



HOLOCAUST MUSEUM  
& STUDY CENTER

THE BRONX HIGH SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

*The Bronx High School of Science, together with its Alumni Association and Endowment Fund, cordially invite you to the ribbon-cutting celebration of the newly re-designed Holocaust Museum and Studies Center at The Bronx High School of Science. Our new facility provides a permanent space to protect and conserve the Museum's collection of over 900 artifacts and to further its mission to promote tolerance and understanding of all people through the historic lens of the Holocaust.*

*Friday, April 19, 2013 10:30a - 12n*

*The Bronx High School of Science  
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The Bronx High School of Science is unique in so many ways. One of the school's special features is the Holocaust Museum & Studies Center. Since its founding in 1938, the Bronx High School of Science has developed a worldwide reputation as one of the best high schools in the United States, attracting a blend of intellectually gifted NYC students who are culturally, ethnically, and economically diverse. The college preparatory curriculum is just as diverse as the school's students. This curriculum includes a Holocaust Studies and Tolerance course that blends history, leadership and museum curatorial skills.

Founded in 1978 by legendary Bronx Science Social Studies teacher, Dr. Stuart S. Elenko, the Bronx High School of Science Holocaust Museum & Studies Center is one of the oldest Holocaust Centers in the United States, predating the Museum of Jewish Heritage at Battery Park and the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C.

Recognized as one of the most significant Holocaust Programs in the nation, the school's collection has been visited by 60,000 people since its opening. Many ministers of education from all around the world have been known to visit as well as other notable people such as Nobel Prize winner, Professor Elie Wiesel, Justice Antonin Scalia, former New York Governor George Pataki, former-First Lady Barbara Bush as well as famed Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal, renown architect and alumnus, Daniel Libeskind and noted psychiatrist Dr. Ruth Westheimer.

The backbone of the Bronx Science Holocaust Museum & Studies Center is

## THE HOLOCAUST LEADERSHIP CLASS

The Holocaust Leadership course at Bronx Science is one of the most unique classes found in any high school in the world. Students selected for this course become administrators in Bronx Science's internationally renowned Holocaust Museum & Studies Center. This leadership class meets one period each day and students are also required serve one additional period a day in the Museum. Every year, students in the Holocaust Leadership class host an event for the school. These have included a Kristalnacht commemoration; a Yom HaShoah school wide assembly; and a fundraiser for Darfuri refugee children.

## MISSION OF THE BRONX HS OF SCIENCE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM & STUDIES CENTER

To educate students, teachers, and visitors about the horrors of the Holocaust while promoting respect, tolerance and combating prejudice.

## THE EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF THE MUSEUM AND COURSE ARE:

- Teaching about the Holocaust.
- Teaching about tolerance.
- Providing a unique hands-on way of teaching history in the context of Bronx Science as a laboratory school.
- Students learning the value of primary source materials.
- Serving as an educational tool beyond Bronx Science by reaching out to other high schools as well as middle schools in NYC, the nation and the world.
- Serving as a resource for teachers and scholars worldwide.
- Serving as a resource for the broader community by offering tours to senior citizens, other schools and community groups.

To accomplish these goals, students in the Holocaust Leadership class examine the history of anti-Semitism, the effects of propaganda, the rise of Nazism, and the subsequent persecution of the Jewish people. After studying the Holocaust, the students grapple with the nature of genocide and examine other genocides throughout history, including the Armenian Genocide. Ultimately, the students become teachers themselves and share the lessons that they have learned with the rest of the Bronx Science student body and with the greater New York City community.

"The museum is not just about the Holocaust. It's about teaching tolerance, so something like this won't happen again to any group of people."

—Ben Frazier, Bronx High School of Science student

"The highest aim of education is tolerance."

—Helen Keller

"The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it."

—Albert Einstein

## HISTORY

Dr. Elenko assembled objects through donation and purchase that relate to the Holocaust and the battle to defeat Hitler and the Nazis. Both European and American anti-Semitism are also represented in the collection and have been important teaching aids. What is most notable is that many of the objects were donated by former Bronx HS of Science students and alumni who were personally impacted by the Holocaust. Many of these students and alumni had parents who survived the concentration camps and many relatives who did not. Over time, the collection grew to almost 1,000 objects.

