Thank you Docents and Volunteers

The importance of preserving individual stories

Join us for upcoming events and exhibitions

Sam Gross Summer Institute for Teachers

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!
From the Executive Director

On Yom HaShoah, we opened the doors of The Florida Holocaust Museum free of charge in commemoration of those who perished during the Holocaust. This year, we began a new tradition, the recitation of the names of victims. From 10am to 5:30pm, overlooking the boxcar that sits as a centerpiece of the Museum, over 7000 names were read aloud – the names of men, women and children who were murdered by the Nazi regime and their collaborators for the “crime” of being Jewish. Throughout the afternoon and after the 5:30 p.m. commemoration service, three Holocaust Survivors shared their miraculous stories of survival to a packed room.

In addition to the more than 500 visitors, tens of thousands more were reached through our Facebook Live feed, allowing virtual visitors from around the world to commemorate the day with us.

The people who participated in the day were varied. There were school board members and politicians, police chiefs and rabbis and priests, local celebrities and student groups, Museum volunteers and home-school families, nonprofit leaders and Holocaust Survivors. There were children and grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors who participated but the majority who attended had no connection to the Holocaust, and many who admitted to knowing very little about the tragic event we were commemorating.

According to the ADL, the number of antisemitic incidents in the US was 86 percent higher in the first three months of 2017 than the same period last year, with Florida in the top four areas of incident. In 2016, there were 137 verified incidents of antisemitism in Florida, a 50% increase of incidents over the previous year’s 91. At a time when overt antisemitism is on the rise in the United States, when we are seeing antisemitic incidents in our own community and at the Museum itself, why did so many people with so little personal connection to the Holocaust take the time to commemorate the six million Jews who perished?

The Florida Holocaust Museum was created 25 years ago to remember those who suffered and died during the Holocaust and to teach the lessons of the Holocaust in order to create a better future for our children and grandchildren, a world without bigotry, hatred and violence. On Yom HaShoah, we were able to see that what we have been teaching for 25 years resonated with our community. All through the day, people approached staff and said “Thank you for what you do.” Today, I am saying the same thing to you: Thank you for what you do. It is your support that allows the Museum to be here and open our doors.

Your support for our crucial work of remembering the past, gives our community and children hope for the future.

Elizabeth Gelman

The Florida Holocaust Museum Leadership Council

Leadership Council

- David Baras, M.D.
- Michael D. Bisk
- Frantz G. Christensen
- Benjamin Diamond
- Tony DiBenedetto
- Etta Donnell
- Ruth Ehreich
- Carolyn Ellis, Ph.D.
- Judy Genshaft, Ph. D., Honorary
- Steve Gersten
- Louis Goldfeder*
- Gary Gould
- Bryan Greenberg
- William Greenberg, M.D.
- Brenda Greenland
- Rochelle Gross
- Adam L. Horn
- William F. Jeffrey
- Mary Johnson, Ph.D.
- Randy Meg Kammer
- The Hon. Nelly N. Khouzam
- Edward Kissi, Ph.D.
- Zena Lansky, M.D.
- John J. Loftus
- Mitchell Lowenstein, M.D.
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- Nancy Paikoff
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- Alan Rash
- Mary Anne Reilly
- Brendon Rennert
- Jack Ross
- Marion Samson-Joseph*
- Calvin B. Samuel
- David Scher
- Debbie Sembler
- Jeffrey Shear
- Craig Sher
- Todd Siegel
- Gayle Sierens
- Tom Stanton
- Bonnie Stein
- Robert Stein, M.D.
- Linda S. Taggart, M.A.
- Howard Taylor
- Dr. Mary Kay Vona
- Mark Wright

*of blessed memory
To formally recognize and thank our outstanding Museum Docents and Volunteers, a Volunteer Appreciation Brunch was held on March 6, 2017. Our sincere appreciation for the contribution of this group is genuine.

