



# Annual Report 2011 - 2012



Centre commémoratif  
de l'Holocauste à Montréal

Montreal Holocaust  
Memorial Centre



## PRESIDENT'S AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REMARKS

It is with great pride that we present the Annual Report for 2011-2012. The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre has been successful in several ways, during the past year. Our Museum visitorship was 15,587 individuals, an increase of over 3,500 people, since 2009 and 11% since last year. We have consistently expanded our outreach to, and partnerships with, other communities and with the broader Montreal community, in organizing events, collaborating on research projects with universities, and involving new volunteers who are representative of Montreal's diversity.



The Centre has rejuvenated its volunteer team dedicated to video recording of Holocaust survivor histories and 27 new testimonies have been taped. We have developed agreements to digitize the interview collections of two other Montreal institutions: Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives and McGill University Living Testimonies. These efforts ensure that memory and the human stories of the Holocaust will continue to teach and inform future generations. As the survivor generation diminishes in number, investment in this precious legacy has become and will continue to be a priority.

The collection, preservation, organization and use of artefacts, historical objects donated to the Centre by survivors, veterans and their families have moved forward in the 2011-2012 year. Our storage facilities for the collection, part of a Montreal museums facility, are being reorganized and the objects are being digitized, better protected and documented. These initiatives have made it possible for the Centre to organize wonderful opportunities for the public to view and even touch (with protective gloves!) remarkable artefacts and new acquisitions, which are normally not on display in the Museum. One such event was held January 26<sup>th</sup>, for the International Day of Commemoration of Victims of the Holocaust. Organized in partnership with the National Theatre School, it allowed a capacity audience to understand the history behind such personal objects as a Hungarian recipe book, recipes collected in Auschwitz from fellow prisoners by Edith Gluck.

Our educational mission was furthered this year, by the organization of a sold-out teachers conference in October: How to Teach about the Holocaust and Other Genocides. New pedagogical tools, to assist teachers across Quebec, have been developed in 2011-2012. *Searching the Archives: The Holocaust, the Cambodian Genocide, and Canada's Intervention*, for Secondary 5 was created to further historical knowledge and inquiry by students, and have them reflect on individual, national and international responsibility and means to intervene. The recognition of our teaching projects is truly exciting. A collection of letters from the Holocaust, the basis for an activity which was posted on our website was used as a educational theatrical event for Holocaust remembrance, by a school in Togo!

The Centre's young adult Human Rights Committee launched a human rights website, [www.mhmchumanrights.ca](http://www.mhmchumanrights.ca), with the goal of highlighting work done by young Montrealers and further involving them on contemporary issues.

To Learn

To Feel

To Remember

To Act

The Centre has, as well, developed and enhanced its governance and policies during the past year. Changes to bylaws allowing for more-effective decision-making, a staff attraction and retention policy and a public position-taking policy, all adopted this year, are the results of reflection and action on organizational development issues by sub-committees of the Board of Directors. They are part of the Centre's 2011-2014 Action Plan, which is well underway.

We encourage you to read the full annual report, to review the year's accomplishments. However in conclusion, we would be remiss if we did not thank those who have made this work possible: our volunteers and staff for their commitment and creativity; Federation CJA for its ongoing support; government funders, including Canadian Heritage and the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine; foundations including the Alex and Ruth Dworkin Foundation and the Azrieli Foundation and our loyal donors: members of the President's Circle and contributors to the Holocaust Education Series and the annual campaign. We offer our sincere thanks to all of you for making it possible for the Centre to educate the public about the Holocaust and issues related to genocide and to contribute to the promotion of respect for diversity.



**Larry Nachshen**  
President



**Alice Herscovitch**  
Executive Director



Awarded to the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre  
by the City of Montreal in the category of  
Heritage and Architecture, May 2012

# MUSEUM AND COLLECTI ON

For the fifth consecutive year, the Museum has increased its number of visitors. Over 15,500 individuals visited the Museum, 11% more than last year. The Museum continues to attract new visitors from Quebec, but also tourists from other Canadian provinces, Europe and the Americas.

## A hit with schools:

This year, 52% of all our visitors came in the context of a school visit: more than 8,100 students and teachers **from 50 different school boards** in Quebec as well as six different school boards outside Quebec (Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Vermont). The volunteer docents guided over 250 visits, reaching 4,800 visitors. This represents the largest number of tours offered in one year since the renovation of the Museum in 2003.

