



Legacy



A publication of the Birmingham Holocaust Education Center, a division of the Alabama Holocaust Commission

Winter / Spring 2013

DATES TO REMEMBER

(Further information online)

Wednesdays in March, Noon

Brown Bag Lunch Series
Birmingham Public Library

April 7, 2:30 pm

Birmingham Yom HaShoah
Commemoration
Levite Jewish Community Center

April 9, 11:00 am

Alabama's Yom HaShoah
Commemoration
State Capitol, Montgomery

March-June 2013

BESA Exhibit—Muslims Who
Saved Jews During WWII
Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

April 28, 2:00 pm

*Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler
Project* (performance)
UAB Hill University Center

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Darkness Into Life Expands

In 2007, the original exhibit of *Darkness into Life*, by Becky Seitel and Mitzi Levin, opened to a large and receptive crowd at the Levite Jewish Community Center. In 2008, at the request of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, it was expanded to represent the stories of twenty survivors who live throughout the state of Alabama. This past summer, in 2012, the original exhibit morphed yet again to spawn a more travel-friendly version of the exhibit, a version we call "Traveler Darkness into Life," or "TDIL."

As we look back over the last six years, it is astounding to reflect on the amount of traveling our original exhibit has done. With the ongoing demand of libraries, civic centers, museums, and schools, we have, on occasion, had to schedule far in advance, disappointing some, and we have seen considerable wear and tear on the exhibit. Additionally, smaller facilities, such as schools and other venues in more remote parts of the state, reported that they lacked the resources to manage the installation and supervision of the exhibit.

With all these factors in mind, the BHEC made the decision to create a more travel-friendly version, made possible through donations to the BHEC and, in particular, funds raised by Max and Betty Steinmetz. TDIL contains all of the material of the original exhibit, including replicated artwork and text. It consists of free-standing pull-up panels, each in its own cloth bag. It accommodates most any space. TDIL is so portable that it may be transported in the trunk of a midsize car.

Barbara Solomon, Exhibit Coordinator



Barbara Solomon and Max Steinmetz

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Delivering My Legacy

Max Herzel, Treasurer, Survivor

Last November, the Arkansas Holocaust Education Committee (AHEC) invited me to be the featured speaker at their 21st annual Holocaust Education Day in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The purpose of the annual conference is to provide historically accurate information as well as good pedagogical strategies for teaching the Holocaust in schools. I saw an opportunity to present my testimony and evidence of the Holocaust to and for future generations. This also provided me with the opportunity to memorialize my father, who died in the Buchenwald concentration camp, and other family members who also died during the Holocaust.



The AHEC brought in eight educators, experts in the field of Holocaust Education, to be the presenters. Each session focused on a different form of Resistance. Friday morning, I attended, "The Many Faces of Resistance," presented by Judith Cohen, Director of the Photo Archives of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. Next, I attended "The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: Understanding the Roles of Four Key Resisters," presented by Monnie Du Berry, a middle school teacher from Savannah, TN who is currently an Ed.D candidate at Union University writing a dissertation on Holocaust pedagogy.

After lunch, it was my turn to present.

Continued on Page 4

NEVER AGAIN: Heeding the Warning Signs

Phyllis G. Weinstein, Chair

The two words *Never Again* may be the most overworked words in the Holocaust lexicon. But there is **NO** substitute for the message it delivers. These are the words we keep in mind as we strive to eradicate the ignorance about the Holocaust in our society, and to confront those who, even today, deny that the Holocaust ever happened. As we learn from the daily news, antisemitism and hate are rising fears in many parts of the world, including our own, and we must be aware and vigilant in our resolve that the horrific tragedy that befell the Jewish people and others who did not follow Hitler's Third Reich's mission of conquest should never, ever, occur again.