In 2016, Docents and Volunteers contributed almost 7,500 hours of service to the Museum. To put this into more concrete terms, this amounts to having more than 3.5 additional full-time staff at no additional cost. Though their duties may include leading visitor tours, informing students of life under Nazi rule, explaining the use of audio wands, assisting in the gift shop and admission desk, welcoming guests and answering questions, or helping to implement The Museum’s special events, there is one unifying reality. While serving, all volunteers and docents are helping to implement the Museum’s mission to honor those who suffered or died in the Holocaust and teaching the value of human life and diversity. For this we say, “Thank you” and extend an invitation to everyone who volunteers at The Museum to invite a friend or relative to become a Museum member and join you the next time you help at a Museum event. In doing so, you will be helping to make the next twenty-five years even more successful than our first!

John Sanguinetti  The FHM’s Volunteer Coordinator

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Congratulations to the 2017 Women of Distinction

Gladys Schultz
Pinellas County Women of Distinction

Involved with The FHM since she moved to the area in 1995, Gladys had dedicated years of her time, talent and treasure to ensuring the Museum’s success. Gladys helped with the capital campaign to purchase The FHM’s current building in St. Petersburg. From 1999 to 2001 she volunteered in the Museum store every Wednesday. During her tenure on The FHM Board of Directors (2001-2008), the Museum expanded its educational programming and began work on the award-winning original exhibition Courage and Compassion: The Legacy of the Bielski Brothers. Throughout the years, Gladys has brought many people into the Museum family, including her cousin, the late Eva Gerson, whose family photos cover the History, Heritage and Hope wall.

Rachael Worthington
Pinellas County Women of Distinction, TOP Life & Legacy

Rachael and her husband first became members of the Museum in 2011, after learning that her father, Thomas Scovill, had been a captain during World War II and had liberated a camp near Czechoslovakia. He passed away in June 2012, but his dedication to sharing his experience motivated Rachael to stay involved with the Museum. Rachael is a Life Member of The FHM and serves on the Board of Trustees as Vice Chair of Development. In 2015, her involvement with The FHM and the Sarasota Opera resulted in the concert “Forbidden Music, Works Banned by the Nazis.” It was performed at the Sarasota Opera House and the Tampa Straz Center.

Sylvia Wein Richman
Tampa Bobbe Karpay Women of Distinction

Born in Poland in 1938, Sylvia spent her early years in the Lemberg (Lvov) ghetto and hidden in a convent under an assumed name to escape the Holocaust. This life-defining experience has led Sylvia to volunteer hours to speaking at schools and with tour groups at The FHM. She translates staggering numbers into an individual story, situating it in historical context for audiences and emphasizing how we all have a potential to make a positive difference through upstander behavior. She was photographed for The FHM’s original photography exhibition “Fragments” and been published in The FHM’s 2007 book We were there — memories of the Holocaust, which enables her testimony to reach beyond the Museum’s walls to audiences throughout the country.
As Curator of Exhibitions and Collections, I have the pleasure of overseeing the permanent and temporary exhibitions of The Florida Holocaust Museum as well as its collection of historic objects, documents, and photographs and contemporary art. But really the best part, and arguably the most important facet of my role here, is to meet with Holocaust Survivors or their children and to take on the role of steward for their prized possessions. Last month, The FHM’s registrar Victoria King and I had the honor of meeting a daughter and granddaughter of Survivors – Mindy Valerioti and Judith Lewkowitz, in Lake Worth and listened to them retell the stories Inge and Salle Lewkowitz. After several hours, we left entrusted with a treasure trove of artifacts that held in them the Holocaust experiences of their parents.

Before the war, Ingeborg (Inge) Lewkowitz (née London) was a nurse at the Jewish Hospital of Berlin. During the war, the hospital served a myriad of uses: a Jewish hospital, a hospital for Jewish concentration camp prisoners, a transit camp for those selected for deportation with one wing set apart as a hospital for Wermacht soldiers. Inge was working in the military wing when it was announced that Adolf Eichmann was in the building visiting injured soldiers. Afraid of being arrested, she immediately hid under the bed of a patient, only for another orderly to tell Eichmann “A Jew is here.” She was forced to stand and was hit by the Nazi official. Inge was immediately arrested.

Originally selected for deportation, another nurse and friend grabbed her from the line of people leaving on the transport, saving her life. Throughout the remainder of the war, Inge was a prisoner and forced to do slave labor. She emigrated to America in 1950. Inge saved her Star of David patch, important documents and a number of pre-war family photographs. Mindy and Judith donated all of these objects to The FHM.

