Scholars, Community Leaders, and Artists Work Throughout U.S. and Abroad to Advance Genocide Education

Anne Frank Center's new Advisory Council promotes diversity, collaboration, and kinship

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In every culture, and in each era, the tenets of compassion, open-mindedness, and understanding are equally critical to our humanity; the need for mutual respect has no trend line. Yet throughout our global history, there have been moments in which such values have been so diluted as to seem all but invisible. One of the greatest duties we possess as citizens of this planet is to prevent the atrocities of our past from echoing into our future, and it is by fostering generosity where it is weak, and education where it is absent, that we find our greatest chance at success.

This philosophy fuels the Anne Frank Center’s mission to promote respect for all of humanity. Through a new Advisory Council established this spring—comprised of political leaders, humanitarians, social justice entrepreneurs, artists, scholars, and educators—the AFC aims to expand the reach of its ambassadors, and in so doing advance the values that are so central to that mission.

The council’s eleven members come from a wide range of experiences, locations, and disciplines. They will serve as experts in their respective specialties, offering advice to AFC staff, advocating on the Center’s behalf, and working to help expand and establish partnerships, programs, and initiatives across the U.S. and abroad.

Education is a hallmark of the Anne Frank Center’s work and will be a focal point of the new council. Several members share backgrounds in education but offer unique viewpoints and areas of expertise.

William Shulman, PhD, is one of the foremost authorities on Holocaust education. He is a Professor Emeritus of History at CUNY and the president of the Association of Holocaust Organizations and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), as well as the Founding Director of the Holocaust Resource Center & Archives at Queensborough Community College. Shulman’s commitment to ensuring that history is not forgotten but, rather, used to ignite the passions of future generations is in absolute alignment with the AFC’s mission, and his expertise and insight are invaluable additions to the Center’s braintrust.

Jud Newborn, PhD, has previously worked with the Anne Frank Center and assisted with the dedication of the Anne Frank Memorial Garden in Huntington, New York, in 2010. Newborn is a scholar, historian, and expert in anti-Semitism who lectures and performs around the world. He is also the Founding Historian, curator, and co-creator of New York’s Museum of Jewish Heritage, as well as the author of *Sophie Scholl and the White Rose*, a book that follows the story of a few German university students who became the most iconic heroes of the German
anti-Nazi resistance. Newborn was honored in 2018 with the AFC's “Spirit of Anne Frank Human Writes Award.”

"I have known and admired the Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect for decades," Newborn says. “From the early 1950s through today, Anne Frank and her diary are the main way that most people worldwide discover the evils of the Holocaust and develop sympathy for all victims of hatred—a task more important today than ever before. This institution, with its wonderfully creative programming inspired by Anne Frank's life, values, and aspirations, is unique in its capacity to raise consciousness.”

Also honored at last year’s Spirit of Anne Frank Awards was Teacher of the Year Ivy Schamis, who was famously teaching a Holocaust education class at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High when in February of 2018 the school became the scene of one of the nation’s worst mass shootings, killing two students in her class and injuring four others. Since the tragedy, Schamis has only become a more outspoken proponent of combatting hatred and misunderstanding, both on the public stage and in her classes.

Maria Esposito, PhD, an Associate Professor of Education at Molloy College, is an expert in educational technology, while Wilma Tootle, LHD, president of W. H. Tootle Consulting Services and a retired public school teacher and administrator, brings her acumen of the public educational system to the council. "I view this as an opportunity to work with other dedicated individuals to help keep Anne Frank's legacy alive through the power of education," says Tootle. "I will lift my voice to spread the message of the mission, especially to our youth."

Now the Vice President for Human Resources at Brown University, Amanda Bailey has extensive experience with recruitment, development, and online communications; in her previous position at Morehouse College in Atlanta, she spearheaded a program focused on employment and leadership, and among other successful initiatives, increased diversity in the college's leadership team.

Josh Lockwood is the CEO of the American Red Cross Greater New York Region and, previously, the executive director of Habitat for Humanity, two organizations dedicated to fostering community and providing safe haven for those in need. "Anne Frank's legacy is one of hope and humanity," says Lockwood. "As a proud member of the American Red Cross, I am inspired by her words that 'nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.' I look forward to working with the Center to nourish a culture of respect across our great city, throughout our nation, and around the world."

Joysetta Pearse, who serves as the Director of the African American Museum of Nassau County, has devoted much of her career to spotlighting little-known or forgotten pieces of history, often using art as a gateway to the past. Her résumé is robust; among many other certifications and accolades, she is a Licensed Private Investigator, Board-Certified Genealogist, active member of MENSA, and co-founder of The African-Atlantic Genealogical Society, and has sat on the boards of or presided over nearly a dozen committees, foundations, clubs, and associations that focus on the advancement of the arts, African American history, and women in the workforce.

Indeed, art has the unique ability to educate and sway opinion with emotion, often without words, which is a talent with universal power. The Anne Frank Center believes in the influence art can have on the hearts and minds its audience, and so has also sought out council members with varied expertise in that field.
Siddhartha Shah, PhD, curator of Indian and South Asian Art at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, has spent more than 15 years as a gallerist, art dealer, and curator specializing in Hindu and Buddhist art of India and Nepal. Much of his work, which he has written about and which has been featured in publications around the globe, from The Times of India to The New Yorker, focuses on the conflicts and intersections between religion, religious identity, and modern art.

“As a young student,” says Shah, “the diary of Anne Frank left a significant mark on me, which has greatly informed how I try to live my life today—from a place of tolerance, compassion, and care. She left us all with a timeless message of hope, and I am honored to support the Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect in assuring that her words and her spirit remain relevant to future generations. I look forward also to championing the message of Anne Frank as a source of inspiration to the many marginalized communities facing the dangers of intolerance and discrimination today.”

Rabbi Barton Shallat, emeritus rabbi from Temple Beth El of Huntington, New York, continues to promote compassion and tolerance while working to advance the arts throughout the East Coast, particularly in Long Island, the Hamptons, and Miami, Florida. With his wife Jane, Rabbi Shallat is active with numerous art museums and cultural institutions.

Lauren McGowan is a longtime supporter of the nonprofit sector and the arts, particularly in Long Island and New York City, where her father, Roy Somlyo, was a leader in the theatre community and managing producer of the Tony Awards. She now serves as the Director of Development for the North Shore Child and Family Guidance Center.

“What is done cannot be undone, but one can prevent it happening again.

—Anne Frank

About the Anne Frank Center:
The Anne Frank Center for Mutual Respect offers educational programs, traveling exhibits, and theatrical performances to share the impact of the message of Anne Frank’s diary by promoting respect for all humanity.

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