Here in Birmingham, we know we must preserve every shred of evidence from our Holocaust survivors to prove that the Holocaust was not a myth but rather a real tragedy of unbelievable events that tore apart families and their way of life, leaving six million dead and many others suffering the pangs of survival. Toward that goal, we are developing a media center which will include the history of our survivors as told in interviews (written and oral), presentations, and photos. We have created a travel version of our profound art/photography exhibit, *Darkness Into Life*, that can reach more venues than the original framed images of our 20 Alabama Holocaust survivors. We are working toward a visible presence in downtown Birmingham. And our Holocaust survivors continue to fill many, many speaking engagements in our city and beyond. We continue to teach the lessons of the Holocaust to diverse audiences.

All of these activities are highlighted in the pages of this *LEGACY*, so please read more to learn what our extraordinary volunteers are achieving in their efforts to bring the history of the Holocaust to our schools, civic clubs, church groups, libraries, retirement homes, and many other places where we have been invited to speak.

Needless to say, although our administrative costs are minimal, the work to achieve the above projects requires considerable funding. We hope you will **Remember, Reflect, and Respond** to our needs with a gift that will make our goals a reality. We are deeply appreciative of your support.

Mark Your Calendar

Ann Mollengarden, Education Coordinator

The Holocaust in Poland, A Film Series

Emmet O'Neal Library

The BHEC is excited to be partnering with the Birmingham International Center and the Emmet O'Neal Library in presenting The Holocaust in Poland, A Film Series. Showings will be FREE, and each film will be moderated with discussion. Film titles have not been finalized, but hold these dates:

Sunday, April 14, 2:00 pm
 Tuesday, April 23, 6:30 pm
 Tuesday, April 30, 6:30 pm
 Tuesday, May 6, 6:30 pm

Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project

Sunday, April 28, 2:00pm, UAB Hill University Center, Alumni Auditorium

This project began in the fall of 1999 when four, rural, Kansas students discovered the story of Irena Sendler, a Polish Catholic woman who served in the Polish Underground during World War II as head of the children's section of Zegota. Sendler smuggled 2,500 Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto and then provided them with false identity documents. In Sendler's own words, "I tried to talk the mothers out of their children." Students wrote the play, *Life in a Jar*, in which they portrayed the life of Irena Sendler. It has since been performed over 285 times across the U.S., Canada, and Poland. Irena Sendler passed away on May 12, 2008, in Warsaw, Poland. She was 98 years old. A book by the same name was a 2011 Kansas Notable Book selection and a 2012 Indie-Reader Discovery Award winner from the National Book Expo.



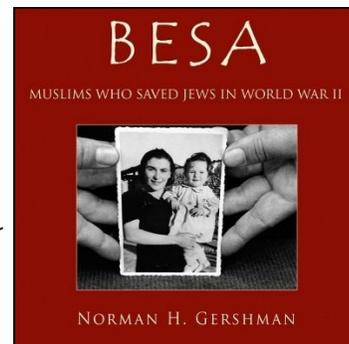
BESA, Muslims Who Saved Jews in World War II

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
 March-June 2013

Opening Reception: Tuesday, March 5, 2013

An additional event, either a lecture by photographer Norman Gershman or a screening of the documentary film, will take place at the Birmingham Museum of Art on April 18, 2013.

Besa is a code of honor deeply rooted in Albanian culture that demands that one take responsibility for the lives of others in their time of need, even at risk of their own lives. In Albania and Kosovo during World War II, Muslims sheltered, at grave risk to themselves and their families, not only the Jews of their cities and villages but also thousands of Jews fleeing the Nazis from other European countries. In recent years, photographer Norman Gershman has collected the moving stories and photographs of these events to create an exhibit. The content of the exhibit is also now a book and the subject of a documentary film.



Darkness Life

Alabama Holocaust Survivors Through Photography and Art

Darkness into Life Expands, continued from Page 1

Barbara Solomon, Exhibit Coordinator



Max Steinmetz in front of his panel

Traveling with both exhibits are a series of DVDs offering interviews with survivors, a brief introduction to the exhibit, marketing information, as well as reproducible materials and other resources.

With both versions of *Darkness into Life* in circulation, we have increased considerably the numbers of visitors to the exhibit and, as such, have expanded the teachings of the Holocaust to a greater segment of the population of Alabama.

