VHM

VIRGINIA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

IMPACT REPORT 2023 2024

COVER: Holocaust survivor Halina Zimm poses with Marcus Weinstein, Chairman of the VHM Board of Trustees, at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

From left to right: Dr. Max Maizels with his arm around his brother, Holocaust survivor Henri Maizels, at VHM's 2023 Annual Meeting. Henri passed away on November 26, 2023.

VIRGINIA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Virginia Holocaust Museum preserves and documents the Holocaust in exhibits and its archival collections. Through the permanent exhibits, educational programming, and outreach the museum employs the history of the Holocaust and other genocides to educate and inspire future generations of Virginians to fight prejudice and indifference.

ADMISSION

VHM is free and open to the public

HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9 am-5 pm
Saturday and Sunday: 11 am-5 pm

LOCATION & PARKING

2000 East Cary Street, Richmond, VA 23223
The Museum offers free, off-street parking directly across from its main entrance on Cary Street.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SAMUEL ASHER

Following the October 7, 2023, terrorist attack in Israel, the global Jewish community has faced a disturbing rise in antisemitic activity, reaching levels unseen since the Holocaust. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has documented this troubling surge, especially among younger Americans.

In these challenging times, the Virginia Holocaust Museum (VHM) serves as a beacon of hope and resilience—our commitment to Holocaust education is more essential than ever.

Recognizing the critical importance of Holocaust education, the State of Virginia has generously allocated $375,000 to support our efforts, enabling us to reach more individuals across the state.

And with your financial support, our Capital Campaign raised a little over $3 million, allowing us to complete renovations on our front entrance and construct a state-of-the-art Dimensions in Testimony exhibit on the museum's second floor.

The highlight of 2024 occurred on October 29th, when 250 guests gathered for the grand opening of the Alan and Halina Zimm Theater of Remembrance on the second floor. Governor Glenn Youngkin joined Halina Zimm in cutting the ceremonial ribbon, marking the beginning of a new chapter in our history—one where interactions with Holocaust witnesses will live on forever.

Please enjoy this Impact Report. Unless otherwise noted, the data reported includes all of 2023 and the first ten months of 2024.

Until next time,

Samuel H. Asher
President and Executive Director

President and Executive Director, Sam Asher with Board Member Maurice Schwarz, MD, at the MARCH for Israel to Free Hostages on Tuesday, November 14th at the National Mall, Washington D.C.

Holocaust survivor Halina Zimm has a private chat with Governor Glenn Youngkin before the grand opening of the theater named in her honor.

The newly renovated front entrance showcases an ultramodern visitor's desk, expanded book shelving, and sleek glass display cases. Realistic railroad tracks have been integrated into the design, guiding visitors seamlessly through the first-floor exhibits.

PHASE I: CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE

FIRST-FLOOR RENOVATIONS COMPLETE

In celebration of the museum's 25th Anniversary in 2022, the VHM embarked on an ambitious $2.5 million Capital Campaign aimed at transforming the visitor experience. With two bold objectives, this initiative was designed to both modernize the museum's infrastructure and expand its impact on scholars, educators and guests alike.

The first goal was to boost energy efficiency significantly, comfort, and security throughout the building, creating a more sustainable and welcoming environment. The second, equally exciting aim, was to broaden the museum's offerings, enriching the experiences for everyone who walks through our doors.

This transformation unfolded in two dynamic phases with Phase I consisting of a sweeping renovation of the first floor, setting the stage for an elevated visitor journey. Phase I, completed in November 2023, marked significant milestones for the museum. Key highlights include a fully redesigned front entrance, featuring a sleek, all-white Visitor's desk, an expanded Museum Bookstore and Gift Shop, as well as the addition of a modern Community Space. The Introductory Film Viewing Room was also enlarged to enhance the visitor experience. Furthermore, a realistic floor mural of railroad tracks were installed to replace the previously worn ones, preserving the museum's historical ambience and setting the tone for a fresh new visitor experience.

Halina Zimm stands in front of her projected Interactive Biography in the new Alan and Halina Zimm Theater of Remembrance.

