

The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus

Nature of the request

The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus (HMC) requests a \$71,774 planning grant for a permanent exhibition and related resources. Located in suburban Detroit, the HMC is one of the pre-eminent regional centers for Holocaust learning in the country, drawing visitors from across Michigan and the entire Midwest region. The HMC also reaches students across Michigan with its educator training program. Developed in 2018 in response to a new state mandate to provide at least six hours of Holocaust instruction to public school students, the fledgling program has already reached educators in half the counties in the state.

The HMC engages people in compelling content and builds lasting connections to the Holocaust and its stories. Reaching Jews and non-Jews, youth and adults, students and educators, the HMC assures that the next generation is equipped with the knowledge and critical thinking to challenge hatred and intolerance. However, today's museums and centers are no longer passive experiences where visitors wander through, viewing exhibits and reading displays. In order to keep pace with contemporary audiences, the HMC is boldly looking ahead to the future with plans to raise \$8 million for a full update of its core permanent exhibit, while also raising an additional \$8 million fund for investment for future exhibit enhancements.

The HMC has already invested over \$100,000 on a study outlining a potential vision for the exhibition from Ralph Appelbaum Associates, a leading museum exhibition design firm. Much of the concept laid out here draws on this plan. The HMC is seeking support from the National Endowment for the Humanities to first convene a group of Holocaust scholars to assess these strategies and provide feedback. The grant would also allow for prototyping new interpretive approaches and testing content delivery strategies with museum visitors of different ages and backgrounds, facilitated by an external evaluator. We will then hold another virtual gathering of scholars for additional discussion based on the responses from general audiences. The end result will be a report of scholarly recommendations and a formal evaluation plan for the reimagining of the permanent core exhibit and related resources.

The overarching strategy for the renovation of our permanent exhibition is to connect visitors more directly with personal stories from the Holocaust. This will be brought about via new design strategies and an updated palette of technological elements and will incorporate shifts of emphasis based on recent historical scholarship.

The new exhibition would be organized around four areas: Broadening Horizons: Europe Before the Holocaust; The Abyss: Occupied Lands During the Holocaust; New Worlds: Emigration After the Holocaust; and Living Memory: The Holocaust Today. One major goal is to create a consistent thread throughout the entire experience via a more than century-long timeline from 1910 to today, which acts as a spine for locating and understanding the personal stories encountered. This will allow for a deeper contextual understanding of the Holocaust's relationship to the past and the present.

Humanities content

At the HMC, our current visitors experience a brief exposure to the most researched era in human history – revealing a flourishing culture and its brutal suppression, a chronicle of admirable and heroic rescuers and abject executioners. Most visitors participate in a guided tour of the museum, often followed by a climactic, live presentation by a local Holocaust survivor. However, the passing of the era of Holocaust survivors makes urgent the desire to preserve their memories. As the Holocaust moves beyond the firsthand memory of living people, it risks becoming perceived as distant history (particularly among young visitors). This transition will require a major reorientation and new forms of engagement.

To align ourselves with today's best practices in pedagogy and education, the HMC recently restructured our guided tour as more of an interactive experience rather than a history lecture. The updated tour creates a deeper understanding of the Holocaust through presentation techniques that encourage participation and interaction with the exhibits. Guests are asked to interpret art and photographs. They hear answers to major questions about the Holocaust: Why the Jews? Why the Germans? Why didn't more Jews resist or leave altogether? Why didn't more people help?



The current content includes:

The Eternal Flame and Memorial Wall: In Jewish practice, a twenty-four hour candle is lit on the anniversary of the death of a parent or child. For many, there is no known anniversary date for relatives lost in the Holocaust; no grave to visit, and, increasingly, no one to remember. For all these innocent souls, we keep a flame burning inside the Museum.

The Boxcar: The Henrietta and Alvin Weisberg Gallery tells the horrors of deportation by rail to the ghettos, death camps and concentration camps of Europe. The Gallery's centerpiece is an actual World War 2-era boxcar used by the Nazis at the time Jews and other "undesirables" were being transported to implement the Final Solution. The boxcar is set in historically accurate architecture of the Hannoverscher Bahnhof station platform in Hamburg, Germany. A mural and audio-visual elements add to the experience.

The Timeline: It is important to contextualize events within world history. All events are the result of actions that came before and, in turn, influence events that follow. The Museum currently displays a history of the Jewish people, which is juxtaposed with milestones in world history, but which is segmented from the rest of the institution.

Museum of European Jewish Heritage: The Museum of European Jewish Heritage is a gallery which uses kiosks, murals, and religious artifacts to tell the story of European Jewish culture and antisemitism from the second century CE through contemporary times. Eastern European shtetl life is prominently featured.

Descent into Nazism: As guests move toward a portrait of Adolf Hitler, they descend into darkness. They learn of persecution, resistance, fear and unparalleled courage, families uprooted, separated, confined and murdered, the unspeakable atrocities of the perpetrators and the silence of the bystanders.



Renovated World War II-era German boxcar near the entrance at the HMC

The Camp System: Beginning in 1933, thousands of camps sprang up. Guests hear primarily about Treblinka, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Dachau, Chelmno, Sobibor, Belzec and Majdanek, the killing centers established in Poland by the occupying Nazi forces. Ultimately there were thousands of other camps, including transit camps, slave labor camps which provided workers for German factories, and Prisoner of War camps.

The Abyss: General Dwight D. Eisenhower required civilian news media and military combat camera units to record their observations. He explained, “I made the visit deliberately, in order to be in a position to give first-hand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to ‘propaganda.’” This area gives a sense of the evil that was perpetrated during the Holocaust.

The Postwar Period: Following Hitler’s defeat, war crimes trials were held at Dachau and Nuremberg. While Jews sought surviving family members and traces of their former lives, the Allies set up Displaced Persons’ camps to house refugees. Individuals came to grips with the reality that they had no place to go and, often, no surviving family. Others came to strange new lands with little more than the clothes on their backs.

The Harry & Wanda Zekelman International Institute of the Righteous: The International Institute of the Righteous provides an exploration of those who take responsibility by acting in an ethical manner, including those who risked their lives to save others during the Holocaust.