Boxer Salo Lewkowitz lived in Berlin before the war and was billed as the Maccabi Champion of Berlin. After Kristallnacht, he was arrested and sent to a concentration camp but later released. Upon leaving the camp, Salo left for Shanghai like many other German and Austrian Jews to flee Nazi persecution. There, he continued to focus on Athletic pursuits and joined the International Sporting Club of Shanghai. The first refugee bouts began in 1939 and the Jewish refugees, including Sam Lewko (his boxing name), defeated the top boxers from Japan, France and the U.S. After boxing was banned by the Japanese in 1941, Salo played soccer with the club until 1945 when the boxing ban was lifted. He emigrated to the United States in 1948. The Lewkowitz Collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum includes Salo’s boxing shorts, two of his boxing match advertisements, trophies won in Shanghai and several documents related to the sporting club.

Every time I have the honor of receiving a donation, the responsibility of being trusted with the legacy of a Survivor is not lost on me. What’s more, it is a joy when the donor is genuinely happy to pass on objects to the Museum, knowing that the stories they contain won’t be forgotten. I recently received a note from Judy Lewkowitz that read, “We are SO thankful to you both – the way you handled all of the precious possessions and memories, the care you took and your faces told us that you were indeed happy with all of the items. It let us know that you really cared.”

Preserving stories and evidence of Survivors and victims is why I am here and it is why The Florida Holocaust Museum exists.

Erin Blankenship  The FHM’s Curator of Exhibitions and Collections
Our Legacy donors, people just like you, understand that it is imperative that we expand the reach of our resources and our work, and set the moral compass for a new generation. Help ensure the future of The Florida Holocaust Museum by remembering us in your will, estate plan or as a designated beneficiary. Each gift, big or small, makes a difference. Help us to connect the choices people made in the past to the choices people are faced with today, by using the lessons of the Holocaust to create a better future for all!

To learn more about creating a legacy gift, please contact The FHM’s Director of Development, Maria Johnston at 727-820-0100 x274 or mjohnston@TheFHM.org. If you have already included The FHM in your bequest, please let us know so that we can be sure to include you in our Legacy of Hope Society.

Leave Your Legacy Today

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DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Alyce Gross

Alyce Gross has been involved with The Florida Holocaust Museum for the past twenty-five years. Her involvement began with her late husband Sam Gross, who was a Holocaust Survivor and founding Member of the Museum. Her husband would often give lectures to school children and in his opening statement would say that “an uneducated child is a lost child.” He felt very strongly that education in all aspects was very important and Alyce knew that she just had to keep that spirit going.

“I believe that the way to live a meaningful life is to promote and do the things that you feel are important. I was a school teacher so I have strong feeling about the importance of education and the value of history,” said Alyce.

Alyce has been a Life Member of the Museum since its inception and an ongoing Sponsor of The FHM’s Sam Gross Summer Institute for Teachers. Through the Institute, teachers begin an investigation of the history of the Holocaust, the systematic, planned annihilation of European Jews and other groups by Nazi Germany from 1933-1945. Educators are then equipped to return to their classrooms with the knowledge and pedagogical resources to teach in a manner that leads to an investigation of the ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping.

This year is The FHM’s 25th Anniversary and marks a major milestone for Alyce in terms of education and compassion. Alyce’s Jewish heritage is very important to her and she has instilled in her children and grandchildren the importance of learning about their Jewish history.

“The FHM’s 25th Anniversary speaks well of each generation’s interest in history. I am always heartened by the generosity and number of people in attendance when I go to The FHM’s community events and causes. The Museum has been very fortunate in having directors who truly love what they do and promote all that is important,” said Alyce.