Currently, the original exhibit is spending the 2012-2013 academic year in the Troy University System, traveling to all three of its campuses in Montgomery, Troy, and Dothan. TDIL opened in August at the BHEC L'Chaim fundraising event and has since travelled to schools in Talladega, to Indian Springs School, and to Temple Beth-El in Birmingham, where it was viewed by both students and adults during two separate programs. TDIL has several school commitments for 2013. Teachers who could not host the original exhibit have been delighted with the opportunity to host the traveler version.

Darkness into Life continues to amaze us. Through photography

and artwork, Becky and Mitzi have created a heartwarming exhibit that tells the stories of twenty survivors—their stories of childhood, imprisonment, hiding, and liberation. Each story is unique; however, their common thread is one of unfathomable cruelty and heroic responses.



The BHEC has various methodologies and tools for teaching Holocaust. This wonderful exhibit, created through the talent and generosity of two dedicated women, allows us to extend our mission to all regions of Alabama. Within the state there are no usage fees associated with the exhibits, and delivery fees associated with the original exhibit are waived for any type of educational institution.

If you are interested in hosting the exhibit in your community, please contact Barbara Solomon, Exhibit Coordinator, through the BHEC office at 205.795.4176 or email Barbara at BSOLOMSW@gmail.com. Please check our website to view the exhibit and to access information about borrowing.

Unto Every Person There is a Name

Joyce Spielberger, Yom HaShoah Name-Reading Chair

In conjunction with Yom HaShoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day (Monday, April 8th), the Birmingham Holocaust Education Center will once again participate in the worldwide initiative "Unto Every Person There Is A Name." The project is coordinated by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, in consultation with the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through this initiative, the BHEC, with the help of community partners, will conduct a "simultaneous" public reading of 5,000 names of those who were among the murdered victims of the Holocaust.

In 2012, Birmingham's first year participating in this initiative, eighteen community partners answered our call, including synagogues, churches, youth groups, schools, and community organizations. Together, through the public recitation of these names, we were able to restore the identity and dignity to approximately 2,500 victims of the Holocaust.

The BHEC is looking for partners to participate in 2013 with the hope of achieving our goal of 5,000 names. In addition we ask that those who lost members of their family to the Holocaust submit their names for inclusion in the public recitation effort this year and for years to come. Each participating entity will receive a list of names to recite at their own program or worship service during the week of April 7-14. The BHEC can provide ideas and resources to make the recitation project more meaningful, as well as a valuable educational experience, for your organization.

The following groups participated in 2012:

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute • Canterbury Methodist Church • Church of the Highlands • Church Without Walls United Methodist Church • Mesch AZA • Mortimer Jordan High School • Mountain Brook Presbyterian Church • Mountain Top Community Church's Hispanic Ministries • Riverchase Church • St. Albans Episcopal Church • St. Stephens Episcopal Church • Temple Beth-El • Temple Emanu-El • Trinity Baptist Church • University of Alabama Coalition of Campus Organizations • Vestavia Hills Baptist Church • Word of Faith Christian Center • YWCA of Central Alabama

To include your organization or congregation, to submit names for inclusion, or to acquire more information, please contact the BHEC office at 205.795.4176 or information@bhamholocausteducation.org.

Delivering My Legacy, continued from Page 1

Max Herzel, Treasurer, Holocaust Survivor

The auditorium was packed with local teachers and high school students; there was standing room only. I was introduced by Tad Sours, a Social Studies teacher. I spoke about my family's experiences during the Holocaust in Belgium and France.

After my presentation, I participated in a press conference with Steve Caraway, a local journalist from Stephens Media, the publishers of The Springdale Morning News, The Benton County Daily Record, the Northwest Arkansas Times, and The Rogers Morning News. The next day, each paper covered the conference and my presentation. In all my years, I have never received so much coverage.

Temple Shalom of Northwest Arkansas made all the arrangement to celebrate Shabbat. The Shabbat was dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust. All the presenters were invited to join the congregation to welcome our holy day; to celebrate together the peace that it brings to us; and to remember, memorialize, and honor the commitment to NEVER FORGET the Holocaust. Rabbi Jacob Adler led a meaningful service. After dinner, I spoke again. Besides presenting the highlights of my main presentation, I chose to emphasize two righteous Christians, who without hesitation, helped my family when we were in distress. Many of the attendees at the service and dinner were not able to attend the conference itself, and this gave them another opportunity to hear me.