The collection was so vast and the available storage and exhibit space so small that the majority of the collection was placed on loan to The Museum of Jewish Heritage in NYC in 2001. Over the next few years, Bronx Science summer interns, under the guidance of the MJH, properly catalogued all of these objects. Other interns measured the objects and, in addition to completing inventory forms, also created condition surveys for each of the objects.



The old "museum" space in the Bronx Science Library.



Posters



Ephemera



Uniforms



Documents



Objects



Photos



A vast collection....



...had to be put into storage.

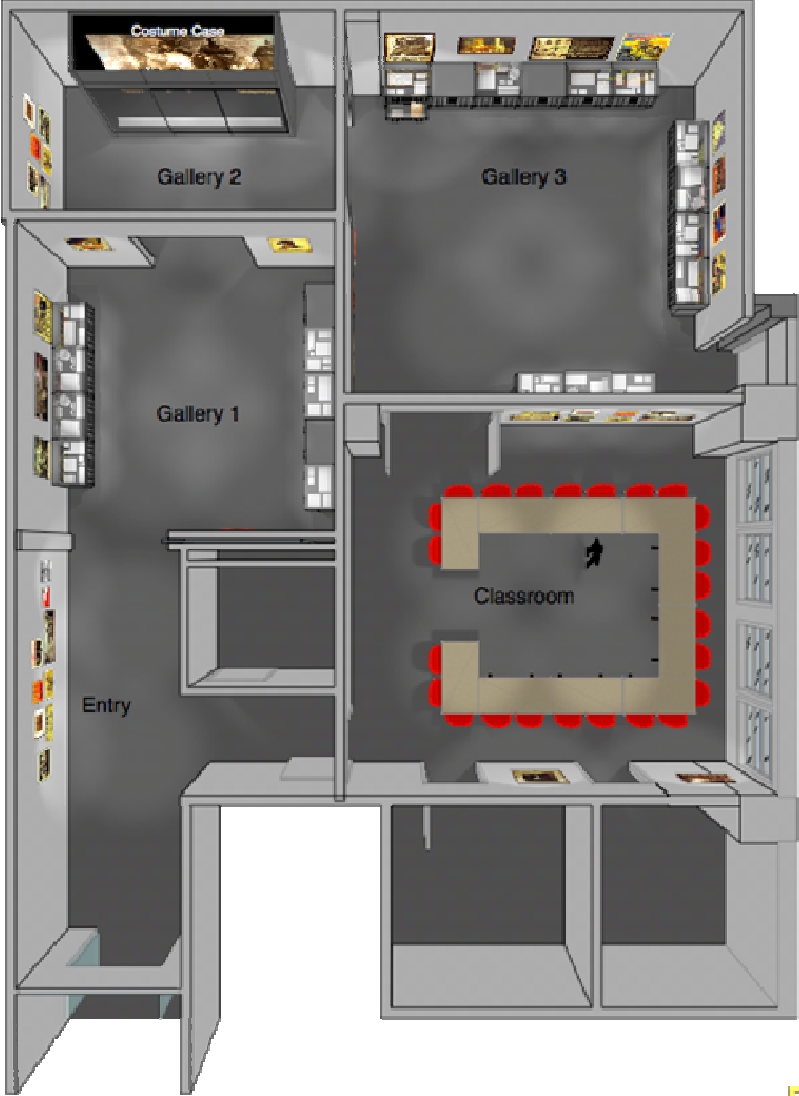
## A SOLUTION

In 2009 a decision was made to create a permanent and safe home for the collection with key emphasis on giving the students greater access to the collection.

Space was secured to create a true museum quality exhibit and learning space dedicated for the Holocaust Museum & Studies Center and Program. This will also allow many more visitors to the center. The entire collection is being digitized and catalogued. This will allow for additional distance learning experiences for students elsewhere and give the Bronx Science students the chance to become the next generation of stewards and story tellers so that the world never forgets.

