



MUSEUM
OF JEWISH
HERITAGE

A LIVING
MEMORIAL
TO THE
HOLOCAUST

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 2, 2009

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Interfaith Living Museum Brings Jewish and Muslim Students Together
to Celebrate Shared Culture and Diversity
at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

New York, NY—On **Tuesday, February 3 at 10 a.m.**, middle school students from the **Solomon Schechter School** of Manhattan and the **Islamic Leadership School (ILS)** of the Bronx will come together at the **Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust** to begin a journey of understanding. The **Interfaith Living Museum** is a four month program of cooperative learning between the schools. Students will share their new knowledge with peers, teachers, and family and community members in the Museum's Events Hall overlooking New York Harbor when they present an exhibition of personal artifacts that represent their respective cultures on **June 10**.

The Interfaith Living Museum project began four years ago when the Museum of Jewish Heritage Education Department saw a need for cross-cultural education between Jewish and Muslim students. Shireena Drammeh, the Director of Islamic Leadership School, was eager to participate from the very beginning—she believes “dialogue and interactions are the enemies of animosity.” Solomon Schechter School has participated for three years. “The Interfaith Living Museum program has been an enriching experience for our students and our school,” said Solomon Schechter principal Gary Pretsfelder. “It has given our fifth graders the opportunity to meet and engage peers from very different backgrounds and from a community with which they would ordinarily have very little, if any, contact. It is important to us that our students recognize at a young age what Muslims and Jews have in common so that future discourse, which right now is so intertwined with politics, can have a chance to succeed.”

The twenty-six students and their teachers will begin this project on **February 3**. In order to establish a deeper knowledge of Jewish and Islamic culture they will visit the Museum of Jewish Heritage (**February 3**), where they will learn about Jewish history, and the American Museum of Natural History (**on February 11**), where they will study Islamic artifacts and culture. Museum trips will be followed by visits to Congregation Anshe Chesed, a synagogue and the Islamic Cultural Center of New York where students will speak with community leaders (**both on April 30**), as well as to one another's schools (**on March 3 and 26**). The program ends on **the evening of June 10** when they present a finished exhibition at the Museum of Jewish Heritage. **All other visits will take place at 10 a.m.**

Once they are better acquainted with the other's heritage, students will be instructed to gather artifacts that represent their cultures in a personal and meaningful way. Students will share with one another a variety of unique objects and will be able to explain their heritage through the prism of their families' own experiences. They will discuss what these artifacts represent to both the culture and to themselves and over the course of the next few months, they will work together to categorize objects thematically, write descriptions, and create their own exhibition.

(MORE)

“The two faiths have a lot in common,” said Paul Radensky, Museum Educator for Jewish Schools. “We want to build mutual understanding and mutual respect between Muslims and Jews. It makes sense to start young.”

The Interfaith Living Museum is made possible through the generous support of the Leo Rosner Foundation, Inc.

About the Museum

The Museum’s three-floor Core Exhibition educates people of all ages and backgrounds about the rich tapestry of Jewish life over the past century—before, during, and after the Holocaust. Special exhibitions include *Woman of Letters: Irène Némirovsky and Suite Française*, on view through March 22 and *The Shooting of Jews in Ukraine: Holocaust by Bullets*, on view through March 15. The Museum offers visitors a vibrant public program schedule in its Edmond J. Safra Hall. It is also home to Andy Goldsworthy’s memorial *Garden of Stones*, as well as James Carpenter’s *Reflection Passage*, Gift of The Gruss Lipper Foundation. The Museum receives general operating support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and is a founding member of the *Museums of Lower Manhattan*.

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