



**The Holocaust Center
Boston North Inc.**

For the study of The Holocaust, Genocides, and Human Rights
Peabody Institute Library's Center for the Study of Human Rights
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NEWSLETTER

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LOOKING BACKWARDS TO THE FUTURE

Until her untimely death three years ago, my close friend, Sonia Schreiber Weitz, a Holocaust survivor, and I traveled on an incredible journey that lasted for more than 30 years.

You might wonder how a second generation American and a Holocaust survivor began working together. In 1978 Gerald Green's docudrama, *The Holocaust*, was televised throughout the world. After too many years of indifference and ignorance, viewers were shocked into the reality that there really was a Holocaust. As a young mother and freelance reporter for the Peabody Times, I interviewed Sonia, whom I only knew casually, about her reaction to the movie. A deep friendship and partnership were born. The rest is history.

Our dream for Sonia and other Holocaust survivors to share their personal experiences during the Holocaust with students of all ages, to bring the lessons of the Holocaust to the community, and ultimately to improve relations between groups of diverse backgrounds was realized when The Holocaust Center was born in 1982. Our priority was and still is education.

Those who have been privileged to hear survivors speak about their years under the Nazi regime, become empowered to make a difference. Applying the lessons of the past, they realize that they must stand up and speak out against bigotry, injustice, stereotyping and other violations of human rights in their own lifetime...to be upstanders. It was a world of bystanders that enabled the perpetrators to carry out the unspeakable genocide of more than six million innocent Jewish people.

For years Sonia and I discussed the future of The Holocaust Center, Boston North. With too many more genocides coming after the Holocaust, we knew that we must find a way to ensure that our center's important work be carried on for the generations to come.

We are pleased to announce that we have come full circle. Our journey began years ago when Sonia and I taught a course on the Holocaust at Salem State. And now we begin a new chapter to fulfill another dream, ensuring the permanence and continuity of our work. Sometime after January 2014, The HCBN will officially become part of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at SSU founded on the principles and ideals of The HCBN: to document and to preserve history; to reduce hatred, prejudice, ignorance and indifference through education; and to prevent future tragedies through the study of the universal lessons of this period.

As long as any people are deprived of dignity and human rights, no one can be free.

We must know the past to understand the present so that there will be a future. What is the alternative?

Thank you to: the City of Peabody for providing us with such a wonderful home all these years and to Peabody mayors, Ted Bettencourt, Michael Bonfanti, and the late Peter Torigian; Martha Holden and the Peabody Institute Library Trustees; the Jewish Federation of the North Shore and our members; and SSU President Patricia Meservey and all those at SSU for supporting the establishment of this exciting center.

Together we can have an impact on history and make a difference.

What does The Holocaust Center, Boston North's move to SSU mean?

During the transitional year, The Holocaust Center (The HCBN) will continue to provide programming and support for local schools, churches, synagogues, civic organizations etc., including presentations by our Holocaust Legacy Partners and Survivors. When The HCBN becomes part of the new center at SSU, connecting with and educating our youth will remain a priority.

By joining with the newly created Center For Holocaust and Genocide Studies (CHGS) at SSU, the mission of both entities will be strengthened with dedicated faculty and increased research and teacher training. The opportunity for grant money and new partnerships will be opened to secure the perpetuity of the mission of The HCBNs. The North Shore will now have a real academic center. The programming will support the study of the Holocaust and comparative genocides including those in Rwanda, Cambodia and Armenia.

One of the forces behind the collaboration was a \$100,000 grant over four years from OneWorld Boston, a foundation affiliated with the Cummings Foundation.

There will be ACADEMIC RESEARCH INTO HOLOCAUST AND COMPARATIVE GENOCIDE STUDIES by faculty from the English, history, philosophy, education, criminal justice and interdisciplinary studies departments.

EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING this year expands at the CHGS with a new graduate certificate in Holocaust and Genocide studies and workshops for educators. Plans for the new center include hosting regional, national and international conferences. SSU was also one of six universities to be selected by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to have faculty work on training teachers to teach about Holocaust.

Working with the Cummings Foundation, COMMUNITY OUTREACH has begun on a Rwandan Oral History project to capture the stories and histories of survivors of the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and make those histories available to the public and educators. In the near future there are plans to expand the interviewing and videotaping of Holocaust survivors to include the other more recent victims of genocide.

The new center will raise the profile and expand the scope of the work of remembering the horrific past and trying to prevent future genocides. SSU will become a hub for scholarly research, publications, and teaching of the Holocaust and other genocides.

The mission and goals of The HCBN will continue and expand in the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at SSU. They will be integrated into a regional state university that connects with students from the next generation. The original mission of people like Sonia Weitz will be strengthened.

SYMBOLIC SIGNING BETWEEN THE HCBN AND SSU



Claude Kaitare (Rwandan Genocide survivor), Dr. Christopher Mauriello, Dr. Robert McAndrews, Sandy Weitz, Eric Kahn (Holocaust survivor) Harriet Wacks and Dr. Patricia Meservey



Harriet Wacks and Dr. Patricia Meservey

We must remember the past, to understand the present, so that there will be a future

**The HCBN will become part of the newly established
Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at SSU
How can you continue your support of the work of The HCBN?**

The Holocaust Center will continue its programming as usual for this fiscal year. Donations for this fiscal year will be used to sustain them.

Sometime after January, 2014 The HCBN will become part of the new center for CHGS at SSU that has been founded on the principles of the HCBN. Our extensive collection of books will be housed in a special section of the Frederick Berry Library at SSU. Our precious survivor oral histories will be preserved and made available for research and education. Memorabilia and art will be on display at the new center at a location to be determined on campus. Following guidelines by state law, all previous donations will be deposited in a designated fund in the SSU Foundation to be used solely for Holocaust and Genocide studies. The HCBN traditions such as Holocaust Legacy Partners (50 presentations were given in the last year), Yom HaShoah Commemoration, The Sonia Weitz Upstander Award will continue at the new center.

Sonia Schreiber Weitz Upstander Award

The Holocaust Center, Boston North is now accepting applications for the Sonia Schreiber Weitz Upstander Award. Two students in grades 7 – 12 will be recognized at the awards' ceremony at Yom HaShoah, the Interfaith Commemoration of the Holocaust, this spring at Peabody Veterans Memorial High on April 28, 2014. The award is named for Holocaust survivor, Sonia Schreiber Weitz, who died on June 23, 2010. Sonia was a poet, author, and spokesperson for her generation who put a face on Holocaust history. A remarkable woman who became a role model for the generations after, she was beloved by everyone who had the privilege of hearing her retell about her years during the Holocaust. Her mission was to encourage others to apply the lessons of the past to the present.

“I dream of a world without victims and victimizers, and even more, without bystanders.”

The award recipients must emulate Sonia's commitment to making our world a better place by demonstrating that they are not bystanders but upstanders who have taken *action* on behalf of another against prejudice, hatred, or indifference. There are unlimited opportunities to be an upstander. Two examples of an upstander include but are not limited to an individual who has helped someone being bullied or has stopped untrue or harmful messages from spreading.

Students are requested to email their completed application to The Holocaust Center at holocaustctrbn@yahoo.com or mail to The Holocaust Center, Boston North, 82 Main Street, Peabody, MA 01960. To receive an application go to www.holocaustcenterbn.org or email request to the center holocaustctrbn@yahoo.com. **February 15, 2014** application deadline.



2013 Recipients of the Sonia Schreiber Weitz Upstander Award:
Joanna Ambeliotis (PVMH) and Maise Miller (Marblehead H) And Honorable Mention Recipients