## A group of committed volunteer guides:

A training session for new volunteer guides was offered in French to a group of bilingual potential volunteers. Ten new guides were added to our team! Ongoing training is enhanced by quarterly meetings, which focused on the following themes: *Hidden children during the Holocaust, the Jewish community in the Netherlands during the Holocaust and How to guide Grade 6 groups*. These meetings are intended to support the guides in their practice and promote exchanges between volunteers.

## Planning and Projects: Museum Committee:

Given the objectives of the current action plan, the Museum Committee began its brainstorming on the renewal of the permanent exhibition and supported the Centre's team in implementing important projects for the collection.



15 500  
Visitors



To Learn

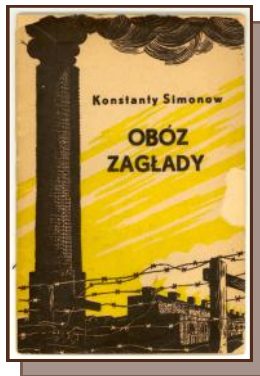
With a grant from Heritage Canada, the Centre undertook a reorganization of its collection in storage. A reorganization plan was developed with our conservation consultant, Rachael Perkins-Arenstein. Since January 2012, a museum technician has been working to reorganize, catalog and digitize over 1,600 objects in the reserve, to allow for their preservation for future generations.

A new collections management database was acquired by the Centre. The transfer of information to the new database was followed by the standardization of our data to assure that our documentation is in accordance with current museum standards in Quebec and Canada. The Centre is working to make this documentation available online, particularly within the Canadian Jewish Heritage Network. The digitization of collections, initiated in 2010, continues. A grant from the Azrieli Foundation has allowed us to scan 800 photographs from our collection. A total of 60% of our museum objects has been digitized.



### New Acquisitions:

The Centre was fortunate to receive personal items with historic significance for its collection. Imy Nemenoff-Gellert donated her prisoner jacket from Auschwitz. Miriam Merkel donated a set of tefillin that her husband took with him during the Kindertransport. Emile Svarc donated the postcards written by his uncle in the Jasenovac concentration camp in Croatia. Other significant donations include documents from Lonia Furstenberg, involved in Polish Jewish resistance in Paris; a series of memoirs written by survivors between 1944 and 1946 as well as artifacts from prisoners of war from the camp of Ban Saint-Jean in France.

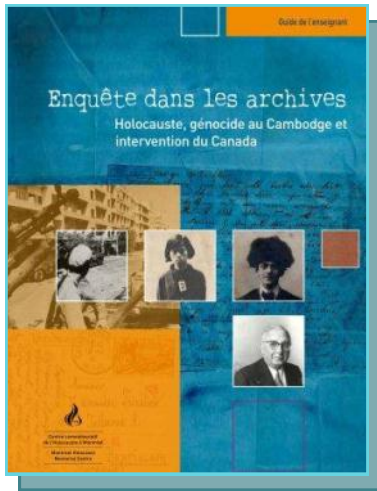


### Dissemination of the collection:

The Museum collection was highlighted during the International day of commemoration of Holocaust victims with the event "*Memory at your Fingertips*". Visitors were able to view, and sometimes touch precious objects from the collection. Additional objects are exhibited throughout the year in our temporary display cabinet located in the lobby of the Cummings House and other artifacts are borrowed for display by other museums. Accordingly, a diary given to the Museum is part of the exhibition "*Enemy Aliens: The Internment of Jewish Refugees in Canada, 1940-1943*" is currently on display at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. These different initiatives allow us to highlight a collection which is unique in Canada.

To Learn

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



## Pedagogical Tools

The Centre is pleased to announce that our new tool entitled *Exploring the Evidence: Holocaust, Cambodian Genocide and Canadian Intervention*, will be launched in French and English sector schools this fall. This tool is destined for students in the Secondary 5 Contemporary World course and engages students to study the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide while focusing on Canada's reaction and response.

To ensure as many students as possible are reached, the Centre has developed another new project for History and Citizenship, Secondary 2 that will be pilot tested by twelve teachers in the French sector, fall 2012. *Draw me the story of Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust* engages students in studying the Jewish community of the Netherlands and the execution of the Holocaust in that country.

The project shows the impact of antisemitism and anti-Jewish

measures on the lives of three Montreal Holocaust survivors: Fred Pfeiffer, Sam Schryver and Ilse van Collem. The tool employs an historical method of inquiry. The accompanying activity guides students through the creation of their own historical graphic novel on the experiences of Jews in the Netherlands during the Holocaust. A UQAM Masters student worked with our archival collection and historical sources documenting capsules of Jewish life in the Netherlands before, during and after the Holocaust to help develop this program.



