

Newsletter Number 1: August 2008

Dear Friend of the Johannesburg Holocaust Centre

As you may already know by now, The Johannesburg Holocaust Centre (JHC), a member of the South African Holocaust Foundation (together with the Cape Town and Durban Centres), began its activities in January 2008, under the Directorship of Tali Nates. Tali is assisted by Thuli Malinga (Office Manager) and Janine Cohen (Project Manager). We also have many (more than 50) enthusiastic volunteers who are involved in different activities.

We are currently operating from a house at 11 Durham Road, Raedene. There have been no objections to the rezoning of the property and we expect building to commence on this property in October. Building operations are expected to take about a year. Please feel free to pop in and visit us and see the 'before', as well as our plans and join in our excitement in following the building as it progresses.

We have been very busy organising and setting up systems for the new centre and building partnership relationships with other museums and organisations. The past few months were also dedicated to various educational projects and tours. In April – May, Tali Nates was the scholar of the 97 strong international delegation to the March of the Living to Poland and Israel. A one hour documentary film on the March of the Living was broadcasted on the SABC 2 programme, Issues of Faith. Tali also took part at the Yad Vashem International Conference in July. There was a strong South African delegation to the conference which included Richard Freedman and Rosemary Gon from the Cape Town Centre, Maureen Caminsky of the Durban Centre, Linda Bester, the exhibition designer of the JHB Centre and Tracey Farber, a clinical psychologist who works with Jewish Community Services with their Holocaust Survivors Services project.

During the last few months, all JHB Holocaust survivors were photographed by a professional photographer and a short summary of their Holocaust experiences were recorded. A team of volunteers are collecting scanned photographs, documents and lists of artefacts for the future permanent exhibition.

We have been involved in facilitating special training workshops for educators. These workshops are part of a 3 year partnership between the Gauteng Department of Education, the Apartheid Museum and the South African Holocaust Foundation. The aim is to teach 180 educators about The Holocaust, Human Rights, the Rwanda Genocide and Apartheid. In addition, we participate in the Yad Vashem Fellowship Programme – a special programme for managers in the Department of Education from 5 provinces, in which the educators learn about the Holocaust and how to teach it in South Africa.

In addition to the ongoing Holocaust education programmes, we have had numerous requests to help schools respond to the xenophobia experienced in many communities. Besides speaking engagements, we are currently in the process of developing a special programme for schools about xenophobia: understanding it; dealing with it and reinforcing our youth's ability to see its dangers and fight against it.

In August (17-24), The JHC, together with SAUJS and UNISA Primedia Holocaust & Genocide Unit organised a study tour of Rwanda for a group of Gauteng university students. The focus of this tour is on genocide and human rights abuses and the rebuilding of a scarred society. This is a pilot tour and we hope to make this an annual experience.

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The JHC works closely with *The Friendship Forum*, a project of Jewish Community Services. Holocaust survivors and their families and friends are invited to a monthly meeting. The JHC is involved in the training and supervision of the 15 psychologists and social workers supporting the project as well as with on-going activities of the service. Training of Holocaust Survivors wishing to speak to Grade 9 students next year is taking place in September.

The Apartheid Museum and JHC partnered for the first 'International day of story-telling', held at the Apartheid Museum, on 16 May 2008. 24 participants, including Holocaust survivors, apartheid victims as well as people from all walks of life shared their stories. This pilot event was a great success and we plan to be involved on a larger scale in the future.

The JHC, in partnership with Constitution Hill, was honoured to host our first public event on 7th August, where Fumiko Ishioka and Lara Brady shared the story of Hana's Suitcase. The award-winning book *'Hana's Suitcase'* written by Karen Levine has been published in 48 countries and translated into 35 languages. It tells the true story of how the curiosity of Japanese children visiting the Tokyo Holocaust Education Centre inspired Fumiko Ishioka, the Centre's curator, to embark on an epic search to give 'life' to a name - Hana Brady - which appears on a forlorn suitcase found at the Auschwitz death camp. The South African edition of the book, including a forward by archbishop Desmond Tutu is now available for sale through our Centre. In the morning of the 8th August, again at Constitution Hill, our guest speakers spoke to Grade 9 learners from Letsibogo Girls High from Soweto and Parktown Girls High from JHB. This was also a great success. All events were filmed and we hope to develop a documentary film for SABC from the material.

In August, the Centre had guests from the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam: Barry van Driel and Aaron Peterer as well as Marcia Shuster of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

Coming Events:

The next lecture of the Friendship Forum for Holocaust Survivors, second generation and members of the community were affected by the Holocaust will be at Our Parents' Home on the 31st August at 2.30. Solange Czerniweicz, a second generation and a well-known physiotherapist will speak about "Aging Successfully".

Second Innings, in association with the JHC and Selwyn Klass, will screen *'Miracle at Midnight'* starring Mia Farrow and Sam Waterston; the film tells the story of the heroic deeds of the Danish community in rescuing their Jewish neighbours from certain annihilation 65 years ago., on Sunday 14 September. Tali Nates will speak about 'The Righteous among the Nations'. The Guests of Honour will be the Honorary Consul General of the Royal Danish Consulate, Mr Jan Lottrup Jensen and Mrs Yvonne Jensen. An exhibition reflecting material provided by the Museum of Danish Resistance will also be mounted. For more information contact email grecia@jhbchev.co.za and (011)5329718

More plans for lectures, events and the 70th Anniversary of Kristallnacht will follow shortly.

It is our intention to send out a newsletter every quarter. We hope that in this way we are able to keep you informed and included in our ongoing and future events.

Warm regards

The Johannesburg Holocaust Centre Team