A MESSAGE FROM NATIONAL CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR WILLIAM S. LEVINE

Investing in Global Holocaust Education

Dear friends, have you ever asked yourself how Hitler got so many people involved in murdering Europe’s Jews? Lawyers, artists, professors, teachers, ordinary people—all assisted in the genocide. How this was possible has haunted me my entire life. That is why I’m so concerned with how little young people today know about this history and its lessons.

Our job is to help the Museum realize the full potential of Holocaust education to help open young people’s eyes to the roots of hatred and what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Last fall, I had the privilege of spending time at the Museum with teachers from around the world. They came from as far away as Korea and Morocco to learn more about how to teach this history to the young people in their countries. It was clear that they did.

Listening to these professionals on the last day present their plans, the enthusiasm and commitment to pass on what they learned was fantastic.

This is just one example of why this incredible institution is in a class by itself. And that’s why I hope, in addition to your annual support, you will also consider helping fund a stronger endowment.

When we have friends and partners abroad who care as much as we do about Holocaust education, we need to make sure we can support them now—and in the future.

Bill Levine
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—Todd Fisher

In investing in innovation and relevance
Christine and Todd Fisher
New York, New York

Todd Fisher’s personal quest to understand how and why the Holocaust has happened has been a defining part of his life. While his maternal grandparents escaped Nazi Germany, many of their family did not. “There was not a day in my grandparents’ lives that the Holocaust did not influence them— that they did not talk about it. Their daily life revolved around the Holocaust and the family that looked for any way they had a massive impact on me and formed the core of my world view.”

“All that I had been talking to my grandmother about for so many years I now found out on a visit to Dachau during college. How could such hatred and evil happen in this so-called peaceful place?” Trying to understand the deadly combination of ignorance, hate, and indifference would lead him beyond the many Holocaust sites he would visit, to Rwanda, Cambodia, and Gaza Island.

Taking their children on many of these harrowing witness trips, Christine Fisher explained, “in a way to make them understand that these things continue to happen around the world, and they can act.”

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—Milt Maltz

“Tamar and Milton Maltz
Cleveland, Ohio

A number of years ago, as we began our Seder service, one of the children said, ‘When do we eat?’

It means that the storylines of the Jewish people—flying persecution in Egypt was not bringing home to all’—remembered Maltz. “It begins with the thought that the importance of conveying this story from one generation to the next. Reading these stories and hearing them not only in one sense, but visualizing them helps you understand what’s most important.”

“It was a matter of question, but as I was involved in building museums and in a great fun of the Holocaust Museum doing just what it’s doing, it all began to come together.”

“Since the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage opened in Cleveland in 2010, it has been our valued partner,” explained Museum director Sam Blumenthal. “It has hosted and created extensive outreach around three of our exhibitions on topics relevant to young people—such as science, the Olympics, and propaganda.”

“Our world is changing in terms of communication. Although I was in television and radio all my life, I have never seen anything quite like this,” explained Maltz. “What we’re seeing now is a distortion of news—it’s opinions, attitudes, and not the facts. And this is a serious issue.”

“There are those individuals who really question the Holocaust. In essence, they’re debating it. What’s the response—simple facts—in other words, the truth. That’s why authentic evidence of the Holocaust is so important. The Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage opened in Cleveland in 2010, it has been our valued partner.”

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In addition to unrestricted annual support, the Maltz Foundation recently made a $1 million commitment to name the Exhibition Design and Production Suite in the David and Felicia Shapell Family Collections and Conservation Center currently under construction. Reflecting on the impact he hopes to achieve through his support, Maltz says, “Museums each have a story of the Holocaust is so important. The truth. That’s why authentic evidence is imperative to use authentic examples to make people think and react today. If we care about the issues facing our young people, it’s imperative to use our philanthropy as a bridge to reach them.”

ABOVE: During the run of the State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda exhibit in Cleveland, in addition to the Museum’s WHAT YOU DO MATTERS youth literature contest with Case Western Reserve University, the Maltz Museum offered related programs like a state and federal newsmakers and their escape from Nazi Germany. Selma said, ‘When do we eat?’

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Europe is beset by a range of unprecedented challenges not seen since the 1930s. These challenges are evident at all ends of the political spectrum and all across the continent. They are political, cultural, and economic—a corrosive combination that can lead to serious threats to Holocaust memory and education as well as to Jewish communities. Given these alarming developments in the lands where the Holocaust took place, the Museum has created a new Office of International Affairs with a special focus on Europe.

‘In this new world, the Museum cannot fulfill its core mission without a robust international reach,’ explained Paul Shaffer, Director of International Affairs. ‘But it first requires securing the future of Holocaust memory, scholarship, and education in Europe, and no institution can lead this effort as effectively as the Museum. Our unique federal status and multiple partnerships give us access to leaders and institutions no other organization has. We must use them to keep Holocaust issues on the agenda as Europe addresses its present challenges and defines its future.’

The Piotr and Basheva Polsky Memorial Initiative for the Study of Ukrainian Jewry defines its future.”

Once home to one of the largest, most diverse, and culturally rich Jewish communities of Europe, Ukraine’s experience during the Holocaust remained essentially buried until the fall of the Soviet Union. But even then, efforts to uncover the truth have been incremental. That is why the Museum’s Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies has made Ukraine and other parts of the former Soviet Union a major focus for archival collection, new research, and education.

