

## PROJECT HISTORY

In 1997 a group of concerned educators, clergy, and professionals, many personally touched by the Nazi genocide, joined together to develop a way of commemorating the Holocaust and other genocides that would not only deeply touch participants, but also motivate them to take action and make a positive difference in even the smallest way. The ripple effect of good over apathy would be incalculable.

Two impulses led the founding committee to create the *Memory to Action* event. First was the concern that with time and the passing of the survivors, genocides such as the Holocaust might become less meaningful to future generations. Additionally, we were dissatisfied with the impersonal, sometimes even perfunctory nature of some Holocaust commemorative events, such as public speeches or information gatherings.

After three years of research and development, the first version of the *Memory to Action* event was piloted in Fall 2000. After dozens of pilot events with hundreds of participants, we refined the guidebook according to the feedback we received. Thousands of intensive work hours later, we have a unique, carefully crafted event that guides participants in recalling the Holocaust, and helping them to emerge from the experience with a commitment to taking steps towards greater social justice.

## MEMORY TO ACTION EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Ralph M. Daniel, Ph.D.** Chair; psychologist; son of Holocaust refugees; expert on role play development.

**Esther Frankel, MBA.** Computer educator at Santa Barbara City College; daughter of Holocaust survivors.

**Lynne Glasman, Ph.D.** Psychologist; educator; specialist in Jewish rituals.

**Herb Gravitz, Ph.D.** Psychologist; expert and noted author on trauma and grief in families.

**Rabbi Arthur Gross-Schaefer, CPA, J.D.** Professor of Ethics, Loyola Marymount University; expert on multiculturalism in public schools.

**Harold Marcuse, Ph.D.** Professor of History, University of California, Santa Barbara; specialist in Holocaust education; author of *Legacies of Dachau*.

**Judy Meisel** Holocaust survivor; renowned educator and lecturer; subject of the documentary film *Tak for Alt (Thanks for Everything)*.

**Bill Weil** Vice President of electronics firm; expert in product development, marketing and advanced technology training.

**Steven Worzman, MBA** Investment banker; son of Auschwitz & Buchenwald survivors; expert in business development.

## GIVING INFORMATION

The *Memory to Action* Project is a public not-for-profit, 501(C)(3) organization. It is registered with the IRS under the name Holocaust Home Commemoration Project, Inc. All contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

**The Memory to Action Project**  
P.O. Box 91402  
Santa Barbara, CA 93190-1402  
e-mail: [contact@memorytoaction.org](mailto:contact@memorytoaction.org)  
web site: [www.memorytoaction.org](http://www.memorytoaction.org)

# MEMORY TO ACTION



*Commemorating Genocide  
Encouraging Tolerance  
Committing to Social Action*

## WHAT IS MEMORY TO ACTION?

The *Memory to Action* project seeks to create and establish the practice of an annual participatory event utilizing the project's guidebook to remember the Holocaust and thereby help to avert future genocides. We endeavor to help participants to value human diversity and empathize with the suffering of others. Further, the *Memory to Action* event encourages participants to take personal actions, however small, that will lead to greater tolerance and personal safety for all.

## EVENT DESCRIPTION

Intended for families and small groups, the *Memory to Action* commemorative experience creates an intense, personal context in which participants learn about and discuss the roles individuals played in the Nazi Holocaust and other crimes against humanity. The event includes group interaction, historical readings, symbolic foods and rituals, role-play, discussion, and a shared meal. Each participant reads from her or his own copy of the guidebook.

The event is typically held in a home or home-like. It takes about an hour and a half, culminating with a shared meal. Sharing food communicates hope—the antithesis of starvation and despair. This is in keeping with the tradition of Jewish families and groups commemorating the biblical exodus during Passover. However, the *Memory to Action* event is not a religious ceremony. It reaches out and resonates across ethnic, cultural, religious and national lines.

## THE GUIDEBOOK

The *Memory to Action* guidebook is based on the insight that prejudice and apathy are personal choices that can stand at the beginning of the path to tragedy. Readings, rituals, and a role play help participants to recognize the choices they make, and to realize the effects of those choices on others.

The *Memory to Action* event is structured by a guidebook that was partially inspired by the Passover Haggadah. It contains instructions for organization, setup, readings, role play scripts, and background materials for the event.

## DISTRIBUTION

The *Memory to Action* project's goal is national and ultimately worldwide guidebook distribution. This will be achieved initially by recruiting institutional affiliates such as synagogues, churches, schools, museums, and community organizations.

The guidebook is also directly available on our web site, [www.memorytoaction.org](http://www.memorytoaction.org) where visitors can download the guidebook with different role plays. In the future it will be available in multiple languages, starting with German. We also distribute the *Memory to Action* guidebook in a paperback version.

In addition, we plan to make the *Memory to Action* event available as an official ceremony for such annual commemorations as the Holocaust Remembrance Day observed in Germany and Britain on January 27th (Auschwitz liberation day), and in Israel.

## GOALS

The *Memory to Action* project has three main goals:

- To look back and commemorate the horror of genocide in history, particularly the Nazi Holocaust;
- To look forward in the spirit of inclusion, compassion and tolerance;
- To encourage participants to take personal responsibility for each other, regardless of race or religion, thereby helping to prevent the recurrence of genocide anywhere in the world.

The event offers participants concrete opportunities to become involved in grass-roots activities for social change in their local, regional or national communities. Participants are encouraged to improve their community by personally taking a small step that encourages the acceptance of difference and reduces or prevents discrimination, mistreatment, or violence against others.

## DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

The food-based rituals, shared meal, and role play of the *Memory to Action* event make it experiential, personal, participatory, and interactive. In addition, the home or home-like setting provides an intimate atmosphere that resonates with everyday experience and heightens the event's impact.

Because it is participatory, interactive and meal-based, this unique annual event is intended to augment public *Yom Hashoah* (Holocaust) events and museums in educating about the Holocaust and other genocides.