Pedagogical programs previously developed by the Centre, including *Hana's Suitcase* and *the Heart of Auschwitz*, were used in 119 different schools, in French and English. Many others downloaded materials through the Centre's website: [www.mhmc.ca](http://www.mhmc.ca)

## Publications and Research

The Centre continued to expand its reputation as a Canadian expert voice on Holocaust education by publishing an article that discusses the importance of using survivor stories when teaching about the Holocaust in the esteemed online journal *Oral History Forum*. In addition, an article was published on teaching the Holocaust in Quebec, in a Swiss publication.

The Centre is working as a partner with the Centre des Études ethniques des universités de Montréal on a research study regarding the impact of our Holocaust education work (preparation of classes, a Museum visit, and survivor testimony) on the anti-racist attitudes of students. Five classes have been followed intensively throughout the 2011-12 year, and we are looking forward to analyzing the results in October.



To Learn

## Teacher Training and Support

As part of the Holocaust Education Series 2011, the Centre hosted an educational conference on teaching the Holocaust and other genocides. The conference involved **over 120 teachers** in workshops on how to ensure that complexities and distinctions of the Holocaust and other genocides are understood. A second educational event in partnership with ALEPH featured a presentation of the play *Hitler et la Fillette* for students at La Voie high school in Cote des Neiges. The play included vignettes written by a teenage girl whose grandmother is a Holocaust survivor, and was followed by a question and answer session with the students.



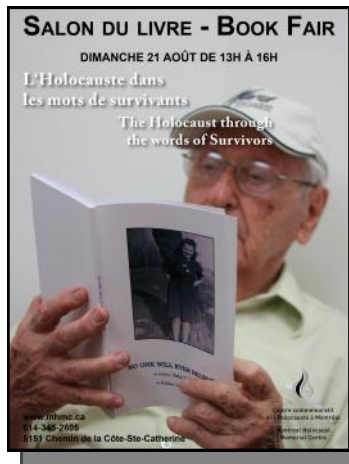
As part of its ongoing support, the Centre organized a seminar day for teachers who have, over the years, attended the *Yad Vashem International Seminar for teachers*. The seminar provided a forum for attendees to share their experiences of teaching the Holocaust and to evaluate the impact of their training at Yad Vashem on their teaching practices. Each year, seven to eight Quebec teachers follow the program.

The Centre partnered with the Quebec Ministère de l'Éducation du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) to provide training for all English language teachers working in Government recognized disadvantaged schools in Montreal. These teachers participated in full day workshops on the use of our pedagogical tools, and their classes visited the Museum with MELS financial support. A similar project will be offered to French language teachers in the *École montréalaise pour tous* program in 2012-13.



To Learn

# EVENTS



From April 2011 to March 2012, the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre organized 40 educational and cultural events which were attended by 5,547 people. We can certainly consider our cultural programs a success. **Some of the highlights of this year include: The Montreal Book Fair: *The Holocaust through the words of Survivors***, in partnership with the Azrieli Foundation drew 144 fans of memoirs to hear lectures and life stories.

**The Holocaust Education Series** was comprised of 18 events that attracted 1,585 people. The events were open to the public of all ages with two very successful Open House Sundays (total of 385 visitors) at the Museum, which offered opportunities to hear testimonies of survivors. Visitors were enthralled with these stories, and it was difficult to close the Centre

on those days. The Centre also organized a discussion on Holocaust denial and antisemitism today, which allowed the public to hear panelists such as the Chairman of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, an expert professor from UQAM and a representative of the Simon Wiesenthal Institute in New York.



The International Day of Commemoration for Holocaust Victims was highlighted on January 26<sup>th</sup> at the Museum with a tour specially staged by the National Theatre School, in which visitors could discover, and sometimes touch, objects not usually on display, which are preserved at the Museum's Collections Centre in Montreal. This visit captivated 115 participants, who were able to understand the human stories behind these objects.

In March, the Centre once again participated in the Action Week against Racism by presenting a panel discussion on issues related to the denial of genocide, in partnership with the Armenian National Committee of Quebec.

## Media Relations:

Our programming, the participation and commitment of Holocaust survivors willing to share their stories, and the richness and unique qualities of our collection made for many media worthy occasions. Forty-six (46) articles were published in the press about the Centre and its activities. The Book Fair in August; the exceptional gift of an Auschwitz jacket in September; the Holocaust Education Series and the Teachers

Conference offered opportunities for media coverage.



To Learn To Feel



The Centre made the front page of *Le Devoir* on January 26, 2012 on the occasion of the tour “*Memory at your fingertips!*”

Seven radio shows and additional news, radio or television broadcasts devoted their airtime to Montreal Holocaust survivor writers at the book fair or during the Education Series and student radio stations followed the activities of the Human Rights Committee with great interest.