The Friday night was filled with prayers, songs, "ruach" (spirit) and delicious food. Enjoying the evening were congregants, members of the AHEC, members of the Jewish Federation of Arkansas, and other guests. A special prayer book was printed for this occasion.

Saturday morning, members of Temple Etz Chaim (local synagogue) hosted a brunch where each presenter was given twenty minutes to provide an overview of his or her presentation. This afforded students from their Hebrew School and Sunday School (and adults who had not been able to attend the previous meetings) to hear some highlights from the previous presentations. The planning committee and Haas Hall Academy assigned smart, well-mannered, and friendly "Student Ambassadors" to all the presenters. It was a pleasure to meet them.



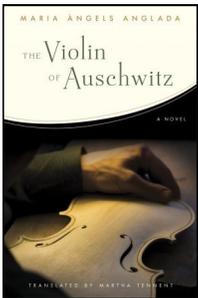
Max with "Student Ambassadors"

The 21st Annual Conference was outstanding, and I praise the Committee for all their hard work. They planned every detail perfectly. I feel honored and privileged to have been asked to be their featured speaker. I will remember the warmth, friendliness, and the many friends I made.

A Tug at the Heartstrings: the Violin of Salvation

Lana Jaffe, Office Manager

Book Review from the BHEC Library: *The Violin of Auschwitz* by Maria Àngels Anglada



This novel of historical fiction juxtaposes the incomprehensible language and thoughts of the German Nazi murderers with the beauty of music, a language that transcends even the most hateful sounds of the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Upon arrival at Auschwitz, Daniel, a luthier, presents himself as a carpenter. While performing a task at the Commandant's party, he notices the Jewish prisoner-violinist, Bronislaw, struggling to play the proper notes. The Nazi guests assume that he is ridiculing the Commandant, a crime that could mean death. Daniel intervenes without hesitation, "It's not his fault, sir. The violin has a crack on the top plate. I can fix it." In this isolated moment of humanity, he even "forget[s] . . . that he [is] in the house of his enemy. He [speaks] of his musical vocation . . . with a self-assurance he ha[s] not felt for many months, not since he had been reduced to a subhuman prisoner." The Commandant and the Doctor make a bet whether Daniel can fix the violin within a given time frame in exchange for either a case of wine for the Commandant or two prisoners for medical experimentation by the Doctor.

The symbolism of the violin is explicit. Daniel's mind wanders to the hymns he used to sing at the Passover *seders*, which commemorate the Israelites' redemption from slavery in Egypt. Moreover, the femininity of the violin serves as a surrogate for his wife, Eva, whose name resembles that of the Biblical first woman. The curves and contours of the violin are the quintessence of the feminine image. He has no contact with Eva, but, through this violin, it is as if with her he vicariously procreates this instrument of life-saving potential that will outlast them both. After completing the violin and handing it over to the Commandant, Daniel sees a case of Burgundy wine. Two lives have been saved.

In 1991, Regina, Daniel's niece who had survived the Holocaust, meets Bronislaw at a violin performance. When Regina begins to play, Bronislaw recognizes "Daniel's violin, the Auschwitz violin!" The novel concludes with the narrator's voice in apostrophe, "It isn't true, is it Daniel, that music can tame beasts? Yet, in the end, a song lives."

This novel provides a chilling glimpse at the Nazi attempt to reduce prisoners to nameless, faceless sub-humans whose lives are tantamount to the worth of a violin or a case of wine. Although captivating and a beautiful testament to the endurance of the human spirit, the prose is weak at times, and some loose ends remain that hinder the narrative from coming full circle. It leaves something to be desired.

REMEMBER...REFLECT...RESPOND**Deborah Layman, Development Coordinator**

Keeping the history and the lessons of the Holocaust alive is an ongoing endeavor that requires funding for educational projects such as:

- Teacher training workshops.
- Preserving and editing the stories of our survivors as told in their own words and making them available on our website and for classroom viewing.
- Editing additional video footage that was created along with our *Darkness into Life* exhibit and adding it to our website.