Updated points of focus:

Recent scholarship has emerged that adjusts the emphasis in the Holocaust narrative. For instance, the concept of “death by bullets” as laid out by Roman Catholic priest Father Patrick Desbois¹ rebalances heavy attention on concentration camps with insight on other forms of mass killings. His research emphasizes the complicity of Fascist collaborators in the Ukraine on carrying out the Holocaust. The new core exhibition will be more clearly a correction to those who understand these events as being solely perpetrated by the Nazis.

There is also an opportunity for a highly meaningful assimilation of the International Institute of the Righteous zone with the historical stories that come prior. Timothy Snyder’s groundbreaking book *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning*² helps link the horrors of the Holocaust to the present. The Holocaust is a history not only of evil, although the evil is undeniable, but also of great courage, strength and righteousness. The new exhibition will integrate the International Institute of the Righteous zone more thoroughly with the rest of the permanent exhibition and help contemporary viewers reflect on their individual morals, choices, and outcomes. For example, on the walls, there could be an “Acknowledging” space, where visitors take a small symbolic object or note to add to a “living memorial,” making a pledge that the Holocaust must never happen again.

In a final space devoted to action, visitors could see an updatable “heat map” that shows recent instances of antisemitism (or other forms of discrimination). Visitors could touch the screen to learn more about the event. The docent, in this final staging point, can provide information (through pamphlets or QR codes with links to websites) about practical opportunities through which visitors can maintain vigilance and oppose injustice in their community.

Recognizing the passing of the time of Holocaust survivors, we also propose the creation of a media program and digital resources that makes explicit the vision of keeping their voices alive and exigent for contemporary visitors. This media program would be an expression of cultural empathy. It could be periodically updated with new recordings of volunteers from the local constituency.

Project formats

This project will reorganize the content layout of the galleries. This reflects the desired shift toward a narrative that is both more inflected with real people’s experiences and more comprehensive and unified across the permanent exhibition. The idea is to reuse some of the Holocaust Memorial Center’s existing materials, while providing a timely update of the design, visual appearance, and use of media and technologies. It would also provide an opportunity for evaluating and updating our digital resources, public programming, and resources for educators.

The exhibition plan involves the following:

¹ Desbois, P. (2009). *The Holocaust by bullets: A priest’s journey to uncover the truth behind the murder of 1.5 million Jews*. St. Martin's Griffin.

² Snyder, T. (2016). *Black Earth: The Holocaust as History & Warning*. Penguin Random House.

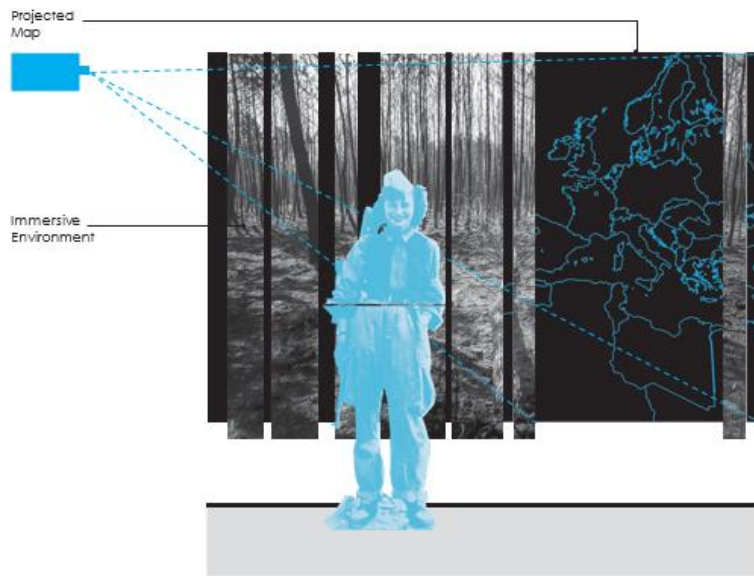
- Situating visitors in the midst of the moral and situational choices faced by real historical persons; bring personal stories to the forefront of the experience throughout.
- Create geographic and temporal shifts across the entire permanent exhibition through transitions between four large zones: Broadening Horizons: Europe Before the Holocaust; The Abyss: Occupied Lands During the Holocaust; New Worlds: Emigration After the Holocaust; Living Memory: The Holocaust Today.
- Create effective thematic educational “staging points” that engage visitors via multiple “ways in” to surrounding content. We would seek to deliver information and experiences founded on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (which can accommodate different learning styles) by connecting with multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement,
- Create a consistent thread throughout the entire experience via a more than century-long timeline from 1910 to today, for locating and understanding the personal stories encountered.

From a practical perspective, the exhibitions will be redesigned with the understanding that a large proportion of visitors will attend the HMC as part of a docent-led group experience. To improve the impact and functionality of these tours, there would be nine “staging points” throughout the core exhibition. These are places where docents will stand and speak about the theme at hand, before giving visitors the chance to explore the exhibit material in that zone. For a 60- to 100-minute tour, we anticipate that this will mean, roughly, an introduction of a few minutes, followed by perhaps 5–8 minutes of free visitor interaction with exhibits in that zone.

Within each zone, there would be about four opportunities to use personal stories to express a key phenomenon in the history of the Holocaust (and its buildup and aftermath). We propose using a series of case studies of real historical persons as a “way in” to understanding the political, social, and economic circumstances in which people were placed during the Holocaust, and how they elected—or were able—to respond. The key idea is choices and the (non) choices available to Jews. This applied to diverse Jewish situations in the prewar period, the Holocaust experiences, and lives reconstructed postwar. Where possible, we plan to feature someone from Michigan. Images of persons would be accompanied, each in different combinations, by elements such as quotes and biographies, anchor objects, background visuals, media, and audio recordings.

Throughout, guests would continually be encouraged to consider the following:

- How did this person live?
- What were his or her life expectations?
- What were the options he or she had?
- How is their life similar to yours or different?



Sample rendering of how personal stories could be integrated into the exhibit. This relates to a Jewish artisan from THE ABYSS: OCCUPIED LANDS DURING THE HOLOCAUST zone. We might learn the story of a young woman who joined the resistance movement in Lithuania. Her story might be relayed through written biographical notes, combined with large-scale historical footage and forest imagery.

