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Contact: Michelle Valmond

Jasculca/Terman & Associates for the *Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center*
312-573-5491 office / 312-933-7594 mobile

Jenna Benn

Anti-Defamation League Chicago/Upper Midwest Region
312-782-4909 office

Drew Rodrick

Chicago Police Department
312-745-4240 office

Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center and Anti-Defamation League Launch “Law Enforcement and Democracy Initiative”

***Holocaust Museum and Anti-Defamation League (ADL) train Chicago Police Department recruits,
other area law enforcement using lessons from the Holocaust at inaugural seminar***

SKOKIE, IL - The Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center and the Anti-Defamation League’s (ADL) Greater Chicago/Upper Midwest Region today welcomed recruits from the Chicago Police Department and suburban police departments, FBI Chicago Bureau officials and U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials, among others, to the inaugural *Law Enforcement and Democracy Initiative*. A partnership between the Museum and the ADL, the two-day educational program aims to teach law enforcement officials the history of the Holocaust, examine the role of police in Nazi Europe and explore the challenges of balancing the rights of people with the protection of society as a whole.

“There are many parallels that can be drawn between the ethical decisions faced by law enforcement during the Holocaust and the choices law enforcement professionals are confronted with today,” said Richard S. Hirschhaut, Executive Director, Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center. “Hate crimes, profiling and abuses of power are all very relevant issues and we have worked closely with the ADL and FBI to develop this program since our opening. It is one of many initiatives we have undertaken to bring world-class anti-hate and human rights education to the Midwest.”

Modeled after ADL’s national program offered at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the new *Law Enforcement and Democracy Initiative* aims to provide law enforcement officials in Illinois and across the Midwest with the training and tools necessary to respond to hate crimes and bias incidents on the job.

“Nearly 50,000 law enforcement professionals have participated in the D.C. program, including new FBI agents and analysts for whom it is required,” said Lonnie Nasatir, ADL Regional Director for Greater Chicago and the Upper Midwest. “But, it is not possible for every law enforcement official to go to D.C. We wanted to ensure law enforcement professionals across Illinois and the Midwest also have this opportunity and are excited to partner with the Illinois Holocaust Museum to make it happen.”

The curricula developed by the Illinois Holocaust Museum and the ADL for this initiative allows for participants to begin their first day with interactive workshops led by Museum staff and a tour of the Museum’s Karkomi Permanent Exhibition to explore the chronology of the Holocaust with special attention to the role of law enforcement in the Nazi regime. Themes, including the abuse of authority, stereotyping, hate crimes and ethical choices, are explored in the context of the Holocaust and common threads are drawn to contemporary events. The day concludes with a visit from a Holocaust survivor.

Curricula for the second day of training features a series of lectures and workshops led by representatives from the ADL and FBI that focus on state law, hate crimes, profiling, collaboration between agencies and the contemporary implications of the lessons of the Holocaust. Participants will also have an opportunity to explore the Museum's Legacy of Absence Gallery, which offers artists' interpretations of loss as a result of mass violence during the Holocaust as well as other historic and contemporary atrocities, such as those that occurred during the American slave trade, Armenian genocide, Rwandan genocide and more. A tour of the Miller Family Youth Exhibition is also included.

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Likely the last international institution of its kind built with the active participation of Holocaust survivors, the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center is the largest facility in the Midwest dedicated to preserving the memories of those lost in the Holocaust and to teaching current generations to fight hatred, indifference and genocide in today's world. To learn more, visit www.ilholocaustmuseum.org.

For over 90 years, the Anti-Defamation League has fought against bigotry and anti-Semitism by exposing and reporting on hate groups and other extremists who seek to harm perceived enemies and to undermine our democracy. Today, ADL's Center on Extremism continues this mission to expose and document the groups and individuals whose ideologies and activities perpetuate hatred and extremism. To this end, its Center on Extremism has created many resources and served as a guide to government officials on prominent extremist movements, groups, and leaders in the United States.

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