Kristen Wright The FHM’s Writer and Digital Content Manager

Legacy of Hope Society

The Florida Holocaust Museum’s Legacy of Hope Society

Janie & Martin Borell
Debbie & Nat Doliner
Susan Edgerley
Amy & Bruce Epstein
Melanie & Erik Fischer
Milton (Mickey) & Deborah Heilweil
Halina & Ed Herman
Maria & Barry Johnston
Joyce Hartman Karpay
Helen Levine & Kattee Tully
Monica & Michael Levy
Rochelle & Mark Lewis
Walter P. Loebenberg
John J. Loftus
Merrill & Steven Marx
Shari & Todd Mezrah
Sonya Miller*
Natarsha Nesbitt
Louis Orloff
Lois & Peter Pardoll
Brian Pearlman
Deborah White & David Pearlman
Maria Ress
Toni & John Rinde
Michael Robbins
Amanda Saft
Diana L. Sager
Alfred & Rose Schiff
Elizabeth & Tom Sivak
Barrie M. Smith
Emilie Socash
Joyce Whitman Tawil
Renée & Tom Walter
Robin K. Warren
Irene & Steven Weiss
Rachael & Donald Worthington

List as of April 30, 2017 *of blessed memory
MUSEUM EVENTS & PROGRAMS

The FHM Film Series: Paragraph 175
June 21, 2017 at 6:30 p.m.
The Florida Holocaust Museum

In conjunction with the exhibition Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals: 1933-1945, The FHM presents a special showing of the film Paragraph 175.

Between 1933 and 1945, 100,000 men were arrested for homosexuality under Paragraph 175, the sodomy provision of the German penal code dating back to 1871. Some were imprisoned, others were sent to concentration camps. Of the latter, only about 4,000 survived. Today, fewer than ten of these men are known to be living. Five of them have now come forward to tell their stories for the first time in this powerful film. RSVP required. Free and open to the public.

Limited seating! To reserve your seat, please call 727.820.0100 ext. 301.

The FHM’s “Rays Up Night” with The Tampa Bay Rays!
July 6, 2017 at 6:45 p.m.
The Tampa Bay Rays vs. Boston Red Sox
Tropicana Field - 1 Tropicana Dr, St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Through an exciting new partnership, The FHM and the Tampa Bay Rays invite you to attend the Museum’s “Rays Up Night” on July 6th! The FHM will be recognized preceding the game with a check presentation on the field, video showcase, community corner, and a special reserved section of discounted seats for Museum supporters. In addition, Holocaust Survivors John and Toni Rinde will throw out the first pitch!

Discounted lower level tickets are $25 each, with $5 from each ticket donated back to The FHM! Tickets are LIMITED.
To reserve your tickets, please call 727.820.0100 ext. 301.

To Life
Honoring the Past;
Empowering the Future

SAVE THE DATE

February 10, 2018
at The Florida Holocaust Museum
**Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933-1945**  
On display through July 2, 2017

The Florida Holocaust Museum is pleased to present the traveling exhibition on loan from the United States Memorial Museum. Presented locally by Wells Fargo, this exhibition examines the Nazi regime’s attempt to eradicate homosexuality, which left thousands dead and shattered the lives of many more.

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazi German regime promoted racial health policies that sought to eliminate all sources of biological corruption to its dominant “Aryan” race. Among the groups persecuted as threats to the national health were Germany’s homosexual men. Believing them to be carriers of a “degeneracy” that weakened society and hindered population growth, the Nazi state arrested and incarcerated in prisons and concentration camps tens of thousands of German men as a means of terrorizing them into social conformity.

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**Courage and Compassion: The Legacy of the Bielski Brothers**  
On display through June 18, 2017

This original, award-winning The FHM exhibition chronicles the Bielski brothers’ story. Presented nationally by Bank of America, this is a multi-media presentation showcasing the heroic efforts of three brothers who helped save more than 1,200 people while living in the forest during World War II.

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**The Greatest Crime of the War: The Armenian Genocide During World War I**  
On display through June 25, 2017

This exhibition recounts the history of the genocide and the conditions which led to it as well as its legacy. The mass murder of the Armenian people in Anatolia, now referred to by most historians and human rights organizations as “The Armenian Genocide,” destroyed a civilization that had resided in Anatolia for thousands of years.

