

## Educational Outreach Annual Report 2007-2008

This has been a productive and rewarding year for the Educational Outreach program. Our programs brought in record numbers, we have expanded the number of schools participating in our programs, and there were some unique events that had a particular impact.

### Workshops:

This year's professional and personal development workshop series focused on the theme, "What Does It Mean to Be Human? Personal Choice in a Universe of Moral Obligation" Our powerful lineup of presenters included Gretchen Steidle Wallace (Global Grassroots), Victoria Barnett (USHMM) and Dr. Alan Rosen (Bar-Ilan University and Yad Vashem, Israel) and dealt with new curriculum developments, Nicholas Winton and Rescue, Darfur and Refugee assistance, Bystanders, and Eastern European Yiddish culture. 132 people attended the five workshops in Bedford, Keene and Dartmouth.

The personal and professional development workshop series were tremendously successful in

- reaching a diverse audience
- enriching knowledge of the Holocaust
- connecting the Center and cooperating with other Institutions
- offering a variety of accessible venues
- attracting record numbers of participants
- connecting workshops with specific state standards

I was pleased with the variety of workshops that were presented and the caliber of the presenters. We were able to develop deeper relationships with the ADL, the Shoah Foundation and Yad Vashem through presenting the "Echoes and Reflections" curriculum; Global Grassroots, a NH organization active in promoting the film, "The Devil Came on Horseback" and in creating innovative projects for women refugees in post genocidal societies; and the Gelman Educational Foundation with the Nicholas Winton workshop. This was the first time that we have made workshops available in different locations. This proved to very successful in both making the workshops accessible and in fund-raising. We will continue to follow up on this year's model of using the presenters as ambassadors for the Cohen Center. The numbers of participants was at a record high, averaging just over 24 per workshop.

### Kristallnacht Remembrance:

Once again the Keene community came together in a unique way to commemorate the events of Kristallnacht. At least 650 attended this year's Kristallnacht Remembrance in the Middle School in downtown Keene. 47 Keene merchants helped us to commemorate the day by displaying an explanatory poster and commemorative candle in their windows. We were deeply moved by the testimony of Congressman **Tom Lantos** and his wife **Annette**, both rescued in Hungary by Raoul Wallenberg. Other participants included the Moving Company of Keene and the KSC Chamber Singers. My special thanks to the Kristallnacht Remembrance Committee, Keene Police and Fire Chiefs Walker and Lamoureaux, Mayor Blastos, Hungarian survivor Tom Weiss Haus, Composer Lawrence Siegel, Choreographer Reagan Messer, Paul Cullity, KSC Ecumenical Campus Minister; Dorothy Frazier, Principal, Keene Middle School; Molly Kelly, NH State Senator; and Dr. Henry Knight, Director, Cohen Center for Holocaust Studies. Next year's Remembrance will take place on November 6, 2008 and will feature Le Chambon child survivor and child of Holocaust survivors, **Pierre Sauvage**, an Emmy Award-winning documentary filmmaker and President of the *Chambon Foundation*.

This Remembrance was significant as it was Congressman Lantos' last public appearance. We were able to focus on rescuers and connect NH survivor Tom Weiss Haus to the Lantos. It also appears to be the last Remembrance held at the Keene Middle School due to structural problems at that venue. Happily, and perhaps this is a significant shift, the Colonial Theater has agreed to be the host of the event in 2008 and perhaps beyond.

### Partnerships:

Once again I was able to present for the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine's Summer Institute. In addition to those previously stated, we developed a deeper relationship with other organizations, including: Cheshire TV (Channel 8) - This year's Kristallnacht Remembrance was televised along with "Eagles Over Auschwitz" to mark U.N. Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, 2008. I have been able to coordinate talks by the educational outreach person at Global Grassroots and have helped them organize film showings as well. This is an important relationship as we develop our genocide program. We also deepened our relationship with the Colonial theater (see Kristallnacht Remembrance and "My Heart in a Suitcase". A new initiative was discussed with Portsmouth Public Radio. We will be co-sponsoring a Holocaust and Genocide movie series next year in the Portsmouth region.

### Fellows:

Our Fellowship program is continuing to grow in importance. Our Fellows:

- Initiated a course on the Holocaust in Richmond, NH.
- Were advocates (petitions, letter writing, phone calls) regarding the genocide in Darfur
- continued participation in the JFR Summer Institute. Once again, two Fellows will attend this summer's program in New York City.
- Attended *Teaching about Genocide in the 20th and 21st Centuries* at the Whitney and Betsy MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies. This two day conference was sponsored by the USHMM and PIER (Program in International Educational Resources).
- attended the JFR Advanced Seminar at the Newark Airport Hilton

### Highlights:

#### ❖ "My Heart in a Suitcase"

On March 20, 2008 The Colonial Theater in Keene in partnership with the Cohen Center for Holocaust Studies sponsored, "My Heart In A Suitcase," an autobiographical play dealing with the trauma of the Kindertransport, the mission to rescue Jewish children after Kristallnacht. The Kindertransport, separating children from their parents, allowed approximately 10,000 children to find refuge in Great Britain in 1938 and 1939. It is estimated that over 80% of those children never saw their parents again. The play, written for grades 5-9, told the true story of Anne Lehmann, and the events that led to her boarding the Kindertransport in 1938.