The Polsky Memorial Initiative has resulted in a significant uptick in research activity in the Museum’s rich archival holdings from and about Ukraine, has brought graduate students from Ukraine to the Museum, and has led to several archival-acquisition agreements that match the historical documentation of this little understood topic. Issues of antisemitism, collaboration, survival, and displacement are all being addressed through these activities.

And after years laying the groundwork, the Museum achieved a quantum leap forward with the official opening of a newly acquired University Center for Holocaust Studies in Ukraine in fall 2013. ‘Through a partnership with the Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv, the initiative is bringing serious teaching about the Holocaust to Ukraine’s national university for the very first time,’ explained Shapiro. ‘Having partners like Michael Polsky is what makes this type of impact possible!’

MP: I was born in the former Soviet Union five years after the end of the Second World War. As a little boy, I remember seeing the destroyed buildings and devastated families that I knew. Later, when I went to school, people talked about the devastation on the Soviet population but didn’t talk specifically about Jews, even though we knew that Jews were the prime targets of Nazis. I grew up in a neighborhood where there were not a list of Jews and remember being bullied as a Jewish boy—a firsthand experience of antisemitism in Ukraine.

‘Start personal journeys, explore your motivations, and teach the world in your own voice. But do not let it end in the Museum.’

MP: A few years ago, I heard that someone had endowed a center for Romanian Jews based on his background, and I started thinking how important it was to apply that same intensity and focus on Ukrainian Jews. A significant number of American Jews have ancestors from what is now Ukraine, and I knew that they knew about what happened to Ukrainian Jews during the Holocaust. The Museum’s resources and reputation set it apart from other organizations. So I called the Museum, introduced myself, and that’s how it started.

MP: To have a center in Ukraine is critical in the 21st century.

MP: Ukraine is going through a very difficult times right now. It’s very important that the Museum pursue and document this history now. A lot of historical material is disappearing and disappearing very quickly. Unless something is done, this part of Jewish history might be lost forever. And I myself have become a witness to the distortion of this history to satisfy particular desires of the moment.

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Gifts of $1,000,000 and Above

Estate of Elizabeth and Lee Pearl
Seattle, WA
$2.3 million bequest to the Annual Fund
Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany
New York, NY
$810,000 gift to the Archival Acquisitions and Reproductions Project; $227,040 gift to the Oral History Cataloguing Project; $200,000 to the Archival Indexing Project

Estate of Rita Stern
Chestnut Hill, MA
$1.2 million bequest to the Annual Fund

Estate of Eugenie Fromer
New York, NY
$1 million bequest to the Annual Fund

Gifts of $500,000 and Above

Linda and Schuyler Sylvers
Ventura, CA
$750,000 gift to the Endowment

Recent Gifts

The Museum is grateful to our supporters who have made outright gifts of $250,000 or more between September 22, 2015, and May 24, 2016.

The Herr Foundation
Chicago, IL
$650,000 gift to the Perpetrators, Collaborators and Witnesses: The Jeff and Toby Herr Testimony Initiative

Linda and Richard Price and Family
Highland Park, IL
$250,000 gift to the Annual Fund; $250,000 gift to the Collections and Conservation Center

SNCF
Paris, France
$500,000 gift to the Digital Learning Center

Paul and Susan Sugarman and Family
Boston, MA
$500,000 gift to the Collections and Conservation Center

Humanity United
$270,000 gift to the Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide

Joyce and Irving Goldman Family Foundation
New York, NY
$250,000 gift to the Americans and the Holocaust Initiative

Marcia and Alan Lazowski
Hartford, CT
$250,000 gift to the Collections and Conservation Center

Steven and Suzanne Hilton
Scottsdale, AZ
$250,000 gift to the Collections and Conservation Center

Above, first row from left: Construction is on schedule for completion in December 2016. * Site Tours: Donors get a behind-the-scenes tour of the unique characteristics of the world-class Center. * Collections Display: The permanent Collections Center display in the Museum, featuring collection stories and donor recognition, was dedicated on May 4, 2016; a 6 million visitor counter will operate the digital display. Pictured from left: Kathy, Tom Shapell, Tom Bernstein, Sara Bloomfield, and Allan Holt.

Second row from left: Student volunteers at the South Florida Luncheon in Boca Raton and survivor-collections donor Helen Jonas launch the national tour of a time capsule with survivor messages to the future. The capsule will be on display in the Shapell Center and opened on the Museum’s 50th anniversary in 2043. From left, it traveled to Miami, Los Angeles, New York, Washington, D.C., Cleveland, and right, to Chicago for a Teen Committee hosted ceremony, co-chaired by Samantha Lask, pictured here with survivor-collections donor Vera Burstyn.

Collections and Conservation Center Progress

This is our generation’s responsibility. We’re in the home stretch, and I hope everyone will join us in this historic project.”
—Tom Bernstein

When it was first envisioned, many of us on the Council did not appreciate the complexity of this project. Very quickly, we realized that the sophisticated systems required to preserve and protect the evidence were unique. This state-of-the-art facility is being built to stand the test of time.”
—Sandy Gottesman, Co-chair of the Collections and Conservation Committee
While the Museum collection will not be relocated to its permanent home until next year, preparations are well underway to ensure the safety and security of the irreplaceable collection during the move.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: At the current storage facility, specialized collections staff verify all contents and locations before a meticulous barcoding process to create a unique identifier for every item in the massive collection. Staff from across the institution volunteered to help barcode the 15,000 archival collections. These vary greatly in size and type—from restitution case files to personal papers.