



Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre

# Newsletter Summer 2012

## MHMC Features: The Holocaust Education Series

The Holocaust Education Series returns October 24 - November 4, 2012. This year the series focus is on those individuals who resisted social injustices and who even risked their lives to save victims. Raoul Wallenberg will be honored at the opening night Wednesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. Our Human Rights committee will animate a discussion on the challenges of humanitarian intervention in cases of massive violations of human rights, while the play *Sauver un être, sauver un monde* (Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>), in collaboration with Aleph, will be exclusively presented to the public at the Côte-des-Neiges Community Center. In keeping with tradition, you are also invited to join us at the museum, for free, on Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup> and November 4<sup>th</sup> to visit the exhibition and meet with Holocaust survivors. The details of this exciting program will be announced in the coming months.



## Montréal, City of History



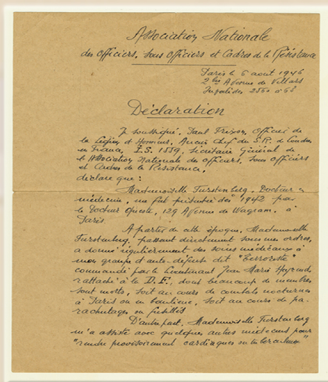
Thirty-five museums and organizations are taking part in *Montréal, City of History*, an exceptional event that brings them together for the first time to present a special program of activities highlighting Montréal history. For this occasion, Museum entrance will be free the first Sunday of every month until December, 2012. Take the opportunity to discover our exhibition, listen to the stories of Holocaust survivors who settled in Montreal after World War II and receive a free guided tour at 11 am in French and in at 1 pm in English. The next free Sundays will be: July 1<sup>st</sup>, August 5<sup>th</sup>, September 2<sup>nd</sup>, October 7<sup>th</sup>, November 4<sup>th</sup> and December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## A Look Into Our Collection: Women and Resistance in the Collection of the Museum

During the Holocaust many brave young women joined partisan groups and served as armed fighters or aides. Many volunteered to work as messengers or help smuggle people. They went in and out of the ghettos and took the fugitives to the partisan camps located in the woods. Various documents in the museum's collection attest to the courage of Jewish women who joined the Resistance.

The survivor testimonies recorded at the Centre present different facets of the engagement of Jewish women in the Resistance throughout Europe. Anne-Laure V. from France hid Jewish children; Bouena G. acted as messenger for a group of Resistance fighters in Athens, Greece; Micheline R. provided food for hidden families in Belgium; Manya K. participated in building barricades against the German occupiers in France; Liba A. was a member of the Markov Brigade of the FPO in Lithuania. In Hungary, Agnes K. wrote anti-Nazi messages on the walls of the factory where she worked as a forced laborer.

In order to participate in the Resistance, these women had to obtain false documents to hide their Jewish identity and be able to move around more freely. Lonia Furstenberg, originally from Poland, was a medical student in Paris when the Germans invaded France; she managed to get false papers in the name of Louise Triasse. During the war she continued to work at a clinic requisitioned by the Germans. As an active member of a Resistance group in 1942, she issued false medical certificates to young Frenchmen who were drafted for compulsory labor in Germany. She also secretly treated resistance fighters who had been wounded during undercover activities.



**Top Right:** This document, which was written in 1946, certifies that Doctor Lonia Kawnik (née Furstenberg) served efficiently in the Resistance and deserves full recognition in France because she exhibited a profound sense of patriotic duty and great courage. **Bottom Right:** Lonia's ID card in the Resistance which gave both her real and false name.

## Ron Meisels Story

Ron Meisels was born in Budapest in 1935. His parents, Mano and Barbara Meisels were divorced in 1938. In 1941, his mother was arrested and was to be deported, but she was saved when Raoul Wallenberg gave her three passports: for her, Ron and her ex-husband. In 1944, Ron and his mother moved to a "Swedish house", a house protected by the Swedish authorities. Ron's future stepfather, Mor, was put on a train to be deported, but he too was saved by Wallenberg when he took on the identity and Swedish passport of Ron's father. Of the 3,000 Hungarian Jews deported on that train, only 4 survived the Holocaust. Ron, Barbara and Mor survived the war. The couple married in 1945 and immigrated to Canada in 1954 with Ron.