These are immediate needs, and we hope that as you remember our survivors and reflect on the importance of teaching the history and lessons of the Holocaust, you will respond with a generous gift to help sustain the work of the BHEC.

*If we want the future to be different from the past,
more people must understand the Holocaust and care enough to act.*
- U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

Here are some of our future plans:

We're dreamers at the BHEC, led by our dreamer-in-chief, Phyllis Weinstein. Along with preserving the stories of our survivors and training teachers to convey the history and lessons of the Holocaust, we envision a more prominent "presence" for the BHEC in Birmingham with a Holocaust/Judaica Museum and a BHEC Garden of Remembrance.

A permanent location in downtown Birmingham would provide a permanent home for the *Darkness into Life* exhibit, as well as a venue for other Holocaust and Judaica exhibits, workshops, and lectures and would hopefully become an educational destination for students, families, and visitors to our city.

A Garden of Remembrance would provide a quiet place for reflection, featuring installations commemorating Holocaust victims and survivors and teaching the lessons of the Holocaust. We are beginning to move towards making these dreams a reality, and we hope to have exciting developments to report in the coming months.

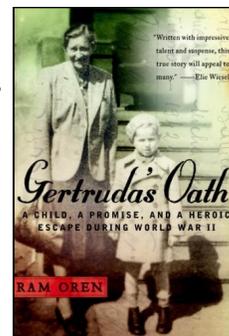
Birmingham Yom HaShoah Commemoration**Ann Mollengarden, Education Coordinator**

Sunday, April 7, 2:30 pm, Levite Jewish Community Center

Michael Stolorow, our guest speaker, was the only son of a wealthy Jewish family in Poland. He was just three years old when war broke out and the family lost everything. His father, desperate to settle his business affairs, traveled to France, leaving Michael in the care of his mother and Gertruda Bablinska, a Catholic nanny devoted to the family. When Michael's mother had a stroke, Gertruda promised the dying woman that she would make her way to Palestine and raise him as her own son.

In 2007, popular Israeli author Ram Oren recreated Michael's amazing journey in the book *Gertruda's Oath*. It is a story that transcends history and religion to reveal the compassion and hope that miraculously thrives in a world immersed in war without end.

This program is sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Coalition, the Birmingham Holocaust Education Center, and the Levite Jewish Community Center.

**A Ghetto is Not Just a Ghetto****Ann Mollengarden, Education Coordinator**

Ghetto. The word was first used in Venice in 1516 as part of the phrase "Getto Nuovo," meaning "New Foundry." This referred to the closed Jewish section of the city which had originally been the site of a foundry. During World War II, many Jews were forced to leave their homes and move to ghettos in Eastern Europe. The first ghetto in Poland was established in the city of Piotrkow Trybunalski in October 1939, just a month after the war broke out. The largest ghetto in Europe, the Warsaw Ghetto, was set up in November 1940. Ultimately there were over 1,100 ghettos. What did they have in common? How did they differ? How were they formed? How were they managed? What were the conditions?

These questions are the basis for a year-long exploration by our BHEC Teacher Cadre. This group of dedicated teachers meets four times a year to explore in-depth topics on the Holocaust and network about classroom-related issues. The Teacher Cadre is open to all teachers; we ask simply that teachers sign up online. Meeting dates, topics, and materials are posted online. Through discussions facilitated by the BHEC, participants will examine the Warsaw, Lodz, Terezin, and Vilna Ghettos.

Not a teacher? Explore the resources online under Teacher Cadre for your personal learning opportunity.

Speaker Update

Denise Lewis, Speaker Coordinator

The Birmingham Holocaust Education Center works via our website to fill requests for our local Holocaust survivors to share their stories. Our speakers do a remarkable job in telling their life stories from before, during, and after the Holocaust. Many thanks to our local Holocaust survivors who have been willing to share their stories in 2012:

Martin Aaron shared his story at Fairhaven Retirement Home and via Skype with teachers attending an AHC workshop in Dothan.

