



MIDWEST CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER
2012

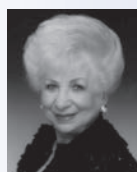
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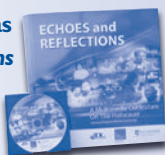
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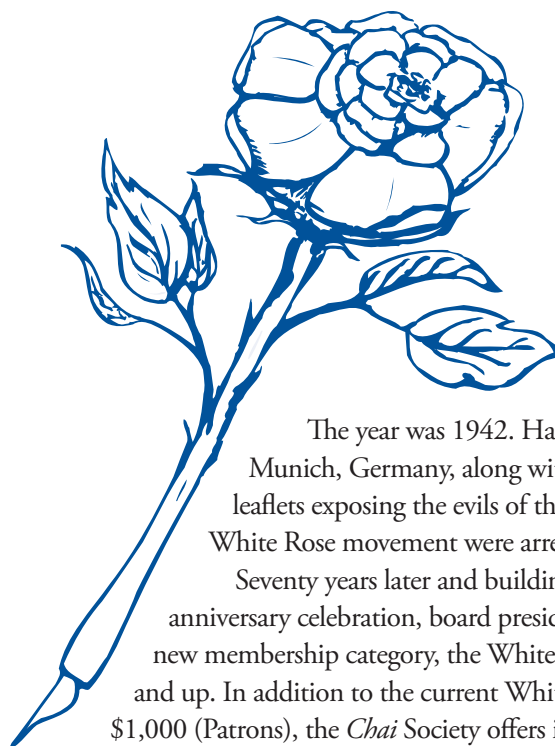
M C H E



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MCHE Creates White Rose *Chai* Society

**\$1,800 MEMBERSHIP LEVEL
HELPS EDUCATE
TOMORROW'S LEADERS**

The year was 1942. Hans and Sophie Scholl, university students in Munich, Germany, along with several friends and their professor, distributed leaflets exposing the evils of the Nazi Regime. For their "crime," members of their White Rose movement were arrested and executed.

Seventy years later and building upon the success of MCHE's 18th (*chai*) anniversary celebration, board president Steve Chick has announced the creation of a new membership category, the White Rose *Chai* Society, for annual donors of \$1,800 and up. In addition to the current White Rose Society levels of \$500 (Benefactors) and \$1,000 (Patrons), the *Chai* Society offers individuals, foundations and organizations an opportunity to honor the spirit and righteousness of young people who spoke up for the rights of others while supporting MCHE programs that encourage students and educators to speak out against bigotry and to learn how one person can make a difference..

Since 1997, MCHE's White Rose Society has provided financial support for educational programs, including the White Rose Student Essay Contest. Benefactors and Patrons are recognized as a group for their participation, and resources are awarded to the winning schools in the name of the White Rose Society. Members of the new White Rose *Chai* Society also will be recognized individually as co-sponsors of future essay contests.

To become a charter member of the White Rose *Chai* Society, an MCHE member at any level or to renew a current membership, please use the remittance envelope located between pages 4 and 5 of this newsletter. You may also donate securely at mchekc.org.

May 10, 2012, 7:00 p.m.
Jewish Community Campus

**Honoring This Year's
White Rose Student Essay
Contest Finalists and
Current White Rose Society Members**

Reservations requested by May 1
913-327-8196 or rsvp@mchekc.org

**MICHE ANNUAL
MEETING AND
ELECTIONS**



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

THE SURVEY SAYS... MCHE Plans for the Future

Last November, I was honored to introduce guest artist Marvin Hamlisch at MCHE's "chai" anniversary celebration in the new Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. From the podium in Helzberg Hall—looking out at survivors, their children and grandchildren, educators, donors, civic leaders and supporters of all backgrounds, and remembering the vision of our founders—I could not help but be inspired by what we have accomplished and, more importantly, the difference we can make going forward.

As we look ahead to future challenges and opportunities, MCHE's strategic planning committee, headed by our capable and energetic vice president of administration Carol Sader, is hard at work reviewing our previous goals and creating a roadmap that will guide our work over the next three years.