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**Jehovah’s Witnesses: Faith Under Fire**  
On display through July 16, 2017

Jehovah’s Witnesses, a Christian community of 35,000 in Germany and occupied lands, refused to conform to the Nazi ideology of hate. This exhibition documents the story of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Holocaust and provides an in depth look at ordinary people who followed their conscience in the face of tyranny.
The FHM’s Sam Gross Summer Institute for Teachers

On June 12 and 13, 2017, we will be hosting the Sam Gross Summer Institute for Teachers. The Institute has been an integral part of our professional development for educators for many years and has provided invaluable knowledge and resources to its participants. We work with teachers from public and private schools and have trained educators from Pinellas, Hillsborough, Sarasota, Manatee, Pasco, and other counties as well as Poland and Slovakia. This would not have been possible without excellent cooperation with the local school districts, especially Pinellas and Hillsborough. The Institute is named after one of our Holocaust Survivors – Sam Gross – who was very involved in Holocaust education at The FHM. Our Museum has been incredibly fortunate to have a group of Holocaust Survivors who value education and help our students and educators become Witnesses to a Witness.

Through the Institute, teachers begin an investigation of the history of the Holocaust, the systematic, planned annihilation of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators from 1933-1945. We also talk about other victim groups persecuted by the Nazi regime. Educators are equipped to return to their classrooms with the knowledge and pedagogical resources to teach in a manner that leads to an investigation of the ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping. Participants work with The FHM staff and guest speakers. They also have a unique opportunity to meet with Holocaust Survivors and learn about their personal experiences in the context of the history sessions taught during the program.

The Florida Holocaust Museum provides Holocaust education throughout the state. Last year we organized two Summer Institutes in West Palm Beach and in Pensacola, in partnership with the respective school districts. We built these partnerships through the Florida Department of Education Commissioner’s Task Force on Holocaust Education of which we are members. The Institutes, both local and off site, are funded in part by the Task Force. Over the years, we have also created close partnerships and offered joint Summer Institute sessions with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The Jewish Foundation for The Righteous, Yahad – In Unum, USF St. Petersburg, USF Tampa, and other organizations. To celebrate our 25th anniversary, the Institute is brought home to the Museum this year. Applications have been coming in and we look forward to working with a new group of teachers!

If you are interested in helping to underwrite a teacher’s participation with the Sam Gross Summer Institute and/or other teacher workshops, please contact Maria Johnston at 727-820-0100 x274 or mjohnston@TheFHM.org.

Comments from the previous Summer Institute participants:

“I am a better person as a result of my participation in this workshop.”

“I will use the information in my classroom to help my students develop a conscience where they will become upstanders rather than bystanders.”

“Absolutely phenomenal!”

“Wonderful! Amazing! I learned so much more about the Holocaust!”

“Outstanding!! Great material! Presenters were excellent!”

“Thank you for offering this thought-provoking, multifaceted Summer Institute. It was incredible!”
THE FHM’S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Docent Led Tours at The Florida Holocaust Museum

Docents are an integral part of The Florida Holocaust Museum’s tours. Since January, the Museum has welcomed 91 groups for docent-led tours that included 3,163 students, 360 of which are from Title 1 schools. It takes numerous docents and their commitment to the Museum to help educate so many students about the Holocaust.

Following is some of the recent feedback we have received about the docents from teachers:

“The docent was very informative and the tour was excellent – at my students’ level and understandable.”

“The tour guide gave so much info! It was a wonderful field trip!”

“The docents were so knowledgeable, I barely had to spend two days on WWII background.”

“The docent taught the students interesting facts that the textbooks don’t teach.”

“The docents were fantastic; they told stories and went beyond basic info.”

“Our tour guide was very knowledgeable and helped our students to understand the Holocaust in meaningful ways.”

Many of our dedicated docents have been with us since inception and our most recent docents have joined us from the last docent training in 2016. The docents have received additional instruction in various classes over the years, including training on new exhibitions in order to best present the subject to the students. Most importantly, the docents help to translate the Museum’s mission in a way that students can relate to and understand.

If you would like more information regarding the group tours or teaching trunks, please contact Melissa Black by email at tours@thefhm.org or trunks@thefhm.org.

Melissa Black The FHM’s Resource and Tour Coordinator

Speak Up, Speak Now!® at Pinellas Park Middle School

Starting on January 26, 2017, a total of 200 students at Pinellas Park Middle School participated in The FHM’s Speak Up, Speak Now!® program. Six classes met every other week over a 10-week period and the program included speakers, lessons, activities, and an art project. Students studied concepts including upstander, bystander, victim, perpetrator, stereotype, prejudice, universe of obligation, bullying, and identity. Each week the students worked on an art project with Joyce Tawil. Their art work was on display on the third floor of the Museum through April 2017.