Phyllis Bass shared her late husband's story at Episcopal Place.

Regina Dembo spoke at Huntsville Museum of Art.

Max Herzel spoke at the Homewood Library, Lawson Middle School (Sylacauga), Oak Mountain High School, Enterprise Lions Club, Enterprise First Baptist Church, Helena Middle School, Springville Middle School, Jacksonville State University, Trinity Methodist Church, Bluff Park First Methodist Church, Hillel-Tuscaloosa, Auburn University at Montgomery, University of Arkansas, and Galleria Woods Retirement Home.

Riva and Aisic Hirsch spoke at Cullman Middle School, Brookwood Forest Elementary, West Point High School (Cullman), First Christian Church, Duran Jr. High School (Pell City), Vinemont Middle School, Clay Chalkville High School, and Leeds High School.

Esther Levy (2nd Generation) spoke at Haleyville High School, Thompson Middle School, and the Social Security Administration.

Denise Lewis (2nd Generation) spoke at St. Martin in the Pines, Marbury Middle School, Cherokee Bend Elementary, Riverchase Methodist Church, Thompson Middle School, and Auburn University at Montgomery.

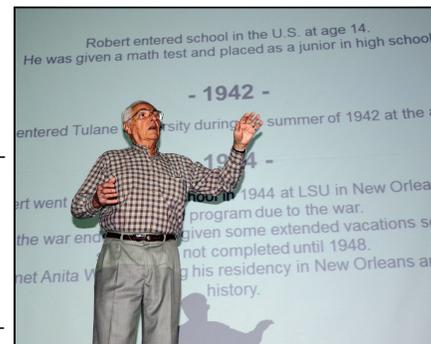
Robert May & Ann Mollengarden spoke to Shades Valley High School and Mortimer Jordan High School.

Hilda Nathan shared her story with teachers attending an AHC workshop in Huntsville.

Ruth Siegler spoke at a "Book Talk" at Vestavia Hills Library and had her testimony video-taped by UAB student, Lesa Touger.

Max Steinmetz shared his story at Birmingham Southern College, Hewitt Trussville Middle School, Social Security Administration, Indian Springs School, Cherokee Bend School, Shades Valley High School, Pleasant Grove High School, Jewish War Veterans at the Jewish Community Center, Our Lady of the Valley Catholic School, and the Rotary Club.

Henry Stern spoke at Opelika Middle School.



Robert May speaking at Mortimer Jordan;
Photo courtesy of Melanie Patterson

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Birmingham Public Library Brown Bag Lunch Series

Phyllis G. Weinstein, Chair

Wednesday, March 6—"An Innovative Project that Saved History"

Between 1989 and 1991, Louisa Weinrib of Montgomery conceived of and executed a local Oral History Project, interviewing Holocaust survivors, children of survivors, as well as American military liberators. Learn how she developed the protocol, recruited participants, recorded and transcribed these histories, all without a computer. Her completed project is housed in the Alabama State Archives, and the transcripts will soon be posted on the BHEC website.

Wednesday, March 13—"Birmingham Civil Rights: a Jewish Perspective"

In this historical year when Birmingham remembers the Civil Rights struggle of 1963, Karl Friedman, then a practicing attorney in Birmingham who had already served in many positions of leadership in the general and Jewish community, recalls how the Jewish people and community responded to the momentous events that were taking place as the black community fought the battle for their civil rights.

Wednesday, March 20—"A Holocaust Survivor Speaks"

Aisic Hirsch, a Holocaust survivor, speaks to us in his uplifting manner of his life in Poland that changed completely when, at the age of 9, he witnessed German troops invade his small town, and he and his family were forced into a ghetto. Later, in the Warsaw Ghetto, he watched helplessly as his brother and grandmother died of typhus, and his mother slid into madness. At age 12 he was alone. He was able to escape from the Warsaw Ghetto by bribing Polish and German guards. He is alive today because of "his guardian angel," a Catholic priest who befriended and protected him.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Legacy Program

Ann Mollengarden, Education Coordinator

Holocaust survivors are a fast-dwindling population. Each survivor is concerned about what will happen with his or her stories after no one is left to give first-hand testimony. This generation grows further removed and increasingly ignorant of the darkest chapter of Jewish history.

