Przychodzi rabin do księdza

Program:
13:00 ks Jan Skarbek i rabin Eliazar Henoch, o stosunkach chrześcijańsko-żydowskich i interwencjach wobec nich
Kościół św. Marcina w Oświęcimiu, ul. ks. Jana Skarbka 5
15:00 Oświęcim – gminna
Starostwa, ul. ks. Jana Skarbka 5
16:00 Wygranie ucznia
Miejską, Ostrowskiego 1, sala nr 4, piazza parkingu przy ulicy Żmigródzkiej
17:30 NOWELA
KRZYWA ALTERNATYWNA
ENES
Miejską, ul. ks. Jana Skarbka 5
www.przychodziwabin.pl

18.09
2011

Auschwitz Jewish Center
2011 ACTIVITIES REPORT
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The Auschwitz Jewish Center (AJC) is the only Jewish presence in Oświęcim – the town the Germans called Auschwitz – which is primarily know as the site of the darkest tragedy of the 20th century.

In September 2000, the Auschwitz Jewish Center opened its doors to honor the former residents of Oświęcim and to teach future generations about the destruction caused by the Holocaust.

Since August 2006, the Center has been affiliated with the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York. The Center’s facilities include the Jewish Museum, the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue, and the Education Center.
2011 was a very important year for the Auschwitz Jewish Center, filled with many unusual cultural and educational projects. A detailed account of this memorable 11th year and its important events follows in this report.

Where did the Chief Rabbi of Oświęcim live before WWII? Which streets of the town were mostly used by local Jews? Who did Polish President Mościcki visit while in Oświęcim? All these questions are answered in our latest project Oshpitzin, an online map of prewar Jewish Oświęcim and a printed guidebook.

This year saw the impossible become possible! Matisyahu – the renowned Hasidic reggae artist performed with his backup band, Dub Trio, at MOSiR Stadium in Oświęcim during the 2nd annual Life Festival Oświęcim 2011. It was a unique event and the first concert of its kind in Poland.

Friendship between a rabbi and a priest – was it possible? And what does the band ENEJ have to do with it? These questions were answered in an educational program entitled About a Rabbi and a Priest.
How does the local population see foreign visitors? Do they accept or resent visitors? What is their perception of local history? Is this history an opportunity or a danger in the context of their identity? These questions were raised by the sociological research project Tolerant Oświęcim, prepared by the Auschwitz Jewish Center.

In 2011, the Auschwitz Jewish Center was honored with several awards. During a special session of the Town Council of Oświęcim, the Auschwitz Jewish Center was awarded the Medal of Oświęcim for its educational projects, preserving the memory of the local Jewish community, working towards Polish-Jewish dialogue, and creating a positive identity for Oświęcim in Poland and abroad. Tomasz Kuncewicz, AJC Director, received the medal on behalf of the Center from the Mayor of Oświęcim, Janusz Chwierut.

In addition, The Auschwitz Jewish Center was honored with the Krysztaly Soli Award for the best organization in the Malopolska region in the category of Protection of Cultural Heritage. The awarding committee based their decision on the AJC’s educational programs that create a bridge between the difficult, painful past and the present; innovative and creative way of presenting Polish history and confronting prejudice; and promotion of sensitivity, respect, and tolerance among young people.

In September, the Chairman of the Auschwitz Jewish Center, Simon Bergson, and the President of the AJC and Director of the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, Dr. David G. Marwell, were both awarded the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland by the Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski for their contribution to advancing Polish-Jewish dialogue. This honor by the Polish state is an important acknowledgment of the AJC as a unique joint American-Polish project.

In 2011, the Auschwitz Jewish Center was also featured on Kawa czy herbata?, the popular Polish TV show, as well as at the Oświęcim fair of non-governmental organizations.

All of the AJC’s projects in 2011 were possible thanks to the tireless work of our exceptional volunteers from Poland and beyond: Szymon Arkuszewski and Klaudia Grygiel from the State School of Higher Education in Oświęcim and Luisa Lehnen and Mario Schweiger. All of the interns helped the AJC make 2011 a remarkable year. We welcome aboard Lukas Sperlich, Lisa Lorentz, and Ievgeniia Rudkovska, our new volunteers for 2011.
In May, the AJC hosted youth groups from Australia, Israel, Poland, and the US during the March of the Living.