Speak Up, Speak Now!® is an outreach program of The Florida Holocaust Museum. Middle school age students engage in discussions, activities and field trips that examine concepts such as: identity, us and them, bystander, upstander, universe of obligation, prejudice, stereotypes and propaganda. The teens hear from guest speakers that include: crime victims, Holocaust survivors, refugees, law enforcement officers and community activists. Throughout the program, students create artwork that is used as part of an on-going public awareness campaign.

The next Speak Up, Speak Now!® program will be held at Dunedin Highland Middle School, starting June 8th for the duration of six weeks.

Sandy Mermelstein The FHM’s Senior Educator

Thank you to the following participants for their assistance with Speak Up, Speak Now!®

Peer Counseling Instructor: Brooke Taylor, Ed.S.
Holocaust Survivor Speakers: Ed and Halina Herman, Lisl Schick, Toni Rinde, and Betty Grebenschikoff.
Volunteers: Joyce Tawil, Charles Jaynes, Claire Shonter, Kayla Dorsey, Taryn Barnett, Harrison and Ethan Smajovits.
Staff: Sandy Mermelstein, Urszula Szczepinska, and Melissa Black.
The FHM has recently partnered with Eckerd College to release a 25th Anniversary oral history series titled “25 Survivors, 25 Stories... Celebrating 25 Years!” Over the next 25 months, the Museum’s oral history series will feature a different Holocaust Survivor on the 25th of every month. The second story was released on April 25th and features Holocaust Survivor Mary Wygodski. To read the story in full, visit: www.TheFHM.org/25th. Holocaust Survivor Mary Wygodski with Eckerd College students (L to R) Emily Freeman, Karolina Perez, and Keeli Armitage.

In March, The FHM’s Genocide and Human Rights Awareness Movement (GHRAM) lecture series brought internationally renowned human rights activist John Prendergast to Stetson University College of Law. Prendergast discussed the first genocide in the 21st century, the Darfur Genocide, which began in 2003 and still continues today.

Mayor Kriseman, community leaders, and faith organizations held a “Love Lives Here” event at The FHM in March to stand in solidarity with those who have been targeted by acts of hate. This event has a goal of encouraging a community-wide response by institutions and individuals to create greater understanding and connection rather than fear of differences. #LoveLivesInTampaBay

In March, The FHM held its 3rd Annual Pass the Plate: The FHM’s Spring Cook-Off to honor the delicious recipes passed down from generation to generation. The program featured a cooking demonstration and sampling from Michael Twitty, culinary historian, food writer, and Judaic Studies teacher.


Holocaust Survivors and their relatives lit candles during The FHM’s Yom HaShoah memorial service on April 24th. This year’s Yom HaShoah Commemoration included free Museum admission, Holocaust Survivor talks, and the reading of Holocaust victims’ names throughout the day.

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TO LIFE: THE FHM’S 25TH ANNIVERSARY GALA  
FEBRUARY 25, 2017


The FHM’s Executive Director Elizabeth Gelman and Board Member and grandson of a Holocaust Survivor Mike Igel present Keynote Speaker David Eisenhower with an original railroad spike from Treblinka Concentration Camp 1941-1943. Eisenhower also accepted the Loebenberg Humanitarian Award on behalf of his grandfather, President and General Dwight D. Eisenhower in recognition of the pivotal role General Eisenhower played while liberating the Nazi concentration camps.

The FHM’s educational and outreach speakers share their individual stories. L to R: Retired Tampa Police Chief Jane Castor, St. Petersburg City Council Member Lisa Wheeler-Bowman, Former WFLA News Anchor Gayle Sierens, and Dunedin Highland Middle School Assistant Principal Jenieff Watson.

Submit your fondest memories from your visits & involvement with The FHM over the past 25 years at TheFHM.org/25th. For additional photos and information, follow The FHM on Facebook at facebook.com/TheFHM, Instagram @TheFHM, and Twitter @FLHolocaustMus.
The Florida Holocaust Museum honors the memory of millions of innocent men, women and children who suffered or died in the Holocaust. The Museum is dedicated to teaching the members of all races and cultures the inherent worth and dignity of human life in order to prevent future genocides.