

Breman Museum, MJCCA host commemoration ceremonies

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The William Breman Jewish Heritage Museum in Midtown is hosting the 51st annual Holocaust Remembrance Sunday in tribute to the children who survived and those who died during World War II.

"Is not only concerning the next generation might forget it happened. I am worried history 50 years from now will deny it did," Holocaust survivor and museum volunteer Robert Ratonyi said



Robert Ratonyi

of being part of the last generation of Jews that survived.

The Yom Hashoah ceremony consists of a remembrance service in memory of the six million who were killed and will take place at the Greenwood Cemetery in west Atlanta featuring Ratonyi as the speaker.

The name of the event, Yom Hashoah, is the Hebrew name that translates to "day of remembering the catastrophe and atrocities committed against the Jewish people in World War II."

As part of the event, the "Absence of Humanity" exhibit at the museum will be open and free to the public Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Holocaust Remembrance Day in the U.S. is May 8.

"It will be a beautiful event; there will be candle lighting and lots of children singing," Ratonyi said.

Of Rantonyi, event co-chair Jeannette Zukor said, "He was only 6 years old when

he was forced to wear the yellow star and face the terrors of loss in his native Hungary. Ratonyi and the community will pay tribute to the 1.5 million children whose lives were stolen from them by the Nazis and the others, like him, who survived against all odds."

Ratonyi volunteers at the museum to make sure young children learn about Jewish history and is part of a program that brings about 1,500 kids annually into Breman's exhibits to teach them about the Holocaust and its victims.

"Most of those kids are non-Jewish; that is why the program is so important," he said, adding he trusts the children of today's children carry the story beyond their generation, but who knows what will happen in 50 years.

The key for this to not happen again is for people to care enough to speak up when they see unfair acts happening around them, Ratonyi said.

"Millions of Christians stayed quiet in Germany while the Nazis took us," he said. Also, May 8 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta in Dunwoody will invite the entire community to come together for a special Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah) commemoration ceremony at

its Besser Holocaust Memorial Garden, one of the preeminent Holocaust memorials in the Southeast.

The program will feature remarks from Rabbi Joseph Polak, who won the 2015 National Jewish Book Award for his memoir, "After the Holocaust the Bells Still Ring." It is about how he and his mother were able to survive two concentration camps and later deal with the past as they tried to reclaim their lives. The program is free and will take place rain or shine.

Information: (678) 812-4161 or www.atlantajcc.org