PHASE II: CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE

SECOND-FLOOR RENOVATIONS COMPLETE

Phase II of our transformative project focused on elevating and polishing the second-floor gallery. By dry walling over the original brick walls, we created a more versatile and refined exhibition space, coupled with state-of-the-art lighting enhancements. The crowning achievement of this phase, however, is the debut of our stunning new feature—the Dimensions in Testimony exhibit.

Dimensions in Testimony, a groundbreaking collection developed by the USC Shoah Foundation, brings to life interactive biographies of Holocaust survivors and witnesses to genocide. Through advanced technology, visitors are able to engage in dynamic, real-time conversations with pre-recorded video images of these historical figures—creating a uniquely moving and personal experience.

This world-class exhibit has been made possible through the generous support of Dominion Energy and the Weinstein and Jecklin families. The theater itself is a tribute to Holocaust survivors Alan and Halina Zimm and is named in their honor—Alan and Halina Zimm Theater of Remembrance—a gift given with love by their children.

Our Dimensions in Testimony exhibit will feature Halina Zimm's deeply personal interactive biography, filmed in 2022. In addition to Halina's story, visitors will also have the opportunity to engage with the testimonies of four other significant figures: Holocaust survivors Pinchas Gutter, Eva Kor, and Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, as well as Holocaust liberator Alan Moskin.

From left to right: Jillian Sheetz (3rd Place winner of Junior Division), Carole Weinstein, Navaeh Bella Crewe (2nd place winner of Junior Division), Kate Adams, Saanjana Akunuri (1st place winner of Junior Division), Claire Teichert (Honorable mention of Junior Division), Morgan Bell (1st place of Senior Division), Molly Janousek (second place of Senior Division), Reese Burroughs (honorable mention of Senior Division), Camilla Stracener (honorable mention of Senior Division), and Julia Velazquez (honorable mention of Senior Division).

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS & SPECIAL EVENTS

Our Community Programs and Special Events are more than just gatherings—they're transformative experiences that leave a lasting impact. Each year, we host two monumental programs that reflect our deep commitment to remembrance and reflection.

In the spring, we come together for Yom HaShoah, an evocative evening dedicated to honoring the memory of the Holocaust. This year's 20th Annual Yom HaShoah Commemoration, held on May 5, 2024, was a profoundly moving occasion. Over 150 guests joined us in a powerful ceremony where Holocaust survivors and their families lit candles, symbolizing hope and remembrance. We also celebrated the Carole Weinstein Prizes for Tolerance and Justice in the Visual Arts, recognizing extraordinary contributions to these vital fields.

The evening reached its zenith with a stirring keynote address by Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat. His eloquent reflections on the enduring conflicts in Israel and the crucial lessons from the Holocaust provided us with deep insights and a renewed commitment to ensuring that history's darkest chapters are never repeated.

2024 Yom HaShaoh keynote speaker, Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat (right), meets with Holocaust Survivor Halina Zimm and Tommy Baer at the end of the program.

Special Event Attendance for the first 10 months of 2024 vs. all of 2023.

67% INCREASE

Second Generation Holocaust Survivor and VHM Board Member, Hannah Cohen, lights a candle at the 2024 Yom HaShaoh Commemoration.

VHM
manda Sadler
Paxton Berrier

SIGNATURE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM:
THE ALEXANDER LEBENSTEIN TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE (TEI)

Alexander Lebenstein Teacher Education Institute (TEI) is the signature educational program offered by the museum. TEI supports educators in understanding the Holocaust and genocide. This program, offered in partnership with Longwood University, is recommended for middle and high school educators who currently teach or wish to teach the Holocaust in their classrooms. Each summer two sessions are held focusing on historical background and pedagogy, aligning with Virginia Standards of Learning requirements. One of the most significant benefits of this program is its lasting impact: Teachers who complete the program return to their communities and through their teaching influence thousands of student lives.

TEI is named in honor of Alexander Lebenstein, OBM, a Holocaust survivor who was passionate about the importance of Holocaust education.

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

- From Context to Classroom Part I - June 24-26
- From Context to Classroom Part II - July 15-17
- Educators Attending Session I: 45
- Educators Attending Session II: 22
- Schools Represented: 40
- Localities from Around the Commonwealth Represented: 28
- Travel Scholarships Awarded: 50
- Travel Scholarship Aid Awarded: $15,000

Teachers attending a lecture in the TEI classroom.

Director of Education, Megan Ferenczy (standing), working with a group of teachers during a breakout session.