A fund raising campaign was launched by the Bronx HS of Science Endowment Fund, Inc. and the Bronx HS of Science Alumni Association to make this a reality.

Curators with expertise in creating educationally based Holocaust exhibits were engaged to guide is in this process. The state of the collection was assessed and recommendations made about how to develop a permanent interpretive exhibit in the context of a newly designed Holocaust Museum and Study Center at the Bronx High School of Science. This broad reaching plan's goal was to create not only a permanent exhibit, but also a gallery for temporary exhibits, storage space, a library, and a classroom.





EAT  
10/21/11



EAT  
10/21/11



EAT  
10/2/11



EAT  
9/11/11



EAT  
3/13/13



EAT  
12/21/11

## TEACHING TOLERANCE

Today, the Bronx High School of Science is more culturally diverse than ever. Many of the students are immigrants from countries where racism, intolerance and violence are still rampant. As such, The Holocaust Leadership course is more relevant than ever. It is one of the most unique classes found in any high school in the world. Students selected from this course become administrators in Bronx Science's internationally renowned Holocaust Museum, the only such museum in any university, college or high school. The leadership class meets one period each day and students must also be willing to serve as curators of the facility. There is a great emphasis on sharing information and outreach to other schools and centers. The school has even conducted distance learning programs with other schools in Germany and elsewhere.

“My goal is ultimately that the students learn how to empathize, especially with someone different. In a school as diverse as Bronx Science, I think it's an essential goal,” says Sophia Sapozhnikov, the English teacher who currently conducts the Holocaust class and oversees the museum. “Bronx Science has a reputation for churning out scientists and Nobel Prize winners, but I also want to develop thinking, feeling, empathic human beings.”

## A NEW MUSEUM

Construction on the new Bronx Science Holocaust Museum & Studies Center began this past summer and is slated for completion in April 2013. The new 2,000 sq. foot facility will include 3 galleries, one lecture hall, two research rooms and ample museum quality display and storage features. The Bronx Science Endowment Fund has been engaged in fund raising for this special project. We are pleased to announce that we have recently received a generous grant from the Claire Friedlander Family Foundation directed by Peter Klein (Class of 1983). Overseen by Peter Klein, the Foundation is devoted to promoting tolerance throughout the world, proliferation of the arts and advocacy for people who need help. Mr. Klein has stated that, "The Friedlander Family Foundation was established by Claire Friedlander, a Holocaust Survivor whose life was saved by people who took a stand against prejudice and intolerance. Only through interactive, passionate courses taught by facilitators and educators can we maintain the memories and lessons of the Holocaust - to learn from it, so it can never happen again - anywhere or to anyone. The Bronx Science Holocaust Museum & Studies Center embodies Claire Friedlander's legacy and we are honored to support this unique learning facility."

The first grant towards the new Bronx Science Holocaust Museum and Studies Center was made, a few years ago, by The Joan and Jerome R. ('42) Jakubovitz Foundation. Jerry Jakubovitz was a Bronx native and member of the first freshman class at Bronx Science in September 1938. He graduated in 1942 as part of the first, four year graduating class of the school and went on to become a successful real estate appraiser, developer and entrepreneur. He was also a philanthropist and believed fervently in the power of education to change lives and, ultimately, the world. He was the first member of the Jakubovitz family to attend Bronx Science and was followed by his daughter Debra ('70) and son Bruce ('74) who also serves on the Board of both the Alumni Association and Endowment Fund. Bruce has stated "My father's connection to the Bronx, to Bronx Science, to supporting education and to preserving the memory of the Holocaust to help ensure it never happens again to any group, makes our family's participation in the new Bronx Science Holocaust Museum and Studies Center very fitting."

## THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE GUIDED THIS PROJECT SO FAR:

Sophia Sapozhnikov has been an English teacher at Bronx Science for 11 years. Having attended Barnard College, Ms. Sapozhnikov teacher honors creative writing, AP English Language and Composition as well as the Holocaust Leadership course. It is the last course that is of particular personal interest to her. Ms. Sapozhnikov's grandfather survived the Holocaust by fleeing Romania during the war. Five of his siblings died in Auschwitz. Her maternal grandmother, who is Ukrainian, saved a family of Jews by hiding them in her church. Ms. Sapozhnikov was born in Lviv, Ukraine while it was still under Soviet rule. Her family fled as refugees when they were deemed treacherous and had their citizenship revoked.