A first step in this process was to survey MCHE's Board of Directors and Council of Advocates, past presidents and the professional staff in order to assess our current strengths and consider what we might do differently. Not surprisingly, their responses generated even more questions:

- How can we best expand school and community programming?
- How can we make the most efficient and educational use of technology?
- How do we engage young adults as learners and donors?
- How can we strengthen the community partnerships we have established with other non-profit organizations?



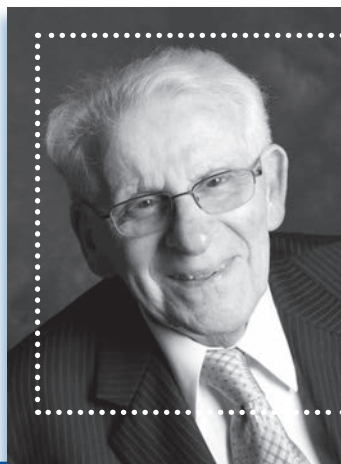
Steve Chick and Jean Zeldin

Photo courtesy of James Maidhof Photography.

- How do we keep the Holocaust relevant with the passage of time?
- How can we ensure the financial viability of the organization?

These questions are not unique to MCHE. They are being addressed at regional, national and international levels, through the Association of Holocaust Organizations and at a conference this summer being hosted by Yad Vashem. Still, while these concerns are foremost on the agendas of centers and museums worldwide, answers and approaches will vary by institution and region.

We invite you—survivor families, educators, students, community leaders and financial supporters—to share with us your thoughts and ideas so that the strategic plan presented to our board in June best reflects our community's needs and interests.



Mazel tov!

Congratulations to MCHE co-founder Isak Federman on the recent celebration of his 90th birthday (5 x chai)! Your vision and leadership continue to inspire us. May you go from strength to strength.

Photo courtesy of Gloria Baker Feinstein.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MCHE Board Remembers Yesterday While Preparing for Tomorrow

This past November, the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education celebrated its 18th anniversary at the magnificent Kaufmann Center for the Performing Arts. Dozens of people contributed to this stellar community event and special thanks

go to our event co-chairs, Judy and Rich Hastings and Barbra and Ron Hill, for their leadership and support, to Donna Thomason of EPIC Entertainment and her terrific staff, and to Jean Zeldin for her guidance and support. Marvin Hamlisch, multi-award-winning composer and our entertainer for this brilliant evening, was fantastic! All who attended enjoyed his music and the camaraderie of a successful celebration and fundraiser.

In the audience that evening were many survivors of the Holocaust. They were MCHE's honored, special guests, and we were so proud to have them there with many of their family members. A short film produced by Outpost Worldwide captured our past successes and related our mission and vision for the future.

MCHE board meetings always begin with a moment of remembrance for those Holocaust survivors who have passed away

since our previous meeting. In February, at our first meeting of 2012, it was especially sad for all of us as we read seven names—more than I can ever remember—including MCHE Director Emeritus Maria Devinki.



Ron and Barbra Hill, Maestro Marvin Hamlisch, Judy Hastings, tenor Mark McVey, and Rich Hastings. Photo courtesy of James Maidhof Photography.

While our survivor numbers continue to decline, MCHE's membership numbers must continue to grow so that we can carry forth the survivors' legacy. If you are not now a member of MCHE, I ask that you please consider joining! Your generosity is greatly appreciated and your support is vital to the continuation of our numerous projects and activities.

We have a wealth of interesting programs described in this newsletter, and our strategic planning committee is dedicated to providing even more educational opportunities to benefit the future of our community. I look forward to seeing you soon.

In Memoriam

We were deeply saddened in December by the loss of MCHE Director Emeritus Maria Braun Devinki. Maria was known for her style and grace, her business savvy and her boundless generosity. A Polish survivor of the Holocaust, she shared her story with MCHE as part of our Witnesses to the Holocaust project and in *From the Heart: Life Before and After the Holocaust - A Mosaic of Memories*. May her memory be a blessing.