Over 850 elementary and middle school students attended the play. The audience was deeply respectful and moved by the play. At one point, when the young Anne waves goodbye to her family, students in the rear of the theater could be seen waving back. This tenuous thread between history and memory is an important aspect to the work of the Cohen Center. To compliment the program, I was able to arrange a panel consisting of Kindertransport survivors, a hidden Jewish child, and a German woman whose family was involved in the resistance to Hitler. The question and answer session with the students was also deeply moving. Students were clearly well prepared by the teachers and their questions were thoughtful and evocative. Anne's struggle to find peace amidst her personal despair clearly inspired these students to think deeply about both history and their own lives.

After the panel discussion, these witnesses then visited individual schools, including both public and one local Catholic school, to talk more directly with students. This was an important way to continue the discussion and make the contact between the students and the witness more personal. It was an important day in educating the next generation and planting the seeds for further investigation.

The night before, we were able to gather the Kindertransport survivors together at a meal in their honor. This was the first time they had met each other and many stories and memories were shared (three had come from Baden). One story evoked a remarkable coincidence. Edith Ehrlich had left Vienna in 1939. She was later joined by Leonard, who would become her

husband. Leonard shared the story of how he and his family, desperate to find transport were only able to secure passage on the last line still able to carry children to England, the Holland-

America Line. He remembered that they had left Amsterdam late in 1939. "Late in 1939..." got me to thinking. Seven or so years ago, the Center's director and I were called to a house in Winchester, N.H. to appraise some books written in German. The house agent working for the recently deceased owner wondered if they would be of any use to the Center. Instantly we discovered that the collection consisted of many books burned by the Nazis. This was interesting. The, out fell a booklet carrying the list of passengers for the *Rotterdam*, a ship that sailed on November 22, 1939 from Amsterdam. The ship was clearly full of German Jews who later arrived safely in New York City. Our first thought was to cross reference the names with the United States Holocaust Memorial's list of passengers from the SS. *St. Louis* that sailed earlier that summer. We found matches and the Museum confirmed that they were admitted to the United States. Remarkably, as I shared the booklet with the Ehrlich's the next morning, Leonard, with great interest, looked through the passenger list. There, for the first time since perhaps his trip, he saw his name and the names of his parents on what was likely one of the last ships leaving Europe for safety. The Keene Sentinel ran a front page story about Edith Ehrlich's presentation to St. Joseph's School in Keene.

And so, as students watched a play, imagined the past, and met witnesses who could ground them in the realities of their lives, the survivors faced the memories of the past and in one case, found an artifact testifying to the chance of his survival.

This event, bringing together different organizations and reaching out to the elementary and middle school communities was a powerful event for me.

- ❖ The Center's profile is also growing in the state. I was honored to testify to HB 1516-FN: Divestiture of New Hampshire retirement assets relating to Sudan Darfur to the House subcommittee examining the bill on February 7, 2008. With much work contacting teachers and others connected to the Center, this bill passed the NH Senate in May 2008. Although not advocating for legislation, the Center was able to play a role in providing expert testimony to genocide and corporate behavior in genocidal societies.
- ❖ I was also able to speak at the Human Rights Torch Relay in Portsmouth, NH on April 12. Again, the Center was called upon to testify to the moral imperative to respond to genocide.
- ❖ Tom Weisshaus. This year has seen Tom, a Hungarian survivor rescued by Raoul Wallenberg, play a more central role in our work. He and I have spoken at a variety of schools with the highlight beyond an all day school event at the Hudson Memorial School.
- ❖ On March 14, the Cohen Center was recognized in Boston, MA by the New England Board of Higher Education as the recipient of the 2008 New Hampshire State Merit Award. We are pleased to be serving the people of New Hampshire.
- ❖ Stephan Lewy and Manchester, NH. The Outreach has held many new programs in the Manchester, NH area. This has developed a base of new teachers, some of whom are attending the 2008 Summer Institute, in Manchester. One of the significant developments was working with German survivor Stephan Lewy in teaching a four week adult education class on the Holocaust for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Granite State College.

**Web Site**

Changes were made to update the web site to make it more user-friendly. In addition, a blog was started to connect the events of the Center to our constituents. New items were also added to include photographs of events. Our events are now also listed on the New Hampshire Jewish Federations' web site as well as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's website.

**KSC**

I have continued to teach in education classes regarding pedagogy and methodology of teaching the Holocaust.

**Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide**

There are currently 58 Cohen Center Fellows (39 of those in NH, 4 in different states, and 14 from five different countries.) Cohen Center Fellows are dedicated teachers who have graduated from the Cohen Center biennial residential Summer Institute. We will be adding a record number of 33 to that list with this summer's institute. We have received grants from the New Hampshire Humanities Council, Panjandrum Foundation, and the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire.

This year's keynote speaker will be **Sibylle Sarah Niemoeller von Sell**, widow of Pastor Martin Niemoeller – Hitler's only personal prisoner. In addition to KSC faculty, **Dr, Martin Rumscheidt**, **Stephan Lewy**, **Thomas Weisshaus**, and **Holocaust survivor Ernie Michel** will also present.

**Presentations:**

I have made 66 school or community presentations with an audience around 4600. I was able to add new schools and developed new presentations, such as: "Confronting Holocaust Denial". (see attached list of presentations.)