! Superheroes of the Holocaust

CHUTZ-POW! SUPERHEROES OF THE HOLOCAUST is an acclaimed and ongoing comic-book series that seeks, as its mission, to place stories of UpStanders’ courage, resilience, and sacrifice at the forefront of Holocaust awareness. Each volume is an anthology by award-winning creative collaborators, telling true-life stories of heroic survivors who brought light into some of the darkest recesses of World War II. Created for audiences ages 12 and up, CHUTZ-POW! unravels the larger narrative of the Holocaust through the use of comics.
On November 8, 2022, we held a private opening for our brand new exhibit, "Revolving Doors," which is housed in Chatham University’s JKM Library. The exhibit displays a curated selection of artwork and artifacts from the Holocaust Center’s collection. It juxtaposes Jewish cultural life with persistent antisemitism across time; the devastating impact of the Holocaust on Global Jewry; and antisemitism today, including artists’ responses to the attack on the three congregations in the Tree of Life building on October 27, 2018. It pays tribute to victims while honoring survivors and their resilience.

The name of the exhibit, "Revolving Doors," is inspired by a series of collages created by artist Man Ray in 1916-1917. One of the pieces from that series is on display in this exhibit. The term “Revolving Door” is used idiomatically to indicate a situation where solutions to problems last for a short time only, and then the same problems occur again. Therein lies the mission of the Holocaust Center; to recognize patterns of the past in today and suggest alternative courses to break generational cycles.

It is interesting to note that the word “Door” is also a homonym of the Hebrew word “Dor” (דור), which means “Generation” and derives from the word meaning “Circle.” A central saying in Judaism is “L’dor V’dor,” meaning “From Generation to Generation,” which relates to the value of learning our ancestors’ stories and traditions and continuing to pass them down to future generations.

The exhibit opened to the public on January 18, 2023. On March 6, 2023, we hosted an open house for members of the Chatham University community. We welcomed Chatham President David Finegold and his wife Sue, plus Chatham students, faculty, staff, and Trustees who not only got to see the exhibit, but also had the chance to meet Holocaust Center staff and hear more about the work we do. The exhibit is open to the public for private, scheduled tours three days per week.

Photo by Melanie Wieland
Thank you to our donors who have generously agreed to leave a gift to the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh in their will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy, leaving a legacy of standing up to antisemitism and fighting hatred.

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“As the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh is near and dear to my heart. The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh ensures that the stories of survivors and lessons of the Holocaust continue to be taught in innovative ways to future generations of students; that is why I have chosen to be a Life & Legacy donor for the Holocaust Center.” - Alison Karabin
The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh would like to thank all of our supporters, donors, and partners. Together, we will continue our efforts to end antisemitism and other forms of identity-based hate.
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