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*of blessed memory

CURRENT MCHE MEMBERS AS OF MARCH 12, 2012 • THANK YOU!

MCHE annual memberships are scheduled for renewal in either June or December, depending upon the donation date. June renewals are indicated by italics.

Please use the attached envelope to become an MCHE member, to reactivate a lapsed membership, or to renew your current membership. All memberships received March 13 through June 30, 2012, will be current through June 30, 2013, and will be recognized in both our fall donor listing and by level in next spring's newsletter.

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Yom Hashoah 2012

This year's Yom HaShoah service, commemorating the 69th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and the 49th anniversary of the dedication of Kansas City's Memorial to the Six Million, will take place on Sunday, April 22 at 1:30 p.m. in the Lewis and Shirley White Theatre at the Jewish Community Campus in Overland Park.

Rita Murra Sudhalter, daughter of the late Rose Zysman Murra and Nathan Murra, will chair the program. Rabbi Mark Levin of Congregation Beth Torah will give the opening remarks. Cantor Rob Menes of Congregation

Beth Shalom will sing *El Mole Rachamim*, and Rabbi Alan Londy of The New Reform Temple will provide closing remarks and recite *Kaddish*.

The program will feature short readings from *CollectiveVOICES*—MCHE's writing workshop for children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors.

This annual community-wide event, organized by the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Community Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee and the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education, is co-sponsored by local Jewish agencies and congregations.

CollectiveVOICES

NEW PUBLICATION GIVES VOICE TO CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF SURVIVORS

MCHE is pleased to announce the publication of *CollectiveVOICES*, a very special writing project for children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors.

CollectiveVOICES contains two years of collected works—a total of 25 separate pieces by ten local children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors. Their reflections and vignettes represent a significant contribution to Holocaust writing, providing not only an additional dimension to Holocaust remembrance, but also a critical component of generational continuity—connecting the fragmented past to a solid present and viable future.

"Other Holocaust centers have children of survivors writing their parents' stories," explains Fran Sternberg, MCHE director of university programs and adult education and coordinator of *CollectiveVOICES*, "but as far as we know, we are the only center to offer children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors an expressive outlet unique to their perceptions and experiences, empowering them to 'speak' on their terms and helping them to share their memories."

Their reflections and vignettes represent ... a critical component of generational continuity—connecting the fragmented past to a solid present and viable future.

Launched by MCHE in 2009 and funded by the Jewish Heritage Foundation of Greater Kansas City, *CollectiveVOICES* was designed as a series of monthly writing workshops, facilitated by Dr. Benjamin Furnish, lecturer in the English department at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and managing editor of its prestigious BkMk Press. Dr. Furnish engaged participants by offering prompts and topics for discussion and writing, encouraging and empowering them to relate their stories from their own unique perspectives, and by helping them to share their memories with each other and in writing.

Copies of CollectiveVOICES are available for \$10 each (plus tax) at the MCHE office, online at store.mchekc.org or by calling 913-327-8192. Please note that shipping charges apply to phone and Internet orders.

YOM HASHOAH PROGRAMS IN THE COMMUNITY

All events are free and open to the public.

April 11

Yom HaShoah Service

Rockhurst University
Kansas City, Missouri

- Reading of Names:
8:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- Prayer Service:
2:45 - 3:15 p.m.
Mabee Chapel, Massman Hall
5228 Tracy Avenue
Kansas City, Missouri
- Contact: Bill Kriege
816-501-4855 or
bill.kriege@rockhurst.edu

April 23

State of Kansas Commemoration

"Choosing to Act: Stories of Rescue"

Kansas Museum of History
6425 Southwest 6th Avenue

Topeka, Kansas

- 1:00 p.m.
- Sponsored by the Kansas Holocaust Commission
- Contact: 785-262-6040

April 30

Arts of the Holocaust

Maple Woods Community College
2601 Northeast Barry Road

Kansas City, Missouri

- 6:30 p.m.
- Includes performances of Simon Sargon's *Shema*, Gideon Klein's *Piano Sonata* and Benjamin Lee's *Piano Trio No. 2, Silent Voices*
- Contact: Jim Murray
816-604-3305 or
jim.murray@mckck.edu