Jill Vexler, PHD is a curator and cultural anthropologist who has curated numerous exhibits on the Holocaust, Jewish History, and human rights. She has designed and acted as project manager for several permanent exhibitions worldwide. She is also the author of "Shaping Holocaust Memory in Museums".

Fred Wasserman is curator and museum consultant. He is the former Deputy Director for Programs at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco, and prior to that was the Henry J. Leir Curator at The Jewish Museum, New York.

Sam Morse of Southside Design has designed and built the custom cabinetry to serve the dual purpose of safe archival of the collection as well as allowing for maximum access by the students. Sam has also provided exhibit and storage solutions for The Asia Society, The Carnegie Museums, The Jewish Museum, The Long Island Museum, The Museum of Jewish Heritage and The Noguchi Museum.

Robin Parkinson, of Exhibition Art & Technology, conceptualized and designed the new space to house the school's collection. His expertise in shaping original and informative museum experiences for over 25 years helped meet the challenges of housing a large collection in a small space while ensuring maximum access to the artifacts. His past projects have been seen in leading institutions including The Jewish Museum, the Long Island Museum, the Cooper-Hewitt National Museum of Design, the Ellis Island Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Leo Blackman Architects helped the team turn school office space into a professional museum quality gallery.

Special thanks to our supporters thus far:

The Claire Friedlander Foundation /Peter J. Klein ('83)

The Joan and Jerome R. ('42) Jakubovitz Foundation

New York City Council/Councilman G. Oliver Koppell ('58)

New York City Department of Education

Dr. Stuart S. Elenko, Teacher and Founder

Additional information:

[www.bxscience.edu](http://www.bxscience.edu)

[www.bxsciencefund.org](http://www.bxsciencefund.org)

<http://bxscimuseum.webs.com/>

<http://alumni.bxscience.edu/>





## **At Bronx Science, A Different Kind Of Lab**

**Students train to become Holocaust educators at the elite public high school's unusual museum.**

January 16, 2009 Carolyn Slutsky, Staff Writer

BRONX, NY The entryway of The Bronx High School of Science is dominated by an enormous, tiled mural depicting scientists and their empirical discoveries, along with a quotation by the famous philosopher and education reformer John Dewey: "Every great advance in science has issued from a new audacity of imagination."

But in the case of the only Holocaust museum located within a New York City public school, imagination accounts for more than just scientific advancement.

For 30 years, the Holocaust Museum and Study Center, one of the first Holocaust museums in the nation, with a unique and sweeping collection of artifacts, has been a centerpiece of this school, helping to shape the lives and perspectives of its diverse student body of nearly 3,000 people hailing from all over the city and world.

Located in a back room within the school's library (though slated to move to a larger space with modern technology later this year), the collection was founded in 1978 by Stuart Elenko, a history teacher (now retired) at Bronx Science. After World War II, Elenko worked with a Jewish survivor organization, and from that time collected Holocaust artifacts, which he eventually donated to the museum.

The museum is entirely student-run, with student guides taking a "Holocaust Leadership" class that meets daily and prepares them for the complex task of navigating their peers and other visitors through the complicated, tragic history of the Holocaust, while teaching tolerance and understanding.

“My goal is ultimately that the students learn how to empathize, especially with someone different. In a school as diverse as Bronx Science, I think it’s an essential goal,” says Sophia Sapozhnikov, the English teacher who for the past two years has taught the Holocaust class and administered the museum. “Bronx Science has a reputation for churning out scientists and Nobel Prize winners, but I also want to develop thinking, feeling, empathic human beings.”

