



2112 East St. Galway, N.Y. 12074  
518-882-6385

Galway Public Library  
2112 East St.  
Galway N.Y. 12074  
518-882-6385  
[www.galwaypubliclibrary.org](http://www.galwaypubliclibrary.org)

March 28, 2025

RE: 2024 Program of the Year Award

To Whom It May Concern:

In May 2024, the Galway Public Library in Galway, New York, was fortunate to host a traveling Holocaust remembrance exhibit, “Messages From Survivors: One Family’s Holocaust Legacy,” a powerful exhibit about the Holocaust, survival, resiliency, and the importance of family. This program was newly being shared with libraries, and when we heard about it through the Southern Adirondack Library System (SALS), we believed it would be a timely, educational offering to bring to our rural community. Working in partnership with The Memory Project Productions, Inc., SALS, and New York Assemblywoman Carrie Woerner, the Galway Public Library was able to host the exhibit, which consisted of six moveable panels providing researched historical context with corresponding short videos and personal stories about one family’s experiences from 1938 through the Holocaust and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“Messages From Survivors” is an intense storytelling exhibit, with poignant, difficult stories to share, and we were proud to bring it to our community, partially because there has never been anything similar here before. Other libraries in our system were hosting the exhibit also, but we set out to adapt the exhibit in a way that would appeal to a wide range of people in our community. We felt this opportunity was important because our community houses many seniors, including Jews, who remember World War II, but there are also people who are less familiar with history. Additionally, with the current state of world events, such as the Israeli-Palestinian War, the Russian-Ukrainian War, and the confrontational nature of our nation’s current political and cultural atmosphere, we wanted to promote and showcase that listening, understanding, respect, tolerance, and kindness can affect and promote change, help us avoid more violence, and remind people where radical views can lead us, if we are not careful; knowing the past is vital if we do not want to repeat it, as the true adage goes.

However, the sensitive nature of the Holocaust story made it somewhat challenging to share. While it was vital to honestly share and talk about what happened, it is not a pleasant topic to dwell on, particularly for an entire month. How could we showcase the “Messages From Survivors” exhibit conveying the story of the Jacobs family and the Holocaust in a manner that was respectful yet engrossing and not too frightening or disturbing for children and adults? To address these challenges, we decided to supplement the Memory Project exhibit by developing our own supporting programs, activities, and locally-generated exhibits. This multi-faceted approach was purposely designed to appeal to multiple ages and interests, using varied programming methods in order to promote meaningful interaction and learning.

First, we reached out to our local school to partner with them. A miniature set of the “Memories From Survivors” panels was displayed in the Galway Central High School library for the entire month. This meant that each of the students was able to view the panel’s real-life stories in the hopes that the experience would foster a better understanding of the impact of the Holocaust. This also allowed us to reach a wider targeted audience within our community.

from generation to generation. "Family Stories: Preserving History Workshop" used collected stories and pictures to create a small scrapbook of poetry, drawings, and anecdotes to help preserve and remember family members and their history. Participants were touched to have a memento of their own personal history to look at and share with others. Sharing family stories is important because these are often what give us the roots to grow and thrive.

We wrapped up our programs with a special presentation of a personal experience during World War II in Europe, "The Two-Fold Invasion: Never to Be the Same," the most emotionally impactful of all the programs held. A local resident, who lived in Hungary during World War II as a child, spoke about the impact the war and its aftermath on his family. Attendees were invariably impressed with the speaker's spirit and courage, zest for life, and his willingness to share difficult memories about how some of his family survived, but others, including his adored sister, did not. The sharing was very moving, and his gratitude for his family's sacrifices for those they loved was very apparent. It was all unimaginable, and yet it happened. After this program, other people in the community who also had relatives living in Europe at the time, shared their stories.

Based on the experience of hosting the exhibit and a month of programming, we have a few take-a-ways:

- We should embrace history for what it is; we cannot change it, but we certainly can, and should, learn from it;
- There are many ways to tell a story, ways that affect the listeners in different ways;
- People enjoy sharing their histories;
- If you have questions about the past, ask them while the people involved are still alive so that the history and impressions are not irretrievably lost;
- Dance is beneficial to one's physical and mental health;
- Kindness is a balm for the soul.

The Galway Public Library is grateful that we had the opportunity to host the "Memories From Survivors" exhibit and develop related programming because of the many positive results gained by community members and the library itself. We were able to meet our goals of generating respectful conversations, promoting kindness, and educating about historical events. We reached a wide audience of all ages with various program types. We base our view of the success of the program series on the number of attendees and the amount of positive feedback we received, particularly from the senior population who were glad to revisit memories, and who want to be sure that the younger generation does not forget. During the month, numerous new faces and regular patrons visited, many who shared why they wanted to come in and see the panel display or attend a particular program. These personal stories added to the impact of the monthlong event. The exhibit and programs attracted at least 700 people during the month, with 300 viewing the school display, attendance statistics that are rare for our small library. An additional 90 people have downloaded or viewed the presentations which we posted on our website. Library staff heard many expressions of gratitude to the library for sharing the stories and information, and there is a growing interest among our patrons for us to hold more history and art-related programs in the future. It was a month to be remembered here in Galway, New York.

Sincerely,



Debra Flint, Director  
Galway Public Library  
2112 East Street  
PO Box 207  
Galway, NY 12074  
518-882-6385  
gal-director@sals.edu