In our efforts to keep the history and lessons of the Holocaust alive, the (BHEC) has a special program for young people as they become B'nai Mitzvah. This program enables a Bar/Bat Mitzvah to learn the importance of *tzedakah* (charity) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world). The program matches a Bar/Bat Mitzvah with a Holocaust survivor or the child of a survivor in our community and enables the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to learn about this individual's experience during the Holocaust. We encourage participants to think creatively about how they can incorporate their survivor's story into their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Participants could, for example: prepare a display about their survivor and share their story with their guests; ask their guests to donate to the BHEC; organize a walk-a-thon, bake sale, or garage sale as a fundraiser for the BHEC. The BHEC is available to help you design a project and provide you with informational materials about the work of the BHEC.

The BHEC Bar/Bat Mitzvah Legacy Program has the power to connect this special family event to the long legacy of Jewish history and to provide the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the opportunity to partner with the BHEC in keeping the history and lessons of the Holocaust alive.

One Teacher at a Time

Ann Mollengarden, Education Coordinator

Quality Holocaust education begins with inspired teachers. With as many as 50% of new teachers leaving the field within five years of beginning their careers, our efforts to instruct and inspire teachers to teach the history and lessons of the Holocaust are ongoing. To that end, the AHC/BHEC has strived for biennial, state-wide teacher workshops. After our success with four workshops in the fall of 2011, and with the financial commitment of the local communities, we were able to add two additional workshops during the fall of 2012.

In November, the AHC/BHEC brought the *Echoes and Reflections* curriculum, created by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Shoah Foundation, and Yad Vashem, to Huntsville and Dothan. These full-day workshops were facilitated by Shelley Rose, Associate Director, Southeast Region of the ADL. The ADL also provided curriculums for all teachers, each valued at \$100.

In Huntsville, we partnered with the Jewish Federation of Huntsville and North Alabama and welcomed over 40 teachers. In addition to curriculum instruction, teachers had the rare treat of hearing Holocaust survivor Hilda Brück Nathan. In our continuing effort to preserve survivor histories, the BHEC recorded Hilda's testimony, and it is available in our library.

Troy University in Dothan was our partner in Dothan, attracting over 60 teachers. Troy/Dothan will also be hosting our *Darkness into Life* exhibit in March and April 2013. Through the power of the internet, Holocaust survivor Martin Aaron "skyped" in from Birmingham to share his amazing story with the teachers. Below is some feedback from teachers:

This was an amazing opportunity. I have never attended a more organized and motivating professional development. I cannot wait to take the curriculum and my experiences here today back into my classroom and to share with my colleagues.

I will feel more confident about teaching this topic. Before today, I felt like I did not do justice to the topic. Now I feel like my students and I could explore the material together. Learning will continue on both levels. Thank you!

Thank you for offering this consolidated set of info. For many years the best I have had to use is what I could personally organize and coordinate myself. This is going to be immensely helpful to incorporate in class.

A Unique Classroom Experience

Amy McDonald, Teacher, Shades Valley High School

This school year, I am teaching two year-long electives in Holocaust Studies. These students have been willing and eager participants, which in itself was an incentive to branch out and attempt something different. Was there a way to make the experience of this class more than an exchange of information? Was there a possibility of making the numbers, statistics, and documentary footage of the Holocaust more personal? Conferring with the BHEC, an organized project began to take shape.

Bringing in a survivor to speak in multiple sessions would provide an opportunity for students to develop a personal relationship with that survivor and learn about that individual's story to a degree of detail not normally possible in one lecture. It would also provide an opportunity for the survivor to realize and grasp the enormity of his or her legacy. We asked Holocaust survivor Max Steinmetz to participate, and he graciously agreed to step up to the plate.