Holocaust Survivor Halina Zimm surrounded by a graduating class of teachers from From Context to Classroom Part I.

Holocaust Survivor Peter Feigl surrounded by a graduating class of teachers from From Context to Classroom Part II.

Teachers in a TEI breakout session working on an assignment.

THE BUTTERFLY PROJECT

The Butterfly Project is a new, free initiative at the Virginia Holocaust Museum (VHM). Through painting ceramic butterflies, participants create lasting symbols of resilience and hope to be permanently displayed at the museum. This act of remembrance honors the 1.5 million Jewish children murdered during the Holocaust and supports the mission to ensure we all "Never Forget."

The program, which began in California in 2006, offers a hands-on approach to Holocaust education that is both hopeful and profound. It was inspired by Pavel Friedmann's poem "The Last Butterfly," written while he was imprisoned in the Terezin concentration camp.

VHM joined the project in 2023. The museum is able to offer free Butterfly Project Kits to students in grades 4 to 12. The finished ceramic butterflies will be installed in a mural in the museum lobby as a beautiful, moving tribute to the Holocaust's youngest victims. The mural was made possible by a generous donation from the family of Holocaust survivor, Henri Maizels, in his memory.

EDUCATOR WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

Defiant Requiem: Teaching About Art & Music as Resistance During the Holocaust • October 11, 2023

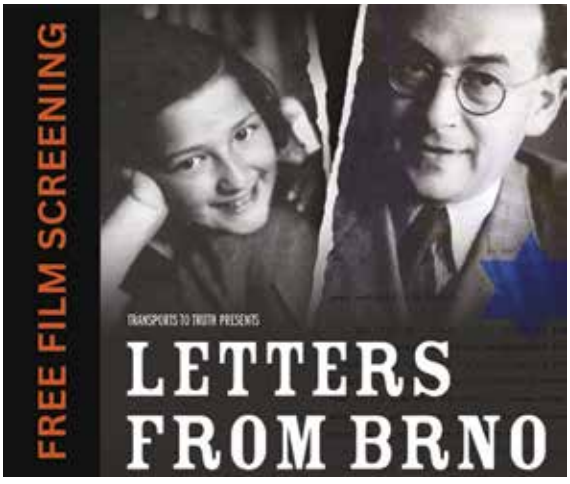
A day of professional development about the prisoners in the Terezin Ghetto who used arts and music to overcome oppression and sustain hope during the Holocaust. Participants viewed a screening of the award-winning documentary film "Defiant Requiem" and engaged in conversation with the Defiant Requiem Foundation's President & Artistic Director, Murry Sidlin. They also explored related curriculum resources and investigated other forms of cultural resistance in contemporary contexts.

How Jews Lived: Diversity in Prewar Central and Eastern Europe • November 15, 2023

A workshop focused on Jewish life before the Holocaust. From 2000 to 2009, Centropa interviewed over 1,200 elderly Jews in 15 Central and Eastern European countries. They did not use video or focus on the Holocaust. Rather, they asked their interviewees to share their entire life stories spanning the 20th century as they showed them their old family photographs. Teachers spent time with Centropa's interviews, photographs, short multimedia films, thematic websites, and podcasts about Jewish life from the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire through the first decade of the 21st century and explored the diversity of Jewish life and culture the Nazis attempted to wipe out.

Letters From Brno • January 29, 2024

A day of professional development with, Karen Kruger, writer, and director of the powerful documentary "Letters from Brno." Using Karen's family's story, the workshop addressed best practices of Holocaust education using primary resources and survivor voices. The workshop also gave educators the opportunity to learn how to research and develop personal family stories.



When Civil Society Stands Up: Sephardic Jews, the Holocaust, and the Bosnian War • March 7, 2024

A day-long workshop where teachers learned about Sephardic Jews, the Holocaust and two remarkable stories of when civil society stood up. Teachers returned to the classroom with resources in Spanish and English for teaching this history.