In 2011, the Jewish Museum and synagogue were visited by the U.S. Ambassador to Poland, Lee A. Feinstein; U.S. Consul General Allen Greenberg of Kraków; Malcolm Hoenlein, the Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; American Jewish musician Matisyahu; Chief Rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich; and Polish-Ukrainian band ENEJ, the winner of the first edition of Must be the Music.

The Auschwitz Jewish Center regularly hosted students from the United Kingdom who came to Oświęcim with a program called Lessons from Auschwitz with Rabbi Barry Marcus from the Holocaust Educational Trust. Other groups that came in 2011 included a group of teachers and educators from the 6th edition of Teaching about the Holocaust Summer Program, organized by the Centre for Holocaust Studies at the Jagiellonian University, a delegation from the French Armed Forces with Rabbi Haim Korsia, three groups from the Raphael Lemkin seminars organized by the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, and educators from Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.
In 2012, the AJC was enriched by the receipt of a number of important new archival resources. Thanks to Mrs. Teresa Danecka and Mrs. Małgorzata Larysz, relatives of Father Jan Skarbek, we received copies of unique photos and documents about Father Skarbek from the interwar period. Our longtime friends, historical collectors Miroslaw Ganobis and Łukasz Szymański shared several new objects from their collections. In addition, the AJC received valuable documents about the Thieberg family from Mr. Władysław Zabrzeński, resident of Oświęcim, whose family was friends with the Thiebergs. We thank all of our donors for sharing their artifacts, documents, and family histories with the AJC.

Please help the Auschwitz Jewish Center preserve the history of the local Jewish community. In connection with preparation for our new Core Exhibition, we are seeking donations of artifacts, including personal testimonies, photographs, formal and personal letters, diaries, press articles, and any other materials reflecting the history of Oświęcim’s Jews before, during, and after WWII. Anyone willing to donate or lend such materials to the AJC is kindly requested to contact Dr. Artur Szyndler, +48 33 844 70 02, szyndler@ajcf.pl.
The past year saw the continuation of our education programs for youth and the general public. Our main program for Polish students, Oshpitzin, which focuses on Jewish culture and the history of the local Jewish community, attracted school groups from all over Poland in 2011.

Ten graduate students from various universities across the US and Canada took part in the 10th iteration of the Auschwitz Jewish Center Fellows Program: A Bridge to History in June and July. The Fellows arrived in Poland after a brief orientation at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. Fellows visited Krakow, Warsaw, and Oświęcim, where they explored and discussed Polish-Jewish history. This year’s itinerary also included numerous field trips, including those to Lodz, Kielce, Będzin (to visit the former house of prayer of Nuhim Cukerman, renovated and preserved by local young people), Bielsko-Biała (to meet with Mrs. Dorota Wiewióra – President of Bielsko-Biała Jewish Community), Pszczyna, the formerly Jewish towns of south-eastern Poland including Bobowa, Checiny, Chmielnik, Działoszyce, Pińczów and Szydłów. In addition, participants visited north-eastern Slovakia, where they explored the Jewish heritage sites in Bardejov and Presov, and met with a local survivor of the Holocaust, Mr. Tibor Kartin.

13 cadets and midshipmen from the U.S. Service Academies (U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, and U.S. Coast Guard Academy) took part in the 2011 American Service Academies Program. After preparation at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the participants traveled to Poland for on-site study of Holocaust history. This year’s program included study trips to Krakow, Oświęcim, and small towns of south-eastern Poland, including Tarnów, Zakliczyn, and Bobowa. The program concluded with a day of hiking in the beautiful Tatra and Pieniny Mountains. Through a short but intensive program, the participants explored rich and diverse Jewish history and learned about the Holocaust at the authentic site of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau.
In addition, the past year saw the continuation of the Auschwitz Jewish Center Program for Students Abroad (PSA). These programs provide a scholarly learning environment through which students engage intensively with the history of the Holocaust and Jewish life in Poland. The five-day program, which is offered four to six times per year, is held during the spring and fall semesters and is open to North American students studying abroad. Participants in the 2011 Programs for Students Abroad visited Krakow and Oświęcim, worked with scholars, took in-depth tours of Auschwitz-Birkenau, heard testimony, and engaged in meaningful discussions. In addition, they met with Mrs. Mirosława Gruszczyńska, a Righteous among the Nations. In 2011, the AJC organized three editions of this program, which included 45 participants.