There is also an opportunity for us to update the technology within the Museum. In listening to current feedback from docents, we know that the timing of tour groups and the customization of information are key concerns. Building on these

basic needs, we propose the development of a handheld tablet system that could have the following functionality:

- Monitoring timing information in each zone (such as a countdown clock that reminds docents when to move on).
- Providing differently accented tour themes attuned to special tour groups (for instance, school groups of various ages, family groups, criminal justice system representatives, etc.).
- Being able to start, stop, or pause media elements in the gallery (such as audio and video).
- Controlling ambient conditions (such as darkening the space, spotlighting a collections item, or increasing a voice or atmospheric audio volume).
- Providing easily searchable “Cliffs Notes” for answers to questions that are often asked.
- Providing updated “news” and current events for discussion in the International Institute for the Righteous zone.

Second, on an administrative, back-of-house level, docents could also have access to information that improves the Center’s performance:

- Live scheduling information (such as the timing of incoming tours along with their size and any time restrictions) could be received from the front desk.
- The tablets could be used to take notes—for instance, to keep a running list of Frequently Asked Questions, which would improve the educational outputs.
- It could become the common mode of immediate communication for all on-site staff (for instance, through an instant messaging platform).
- Given that the history of the Holocaust is a lot to take in during a short period, there could be increased opportunities for integrating the staging points with content from the HMC’s digital resources and Teacher’s Resources package, which introduces the subject matter and acts as an avenue for subsequent follow-up.

To provide continuous context for the stories in the main spaces, a timeline will wrap around the perimeter of the four zones of the permanent exhibition. By beginning and ending well after the standard (1933–45) Holocaust history, this “long Holocaust” provides context for the buildup to the Holocaust, and includes a longer aftermath and its ongoing impact. Its chronology helps to place the personal stories in their appropriate time period on the main gallery floor. The timeline, which could also be broken down into events that fall into Jewish, Holocaust, and world history, can incorporate images, video, documents, and smaller objects.

To avoid the potential for sameness of the timeline, its graphic style and materials will change in tone along its length, depending on the topic at hand. For instance, in pre-Holocaust Europe, it might reflect, at times, the whimsy of urban café culture; when dealing with the Nazi regime, cold materiality and tilted walls could appear to bear down on visitors; in the postwar period of survival and migration out of Europe, pockets of hope and brightness might punctuate its appearance. Additionally, rather than remain continuously flat against the walls, the timeline could intrude into the exhibit space through suggestive dimensional forms that take their cue from the content of that period (for instance, echoes of a Vienna café storefront, a Nazi rally in Nuremberg, or a steerage cabin of an emigration ship).

The first gallery experience of the revised permanent exhibition would be in the Introductory Theater. It would use a spherical format to support the theme of the circularity and continuity of Jewish traditions, and the generations that practiced Jewish customs across several thousand years—from the time of the ancient Israelites. The dominant idea is to impress upon visitors that Jewish culture and religion had, against the odds, flourished and survived, despite its historically small number of adherents. The unprecedented attempt to eliminate it entirely during the Holocaust would have meant the loss of an entire people, and their cultural, intellectual, and social heritage.

Across a top band above viewers, the short program (5 to 10 minutes in length) moves chronologically through Jewish history in a sweeping show that traverses continents and cultures. As the narrator provides the overview, the multiple screens show still and moving imagery that appears to spin and periodically come together. Paintings, etchings, documents, scenes, maps, and portraits provide a rich tapestry of imagery, while music, languages, and period audioscapes are heard.

In the center of the space is a low table showing a map focused on the Middle East and Europe. On it, regions light up, trails of migration are shown, and numbers and statistics are highlighted, in synchronicity with the narrative being told in the film. The program may conclude in the early 20th century, as a setup for visitors stepping out to explore the other galleries.

Guests would experience the variety of Jewish life before the Holocaust, ranging from highly religious to more secular persons, the wealthy and the poor, people in urban centers and shtetls, those who embraced modernity and those living more traditional lives, and the different political allegiances of the times—from Zionists and Communists to the moderate and politically indifferent. The idea is to illustrate the diversity of Jewish lives in Europe (and North Africa) prewar, setting up discussion of why people may have responded to the conditions and threat of

the Holocaust in different ways. This escalates in intensity and danger as it progresses through this gallery.

Difficult Decisions

When the German troops walked into Austria my dear daddy committed suicide—one of the thousands. It sounds like a story but it was true.— Ruth Korn

This zone is dedicated to how people might have considered their options in the face of the Nazi threat: Could one resist through political action, assimilate, convert, emigrate, or something else? For purposes of discussion, we use the case study of Ruth Korn. She was a young German Jew who had decided to flee the Nazis to the Isle of Man, where she gained work and safety as a maidservant. Meanwhile, her father had fled to Austria. Tragically, on the day Hitler annexed the country, he committed suicide.

The display would tell this story (and the dramatic details of her biography and Detroit connections that follow this period), while also providing sufficient context about the flight of Jews from Europe that will allow visitors to understand the significance of Ruth Korn's experience. Thus, the display aims to combine her biographical detail with themes in Holocaust history, to create a powerful combination of empathy and understanding.

Narrowing Choices

In this zone, another staging point, docents gather visitors in front of another set of four personal stories. In this case, the thematic focus is on the increasingly dire choices open to Jews in Europe as the Nazi grip on power takes hold. Topics such as the boycotting of Jewish businesses, the Nuremberg Laws, Kristallnacht, and obstacles to emigration are explored. As tension intensifies and discrimination escalates, the gallery space representing the Jewish experience narrows accordingly.

The Abyss

This gallery is the darkest, most difficult part of the visitor's journey. In our conceptual plan, visitors move through a set of experiences that become increasingly harrowing as the narrative progresses, in step with developments along the continuous timeline. The journey reaches an emotional apex through the personal experiences that follow. The aim is to highlight for visitors the tragedy of any single life or family's lives lost. The inference, confirmed on the timeline, is that this was multiplied to an unimaginable degree.

