

# THE Zekelman HOLOCAUST CENTER

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## The Zekelman Holocaust Center Expands Virtual Training Options for Law Enforcement Agencies Across Michigan

**Farmington Hills, Mich., Oct. 23, 2023** – [The Zekelman Holocaust Center](#) (The HC) recently partnered with the Township of Kalamazoo Police Department to train its police force about the Holocaust, courageous leadership, and public service. Participants included 34 sworn police officers and 6 civilian staff members.

The partnership expands The HC's law enforcement training to departments serving communities on the west side of the state. To date, more than 200 Michigan law enforcement officers have participated in training that is registered through the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES).

The training sessions, "Lessons of the Holocaust for Policing," have provided the department's personnel "with the opportunity to learn more about human history and gain a deeper appreciation for the Holocaust as a human story," said Chief Bryan Ergang of the Township of Kalamazoo Police Department. "It also has allowed us to contemplate how we, as leaders in our communities, can demonstrate strength and depth of character in the face of potentially controversial moral and ethical dilemmas."

The course was administered online through a series of 15–20-minute modules that could be viewed anytime and anywhere by officers. "The lessons were compelling, informative, and engaging, and the format allowed us to efficiently administer the course to the entire department," Chief Ergang said. "Overall, we have had an overwhelmingly positive experience working with The Zekelman Holocaust Center and would sincerely recommend the virtual training to other departments seeking similar opportunities for their personnel."

"We were delighted to work with Chief Ergang to pilot this unique learning opportunity for the Township of Kalamazoo," said Katie Chaka Parks, Manager of Adult Education at The HC. "In every partnership, we work to meet the specific interests of leaders and professionals to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust align with their needs and can be applied in their setting, whether in the workplace or in the community they serve."

The virtual course covers Holocaust history and highlights how police and law enforcement officers responded to the genocide as it unfolded. Topics covered include Introduction to the Holocaust, the Radicalization of German Police, Courageous Leadership During the Holocaust, The Holocaust by Bullets, The Final Solution in the Camps, and the Legacies of the Holocaust. The series concluded with a recorded talk from one of The HC's Next Generation Speakers, a direct descendent of Holocaust Survivors who shared their family's personal connection to the Holocaust and life after.

"This course enables law enforcement officers to reflect on their responsibility to defend our communities against bias and hate crimes," said Jamie Wise, Security Sector Coordinator and Educator at The HC and the instructor for the virtual course. "The modules include many personal stories and examples relevant to the policing profession to help officers make valuable connections."

"We are proud to partner with local law enforcement to provide educational programming, resources, and museum experiences," said Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, CEO at The HC. "With the grand reopening of our exhibits coming in 2024, we look forward to continuing to make Holocaust education accessible for police officers across the state."

### ***About The Zekelman Holocaust Center***

*Founded in 1984 by Michigan survivors who were intent on creating a lasting memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, The Zekelman Holocaust Center is guided by its mission to engage, educate, and empower by remembering the Holocaust.*

*Each year the Center welcomes thousands of visitors who benefit from having a local resource where they can learn the lessons of history's darkest period. Exhibits and artifacts on display include survivor testimonies, documents, paintings, and films, an authentic WWII-era boxcar, and a sapling from the tree located outside Anne Frank's hiding place window that is described in her diary. The Center also invites the public to make use of its extensive Library Archive, which contains more than 20,000 volumes.*

*Embedded in the community, the Center's Museum Educators and Docents tell the human story of the Holocaust to school and adult groups through customized tours, training, and programs. Participants are empowered to apply the lessons learned to create a compassionate society where people take responsible action. Learn more at [www.holocaustcenter.org](http://www.holocaustcenter.org).*

*Hours: Sunday through Thursday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm and Friday 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. The last admission is one hour before closing. Wheelchair accessible. Free parking. For additional information, visit [www.holocaustcenter.org](http://www.holocaustcenter.org) or call 248-553-2400.*

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