

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([00:01](#)):

You're listening to pull up a chair stories from 100 years of creating community in Jewish, Baltimore, a podcast created by The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore

Gary Scholl ([00:10](#)):

The impact that I see on our students is they know they have to become upstanders. They can't allow people to be discriminated against disrespected, humiliated in any situation where they are present.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([00:33](#)):

Welcome back to Pull Up a Chair. I'm your host, Melissa Gerr. Each month, we explore a different theme that illustrates how for more than 100 years and counting The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore has been a place to turn to in times of struggle or celebration and for assistance in connection, you'll probably hear some familiar voices as we laugh, reminisce and learn a thing or two about what it means to build and be a part of a strong Jewish community. For this episode, we commemorate Holocaust remembrance day through a unique lens. You'll hear stories from two students and a faculty member at the John Carroll high school, a Catholic preparatory school in Bel air, Maryland. Decades ago, a program was started to immerse students in the study of the Holocaust that included a trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC. Then in 2008 Louise Geczy, senior project coordinator at the school reached out to the Baltimore Jewish council, an agency of the associated to connect with Holocaust survivors for a new program called Lessons of the Shoah. Since then, hundreds of students from public private and independent schools, as well as John Carroll have participated Lessons of the Shoah teaches tolerance and respect for diversity. Today, the BJC helps secure Holocaust speakers and keynote presenters, works with the school to plan workshops and helps with other logistics.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([02:02](#)):

The program is also sponsored by the Klein Family Foundation. It's been a huge success. Students say that hearing directly from Holocaust survivors has a life-changing impact. Claire Grunewald is one of those students. She graduated from John Carroll in 2016. She was paired up as a student host ambassador with Morris Rosen, a Holocaust survivor and active member of the BJC speakers Bureau. Sadly Rosen recently passed away in December, 2020.

Claire Grunewald ([02:32](#)):

He lived in Baltimore and he was kind of a famous legend in Baltimore, I would say. So it was really so inspiring and just shocking to meet someone with such strength, but also happiness. He was so happy and telling me about how he wakes up and does Zumba like every morning. And I was just after hearing his story, seeing how he can still have such a light was sort of amazing.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([03:00](#)):

Kishan Patel graduated the same year as Claire. His participation in the senior Holocaust experience helped shape the way he conducts himself in the world.

Kishan Patel ([03:09](#)):

Just hearing these stories, everyone would be moved. Some people would be in tears and yet like hearing something that's so, so sad, that's still gave positive vibes. I still remember [inaudible]. So I

would, I had the honor to be the ambassador to, she said, be happy in this country, this is a great country. but don't forget those stories, continue to share our stories and live through our stories. I don't think it's possible to go through that program without just becoming a better human and a better advocate. Regardless of, whatever your political, religious beliefs are. And that's really the beauty of the program that you're able to turn these stories [inaudible] into to something that makes you an advocate. It makes you a better person willing to go out there and put yourself out there for other people.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([03:59](#)):

Gary Scholl has been a teacher and administrator at John Carroll for nearly 50 years. He has witnessed the transformation of many students.

Gary Scholl ([04:07](#)):

The impact that I see on our students is they know they have to become upstanders. They can't allow people to be discriminated against, disrespected, humiliated in any situation where they are present. I have seen students become truly motivated to help other people in significant ways.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([04:35](#)):

Though Claire and Keishan graduated several years ago, they say that the wisdom imparted by Holocaust survivors and the lessons they've learned from Holocaust history are things they'll carry into the future.

Claire Grunewald ([04:47](#)):

Well, yes, the Holocaust is part of Jewish history. It is also part of human history. And as humans, we have a duty to learn about human history and how that's affected our neighbors, because we are all human and we all have the same dignity and value and rights. And so learning and being exposed to past transgressions and past injustices and how we can then move forward from them, I think is something to emphasize and something to really focus on as the importance of this program and something I would pass down to my kids.

Kishan Patel ([05:20](#)):

My kids are definitely going to know about it and my kids' friends are going to know about it. I think that's one of the biggest things and impacts that you could make, continue to share to that next generation and letting my kids know that even if they aren't the ones marginalized, you ever do need to become an advocate and speak up and be their own aid for another person.

Gary Scholl ([05:38](#)):

One of the things that I am most proud about my three daughters is the fact that they have become advocates for human rights and social justice and racial equality. And they were all products of John Carroll. They all went through this Holocaust program. And I believe that what they learned at home and what they learned at school reinforced this effort on their part to be just and fair and work for equality and be open to differences and diversity.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([06:27](#)):

A lot goes into creating the Holocaust Remembrance Program for seniors at the John Carroll school. And many are thankful for it.

Kishan Patel ([06:34](#)):

This program wouldn't be as special as it is, create as many advocates as it's done without the BJC's help in providing Holocaust survivors, enabling them to come and create that connection with Mrs. Geczy.

Claire Grunewald ([06:47](#)):

This program is unbelievably unique and I don't think it would be possible without the BJC and you know, all the work from all different partners and Louise Geczy as well. Going to college and talking with other, you know, kids from high schools all around the country, there wasn't any program that was similar to this one. They were kind of shocked actually, that we were able to have such an intimate and ongoing relationship with the BJC and like having all these survivors come to, to John Carroll for this day.

Gary Scholl ([07:22](#)):

It's clear that the connection with the survivor community with when it's not possible without that kind of support and help. I was at an award ceremony several years ago and in which the Jewish community honored Louise for her work with the Holocaust program at John Carroll, along with a number of other leaders in the Baltimore area. And it just so it's clear that there's a great deal of mutual respect between Louise and the John Carroll community and the Baltimore Jewish community as well.

Melissa Gerr (Host) ([08:07](#)):

Thanks for listening to Pull Up a Chair. I'm your host Melissa Gerr. This podcast was produced for you by The Associated: Jewish Federation of Baltimore. From East Baltimore to Forest Park, from Pikesville to Randallstown and beyond, The Associated has been there for the community every step of the way. Don't miss the next episode with more stories from your friends and neighbors in Baltimore's Jewish community. Thanks for listening. You've been listening to Pull Up a Chair, stories from 100 years of creating community and Jewish Baltimore. It's part of The Associated's Centennial Celebration.