

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE JEWISH FOUNDATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS

Corporate Backgrounder

There are many tragic stories about the Holocaust and very few with positive endings, but The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) has some affirmative stories to tell of human beings—both Christians and Muslims—who reached out to save Jewish victims of German persecution.

JFR is a unique non-profit dedicated to identifying, honoring, and supporting those Christians and Muslims—Righteous Gentiles—who risked their lives and often the lives of their families to save Jews from death in Europe and Eastern Europe during the Holocaust and to educate future generations about the history of the Holocaust.

Founded by Rabbi Harold Schulweis in 1986 to fulfill the traditional Jewish commitment to recognize goodness, today JFR is led by Harvey Schulweis, chairman, and Roman Kent, president. Stanlee Stahl has been its long-time executive vice president.

Today the Righteous, like Jewish Holocaust survivors, are aging and living in poverty. Through its Rescuer Support Program, JFR provides monthly financial support to more than 450 rescuers in 20 countries. The rescuers use the funds from the JFR to pay for food, housing, and medical expenses. To receive funds, an applicant must be recognized as a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Authority, and prove they need financial assistance.

JFR's national Holocaust education program, called "Teaching the Holocaust: History Perspectives and Choices," seeks to educate middle and high school teachers about the Holocaust so that they can effectively teach their students about the seminal event of the last century.

Each year JFR holds a weeklong Summer Institute for Teachers, an education program in Holocaust studies, at Columbia University. Approximately 35 educators are selected for the exclusive program through a rigorous screening process. At the request of the State Department,

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JFR has provided full scholarships for foreign teachers from Poland, Croatia, and Hungary to attend. All teachers who attend the annual Summer Institute for teachers are known as Lerner Fellows, a tribute to Alfred Lerner, founding chairman and chief executive officer of MBNA Corp., who was a long-time advisor and generous supporter of JFR from its early years.

After an educator has participated in the Summer Institute, they become eligible to apply for the group's European Study Program in Germany and Poland where they will visit authentic sites from the Holocaust including former concentration and death camps, former shtetes, and master advanced teaching techniques for presenting Holocaust education programs in their schools.

The program is a high-level, intensive educational experience that enables educators to travel to key sites associated with the Holocaust and see firsthand the death camps and the remains of ghettos, shtetls, and Jewish cemeteries. Educators meet with Holocaust survivors, rescuers, local historians, and teachers in Germany and Poland. The two-week program ends in Auschwitz-Birkenau where the group spends four days reviewing documents in the archives and spending time in both camps. There is also time for reflection and discussion on approaches to teaching the Holocaust based upon their experience having visited authentic sites.

The organization offers a program for young Jewish boys and girls as they become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The program enables the young person to make their celebration even more meaningful by combining charity and education. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be linked or "twinned" with one of the Righteous Gentiles by making a contribution to support that rescuer.