Mass Killings

This zone examines the escalation from acts of terror to mass murder as the Holocaust began. Topics including the ghettos, early concentration camps, and the "murder by bullets" by the Einsatzgruppen and their accomplices are profiled. Here, visitors meet, as an example, Arthur (Asher) Berlinger. He represents an opposing theme of resistance, through a brave act that maintained religious devotion against the odds. Asher was a German Jewish artist, craftsman, and musician who, after being deported from his home in 1942, was forced to work in a workshop at Theresienstadt camp-ghetto. During his time there, he discovered a four-by-five-meter attic, where he created a secret hidden synagogue, painted and decorated with religious symbols and inscriptions. Asher continued to teach Torah while in the ghetto and wrote a series

of “luchot” (stone tablet) calendars, to remind others when the Jewish festivals were and when Shabbat started.

Asher Berlinger was deported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz on the 28th of September 1944, where he was murdered. In this example we can also tell the emotional “after story” of his daughter Rosie Baum (who had been sent to the United Kingdom on the Kindertransport). She traveled to the camp in 2002, where she identified the painted handiwork as his.

Final Solution

At this staging point, visitors consider the horrific outcomes of those who endured or died as a result of the policy, during the latter part of the Holocaust, that saw the industrialized murder of millions. The timeline focuses on the perpetrators and accomplices who directly and indirectly supported this entire system of murderous deception. Stories of transportation, starvation, murder, and survival are relayed, along with stories containing glimmers of hope, such as those Jews who successfully hid.

New Worlds

This fourth gallery focuses on the efforts to repair lives after the Holocaust, in situations as diverse as Displaced Persons camps, the work of Jewish agencies to offer basic life services, and immigration to the US, Palestine, UK, South Africa, and farther afield. The topic of justice is largely dealt with through the Nuremberg trials, which were most notable for the prosecution of prominent members of the political, military, judicial, and economic leadership of Nazi Germany.

The creation of the state of Israel is also a turning point in the narrative. Where possible, a historical person introduced in an earlier personal story could be “followed” into this zone. The opportunity to recognize the righteous also makes this a more hopeful, affirming gallery than those that came before.

The Liberators

This zone and sixth staging point concerns the terrible end days of the Holocaust, broaching topics such as the death marches, attempts to cling to life in the camps, and their liberation by the Allies. We focus here on the Liberators zone, which will be composed of two main elements. The first concerns the soldiers’ experience at the liberation of a concentration camp; the second concerns the war experience more generally. We plan to transform an existing mini-theater space into a multimedia environment composed of two arced surfaces facing each other, as if in conversation. Working with the Center’s existing story examples where a liberator and a survivor met, a multimedia program switches constantly from one side to the other, making use of oral histories, historical film footage, photographs, and miscellaneous images that tell a story of hope and reconnection. A bench in the center allows visitors to feel as though they are in the midst of the conversation.

Second, in the current space chronicling the End of the War (and Berlin model), we envisage a wraparound floor-to-ceiling case, with a large-scale scenographic backdrop. Artifacts associated with the larger GI experience (e.g., a helmet, weapon, flag, keepsake) are arranged inside. Visitors hear audio from the oral history of a liberator (or perhaps letters or diaries read aloud).

Facing these GI objects are a set of survivor artifacts, whose dismal paucity makes for a striking contrast.

Rebuilding Lives

In this zone, the theme involves personal adaptation, persistence, and the tumultuous pathways of a single life. In the personal narratives in this space, we could choose the example of Steve Lewkowicz. After surviving Buchenwald concentration camp, he lived as a young man in the Landsberg Displaced Persons camp, near Munich, in the American zone. The population of 5,000 who lived here were utterly demoralized and physically and spiritually beaten in late 1945. However, the residents of the camp soon organized and had several schools, a religious academy, kosher kitchens, a newspaper, training farms, a police force, and a theater and cinema. This community rebirth would prove to be a formative experience for Steve Lewkowicz.

Later, Steve immigrated to Detroit, where he married and had children, ran a glass supply business, and experienced a series of personal joys and tragedies associated with raising his family. The larger theme is the tenacity of the human spirit that overcame the extreme degradations of the Holocaust.

Righteous Among Nations

At this staging point, we anticipate two closely connected zones: the Righteous Among Nations and the Righteous Among Jews. To augment the static biographical graphic displays currently shown, we would propose a touch monitor that supplies more dynamic information about a handful of the 25,000 or so people who have been formally identified for their role in helping to protect others. We could use 30- to 60-second video segments where the person explains why he or she risked their lives to hide, save, or fight for Jews.

Other formats

Last year, we trained 449 teachers from 245 middle and high schools on the Holocaust, representing 189 districts. Due to our free training, they now teach an average of 50,000 students per year our important lessons such as how silence and indifference to racial injustice, the suffering of others, and the infringement of civil rights perpetuates societal problems.

We also frequently collaborate with local nonprofit and community organizations on programming to extend our reach. In recent years, these partners have included six area universities and more than two dozen cultural, educational, religious, civic and community nonprofit organizations; national/international programs promoting cultural diversity and human rights, including foreign consulates; and Holocaust museums and organizations. In addition, our CEO is a founding member of a new Coalition for Black and Jewish Unity which held its first public event at the HMC this month, featuring a musical performance and a presentation about the Holocaust. We are a frequent collaboration with the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History.

This grant would allow us to begin to plan and evaluate how to better use personal stories throughout all of our initiatives, including our trainings and materials for educators, our public programming, and our digital resources.

Project resources

We had to give up all hope of being able to show our papers to somebody and so we got into the box-cars. Over a hundred people were crammed into our car. The ghetto police closed the doors. When the door shut on me, I felt my whole world vanishing.— Abraham Krzepicki

This project will allow us to envision our existing museum resources. For example, coming from the parking lot, visitors currently enter to see a heavy desk on their right, offering ticketing, tours, audio tours, and security. The somewhat under-defined entrance space could be made more effective and accommodating for visitors. By adjusting the angle of entry into the building, security can have a direct view and better maintain lobby control.