Internet news sites and blog have become full-fledged media. Although it is difficult to evaluate our presence in these new media forums, the Centre has been mentioned several times on educators’ blogs and teachers have promoted their visit to the Centre, their participation in our activities, use of our educational programs and our teachers' training.

### Marketing:

The Centre continues to create communication tools to outreach and educate. We have standardized our logo and layouts to give us a recognizable graphic identity. The Centre’s Newsletter allows members and the general public to keep abreast of all our activities and learn about the Museum and our collection. Nearly 500 people subscribe to this new quarterly bulletin.

Figures showing hits on our web pages are at an interesting level with 55,906 visits by 37,644 different visitors between April 2011 and March 2012. We are also an active member of the group of Montreal History Museums and participated in the launch of a new Internet portal promoting the educational activities of each history museum.

Social media are fully integrated into our communications strategies. Our Facebook page is followed by 685 people who track our news or discover the artifacts and archives of our remarkable collection through the online thematic photo album. Twitter has also become an essential tool for broadcasting our activities. To date, 602 people follow us through this news feed.

To Learn To Feel



# REMEMBRANCE AND THE TRANSMISSION OF MEMORY

## Yom Hashoah

Almost 5,000 Holocaust survivors still live in Montreal today. A number of them are involved with the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, which, together with its Remembrance Committee, chaired by Judith Nemes Black and Marcel Tenenbaum, organizes the annual Yom Hashoah service.



This year the commemoration was held on April 18, 2012 at Congregation Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem. The theme, *Remembering 1942: 70 Years Later*, showed how the Nazis developed the means to carry out the genocide of the Jews. 1942 was a turning point in the history of the Holocaust, when thousands upon thousands of Jews were deported to their deaths.

Six Montreal Holocaust survivors symbolizing the 6 million victims lit memorial candles and shared their memories of 1942. The short testimonies shown as video clips were punctuated by Yiddish songs sung by the youth choir of Bialik High School. Children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors and community leaders read texts connected to the theme of this year's commemoration. The Centre also participated in the national Yom Hashoah commemoration organised by the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem on April 23, 2012. Montreal Holocaust survivor Irene Romer was one of the candle lighters at the ceremony.

## Kristallnacht

The annual service commemorating the state-orchestrated pogrom of Jews in November 1938 was held on November 9, 2011 at the Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron. Holocaust survivor Ilse Matalon recalled how her family's apartment was stormed and looted on Kristallnacht. Berlin-born Charlotte Lintzel, who survived the war as a child in hiding, lit the memorial candle.



The commemorative service included Yiddish songs sung by the Bialik High School Choir and the General Vanier Elementary School Choir and professional musicians Joanne Grant and Michael Woytiuk performed Maurice Ravel's *Kaddish*, Max Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* and Ernest Bloch's *Méditation Hébraïque*.

**Commémoration de Kristallnacht**  
La Nuit de Cristal – The Night of Broken Glass  
73ième anniversaire – 73rd anniversary

Mercredi, le 9 novembre 2011 à 19h30  
Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at 7:30 pm  
Congrégation Beth Israel Beth Aaron  
6800 chemin Mackle Road, Côte-Saint-Luc

Info: 514-345-2605

Centre commémoratif de l'Holocauste à Montréal  
Memorial Holocaustal Montreal Centre

COOPERATION CJA

To Learn

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To Remember

## Survivor Testimonies

More than 40 survivors speak on behalf of the Centre with school groups and adults, educating the public about the human story and the consequences of the Holocaust. They describe their lives before the war, recount what happened to them and their families during the Holocaust and tell about how they rebuilt their lives after the war in Canada. Survivors speak out against hatred and discrimination, show where it can lead and teach tolerance and the promotion of respect for diversity through their life stories, all the while transmitting a message of hope and perseverance.

In 2011-2012, survivors spoke with nearly 13,000 people in the Centre, in schools and other institutions. More than 50% of this audience was French speaking with this number increasing annually. About half the testimonies were given in schools in the framework of history, religion or civic education class, with teachers preparing the students in advance of the survivors visit.

## Video Testimonies

The Centre has progressed considerably in expanding its oral history collection. The Remembrance Coordinator recruited and trained a number of new English and French speaking volunteer interviewers. Since August 2011, 27 interviews have been completed (of which 4 were in French) with several recordings currently scheduled. The Centre is striving to conduct as many video interviews as is possible in the next few years in order to ensure that the stories of Montreal survivors are preserved and continue to reach future generations. The Centre has over 520 recorded survivor video testimonies, and thanks to funding from the Azrieli Foundation, is digitizing and integrating two additional Montreal collections of 185 testimonies. This is the largest such collection in Canada.

