



Personal Connections: Outreach to the Jewish Community,
Holocaust Survivors, and the Southwest Florida Region

Cody Rademacher, Holocaust Museum & Education Center of

Southwest Florida

A Unique Start to Outreach

- ◆ Origins- David Bell and his middle school class
- ◆ Students inspired by their studies of the Holocaust and Holocaust literature to create an exhibit
- ◆ Later this exhibit found a permanent home with the help of the Jewish Federation of Collier County and private business owners
- ◆ Became a 501(c)(3) in 2001



Outreach to the Jewish Community

- ◆ Connecting to the local Jewish community directly
 - ◆ Working with local synagogues and organizations
- ◆ Reaching out to the community's Survivors
 - ◆ Recording their stories
 - ◆ Acquisition of items from Survivors and their families

The Jewish Federation of Collier County

- ◆ One of our original supporters
- ◆ Have maintained a positive relationship through the years after becoming a non-profit



GenShoah of Southwest Florida

- GenShoah- Generations of the Shoah International
- Group focused upon the descendants of survivors
- Meets regularly at the museum on the third Sunday during the tourist season
- Holds events with the museum to promote both organizations

Oral/Visual History Program

- Works to collect the stories of local Survivors, Liberators, Resisters, and Witnesses
- Have recorded over 50 people who are connected to the Holocaust that live in the region
- Allows the museum to tell the local resident's story after they have passed away or uncomfortable with the public

Acquisitions Programs

- ◆ Beginning to develop a more active program
- ◆ Reaching out to survivors, liberators, and the communities they're involved in
- ◆ Sensitive connections to artifacts- what this means for the museum's collections
- ◆ Long-term loans

Why Long-term Loans?

- ◆ Allows the lending person/family to retain ownership if hesitant to give away a precious heirloom
- ◆ Creates a positive working relationship which can lead to a donation later on
- ◆ Provides the museum additional materials for temporary exhibits despite the limited storage space for collections

The lacampo Collection- How we Make Loans Work

- ◆ Grandfather was a surgeon during World War II
- ◆ According to research by the family, his unit possibly did initial evaluations of The Dora-Mittelbau Concentration Camp
- ◆ Loaning of a collection of over 200 letters plus artifacts for use in a temporary exhibit

Perception by the Jewish Community and Beyond

- By the Public
- By Jewish Patrons
- Why is this an issue?

How does one overcome these public perceptions and reach out to the greater Southwest Florida community?

Education Programs

- ◆ Florida is one of six states that mandate Holocaust education
- ◆ Actively reaching out to provide educational materials to teachers in Lee and Collier County
- ◆ Provide tours and programs that help meet educational guidelines
- ◆ Traveling boxcar program
- ◆ Survivor speakers



HMSWFL Traveling Boxcar

- Began in 2008
- Loaned to the museum by board member Jack Nortman who was born in a displaced persons camp
- Program has reached 45,000 people at over 60 locations in the region





Survivor Speakers

Allows us to bring their stories directly to the community

Working With Local Universities

- ◆ The Center for Judaic, Holocaust, & Genocide Studies of Florida Gulf Coast University
- ◆ Promotes similar goals to the museum in its mission by focusing on The Holocaust and genocide
- ◆ Both organizations assist in promoting the other and create greater potential outreach usually less accessible to the other



Other groups connected to the Holocaust

- ◆ Liberators
- ◆ Medical staff who assisted in rescuing survivors
- ◆ Allows for connecting to veterans, their families, and to a larger part of the regional community



Through these aspects of acquisition and outreach

- ◆ The museum maintains ties to the Jewish communities of Southwest Florida and works to improve them
- ◆ Acquires materials to develop temporary permanent exhibitions and programs
- ◆ Improves outreach beyond the Jewish community through various educational and public programs, partnerships, and exhibits