Oświęcim: A Different Perspective is a series of new, one-day intensive study visits to the Auschwitz Jewish Center and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum for high school students from the Silesia region of Poland to be debuted in 2012. The program combines high school study visits to the Auschwitz Museum and Memorial with educational workshops on the historical context of the Holocaust and the prewar history of the Jewish community of Oświęcim/Auschwitz. In addition, reflection discussions on contemporary instances of anti-Semitism, and other forms of prejudice today, help students make connections after their visit to Auschwitz.

Oświęcim: A Different Perspective continues the work of the 2011 Why Do We Need Tolerance? program, the first project in Poland and one of the few initiatives in Europe to link the history of Auschwitz with education about ethical decisions today. Oświęcim: A Different Perspective is made possible through a generous grant from the Civic Initiatives Fund (FIO) in Warsaw. The In-Service Teacher Training Center in Katowice is a recruiting partner for Oświęcim: A Different Perspective.

Tolerant Oświęcim, a conference presenting the results of a sociological survey of Oświęcim...
The AJC brings Jewish culture and multiculturalism to the public through various events ever year. At the start of 2011, the AJC hosted an exhibition entitled Holocaust Memory, which consisted of a series of unique postage stamps issued on January 27, the anniversary of the liberation of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, which, since 2005, has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The project had three goals:
• To measure the level of xenophobia among residents of Oświęcim;
• To study the social memory of the residents of Oświęcim, i.e. to find out which historical events are meaningful to their identity;
• And to create recommendations for the local administration and educational institutions based on the results of the study.

The project was made possible by the generous support of the Stefan Batory Foundation in Warsaw under the framework of the Democracy in Action program.

Cultural events

The AJC brings Jewish culture and multiculturalism to the public through various events ever year. At the start of 2011, the AJC hosted an exhibition entitled Holocaust Memory, which consisted of a series of unique postage stamps issued on January 27, the anniversary of the liberation of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, which, since 2005, has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Stamps presented in the exhibition came from the collection of Grzegorz and Piotr Ichniowski.

As in years past, selections of Polish and foreign films on Jewish themes from the 2010 Jewish Motifs Film Festival were showcased at the Center. In total, 14 movies were shown on four March afternoons, attracting 250 visitors from Oświęcim and beyond.
In April, the AJC presented its new project, Oshpitzin, which consists of two elements: an interactive online map of prewar Jewish Oświęcim, which can be found at www.oshpitzin.pl, and a printed guidebook. The project is available in both Polish and English has gathered together a unique collection of historical photographs, documents, and video testimonies to bring to life the vanished Jewish world of Oświęcim. Oshpitzin was created by Tomasz Kunczewicz, Dr. Artur Szyndler, and Maciek Zabierowski.

In May, the Center was visited by a special guest, Henryk Schönker, who is a former resident of Oświęcim. Mr. Schönker came to Oświęcim to discuss the third edition of his unusual memoir, Angel’s Touch, and meet with residents of Oświęcim. The visit was organized in conjunction with the KARTA Center and the History Meeting House. In addition, Mr. Schönker held two more book launches, in Warsaw and Kraków, with the participation of Katarzyna Madoń-Mitzner, the deputy director of the History Meeting House and the memoir’s editor, as well as Dr. Artur Szyndler, who authored the appendix.

In June, the second annual Life Festival Oświęcim (www.lifefestival.pl) took place, co-organized by the Auschwitz Jewish Center. In addition to the concerts and plays, an important part of Festival’s activity was its educational component, co-organized by the Roma
Association in Poland, which included Ask the Rabbi, a meeting with Chief Rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich, led by Tomasz Kuncewicz and Maciek Zabierowski and the Living Library – an anti-discrimination project by the Meritum Association for Informal Education. The program provided a rare opportunity to speak with people facing exclusion in their everyday life in Poland.

