

## The Stan Greenspon Center for Peace & Social Justice

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and prejudice through Holocaust education. Together she, Greenspon, and Dippold decided to create a study with the following goals: to explore Charlotte's community-specific needs relating to Holocaust resources and to research best practices of Holocaust centers around the country and to make recommendations for the Charlotte community. With Greenspon's financial backing, Dippold sought the assistance of Jackie Fishman, a professional educator and daughter of a Holocaust survivor, and Melanie Baron, an early organizer of Imagination in uptown Charlotte.

After months of conducting surveys with focus groups of local residents and educators, of visiting Holocaust education and exhibit centers, and of attending conferences and lectures and programs, the three presented a final report in January 2015.

Over the course of the study, it was discovered that a Holocaust education center was not enough. To continue to be relevant in the present day, Holocaust education was morphing, and the original vision for the Holocaust Resource Center in Charlotte had transformed as well. In addition to a place to commemorate and honor the victims of the Holocaust, the report also notes that "we also

have an opportunity – and many say an obligation - to use the Holocaust and its abundance of documentation as a primary case study, and make connections with current local, national, and global situations in which injustice, bigotry or inequality have surfaced. In this way, the study of the Holocaust can have a positive outcome – to help students, parents, teachers, community leaders and all citizens think about the decisions they make, and their power to make a difference in the world." The true mission of the center was starting to take shape.

The final report, which temporarily named the project The Center for Collective Justice and Holocaust Education, demonstrated that the product would be more global and fit in more into the outside community than on Shalom Park.

### It Was *Bashert* (Meant to Be)

Again the planets aligned and proved to all that this project was *bashert*, meant to be. As the final report was resting on Worrel's desk, Rabbi Judy Schindler announced to the community that she was leaving work as a pulpit rabbi to do more work in social justice in the outside community. While Schindler explored her options, Worrel presented her with the report and suggested that this was a project that was ideal for Schindler's future endeavors. At the same time, Queens University had indicated an interest in Schindler joining the faculty. When Worrel introduced Greenspon into the mix, everything tied together. The vision of all parties meshed into what is now known as The Stan Greenspon Center for Peace and Justice at Queens University.

Greenspon doesn't want the center named for him just to copy what other cities were doing. His hope is that the Stan Greenspon Center will "shake people up. ... I want it to impact people's lives, open up their minds, make people pro-active to ensure that [the Holocaust] never happens again."

Schindler sees it as an additional leaf on the blossoming plant of Holocaust education. "We have the Butterfly Project that educates school-age children ...; we have the NC Council on the Holocaust that educates teachers on how to teach the Holocaust; the Stan Greenspon Center for Peace and Social Justice will collaborate with them to create a digital resource center available to any scholar or educator at any hour of the day.

"We want to make the lessons of the Holocaust relevant to things that are happening today," Schindler continues. "Our programs and resources will juxtapose and connect current events to historical events. ... The idea is to move people to advocacy."

### Interfaith and Programming Visions

There will also be a strong interfaith aspect to the work of The Stan Greenspon Center. "We'll survey houses of worship in Charlotte to see where they want to use their voices to make change," Schindler explains. "We can then

have a database of churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples that anyone can access to see where their passions are being acted on."

Her current vision of the center, while a work-in-progress, is composed of four parts: 1) Jewish studies; 2) Holocaust and human rights education; 3) Jewish life programming with the Queens University Department of Jewish Life; and 4) Social justice.

This truly fulfills Greenspon's dream. His practice of giving *tzedakah* was learned from his father, who, although he passed away at a young age, always gave to the synagogue and other causes. "He served as an example to me and I hope I will have served as an example to my own children.

"Charlotte is a very charitable community," Greenspon continues. "We've also had great examples of philanthropy in our own lifetimes here in Charlotte: Herman Blumenthal and Leon Levine. These men saved lives and educated people. They were my inspiration." Greenspon has known Levine since they were teenagers. Stan has been impacted by Levine's practice of giving.

"Stan has a great passion which is exhibited in his efforts to give back and improve the lives of those less fortunate," says Phil Warshauer, executive director of The Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community. "His methodical approach to philanthropy matches his Jewish roots and values with his desire, as a successful results oriented businessman, for accountability."

### Fulfilling Your Own Dream

Greenspon's \$2 million endowment will be managed and funded at the Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community. "The Founda-



Rabbi Judy Schindler with her husband, Chip Wallach.

tion for the Charlotte Jewish Community is honored and fortunate to assist him in his philanthropic efforts," Warshauer adds. Greenspon has funded this endowment to ensure that the Center is funded in perpetuity.

The Stan Greenspon Center has an ongoing separate operating fund, a significant portion of which will be funded by Greenspon on an annual basis. "Even though this may not fully cover the entire annual operating budget," Greenspon says, "I feel confident that the community will step forward to assist in making this endeavor a reality."

Ultimately, it was Federation's facilitation of all parties, ideas, and desires that brought this dream to reality. "Federation was happy to identify a critical need which has now been met thanks to the talent, passion, and generosity of some caring and concerned people, resulting in a meaningful impact for the Charlotte community," Worrel concludes. ☆

**Stan Greenspon has been involved in charitable causes both in the greater Charlotte community as well as the Charlotte Jewish Community since the mid 1970s. He served as President of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte during the establishment of Shalom Park.**

**His charitable work has encompassed many causes and organizations. His focus in charity has been on senior citizens, children and their families who lives are affected by severe illness both mental and physical.**

**Some of the entities he has been supportive of in a substantial way are:**

- Levine Children's Hospital;**
- UNC Lineberger Cancer Center -Pediatrics Division;**
- Alexander Youth Network;**
- Misty Meadows Mitey Riders;**
- Jewish Family Services;**
- Senior Outreach Program;**
- Levine Jewish Community Center Oasis Program for Senior Citizens;**
- Etta and Louis Greenspon Endowment Fund for Senior Citizens;**
- The Jimmy V Foundation;**
- North Carolina Holocaust Foundation (Support of Various Educational Projects);**
- Sanford and Lois Benjamin Healing Garden at Carolinas Medical Center;**
- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation;**
- Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte;**
- Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community**

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