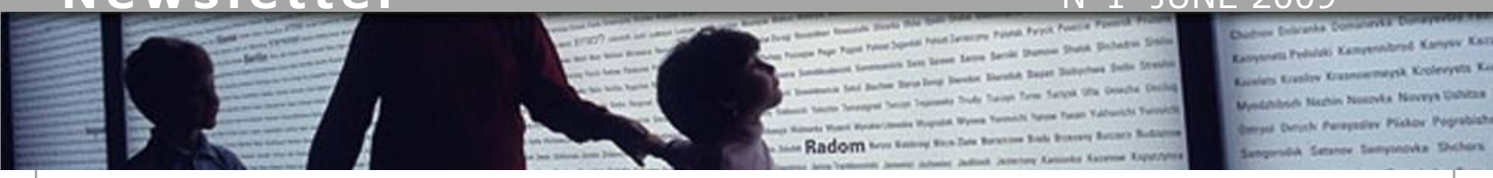
The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre

Newsletter

N°1 JUNE 2009



"Our Legacy" Message from the President

The very purpose of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre speaks to our responsibility to pass on the history, stories, memory and lessons of the Holocaust. This is our promise. In this, our 30th anniversary year, we have launched a campaign to assure the perpetuity of Holocaust education and remembrance work and to continue to make a difference on issues of antisemitism, racism and intolerance for generations to come. **The Centre is the longest standing memorial and the only Holocaust museum in Canada.**

Julia Reitman

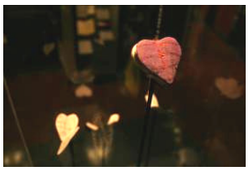
The launch of this Campaign took place on June 9th. Our guest speaker was Mr. George Hellman, Director of Planned Giving at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Individuals who have already made commitments to planned gifts spoke eloquently about the importance of memory and of transforming that memory into action. I urge all those committed to this cause, in particular, survivors and children of survivors who carry this legacy, to help us ensure that it lives now and forever. I invite you to contact Alice Herscovitch.

Legacy and planned giving information is available on our website

The Heart from Auschwitz Focus on the Collection

It is purple on the outside and yellow on the inside. It is small in size, but has great importance within the Museum collection. It is the heart from Auschwitz; a birthday gift for a young woman who turned 20 years old behind the walls of a concentration camp.

In 1988, Mrs. Fania Fainer donated this object that symbolizes friendship and moral resistance. The heart was given to Fania on December 12, 1944, on her 20th birthday while she was an inmate doing slave labour at an Auschwitz munitions factory. The heart is a tiny signature book that contains messages in five languages wishing Fania a happy birthday and expressing hope for a better world. It was created in secret in the camp by twenty female prisoners, with stolen materials.



On July 11, 2008, the Museum closed to allow access to a film crew wishing to film and pay appropriate homage to *the heart*. On December 10th, the film crew returned with Fania and more recently it came to film survivor volunteers of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

Why now? Ten years ago, documentary filmmaker, Carl Leblanc, visited the Holocaust Museum. Touched by the story of the heart, he reconstructed its history and journey from Auschwitz. In the past few years, he located one of the young women who created the heart in Argentina and filmed others in Paris, Jerusalem and Buenos Aires. He journeyed to Poland to film the original *Union Werke* factory, where the young women were forced to toil. The film produced by Radio-Canada is set to hit the big screen soon. An educational activity developed by the Centre is now a pilot project used by primary school teachers.

Learn more about Museum artefacts by visiting our website

International Human Rights Training Program Events and Activities

Human rights activists from around the world will be onsite at the Museum on June 21st. The program: guided tours of the exhibition in French and English, lunch and in-person discussion with Montreal Holocaust survivors.

This opportunity will show participants how the Centre promotes human rights education. The event is organised in partnership with Equitas for their International Human Rights Training Program (IHRTP) which takes place June 14th - July 3rd, 2009. Each year since 1980, the IHRTP has brought together approximately 120 participants from over 60 countries. The IHRTP provides a unique opportunity for human rights workers to deepen their knowledge and more effectively act for social change.

Discover other events and activities on our website

TEACHERS - SAVE THE DATE: October 22, 2009

The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre and the Riva & Thomas O. Hecht Scholarship Program for Educators are sponsoring a full-day conference - **Tools for Holocaust and Human Rights Education in Today's Schools**. Please keep this day open!

The Team

Gersha Zohar Secretary - Receptionist | Stefan Felser - Gedenkdiener | Julie Guinard - Museum Coordinator Alice Herscovitch - Executive Director | Brunhilde Khandanpour - Transmission of memory Coordinator | Audrey Licop - Events Coordinator Laurel Ovenden - Reservations Agent | Emmanuelle Sonntag - Education Coordinator | Leanne Templeton - Assistant to the Executive Director Dianne Fallis - Financial Officer

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