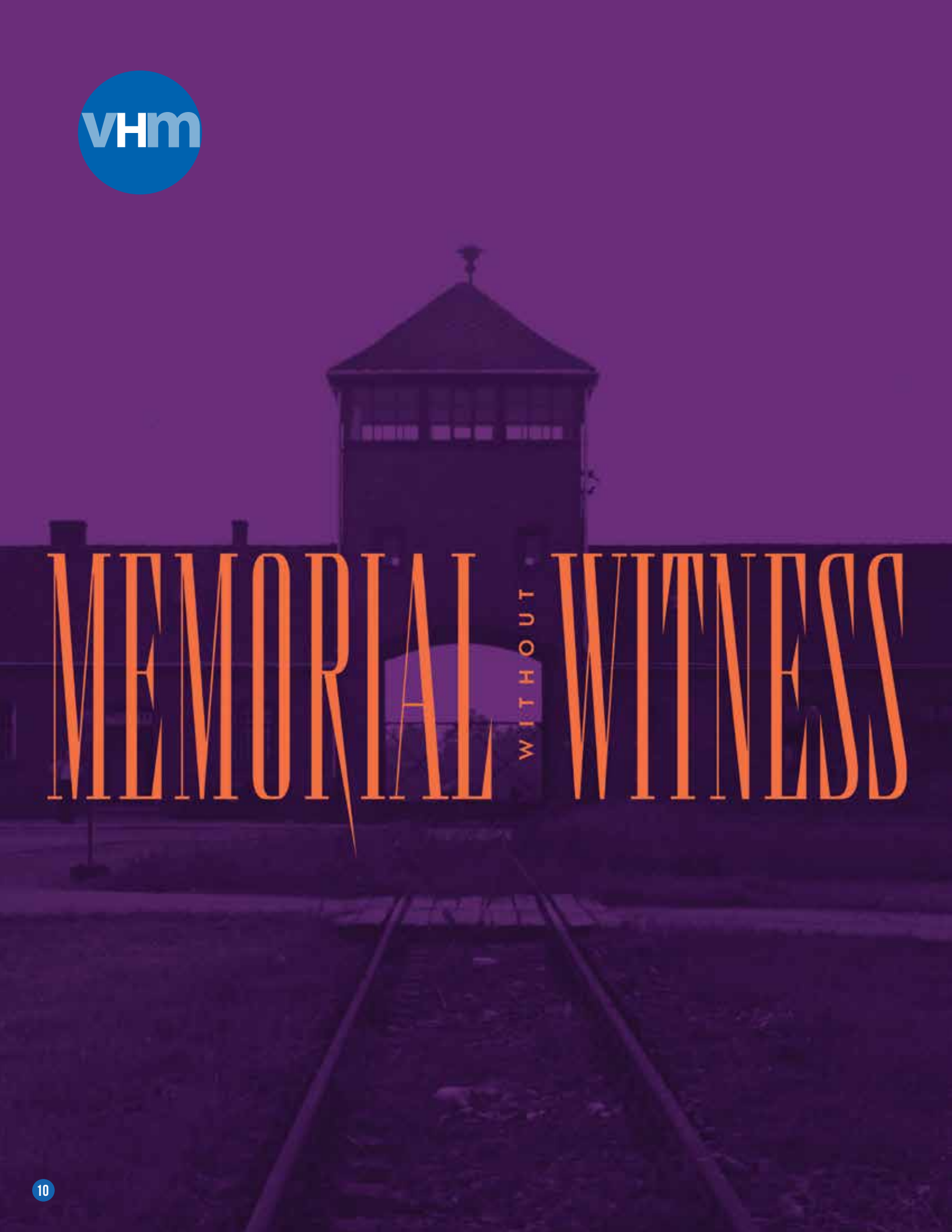

VHm
MEMORIAL
WITHOUT
A
WITNESS

EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS

FEATURED EXHIBIT: MEMORIAL WITHOUT WITNESS

November 2023 – November 2024

In July 1987, Dr. Charles W. Sydnor, Jr., VHM's Senior Historian, accepted an invitation to speak in Frankfurt. His colleague, Professor Joachim Russek, suggested a trip to Poland to visit Auschwitz. While there, he experienced the former killing center as few tourists have – a nearly empty memorial site.

For several hours, Sydnor walked among the ruins of the infamous Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp by himself. With only his camera and the ruins to keep him company, he took hundreds of black and white photos. Memorial Without Witness features a curated collection of Sydnor's images, enlarged to wall-size panels so that the visitor can see and feel what it is like to walk alone among the rubble and decay of the Nazi's most notorious death camp, Auschwitz.