MCHE Designated as *Echoes and Reflections* Training Center

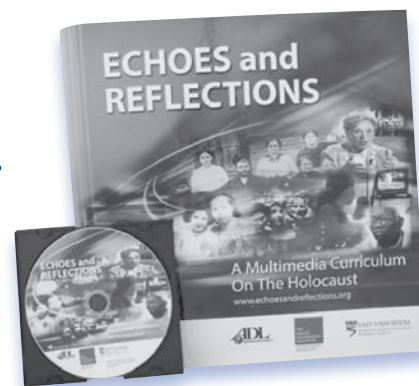
Recently designated as an *Echoes and Reflections* training center, MCHE will soon offer expanded training on this award-winning curriculum.

Developed by the Anti-Defamation League, the USC Shoah Foundation Institute and Yad Vashem, *Echoes and Reflections* includes 10 testimony-based, modular lessons to help educators teach the complex issues of the Holocaust through personal narratives and primary source materials. A comprehensive web site provides additional resources to enhance the learning experience.

In June, MCHE will present training on the *Echoes and Reflections* curriculum as an optional fourth day of “1942 and the Final Solution” (see page 7).

Beginning in July, MCHE plans to offer stand-alone trainings for teachers of grades 7-12 throughout Kansas and Missouri. Participating educators will each receive a free copy of the curriculum (\$100 value), as well as specific approaches for implementing the curriculum, tying it to local survivor testimonies and gaining hands-on practice with the materials.

As part of becoming a designated *Echoes and Reflections* training center, MCHE executive director Jean Zeldin joined representatives from 10 Holocaust museums and memorial centers last September for a seminar hosted by the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County, New York, and organized by Yad Vashem.



The four-day training was geared specifically toward education directors of museums and Holocaust centers invited by the three *Echoes and Reflections* curriculum partners. The seminar also introduced participants to IWitness, a new online application for teachers and students and companion to *Echoes and Reflections* that will make more than 1,000 of the USC Shoah Foundation Institute’s testimonies available over the Internet.

For more information, including future training opportunities, visit mchekc.org/ professional development.

MCHE Participates in Genocide Prevention Education at Ft. Leavenworth

For the past two years, military personnel at the U.S. Army Command General Staff College (CGSW) in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, who have taken a course examining the military’s role in the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities have learned about the Holocaust from MCHE’s director of university programs and adult education, Dr. Fran Sternberg.

Introduced in 2010 and coordinated by Colonel Charles E. Heller, Ph.D., “Genocide and the Military Role: Identification, Prevention, Intervention” familiarized students with the concept of genocide, including an examination of the military’s capacity to assist in policymaking and the role of enlightened military action in the prevention of genocide.

One of the course’s unique aspects was the Raphael Lemkin Seminar facilitated by the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR). Conducted in Poland in collaboration with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, the six-day workshop



Ft. Leavenworth soldiers learn about the Holocaust from Dr. Fran Sternberg.

included tours of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Krakow, as well as intensive instruction by leading international public policy practitioners and researchers on genocide prevention.

The course also included instruction at Ft. Leavenworth before and after the Lemkin seminar. Students were introduced to a variety of perspectives, with Dr. Sternberg providing context about antisemitism and interwar Polish Jewry, as well as an overview of the emergence and evolution of the Holocaust. MCHE also hosted

Colonel Heller and the students at the Jewish Community Campus at a special class featuring MCHE’s film *Witnesses to the Holocaust: Auschwitz*.

“Working with these young officers has been a gratifying experience,” says Dr. Sternberg. “On a personal level, they are among the most engaged and thoughtful students I have encountered, but also because by participating in this critical program, MCHE is playing a part in preparing future leaders to deal with future challenges.”

1942 and the Final Solution

SUMMER COURSE OFFERS OPTIONS FOR EDUCATORS

Following the establishment of the death camp system in 1941, the full-scale destruction of European Jewry commenced in 1942. By summer, the large Polish ghettos were being liquidated and the Operation Reinhard camps (Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka), designated for the murder of those communities, were operating at full capacity.