The class takes an in-depth look at the history of the Nazis, the Jews in Europe and the legacy of the extermination of six million Jews and five million others, and makes comparisons between the Holocaust and other genocides for its students, who come from a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Sapozhnikov’s classroom looks much like any other in this public school, cluttered with plastic-and-metal desks, posters, book-bags and kids. But once she begins teaching, a quiet falls over the room and the students turn reflective about their reasons for committing to a yearlong Holocaust class and tour-guide training program.

For Perri Feldman, who long felt a connection to the Holocaust, taking the class was a way to confront the sadness she felt lingering around the history of the Jews during World War II.

“I didn’t like to talk about it, but it’s important to talk about what happened because it could happen again if we don’t make people aware of it,” she says. Despite her sadness, she realized that “I could be one of the people who could help make it not happen again. So I fought through it, walked into the museum ... and didn’t let the sadness prevent me from learning about it.”

Now, says Feldman, she realizes “you can never escape human nature, but you can address stereotypes and make society better.”

Feldman’s classmate, Arielle Kellman, says she always read a lot about the Holocaust, but what inspired her to take the class was its mission statement.

“It preaches tolerance and makes sure hatred stops and we spread peace,” says Kellman.

Nick Capon, a Catholic student, says he welcomed the opportunity to learn about Judaism and religions other than his own; he also appreciated the chance to learn public speaking and leadership through the tour-guide training.

“To be able to teach other people was something I wanted to do,” he says.

In addition to focusing on Holocaust history, the class, which students say has become its own community within the vast building, teaching members how to get along with each other, helps students address the tensions inherent in a school as large and multicultural as Bronx Science.

“Our school is diverse and we see tensions and problems within the different ethnicities,” says Laura Karson, mentioning a recent incident in which a student scrawled, “the Holocaust didn’t happen,” on a poster advertising the museum. The school combated that graffiti and ignorance by holding a Tolerance Day, during which the members of the Holocaust class were central participants.

“We explain through the museum what can happen if we don’t learn about each other,” adds Karson.

“A huge thing this class does is correct misconceptions,” says Madison Gardiner. “The Holocaust wasn’t just [a persecution of] Jewish people; there were five million other ‘outcasts’ attacked during World War II,” as well.

“It focuses on the nature of genocides in general,” says Katia Lin, a sentiment echoed by other classmates, both Jewish and from other traditions. “Not just about genocide but about how to help victims.”

While the group of students discuss their motivations for taking the class upstairs, others are downstairs in the museum learning the techniques of how to guide visitors through the museum from seasoned upper classmen who have undergone the training themselves.

“The Holocaust was the climax of anti-Semitism,” explains Josef Goodman, a senior, as he points out the museum’s rich and varied material artifacts.

They include part of a Torah scroll salvaged from Kristallnacht, a Jewish concentration camp medical orderly jacket and Sonderkommando Nazi crematorium orderly jacket, a collection of Nazi-imposed Star of David patches from various countries and a transcript of the Israeli police interrogation of infamous Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. There are colorful posters and devastating documents, many of which cannot be found in more established museums like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., or the Museum of Jewish Heritage downtown in Battery Park City.

There are no labels on any of the artifacts, which ensures that the students know their stuff: by the end of the training, their knowledge of specific Nuremberg laws, German society and even snippets of the Polish, German, and other languages that appear on some of the objects, is solid and impressive.

Sapozhnikov hopes to expand the scope of the Holocaust museum's visitors from current students, alumni and parents to other students from local public schools, as well as elderly residents of the nearby Hebrew Home for the Aged in Riverdale.

To this end, the students have adapted the tour to fit all age groups and visitors, shifting the graphic details depending on their audience.

"The gist [of the tour] is the same but we have PG, PG-13 and R-rated versions," says Lucas Killcoyne, a student tour guide. Ultimately, he adds, "the real message of our tour is tolerance and acceptance."

For more information about the Holocaust Museum and Study Center at the Bronx Science High School, please visit: [www.bxscimuseum.com](http://www.bxscimuseum.com).

[http://www.thejewishweek.com/special\\_sections/education\\_careers/ed\\_bronx\\_science](http://www.thejewishweek.com/special_sections/education_careers/ed_bronx_science)