

## GUIDELINES FOR ARRANGING A **SURVIVOR PRESENTATION**

The Museum's office of Survivor Affairs is proud to offer schools, civic groups, military bases, and other institutions nationwide the opportunity to hear a Holocaust survivor share his or her experiences. In the past year, our survivor speakers have reached more than 165 different audiences, providing more than 10,000 people from Virginia to Iowa to North Dakota with the moving and memorable experience of listening to them recount their stories of suffering, loss, and survival.

We have created this guide with both the hosting organization and the survivor community in mind and hope that our suggestions will help your organization consider the survivors' comfort and well-being as you plan for your program.

### **BOOKING A SURVIVOR SPEAKER**

#### **THROUGH THE MUSEUM'S OFFICE OF SURVIVOR AFFAIRS**

To request a Holocaust survivor to speak at your program, please e-mail [jolson@ushmm.org](mailto:jolson@ushmm.org) and include the following information:

- Name of organization
- Date, time, and purpose of program
- Brief profile of audience, including size and age
- Topics of interest to your organization
- Preparation for program
- Location of program\*

\* *Please note that due to the age of our survivor speakers, your organization may be asked to bear some expense for travel arrangements.*

#### **IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY**

For speaking engagements outside the greater Washington metropolitan area, we encourage you to seek the help of your local survivor community. There are members of the Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO) active in many states who arrange for survivor speakers; to find out if there is one in your community, visit [www.ahoinfo.org](http://www.ahoinfo.org).

When asking a survivor to speak at your program, we recommend that you provide them with the following details:

- Schedule, date, and time
- Location
- Audience capacity
- Audience profile (age, topics of interest, any preparation or relevant activities taking place prior to the event, etc.)
- Name, phone number, and e-mail address of program coordinator

Please also send the survivor a confirmation letter in advance of your program clearly reiterating the information listed above and encouraging him or her to contact the program coordinator with any questions.

## PROGRAM AND AUDIENCE PREPARATION

### SUGGESTED PROGRAM FORMATS

Please discuss your program format with the survivor in advance to ensure his or her comfort. Options include:

#### **Stand-alone Lecture**

This is the most common format, with the survivor speaking about his or her Holocaust experience for 40–45 minutes followed by a 15–20 minute question-and-answer period with the audience.

#### **Interview**

Conversational programs can be a good way to engage the audience. There are experienced interviewers in most communities who could serve as moderators, including local radio and television personalities as well as oral history experts from museums and universities.

#### **Panel Discussion or Program Series**

Providing an opportunity for multiple survivors to speak highlights the diversity of Holocaust experiences (e.g., some survivors were imprisoned in concentration camps, while others hid, used false papers to pose as Christians, or went into exile as refugees. Some were infants during the Holocaust, while others were teenagers or young adults).

We also encourage you to include an opportunity for informal discussion between the survivor and the audience during your program. Please note that a survivor often requires at least 30 minutes to tell his or her story; try to allow at least an hour for your program.

You may also want to consider featuring a book-signing in your program if the survivor has published his or her story.

### INTRODUCING THE HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST TO YOUR AUDIENCE

We recommend that you introduce the history of the Holocaust to program attendees in advance to provide context for the survivor's personal story. On the Museum's Web site ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)), you will find:

- An introduction to the Holocaust  
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/index.php?lang=en&ModuleId=10005143>
- Animated overviews and maps  
<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/maps/>
- The Holocaust Encyclopedia  
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/>
- Biographies of Museum survivor speakers  
<http://www.ushmm.org/remembrance/survivoraffairs/meet/>

You may print out and distribute information from the Museum's Web site as long as you cite the Museum as your source.

#### **SENSITIVITY IN DEALING WITH A DIFFICULT TOPIC**

Please remember that the survivor is sharing private and often traumatic memories in a public setting; many find they are able to tell their stories only once in a day. Your mindfulness of this is critical to planning a successful program.

#### **PLANNING FOR YOUR PROGRAM**

##### **AT THE MUSEUM**

Plan to arrive on time, both out of respect for your speaker and to maximize your audience's experience. Museum space is limited and rooms are reserved for the exact time scheduled for the presentation; a late arrival means that your time with a survivor is reduced.

If you are significantly late, please consider canceling or rescheduling; survivors need at least 30 minutes to share their experiences. To cancel, please call Jeanne Olson in the office of Survivors Affairs, at 202.314.7824 as soon as you are able. She will notify the survivor and will work with you to schedule a new date.