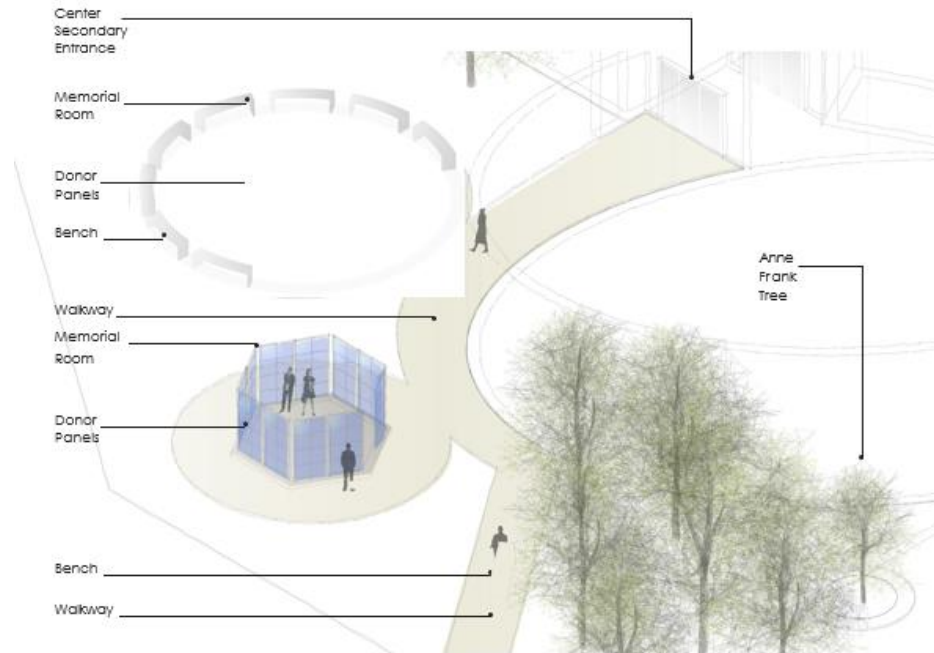
Looking out to the extended lobby area, the new concept would add several white, semiabstract cast figures in front of the boxcar, modeled from an actual Holocaust photograph (please see rendering at left). Another addition could be the projection of a short section of text, either on the exterior of the boxcar or, taking a few steps up, its darker interior. This could define the Holocaust in a few short words, or provide a quote from a historical person who experienced the horrific boxcar transport.

The Viola & Garry Kappy Anne Frank Tree Exhibit and Garden: While the boxcar serves as an entry point into the Museum, this exhibit is located towards the end. In 2009, the Holocaust Memorial Center was honored to have been selected as one of only eleven sites in the

United States to receive a sapling from the tree that grew outside Anne Frank's hiding place. During her nearly two years in hiding, her exposure to the outside world was limited to what she could see outside her window.

In 1944, she wrote: "From my favorite spot on the floor, I look up at the blue sky and the bare chestnut tree, on whose branches little raindrops shine, appearing like silver... When I looked outside right into the depth of nature and God, then I was happy, really happy." Watching the chestnut tree cycle through the seasons offered Anne hope that one day humanity would also have another chance.

Anne Frank's tree has reached the end of its 150-year lifespan, but lives on through saplings planted around the world, including the one at the HMC. The HMC's sapling has grown in a specially designed and secured garden on the campus. Visitors currently see and experience the sapling from inside the museum as part of an exhibit about Anne Frank.



Rendering of proposed outdoor Memorial Park

The new project proposes a more integrated display that, through projections onto the adjacent wall space, poetically connects the text from her diary to an artistic slideshow of various period images. We would also add the audio from interviews with her father, Otto Frank, who speaks about his surprise at learning about the depth of her inner feelings.

To counteract the dark, tragic nature of the indoor experience, we propose the dedication of an outdoor area to hope and peace. Thematically, it takes as its inspiration the Anne Frank tree—specifically, her view from the attic’s available window to the chestnut tree, which she observed with longing and optimism. We believe that an outdoor experience with the Center’s own tree can be an emotional apex to the visitor’s journey.

From the Center’s rear exit, we propose the addition of two hexagonal-shaped glass-walled outdoor rooms, each about 10 feet in diameter and 7–8 feet high. Benches and a viewing area will complete the small park. The hexagonal shape symbolically represents the six sides of the Star of David. With one panel area removed for entry and exit, the remaining five glass panels can be divided into colored glass window-like “panes.” These can contain artistically etched content, such as graphic elements and peace-themed quotes from inspirational artists, writers, and thinkers. Period music can be heard from speakers embedded in the benches. The settling of snow, water, and the sun’s rays on the glass will remind visitors of the changing seasons that Anne Frank sensitively wrote about from her own room.

Project history

In 1982, a group of survivors in southeast Michigan, led by Rabbi Charles Rosenzweig of blessed memory, founded the Holocaust Memorial Center (HMC) to memorialize and remember the Holocaust and to bring its history to the people of Michigan. These survivors saw that with the

passage of time, people could question whether such atrocities could really happen. Young people had wondered why they should learn about the Holocaust. Current events make clear that the Holocaust contains important lessons for every generation.

The Wall Street Journal, in a front-page article about our museum said in reference to the provocative nature of our building that our museum “may be the most provocative museum of them all.” We are pleased that the architecture of this historic museum stirs the public consciousness of the unprecedented horrific crime of the Holocaust. Knowledge of the past is essential in order to avoid its repetition, and we serve as both the region’s leading Holocaust learning center and a statewide force for educating around tolerance, diversity, and justice.

The HMC has a strong Jewish constituency in the northwest suburbs of metropolitan Detroit. Due to its suburban location in Farmington Hills, with little passing foot traffic, the HMC is a standalone destination that visitors will typically plan to attend ahead of time. Its reach, however, is great: Within a three-hour drive, the HMC can attract visitors from the Midwest cities of Detroit, Columbus, Cleveland, Toledo, Grand Rapids, Windsor (Ontario), and more.

Intergenerational learning and sharing is one of the cornerstones of the Holocaust Memorial Center. Most visitors to the HMC have no personal memories or connections to the Holocaust. And soon, people will no longer have the chance to hear survivor stories firsthand, one of the most powerful experiences for HMC visitors.

In the fall of 2016, Eli Mayerfeld began consulting with the HMC to build a long-term strategic plan. One of four key goals coming out of this process was to refresh the core exhibits and keep them current. Eli was made CEO in January 2017 and immediately began to implement the findings from the strategic plan. Ralph Appelbaum Associates was hired to create the vision which is laid out in this grant proposal. We hope that our renovation will become a model for how a regional museum can reinvent its core exhibitions in a way that is creative and relevant.