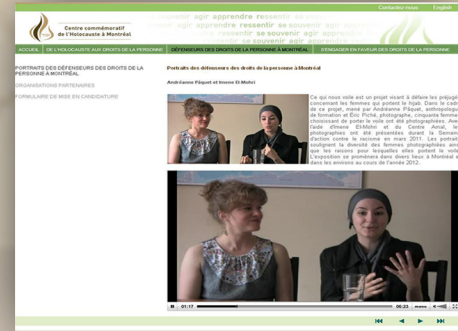
Bialik High School, in partnership with two public schools and under the auspices of the Israeli Consulate and other partners, hosted the launch of a video competition on the relevance of Mr. Wallenberg's message today. The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre will commence its Holocaust Education Series on Wednesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, honoring the memory of Raoul Wallenberg on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth with the film, *The Angel of Budapest*, and a presentation on the legacy of Raoul Wallenberg by the Honorable Irwin Cotler.

If you or someone you know would like to give a video testimony and thus ensure its long-term preservation, please contact Eszter Andor by email at: [eszter.andor@mhmc.ca](mailto:eszter.andor@mhmc.ca) or by telephone at (514) 345-2605.

## A Few Highlights: Human Rights Website

The site *Stand Up For Human Rights!* focuses on promoting youth engagement in social justice and human rights issues. In presenting simultaneous portraits of The Righteous Among Nations as well as those of contemporary Montreal activists, the site is a source of inspiration for young and old alike who wish to take action.

Two human rights defenders, Andréanne Pâquet and Imene El-Mohri talk about their project, *Ce qui nous voile*, an initiative that attempts to deconstruct preconceived notions about women who wear the hijab. The photographs highlight the diversity of the women whose portraits were taken and why they have chosen to wear the veil.



To see the interview: Visit [www.mhmc-humanrights.ca](http://www.mhmc-humanrights.ca) in the section, Human Rights Advocates in Montreal.

## The Centre's New Pedagogical Tool



The center has recently developed a new pedagogical tool for Cycle 1 high school students in History and Citizenship entitled: "Draw-me the story... Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust". Students are invited to create a comic strip on the historical experiences of Jews in the Netherlands. The project shows the impact of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish measures on the lives of three Montreal Holocaust survivors: Fred Pfeiffer, Sam Schryver, and Ilse van Collem. In doing so, students learn the history of the Holocaust, discover how to use historical documents for engaging in the historical method of inquiry, all the while learning about the role of Canadian soldiers who participated in the liberation of the Netherlands. Fifteen teachers have been recruited to pilot-test the tool in September in order to provide useful feedback contributing to its improvement.

## The President's Circle

A unique event was held on April 30, 2012 for the members of the President's Circle, donors who make an annual contribution of a minimum \$1,000. The Circle is composed of people who believe in the importance of our educational mission and our ability to reach across community and geographic boundaries; they have chosen to sustain the long-term work of the Centre. The President's Circle counts 69 members and 10 sponsors. In thanks to our generous donors, the event, *Behind the Scenes*, offered an opportunity for an exclusive glimpse of some of the never-before-seen treasures of our Museum's archived collection. Guests discovered, through precious objects such as a Hungarian recipe book compiled in Auschwitz, some of the personal stories, history, traditions and culture that were miraculously saved and are meticulously preserved at the Centre.



For more information regarding the President's Circle, please contact Alice Herscovitch, at 514-345-2605.

## Yom Hashoah 2012



The annual Yom Hashoah commemoration held on April 18<sup>th</sup> was attended by over 1,200 people, with a greater number of young people and families present than in previous years. This year's theme, *Remembering 1942 - 70 Years Later*, illustrated how the Nazis developed the means to carry out the genocide of the Jews. 1942 represents a turning point in the genocidal process. It was in that year that hundreds of thousands of Jews were deported to their deaths; the year the world changed for Jews in Europe forever. Six Montreal Holocaust survivors symbolizing the six million Jewish victims, lit memorial candles and shared their memories of 1942 through short video clips.

The Centre is always looking to collect objects and documents currently underrepresented in our collection, particularly from the following countries: Greece, Italy, Serbia, Croatia, Albania, Slovenia, Finland, Denmark, Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus, the Baltic States and Luxembourg. If you or someone you know has any documents, objects or photographs representing Jewish life and the Holocaust experience of Jews originating from these countries, contact Julie Guinard, Museum & Collection Coordinator, to make a donation. This will help future generations to learn and remember.

## Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre

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