Seventy years later, this course explores the path and process of the Final Solution, offering in-depth analysis of the death camp system with a special emphasis on the Operation Reinhard Camps. Sessions led by Jessica Rockhold, MCHE's director of school programs and teacher education, and Dr. Fran Sternberg, director of university programs and adult education, will explore the impact of this short 11-month time frame from mid-1942 through mid-1943 that led to the destruction of millions of people.

Analysis of primary source documents, practice with resources and ready-made lesson plans will equip teachers with tools to engage their students in meaningful learning about the Final Solution. Sessions will feature hands-on activities and pedagogical



Jewish children are rounded-up for deportation from the Lodz ghetto in 1942 and marched to the Radogoszcz railroad siding in Marysin. The Ghesperre Action resulted in the transport of over 15,000 Jews, mostly children under the age of 10, the elderly and the infirm, to their death in Chelmno.

approaches appropriate for 7-12th grade classrooms. Two hours of optional graduate credit are available through Baker University.

Those enrolled in the three-day course may also register for an additional day of professional development on June 28, featuring the testimony-based *Echoes and Reflections* curriculum developed by the Anti-Defamation League, USC Shoah Foundation Institute and Yad Vashem (see page 6). Each participant will receive a complimentary copy of the curriculum, valued at \$100, and individually scheduled independent study will be arranged for those wishing to earn an additional graduate credit.

For complete course information, including fees, registration and graduate credit options, please visit mchekc.org/1942course. Enrollment is limited and those interested are encouraged to register by May 15, 2012.

BELZEC, SOBIBOR AND TREBLINKA: OPERATION REINHARD CAMPS

In the autumn of 1941, plans began to take shape under the guidance of SS *Obergruppenfuhrer* Reinhard Heydrich to murder the Polish Jews residing in the General Government—disputed lands bordering western and northern Poland—directly annexed by Germany in 1939 and home to many ethnic Germans.

The operation was a coordinated process involving the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA) in Berlin that facilitated deportations, a command staff centered in Lublin, and the establishment of three killing facilities—Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka. The operation was later named for Heydrich, chief of the RSHA, who died in 1942 from injuries sustained in an assassination attempt.

Construction at Belzec began in November 1941 under the direction of Christian Wirth, the camp's first commandant, and operations began on March 17, 1942, with the gassing of Jews from Lublin and Lvov.

Those gassing operations ended nine months later in December 1942, by which time at least 434,508 Jews, mainly from the ghettos of southern Poland, had been murdered.

Construction at Sobibor began in the spring of 1942. Experimental gassings with carbon monoxide began in April and regular gassing operations occurred from May 1942 through October 1943 with a brief suspension of activity in the late summer of 1942 for railway repairs. At least 167,000 Jews, mainly from the Lublin area and ghettos in eastern Poland, were murdered in Sobibor.

Construction at Treblinka II, the killing center of the camp complex, was completed in July 1942. The final Operation Reinhard camp to begin gassing, Treblinka received its first transport on July 23, 1942, and was operational until May 1943, with only a brief interruption in late summer 1942 to upgrade the gas chambers at the camp.

The largest and most active camp of the three, Treblinka received 265,000 Jews from the "Great Action" in the Warsaw ghetto in the summer of 1942, 346,000 Jews from the Radom district in the fall of 1942, and more than 110,000 Jews from the Bialystock District during the winter of 1942-43. Approximately 925,000 Jews, mainly from central Poland and the ghettos in Warsaw, Radom and Krakow, were murdered in Treblinka II.

In total, approximately 1.7 million Jews were murdered as part of Operation Reinhard. Unlike Auschwitz-Birkenau, which employed modern gas chamber-crematoria combination buildings and Zyklon B, the Reinhard camps used carbon monoxide gas in simple gas chambers. Records indicate that at war's end there were only seven survivors of Belzec, 50 survivors of Sobibor, and 60 survivors of Treblinka.

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