The exhibit overhaul will also prepare third generation family members of Holocaust survivors to tell the stories of their ancestors. Through the history of the Holocaust, the HMC seeks to not only transfer knowledge but also nurture insights, inspire reflection, and promote critical thinking. The HMC encourages audiences to think about personal responsibilities as they learn about those who chose to protect the rights of others and those who chose to stand by. With this project, we plan to be the leading model for how regional museums can teach these fields.

Audience, marketing, and promotion

We currently reach 65,000 in-person guests each year. We have recently hired Lafayette American, a boutique Detroit advertising, marketing, and creative agency, to create a new marketing playbook for us. We feel that we can continue to grow our reach across the Midwest, engaging new audiences and empowering them to act.

We send notices of upcoming events, programs and exhibits monthly to a mailing list of 12,000 and weekly to an email list of 13,225. Ads, our newsletter, our website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are other ways we reach existing and new audiences. PR firm Marx Layne assists us in

these efforts, and they are successful in placing many stories about us in local newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

The HMC has a set of relatively specific relationships with key categories of visitors:

--Families and Stakeholders: We appreciate that HMC has a particularly strong network of survivors and their descendants.

--School Groups: A major part of the HMC's audience is students: Currently, around 35,000 students from grades 7–12 visit annually. College groups are also a significant demographic. These young people are of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, and will need a strong contextual background for the stories they hear.

--Community Groups: The groups that attend are varied, including those from, for example, university groups, military, and law enforcement. This means that it may be suitable to design tours that are customizable according to group interests.

--Casual Visitors and Tourists: Although the Center does not pick up foot traffic, it sees a consistent number of adults arrive through their own interest. It is important that, beyond the docent-led group tours, the permanent exhibition remain coherent for the visitor exploring at his or her own pace.

--People Who Care: The broadest group includes those who, for a variety of reasons, are drawn to the powerful stories inherent in the Holocaust. Their backgrounds are varied, but they share a common commitment to remembering the event and preventing its recurrence.

Evaluation of the project's impact

The HMC will be working with museum evaluation consultant Kate Livingston (ExposeYourMuseum LLC) on this project. The main goal is to test the assumptions of the plans for the exhibition. The first step will be convening scholars for holistic feedback. While exhibition plans have been deeply informed by museum leadership, staff, docents, and Ralph Applebaum Associates, a critical perspective is thus far missing: visitors. This grant will allow us to thoroughly incorporate visitors' perspectives, input, interests, and questions into the exhibition plan. We will ask visitors to explore and assess the current exhibition--identifying strengths and assets to hold onto as well as areas where change is needed most. Additionally, we will prototype and test visitors' reactions to various new concepts, content, stories, examples, and mockups of displays being considered within the new exhibition design.

Key evaluation questions identified by HMC staff include:

--What does and does not appeal to museum guests? What forms of multimedia usage? What interpretive strategies? What voice/tone?

--How do visitors feel about and connect to personal stories? What makes stories feel relevant?

--How important is the integration of stories of people from Michigan or otherwise connected to the state into the exhibition?

--How can the museum be accessible to people not on a docent-led tour? What do people tend to look at and how clearly are we telling the story?

Importantly, before evaluation and prototyping with visitors occurs, the project's humanities scholars will be convened to advise the HMC team and inform the evaluation questions and plan. This will ensure we are focused on the questions most important to ask and answer with visitors. During a full day meeting with the humanities scholars (listed below), HMC staff will lead the scholars on a walkthrough of the current exhibition. This will be followed by a facilitated discussion (led by museum evaluation consultant Kate Livingston) where the team of scholars identify current strengths and challenges from their specific lenses. Ralph Applebaum Associates will present the "Visualized Concept Study," which includes detailed plans for the new exhibition content and design. Again, a facilitated discussion will follow. The convening will conclude with the scholars informing a prioritized list of evaluation questions and approaches to inform the project's next steps.

Informed by the humanities scholars' input, the HMC and museum evaluation consultant Kate Livingston will finalize the evaluation plan. Project evaluation has been conceived in two rounds--one 2-month period of visitor input and prototyping, followed by analysis and interpretation, then a second 2-month period of visitor input and prototyping, followed by analysis and interpretation. This purposeful pacing will allow for methodical and intentional integration of ongoing learning from visitors.

Though the specifics of the evaluation plan (including methodology and design) will not be finalized until after convening with humanities scholars, the following is an example of how visitors will be involved:

To investigate the key question, "How important is the integration of stories of people from or related to Michigan into the exhibition?", three visitor panels of approximately 10-12 people each will be convened. One panel will consist of educators, the second of donors and/or members, and the third of families. Advanced recruitment (via email and/or phone, utilizing HMC's existing relationships and visitor database) will allow the evaluator to describe the purpose of the project, explain why visitors are being convened, and gain consent and/or assent from potential participants. When visitors arrive for their panel, there will be brief introductions to the evaluator, HMC staff, the project, and each other (i.e., other visitors on the panel). In some cases, HMC may lead visitor panelists through the existing exhibition; in other cases, visitor panelists will have time to explore the exhibition on their own. Following the walk-through, the evaluator will facilitate a guided, audio-recorded discussion (i.e., focus group), including these (or similar) questions: 1) What, if anything, specific to Michigan did you notice, see, or read in the exhibition? 2) What Michigan stories do you know (e.g., from your own family, friends, communities) that might connect to the exhibition? 3) How do you feel about including Michigan-specific stories in the exhibition? Visitor panelists will then be shown prototypes or mockups with Michigan-specific stories and content from the "Visualized Concept Study," followed by a second facilitated discussion to garner responses to the plans and ideas presented.

In total, it is anticipated that over 200 visitors and/or community members will be included in the evaluation and prototyping over the course of this project, including Jews and non-Jews, youth and adults, students and educators. Thorough analysis and reporting following the two rounds of evaluation will inform the final exhibition plan.