During the Festival, an anti-discrimination poster competition called Why Do We Need Tolerance? was held. The main purpose of this project was to encourage young people to think about the meaning of tolerance in the context of democracy and civil society’s development, as well as the peaceful coexistence of different nationalities and minorities.

Almost 100 posters were received – three of them received awards and three additional works received honorary mentions. In addition, 19 works were displayed in a special exhibition at the Oświęcim Culture Center.

The most memorable and spectacular moment of the Festival was the Matisyahu concert. He performed on Saturday night at the MOSiR Stadium in Oświęcim. Matisyahu, who is, at the moment, probably the world’s most famous Jewish musician, combines elements of jazz, hip-hop, beatboxing, and Hasidic music. In Oświęcim, he performed together with the Brooklyn-based Dub Trio, composed of D.P. Holmes (guitar), Stu Brooks (bass), and Joe Tomino (drums). Matisyahu’s performance at the end of Life Festival Oświęcim 2011 impressed thousands of fans from Poland and beyond, who heard his most popular hits, including his famous song, One Day.

The day before the concert, on Friday night, Matisyahu participated in Shabbat prayers at the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot synagogue in Oświęcim. This special occasion, initiated...
and led by the Chief Rabbi of Poland, Michael Schudrich, brought more than 40 individuals from across Poland together to attend prayers. After prayers, Shabbat dinner took place, led by Matisyahu and prepared by well-known Warsaw restaurant owner, Malka Kafka, who operates two establishments in the Polish capital, “Tel Aviv” and “Haifa.” Thanks to Matisyahu, Rabbi Schudrich, and the many guests, prayers rang out from the Oświęcim synagogue – prayers which, before the Second World War, could be heard from more than twenty different places of worship in our town.

September was devoted to About a Rabbi and a Priest, a series of cultural and educational events commemorating the friendship of Father Jan Skarbek and Rabbi Eliyahu Bombach. The story of the close friendship between these two well-known and powerful men was almost unknown to the local people, but it is an important symbol of friendly relations between Christians and Jews in interwar Oświęcim and the foundation for the creation of a positive local identity.

During the program, visitors heard a lecture on the prewar friendship between Rabbi Bombach and Father Skarbek by Dr. Artur Szyndler; played a location-based game called Oshpitzin, based on the Jewish past of Oświęcim, and created a mural with Sławomir Czajkowski ZBIOK. The day ended with a final concert, opened by Krzywa Alternatywa from Oświęcim and featuring ENEJ from Olsztyn, the winner of the first edition of the Must be the Music TV show. 3,000 people attended this celebration of a friendship between a priest and a rabbi.
PARTNERSHIPS

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS ATTENDED BY THE AJC STAFF

Conference of the Association of European Jewish Museums, London Jewish Museum; Holocaust and Human Rights, Fundamental Rights Agency EU and Ann Frank House, Amsterdam; Holocaust Education in European Perspective, Anne Frank House, Amsterdam; Evaluation of transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge, Council of Europe, Strasbourg; Organising Study Trips to Auschwitz: Contemporary Challenges, Memorial de la Shoah, Paris.

SUPPORT

In 2011, the projects of the Auschwitz Jewish Center were made possible through generous support by:

Simon Bergson • Jaffa and Larry Feldman • Allan and Marilyn Glick Foundation
Joseph and Michelle Jacobs • Andrew and Ann R. Tisch Foundation
Skirball Foundation • Koret Foundation • Tomorrow Program
United States Military Academy at West Point • United States Air Force Academy
United States Naval Academy • United States Coast Guard Academy
The Auschwitz Jewish Center is an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.

www.mjhnyc.org

Please support the Auschwitz Jewish Center. For more information please contact the AJC in New York at www.ajcf.org or 646-437-4276.

The Foundation is a registered not-for-profit 501 (C)(3) organization.
Matisyahu performing at Life Festival Oświęcim 2011. Photo credit: M. Schwaiger.

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