Two million people visit the site each year. But on a warm afternoon in July of 1987, Dr. Charles Syndor walked the sacred grounds alone, capturing a Memorial Without Witness.

NEW PERMANENT EXHIBIT: WANNSEE CONFERENCE

Early Nazi persecution of the Jews began with anti-Jewish legislation to limit their civil liberties and saw an escalation to violence, with Kristallnacht in 1938. The start of World War II saw the creation of ghettos and in 1941 mobile killing squads were introduced as a means to eradicate entire Jewish communities. By 1942, the Nazis moved away from open-air killings, and towards industrialized mass murder. To carry out the "Final Solution," the Nazis created killing centers specifically designed for extermination rather than concentration or forced labor. The "Final Solution" was the euphemism "for the systematic, deliberate, physical annihilation of the European Jews." The "Final Solution" was discussed at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 and attended by high-ranking Nazi officials. It was at this conference that the "Final Solution" was coordinated and months later three new killing centers were established in Poland (Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka).

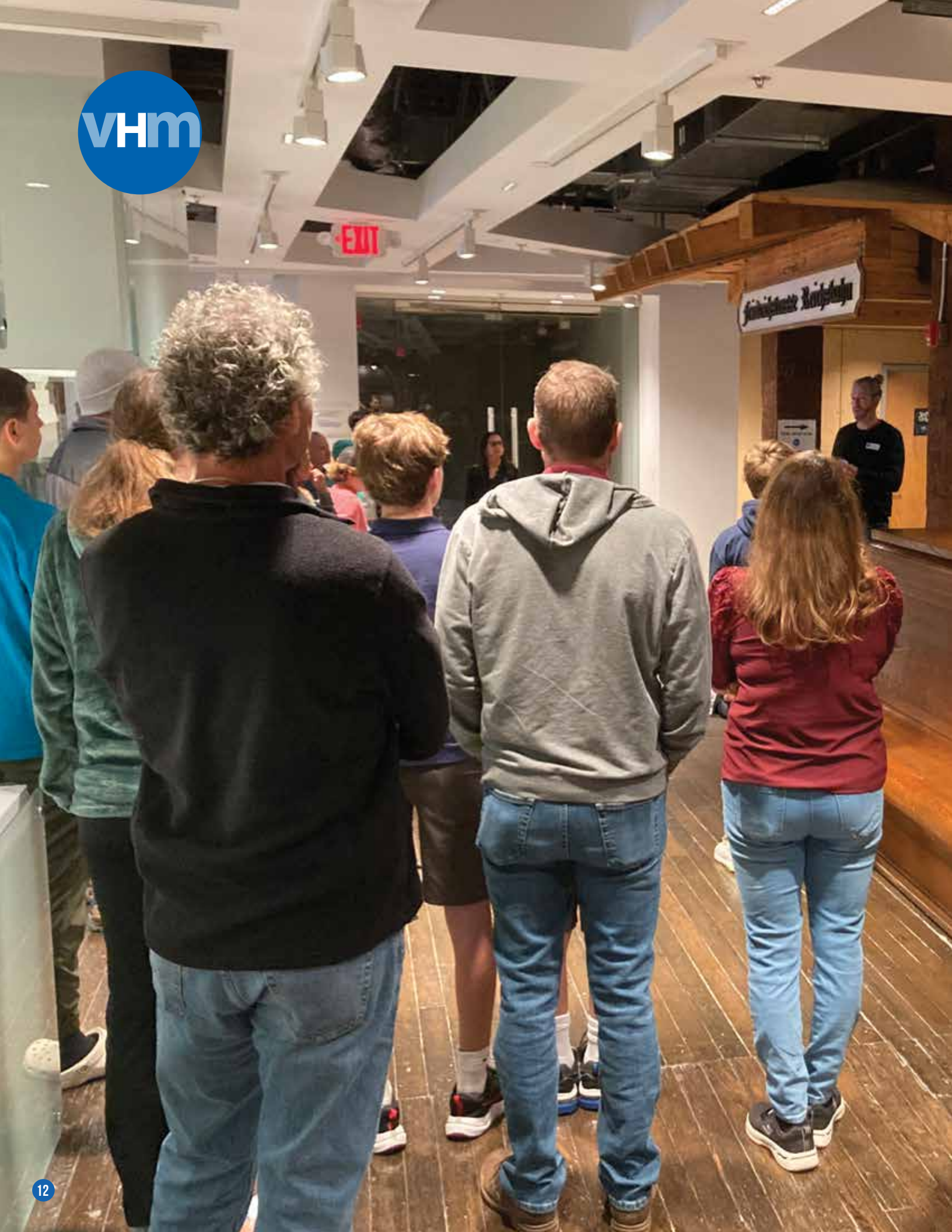
COLLECTION STATISTICS FOR THE FIRST 8 MONTHS OF 2024:

556 DONATE AN ARTIFACT REQUEST

681 ASK COLLECTIONS A QUESTION

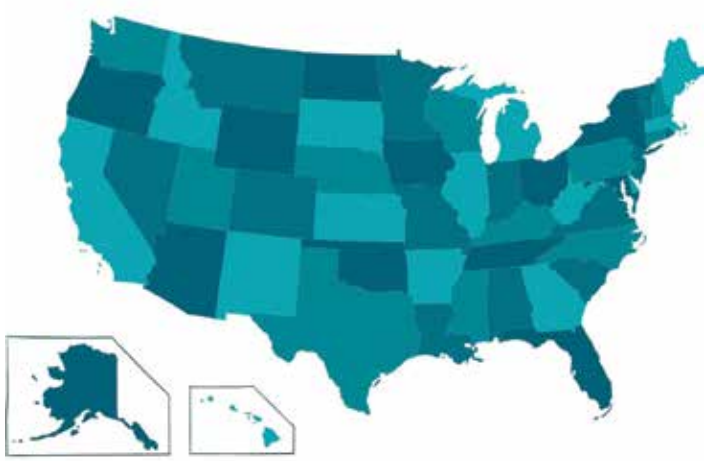
5,937 PRIMARY SOURCES USED

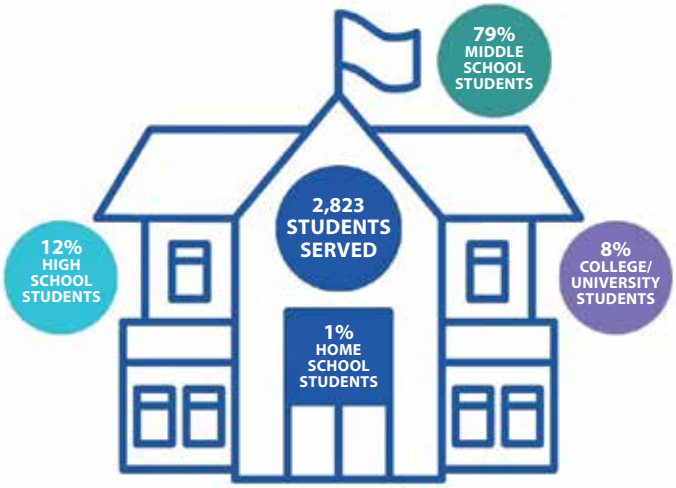
105,700 ORAL HISTORIES WATCHED


EXIT

OUR VISITORS

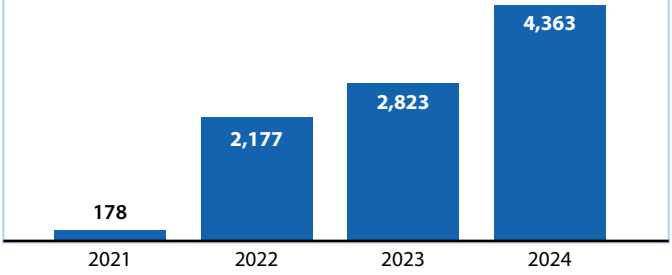
VHM hosted visitors from all 50 states (and the District of Columbia) and from countries around the globe.





VHM HOSTED 2,823 STUDENTS IN 2023

TREND: This chart shows the number of TOTAL students who visited the museum each year since the low point of the pandemic in 2021. The value shown for 2024 is not reflective of a full year, but the first 10 months of the year.