Michael (left) and Andrew (right)

Since October, we have had two of our four scheduled 90-minute interview sessions. Before each, Ann Mollengarden came, and we worked with the students to generate topics and questions. To say that my students have been impacted is an understatement. Their questions and our discussions have been genuine and heartfelt. I have watched these 15-18 year old kids grapple with how the Holocaust shattered one person's family and life. I have watched as they responded to Max with admiration, respect, and kindness. Not only do I hope that my students will continue to learn and grow from this incredible experience, but I hope that Max realizes what an impression and influence he is having on these students. We have all been so touched by his courage, honesty, and willingness to spend time with us.

Once Thrown to the Dark

by Michael Malcolm (Senior)

Once thrown to the dark
Yet my spark kept me alive.
Pulled away far from paradise
I fear for us all.

Battle scars
On a soul who has not yet picked up an axe
But only a shovel to hide my kin from stars.
Memories engulfed in flames.
Gassed away for eternity.

Yet still I remember everything.
These I speak to describe the horror
Yet I live for those who are gone.
I shall hold them close to my heart
And remain a part of my core.

After Max's first visit, the students wrote a response, composed a poem, or drew a picture. Several students read their poems to Max when he came back for the second session. It was a very powerful and touching moment. These students' poems speak for themselves.

Enemies Overnight

by Andrew Norwood (Senior)

We started off playing.
Walking to school.
Studied together.
Calling each other friends.
We learned together.
But when the dark moon came over
Everything turned left
In a matter of seconds.
Now we are foes.

I am a refugee
In my own town and
You are the people who
Are against me.
I thought friendship was key.
Now we are enemies overnight.
We lost it all over religion.
But before we didn't know of
Each other's religion.
Just friendship
That sailed off like an old life boat
Into the sea.
Enemies overnight.

Amy is a past recipient of the Brenda and Fred Friedman Teacher Scholarship.

**Alabama Holocaust Foundation
Birmingham Holocaust Education Center**

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Phone: 205.795.4176
www.bhamholocausteducation.org**

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Phyllis G. Weinstein, Chair	
Barbara Aland	Denise Lewis
Karen Allen	Judy Borisky Metzger
Barbara Bonfield	Ann Mollengarden
Lisa Byrd	Lynn Raviv
Laurie Elmets	Esther Schuster
Vicki Flax	Becky Seitel
Max Herzel	Cynthia Spruell
Kelly Kahn	Joyce Spielberger
Sharon Kahn	Barbara Solomon
Deborah Layman	Lemarse Washington
Mitzi J. Levin	Dr. Steven Whitton
Esther Levy	Eva Wilensky

BHEC MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by Alabama Holocaust survivors, whose presence in our community makes us mindful of the injustices in their past, the BHEC is committed to preserving their memories and continuing their legacies. The lessons of the Holocaust are profound and relevant, providing a platform to explore important ethical and moral issues. Our goal is to keep the history of the Holocaust alive by providing engaging resources, programs, and initiatives to the students, teachers, and communities of Alabama. Through Holocaust education, we hope to ensure that new generations will apply the lessons of the Holocaust to the construction of a more just, humane, and tolerant future.

Speaker Update, continued from Page 7 **Denise Lewis, Speaker Coordinator**

I have heard Riva and Aisic Hirsch speak for the last three years, and I still cry when I hear their stories. The students learn so much from their experience. We thank them so much for sharing that part of their lives with us. —Duran Junior High School

Each of the stories that Max Herzel and Denise Lewis told were extremely touching and it was clear from the audience response that their comments touched many hearts....the lessons of the Holocaust must not be forgotten. —Horizons Unlimited

If any survivors are not available to speak on a requested date, we are now using our Second Generation speakers who are telling stories of their own family's survival with stories that were passed down from their parents or grandparents. If you would like more information concern-



Henry Stern signing Never Again

ing a speaker, please visit the *Speakers Bureau* on our website to send a request or contact Denise Lewis at DBL50@aol.com.

2012 by the Numbers

6	Scholarships granted to teachers.
24	BHEC volunteers who made this all possible.
60	Venues that heard a survivor speak.
125	Teachers trained in state-wide workshops.
220	Donors who provided for the work that we do.
500	People who heard a survivor speak.
2000	People who viewed <i>Darkness into Life</i> in the state.

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