At the same time, the Video Archivist, with the help of volunteers, continues to document and index the recorded survivor testimonies. To this date, more than 80% of the collection has been summarized and 40% has been fully documented and indexed to ensure a better understanding and use of the collection. Several clips are now used in different educational tools and on a variety of websites and quarterly, a video testimony clip is highlighted in the MHMC Newsletter.



# HUMAN RIGHTS

Founded in 2010, the Human Rights Committee is composed of ten young adults from all backgrounds who are interested in a variety of contemporary human rights issues, with the Holocaust as a starting point. In spring 2011, the Committee adopted an action plan which has guided their work throughout the past year.



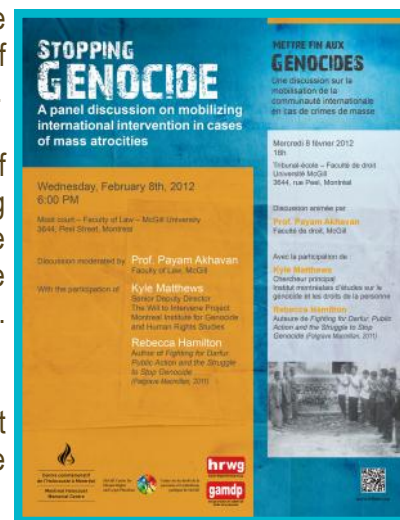
As part of Holocaust Education Series, the Committee organized a panel on the rights of refugees in Canada. Focusing on the barriers faced by refugees arriving in Canada, the Committee invited two experts who traced the history of Canadian policy towards refugees since World War II and highlighted a portrait of the current situation. Two refugees then shared their experiences upon arrival in Canada.

A new human rights website [www.mhmc.org](http://www.mhmc.org), funded by the Jewish Community Foundation was launched at the beginning of 2012 in the presence of many partners! Stand up for human rights! aims to promote youth engagement in social justice and human rights. In presenting portraits of both the Righteous Among the Nations and contemporary Montreal activists, the site serves as an inspiration for young and old alike, who wish to take action. During the launch, two Montrealers involved in contemporary issues featured on the site shared the reasons that drive them to commit themselves to various causes.

In collaboration with the Human Rights Working Group, Faculty of Law, McGill University, the Committee organized an activity in February where over 75 people reflected on the issue of preventing genocide through a discussion between experts from Canada and the United States.

In March, Committee members created a program to help in the training of 200 participants of the March of the Living. Participants had the opportunity to listen to the testimony of a young survivor of the genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994 and learn more about the issue of genocide prevention. Students were asked to reflect on the legacy of the Holocaust and see this history as it relates to human rights and individual responsibility to act against injustice. Workshops were facilitated by a dozen young adults trained by the Centre.

Finally, Human Rights Committee members also contributed to the success of other Holocaust Centre events through actions such as being storytellers during the tour which marked the International Day of Commemoration to honour the victims of the Holocaust, January 26th.



To Learn

To Feel

To Remember

To Act

# VOLUNTEERS

The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre has benefited year after year from the generous dedication of its volunteers. The Centre's volunteers act on the importance and necessity of passing on the history and perpetuating remembrance of the Holocaust, whether through Museum tours, giving testimony, documenting our collections, being involved in contemporary human rights work, or educating the public. Board and committee members contribute to the vision and development of the organization and its diverse programs. They plan, fundraise, organize events, act as ambassadors and shape the Centre. They ensure that Montrealers, Quebecers and individuals from around the world understand the relevance of the Holocaust for today.

Our volunteer corps continues to grow and strengthen this cause. We are thankful for their contribution. Without these individuals, it would not be possible to meet our mission: to inform, to educate, to prevent antisemitism, hate and indifference while promoting respect for diversity.



To Learn To Feel To Remember To Act

## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

To all of our generous donors who help us educate people of all ages and backgrounds about the Holocaust and the universal perils of antisemitism, racism, hate and indifference, WE THANK YOU! We also want to thank those who have donated objects and documents to assure that the story of the Holocaust continues to be told. Our major annual donors are highlighted below.

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#### ***Gold***

The Azrieli Foundation

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Claims Conference ועידת התביעות  
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# We are the heirs



Centre commémoratif  
de l'Holocauste à Montréal

Montreal Holocaust  
Memorial Centre

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