2023 WALK-INS VS GROUPS
- 67% Walk-Ins
- 12% Student Groups
- 21% Non-Students Groups

2024 WALK-INS VS GROUPS (FIRST 10 MONTHS OF 2024)
- 65% Walk-Ins
- 17% Student Groups
- 18% Non-Students Groups

JAN 2023 - OCT 2024

49,515 VISITORS

CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE

WITH GRATITUDE WE HONOR THESE DONORS

LEAD SPONSORS

The Barbara & Fred Kort Foundation & The Weinstein & Jecklin Families

Gifts of $150,000+
- The Cabell Foundation
- The Mary Morton Parsons Foundation

Gifts of $100,000+
- The Weinberg & Bocciarelli Families

Gifts of $75,000+
- The Anne Carter Robins & Walter R. Robins Foundation
- Dominion Energy

Gifts of $50,000+
- The Koller Family+
- Charles Beorn, OBM
- The Brown Family Trust
- Linda O. Ferguson & Jessie Ferguson
- The Novick* & Schwarz* Families:
  - Jane & Maurice* C. Schwarz,
  - Penny G. & Harry* Schwarz,
  - Susie* Schwarz-Novick & David Novick
- Kim & John B. O'Grady
- United Jewish Federation of Tidewater and its Holocaust Commission
  - Annie & Art Sandler & Family
  - Steve Sandler & Margot Miller & Families

Gifts of $25,000+
- Beejay & Donald Brown
- The Binshtok Families
- Elly* & Josh Goldberg
- Carol Loupassi
- The Sament Families:
  - Richard* S. & Jessica F. Samet
  - Norman G. & Sylvia* L. Samet
- Kathie & Steve Markel
- The Zimm Family:
  - David & Rebecca (Zimm) Parisier
  - John & Ruth (Zimm) McMahon
  - Dr. Sol Zimm
  - Drs. Joshua Zimm & Allyson Ocean

Gifts of $20,000+
- The Itzkowitz & Fayman Families
- The Ronald Plotkin, Daniel, Metzger, Vorenberg & Tate Families
- The Scher Families

Gifts of $15,000+
- Hannah* & Allen Cohen
- The Horwitz Family
- Jill & Ben* Kutner
- Huda & Fred Rahal

FOUNDED 1997
VHM
CAMPAIGN FOR THE FUTURE

PRESERVING HISTORY TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE

Gifts of $10,000+
- Belleman Family
- Doris Chance
- Miriam* and Daniel Davidow and Family
- Eva Teig & Michael Hardy
- Deborah Minaloff & Alan Kirshner
- David Lebenstein* & Family
- Rosenthal Family
- Barbara Shocket
- Dawn & Stuart Siegel
- The Marilyn & Marvin Simon Philanthropic Fund
- Susan & Mark Sisisky
- Bobby & Jayne Ukrop
- Morris Willner
- Sandra & Frank Zieve

Gifts of $5,000+
- Samuel H. Asher
- Bernstein Enterprises
- Rhona & Irv Blank
- Shelly & Joseph* Brodecki
- Carlson Financial
- Katheryn & Christopher Curtis
- Susan & Arthur Davis
- Robyn & David Galperin
- Jill & Howard Goldfine
- Jeanne Saunders & Russ Jennings
- Jeanie Keys
- Judith Levine Maizels
- Elisa & Rich Malkman
- Gail & James Plotkin
- Faye* & Jerry Rosenthal
- Peggy & Dan Siegel
- Lynn & Jay Schwartz
- Morton Thalhimer, Jr., Morton Thalhimer, III & Richard Thalhimer
- Cheryl Krueger & John Urbach*

Gifts of $2,500+
- Anonymous
- Susan & Phillip* Baum
- Suzanne Frick & William Bruckner*
- Betty & Matthew Grossman
- Wolfe Joffe*
- Sandra & Stewart Kasen
- Gabriel Laufer*
- Susan J. Meyers
- Ronnie Rosenfeld
- Kathleen & Richard Seward, III
- Susan & Brian Wasserman

Gifts of $1,000+
- Betty & Tommy Baer
- Elena Barr Baum & Gary Baum
- Sam Seeley & Kenneth Dye
- Eileen May & Stanley* Feuer
- Marie & Bernard Henderson
- Faye* & Fred Kessler
- Lenora* & Levy* Kopelovich
- David* Kupfer
- Max* Maizels & Family
- Anthony Markel
- Julie* & Paul Ratki
- Shauna & Randolph* Shapiro