##### **IN THE GREATER WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA**

Please be aware that survivors may have special mobility concerns. We recommend that you select one of the following options:

- Provide payment for a car service to be arranged by the Museum.
- Make arrangements for a representative from your organization to drive the survivor from his or her home to the event and back home again. If your program is scheduled during Museum hours, you may arrange to drive the survivor from the Museum to your event and back.
- Provide mileage reimbursement to survivors who wish to drive themselves to the event.

We encourage you to consider planning a meal in conjunction with your program to honor the survivor. If you do, then:

- Please inquire about the survivor's dietary needs, including food allergies, dietary restrictions such as kosher meals, and other special requests.
- Discuss the timing of such a meal with your survivor speaker in advance; some prefer to eat following their talk.

##### **OUTSIDE THE GREATER WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA**

If your program requires the survivor to travel, you may have to bear some of the transportation and lodging costs.

- Please arrange for the survivor to stay overnight if the trip involves a flight or travel by car of more than two hours one way.
- On overnight trips, the survivor will be accompanied by either a spouse or Museum escort. In the case of the latter, please arrange for two separate hotel rooms.
- Please arrange for transportation during the trip, including travel to and from the hotel for the program, meals, and other occasions that may arise.

We also recommend that you:

- Identify a local “point person”—someone affiliated with your organization who will address the needs of the survivor during his or her stay. Please provide contact information for the point person to the Museum well in advance of your program.
- Be aware of the survivor’s dietary needs, including allergies, restrictions such as kosher food, and other special requests, as well as the timing of meals—some survivors prefer to eat after their presentations.
- Consider offering to take the survivor on a tour of your area during his or her visit.

## PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

### PREPARING THE VENUE

- Please have a glass of water on hand for the survivor during his or her presentation.
- Ensure the lighting is not directly in the survivor’s eyes.
- Keep house lights on if the program takes place in a theater or auditorium; survivors often like to make eye contact with the audience.
- Provide a chair for the survivor, even if he or she intends to stand while speaking.
- Use microphones in larger venues.
- Find out if the survivor intends to bring guests and reserve seating for them in advance.

### AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

- Turn off all cell phones and pagers before the survivor begins.
- Survivor presentations may not be videotaped.
- Photography is allowed after the presentation only if the survivor has previously agreed.
- Refrain from eating or drinking during the presentation.
- When you introduce the survivor to your audience, please announce the length of the program and encourage them to stay for its completion—both to demonstrate respect for the survivor and to minimize disruptions.

### INTRODUCING THE SURVIVOR

Even when a Museum escort is present, it is more meaningful for the hosting organization to introduce the survivor. The Museum will provide you with a brief biography of the survivor with which you may prepare. We recommend that you:

- Keep the introduction short—no more than five minutes.
- Do not tell the survivor’s entire story for him or her; provide only a general outline.
- Explain why your organization is providing the program.

If you are introducing a survivor from your local community, we recommend that you include:

- The survivor’s birth name
- The town in which he or she was born
- The names of his or her family members
- What life was like when he or she was young or before the Nazis came to power
- What took place once the Nazi regime took over

Consider including the following visual materials:

- Pre-Holocaust family and hometown photos
- Maps that indicate where the survivor is from as well as points along the way of his or her experiences during the Holocaust (e.g., ghettos, concentration camps, DP camps, etc.)
- Images of any significant historical artifacts the survivor may have kept

The following areas of the Museum's Web site may feature useful images:

- Photo/Artifact Archives: [www.ushmm.org/research/collections/](http://www.ushmm.org/research/collections/)
- Mapping the Holocaust: [www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/maps/](http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/maps/)

You may print out and distribute images from the Museum's Web site as long as you cite the Museum as your source.

#### QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSIONS

- Encourage your audience to come prepared to ask questions; most survivors enjoy engaging with their audience and the audience is often curious to learn more.
- After a member of the audience asks a question, your program host should repeat it once to ensure that both the survivor and the audience has heard and understood it.
- We recommend that you appoint a moderator for the question-and-answer session to prevent inappropriate discussion of political topics or subjects that may make the survivor uncomfortable.

#### POST-PROGRAM ETIQUETTE

- Thank the survivor for coming by sending a formal letter.
- Survivors appreciate receiving written thank-you notes from members of the audience.
- For programs that require the survivor to travel, you may want to provide him or her with a small gift to commemorate the experience; survivors are often very touched by such a gesture and like to have something to remember your organization or community by.
- If you are impressed with the presentation and would like to ensure that the office of Survivor Affairs can continue to provide such opportunities, please consider making a donation to the Museum or your local AHO in the survivor's name.

*If you have any questions, please call Jeanne Olson of the Museum's office of Survivor Affairs at 202.314.7824 or e-mail [jolson@ushmm.org](mailto:jolson@ushmm.org).*