Organizational profile

The Holocaust Memorial Center Zekelman Family Campus (HMC) is a 55,000 square foot museum and library archive in Farmington Hills, Michigan. The HMC is Michigan's only Holocaust museum, so we draw visitors from throughout the state. The overwhelming majority of the people we serve are not Jewish. Our mission is to engage, educate and empower by remembering the Holocaust. Our exhibits feature artifacts, text panels, photos, video testimonies and artworks ranging from the representative to the abstract. Art is an essential medium we use to convey challenging subject matter such as the magnitude of the tragedy, man's inhumanity to man and the banality of evil. Paintings, sculptures, photography and films are on display in both our permanent and temporary exhibit galleries.

Tours are guided by a corps of 70 docents who have undergone eight months of extensive training and testing in history, pedagogy and sensitivity, and who are required to complete three continuing education credits per year. Museum visitors who do not participate in the docent-guided tour explore the museum with their families or they attend on- or off-site programming we present. We require that our program presenters possess significant credentials as university professors, scholars, filmmakers, professional musicians, authors, artists or Holocaust survivors.

In 2017, we completed a strategic planning and evaluation process with input from staff, board, donors, Holocaust survivors, and community members. Strategic priorities that were identified, and are now being implemented, are to: 1) Integrate the HMC visit into students' classroom education; 2) Make the HMC the nexus for the implementation of the new Holocaust education law; 3) Engage and involve young adults in the HMC; and 4) Develop the financial resources necessary to refresh exhibits and keep them current.

We present programs and exhibits of the highest caliber that use the lessons of history to create a call to action, teaching visitors through the examples of those who risked their lives to save others, and asking our guests to react to contemporary challenges, such as racism, intolerance and prejudice. We present 2-3 temporary exhibitions per year. We offer a wide variety of public programs on evenings and weekends, often in collaboration with other organizations or institutions of higher education. We frequently present, co-present or sponsor special programs such as lectures, Holocaust-themed films and music/dance/theater performances, author talks and book signings, Holocaust Remembrance Day services, and art programs for youth.

Our Library Archive is an important resource for academics, the media and families researching their heritage. It documents the Holocaust by acquiring and cataloging books, artifacts, audiovisuals, posters, oral histories, maps and a host of other special collections and materials. Admission and reference services are free to the public. Our vast collection includes one of the most extensive Memorial Book collections in the country and our Oral History Collection is the major Michigan survivor personal-narrative repository.

Project team

Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, Chief Executive Officer: Eli Mayerfeld became Chief Executive Officer of the Holocaust Memorial Center in January 2017 after a distinguished career in education

management. He served as Executive Director of the Southfield-based Yeshiva Beth Yehudah, the largest K-12 Jewish school system in Michigan, from 1993 to 2015. During his tenure, he saw the number of students more than double and its annual budget more than triple. He also led completion of an \$8 million capital campaign to fund construction of new state-of-the-art education facilities. Since 2015, he served as CEO of YEOOD Consulting, a strategic management consultancy, and CEO of the Jewish Wisdom Foundation, a Bloomfield Hills-based organization working to engage Jews with their history and develop online content and programs for high school students. In 2018, he became a member of the Advisory Council for the newly-created Coalition of Black and Jewish Unity. Mayerfeld earned a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering in 1991 from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York City and an Advanced Degree in Rabbinic Ordination from Rabbi Berel Wein the following year.

Dr. Guy Stern, Holocaust Survivor and Director of the Harry and Wanda Zekelman International Institute of the Righteous: Guy Stern became director of the Harry and Wanda Zekelman International Institute of the Righteous after his 2003 retirement from Wayne State University. The Institute pays tribute to the men and women who, throughout history, have supported and rescued others, even at great risk to themselves and their families. Stern emigrated from Germany to the United States as a teen. He served in Europe in the Military Intelligence Service of the U.S. Army, earning the rank of master sergeant and receiving the Bronze Star during World War II. Stern graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Romance Languages from Hofstra College, New York, and a Master of Arts degree in Germanic Studies and a Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York. He taught at Denison University in Ohio and Columbia University in New York. He studied as a Fulbright Research Fellow at the University of Munich in Germany. He was Professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Cincinnati. During his tenure at the University of Cincinnati, he served as head of the German Department, University Dean for Graduate Education and Research, and Chair.

Ruth Bergman, Education Director: Ruth Bergman oversees the development and implementation of teacher and docent training, as well as the educational content of the HMC's programs and events. She is responsible for establishing statewide strategies for teaching the Holocaust, collaborating with education partners to secure premier teaching materials, and exploring ways and methods to enrich school visits to the HMC. Bergman has been teaching Judaica for 26 years. She earned her B.A. in English literature from Columbia University before completing graduate coursework at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She developed and taught courses in Ethics, history, Bible, Talmud, theology, and Holocaust studies. Ruth joined the HMC in April 2018.

Mark Mulder, Exhibitions Manager: Mark Mulder joined the HMC in 2016 and has been utilizing his expertise in Holocaust exhibits ever since. He now oversees all areas of exhibition management, from content creation and curating visiting exhibits to overseeing the HMC's own traveling exhibit and assisting with future plans for the HMC's permanent exhibit. Mulder's specialized experience goes back over a decade, having studied European history with a focus on Holocaust and Genocide studies at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington. He continued his education at the University of Washington where he earned a Master of Arts

Degree in Museology, directing research and thesis work on Holocaust representation in museums. He began his work at the Holocaust Center for Humanity in Seattle, Washington.

Feiga Weiss, Head Librarian Archivist: Feiga Weiss is responsible for the administration, budget, acquisition and reference duties in the HMC's Library Archive. The work of the Library Archive is to collect, preserve, house and make available to the public all materials relating to the Holocaust, in all formats. Weiss arrived in October 1984 when the HMC Museum just opened. She created the infrastructure for the Library Archive, revised the Library of Congress classification scheme for use in the HMC and began the arduous task of collection development. Under her leadership the collection has grown to be a major source of Holocaust documentation that is recognized nationally and internationally. Weiss came to the HMC from the Library of Congress, where she was singled out by the Congressional Reference Service for invaluable aid given to a member of Congress. Numerous books and articles acknowledge her assistance on a wide subject range of Judaica. Her knowledge of several languages, expertise with Holocaust books, artifacts and geographical finding aids and worldwide contacts have made the HMC Library Archive a premier resource in the Detroit Metropolitan area and beyond for survivors, researchers, genealogists, historians, educators, in-kind donors and the media.

