Update to the VHEC Community re: COVID-19

March 16, 2020

In recent weeks, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has been vigilantly monitoring updates from public health authorities and consulting with community partners about precautions and planning for COVID-19 (coronavirus).

The safety of our visitors, volunteers and professional team is our highest priority. To enact social distancing recommendations, the VHEC will be closed effective Tuesday, March 17, with further updates to follow in email communications and on our website.

The VHEC is making this difficult decision in response to a dynamic public health crisis and in the interest of the health and welfare of all members of our community, and with the utmost concern for society’s most vulnerable.

Highlights of how this closure will affect our services:

• Administration
  The professional team continues to work remotely and can be contacted by email via info@vhec.org or individual staff email addresses. Tribute card requests can be made online and we thank you in advance for your patience with longer than standard processing and mailing times.

• Public & Commemorative Programs
  All scheduled public guided exhibition tours, extended hours and Sunday programs are cancelled. We will keep members informed with rescheduled dates for upcoming events featuring Claus Jahnke and Professor Emeritus Chris Friedrichs.
  Out of an abundance of caution for our community members, especially Holocaust survivors, the community-wide Yom HaShoah commemoration scheduled for April 20, 2020 is cancelled. We will be in touch closer to the date with resources to support community members in marking this solemn commemorative moment virtually.
  There will be future opportunities to visit our current exhibition, Treasured Belongings: The Hahn Family and the Search for a Stolen Legacy, on view until November 2020. In the meantime, we invite you to view Dr. Michael Hayden’s keynote address about his family’s remarkable story and collection on our website.

• School Programs
  School tours, classroom workshops, Holocaust Symposia and Holocaust survivor speaking engagements are cancelled until further notice. We will maintain close contact with school boards and public health authorities to determine next steps for our educational programming, rescheduling programs as soon as possible.
  In the meantime, we encourage you to explore our online teaching resources and virtual exhibitions.

• Library, Museum & Archives
  Donations of library books, museum artefacts and archival materials will not be accepted during our closure. We are unable to provide in-person access to materials in our holdings until further notice. Please visit our collections catalogue online via our award-winning database.
  Limited reference support is available by emailing: collections@vhec.org

• Annual Fundraiser
  In lieu of a fundraising event on June 18th, we will be preparing a special direct mailing to our supporters in the months ahead. Please watch your mailboxes.

• Commitment to the Holocaust Survivor Community
  During our closure and mindful that the VHEC is a “second home” for many, the VHEC team will be in regular contact with members of the Holocaust survivor community. As Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam recently urged Canadians: “All of us need to take every precaution to protect those at highest risk of severe COVID-19, while at the same time ensuring that the most vulnerable among us are fully supported and not isolated.”

Finally, we encourage you to consult the following websites for up-to-date information regarding prevention, travel and other guidance:
Vancouver Coastal Health, the BC Centre for Disease Control and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The VHEC continues its commitment to developing and delivering Holocaust education and remembrance initiatives in innovative ways, including digital content and virtual programming. We are grateful to our Holocaust survivors, Board of Directors, Guardians of the Society, staff, volunteers, visitors, members, donors, and partners for your continued support of the VHEC and our mission.

We wish you all continued good health and safety and thank you for your understanding and your patience. Please visit our website and follow us on social media (@theVHEC) for updated information.

Sincerely,

Nina Krieger
Executive Director

Philip Levinson
Board President