Gifts of $500+
- Leslie & Howard Baron
- Leslie & David Greenberg
- Betty & Michael Wolf

All Other Gifts
- Aliza* & Rabbi Dovid* Asher
- Ellen Brothers*
- The Honorable Betsy Carr
- Lisa Fantasia*
- Carolyn Dean & Lonny Green
- Susan Greenbaum & Christopher Parker
- Lenora* & Randy Howard
- Deborah Josefson
- Novalene & Norman Melchert
- Susan Rubin*
- Elise Emanuel & David Scherer
- Virginia & Jack* Shapiro
- Nicholas* Shapiro & Jaime Miller
- Lenora* & Michael Solodar
- Wilson Torrence
- Thelma Williams Tunstall
- John Valvo

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* Denotes a 2nd or 3rd Generation Holocaust Survivor
\+ Denotes Bequest

IGNITE CHANGE AND HONOR HISTORY: YOUR SUPPORT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Holocaust survivor Odette Cook and her daughter Valerie Grant, lighting the candles at VHM's 2024 Yom HaShoah Commemoration.

At the Virginia Holocaust Museum, we invite you to become a beacon of hope and preservation. Your contribution, whether through a generous donation, a planned gift, volunteering your time, or another form of support, is crucial to sustaining our mission. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, every bit of your support directly fuels our efforts to educate, commemorate, and inspire.

With your help, we offer expertly curated Holocaust exhibits, free educational programs, and impactful public programming. Together, we ensure that the lessons of history are never forgotten and work tirelessly to prevent future atrocities.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE:

- Keep the Museum Open and Accessible: Free admission and parking seven days a week.
- Engage with History: Docent-led tours for groups of 10 or more.
- Educate the Next Generation: Guide over 120 school groups on field trips annually.
- Revitalize Exhibits: Renovate our permanent displays and introduce new, captivating temporary exhibits.
- Preserve the Past: Care for over 4,800 Holocaust-related artifacts.
- Empower Educators: Offer free professional development workshops and travel scholarships for teachers outside of Central Virginia.
- Collaborate for Greater Impact: Partner with organizations like Longwood University and Echoes & Reflections.

Your involvement, whether you are a first-time donor or a long-time supporter, is invaluable. Join us in preserving history, honoring the victims, and shaping a future of understanding and tolerance. Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to our cause.

GET INVOLVED TODAY AND MAKE A LASTING IMPACT!

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 2023
WITH COMPS FOR YEAR ENDED 2022

	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	2023 TOTAL	2022 TOTAL
Revenue and Support:				
Public support:				
Contributions and grants	$786,913	$2,178,249	**$2,965,162**	$1,623,560
Other income:				
Museum sales, net	3,097	—	**3,097**	(483)
Rental income	8,919	—	**8,919**	9,488
In-kind donations	—	—	—	835
Employee retention tax credit recovery	62,933	—	**62,933**	—
Interest and dividends, net	18,439	14,555	**32,994**	28,982
Realized gain (loss) on investments	4,291	1,118	**5,409**	87,105
Unrealized gain on investments	82,253	30,306	**112,559**	(236,763)
Total other income	179,932	45,979	**225,911**	(110,836)
Net assets released from restrictions	2,084,524	(2,084,524)	—	—
TOTAL revenue, gains, and support	**3,051,369**	**139,704**	**3,191,073**	**1,512,724**
Expenses:				
Program services	1,133,976	—	**1,133,976**	887,413
Management and general	196,300	—	**196,300**	178,306
Fundraising	50,204	—	**50,204**	59,204
TOTAL expenses	**1,380,480**	—	**1,380,480**	**1,124,923**
Change in net assets	1,670,889	139,704	**1,810,593**	387,801
Net assets, beginning of year	3,382,973	4,259,218	**7,642,191**	7,254,390
Net assets, end of year	$5,053,862	$4,398,922	**$9,452,784**	$7,642,191

VIRGINIA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM

Virginia Holocaust Museum
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(804) 257-4314 (fax)

www.vaholocaust.org

Mon–Fri 9 am–5 pm
Sat–Sun 11 am–5 pm

Closed New Year's Day, Easter, first day of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve.

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