Humanities scholars and consultants

Robert Jan van Pelt, Humanities Scholar (confirmed): Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt is one of the world's leading experts on Auschwitz. He co-authored the award-winning book, *Auschwitz 1270 to the Present*, with Dr. Debórah Dwork, and initiated and chaired the workgroup that created the master plan for the future of the Auschwitz museum. Dr. Van Pelt was one of the four internationally renowned historians who served as expert witnesses for the defense in the Irving-Lipstadt trial. Van Pelt received his Ph.D from the University of Leyden, The Netherlands. He is the recipient of various honors, including a Guggenheim Fellowship. Dr. van Pelt holds the rank of University Professor and teaches at the School of Architecture of the University of Waterloo in Canada.

Havi Dreifuss, Humanities Scholar (pending on scheduling): Dr. Havi Dreifuss is a senior lecturer in the department of Jewish History at the University of Tel Aviv. She is also the head of the Center for Research on the Holocaust in Poland in the International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. Her book, *"We Polish Jews"? The Relations between Jews and Poles during the Holocaust - The Jewish Perspective*, was published by Yad Vashem in 2010. She has published many articles on the period of the Holocaust in general, and on the history of the Jews of Poland in particular.

Peter Hayes, Humanities Scholar (confirmed): Peter Hayes (Ph.D., Yale, 1982) is Professor of History and German, Theodore Zev Weiss Holocaust Educational Foundation Professor of Holocaust Studies Emeritus at Northwestern University. He specializes in the histories of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust and, in particular, in the conduct of the nation's largest corporations during the Third Reich. He taught at Northwestern for thirty-six years from 1980 to 2016. The recipient of numerous research fellowships, Prof. Hayes also has served on the academic boards of multiple professional societies and Holocaust memorial sites, including as Chair of the Academic Committee of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum from 2014 to 2019.

Samuel Kassow, Humanities Scholar (confirmed): Samuel Kassow is the Charles H. Northam Professor of History at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. He is author of the award-winning book, *Who Will Write Our History? Rediscovering a Hidden Archive from the Warsaw Ghetto*. He has lectured on Russian and Jewish history in many countries, including Israel, Russia and Poland. Kassow was born in a displaced persons' camp in Stuttgart, Germany. In 1966, Kassow earned his B.A. from Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. In 1968, Kassow earned a M.Sc. from the London School of Economics. In 1976, Kassow earned a Ph.D. from Princeton University.

Deborah Lipstadt, Humanities Scholar (confirmed): Deborah E. Lipstadt is Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish History and Holocaust Studies, Tam Institute for Jewish Studies and the Department of Religion at Emory University. Lipstadt was an historical consultant to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and helped design the section of the Museum dedicated to the American Response to the Holocaust. She was appointed by President Clinton to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council on which she served two terms. She received her B.A. from City College of New York (1969) and her M.A. (1972) and Ph.D. (1976) from Brandeis.

Kate Livingston, Evaluation Consultant (confirmed): Kate holds a BA in Psychology and Criminology from New York University and a MS in Investigative and Forensic Psychology from the University of Liverpool (England). Kate was Director of Audience Insights at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science from 2007-2013 and began consulting in 2010. At DMNS she led a team of 3 full-time staff and 20+ on-call research assistants. She has directed, planned for, and engaged in exhibit, program, and process evaluations of all shapes and sizes—from front-end and formative to remedial and summative. Kate has been the principal investigator on IMLS and NSF grants and coordinated evaluation on NEH, IMLS, NSF, NASA, and NIH funded projects. She is a former board member of the Visitor Studies Association and the American Alliance of Museums’ Committee for Audience Research and Evaluation, and served in leadership roles on the American Evaluation Association’s Arts, Culture, and Audiences group and Data Visualization and Reporting group.

Ralph Appelbaum Associates, Museum Design Consultants (confirmed): Ralph Appelbaum Associates (RAA) is a multidisciplinary firm specializing in the planning and design of museums and exhibits. RAA has a staff of over two hundred practitioners including designers, architects, historians, educators, media specialists, technologists, and researchers. HMC’s primary consultant at RAA is Rick Sobel, senior exhibit designer. He graduated from Cornell and received a master's degree in architecture from the University of Maryland.

Work plan

Grant period: June 1, 2020-May 31, 2021

Project Activities	June 20	July 20	Aug 20	Sep 20	Oct 20	Nov 20	Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21
Staff/consultants prep for scholar review panel (HMC staff, RAA consultants, Kate Livingston)												

Scholar/adviser meeting (Kate Livingston and RAA onsite 1-2 days before scholar/advisor meeting to meet with HMC team and prep for meeting. Five scholars participate in day-long panel.)														
Final development of evaluation plan (Kate Livingston)														
First round of prototyping/testing/evaluation with museum visitors (Kate Livingston)														
Analysis and reporting (Kate Livingston)														
Second round of prototyping/testing/evaluation with museum visitors (Kate Livingston)														
Analysis and reporting (Kate Livingston)														
Virtual reconvening of scholarly panel (Five scholars, Kate Livingston)														
Planning next steps of exhibit development (HMC staff, Kate Livingston, RAA)														

Note regarding scholar/advisor meeting: Schedules will vary slightly due to national and international travel. Panelists will arrive at least the night before the convening for a dinner with HMC staff and consultants. There will then be a full-day scholar/advisor meeting with the following agenda: Introductions, go through agenda for day; Walk-through of current exhibition (led by HMC team); Q&A re: current exhibition (facilitated by Kate); Lunch; Walk-through of “Visualized Concept Study” (led by Ralph Applebaum Associates; provided prior to meeting for scholar/advisor review); Q&A re: “Visualized Concept Study” (facilitated by Kate); Evaluation plan and next steps (facilitated by Kate).

Project funding

So far, HMC has directly invested over \$100,000 in the planning of the exhibit renovation. The NEH funding would be used to convene scholars and evaluate our plans so far. The impact of this process would help kick off our campaign to raise \$8 million for a full update of the permanent exhibit while also raising an additional \$8 million fund for investment for future exhibit enhancements. The future exhibit fund will assure that the HMC can refresh its exhibits regularly, bringing innovation to its efforts and assuring that the HMC stays cutting-edge, while maintaining its physical exhibit offerings over time, keeping them relevant and impactful.