

# OREGON JEWISH MUSEUM AND CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

724 NW Davis Street  
Portland, OR 97213

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Council of American Jewish Museums  
1582 Atlantic Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York, 11215

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my sincerest gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Council of American Jewish Museums' 2017 Poland fellowship. Participation in this program has opened my eyes to developments in the field of Jewish museums internationally in ways that will directly impact my work at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education, and in ways I will continue to reflect on for years to come.

After participating in this program, and thanks to the opportunity to visit and meet with leaders in major historical institutions like the Krakow JCC, the Warsaw JCC, and tour guides with Taube Jewish Heritage Tours, my understandings of Polish Jewish life have shifted. I did not initially expect to find Jewish communal life thriving Jewish life in Poland. Hearing about the revival of Jewish life in Poland first-hand – and the opportunity to witness this myself – has caused me to think about Polish Jewish life and history with nuance, hope, and excitement that I did not bring to my work previously. This perspective helps me have a more well-rounded perspective when it comes to the hugely impactful role Polish Jewish history has on broader Jewish history and life, and the ways this history is often translated in American Jewish institutions.

I applied to this fellowship with the hope of learning about how museums are engaging with history at the sites on which atrocities have occurred, and to observe models for connecting these histories to contemporary issues. I was especially curious about ways museums have been able to cultivate interpersonal dialogue between Jews and non-Jews. During this fellowship I observed institutions empowering Jewish and non-Jewish individuals to be accountable for the Jewish history of their towns and nation, while both modeling and encouraging rigorous historical research, innovative exhibits, and meaningful dialogue. This was especially evident at POLIN Museum, the Oswiecim Jewish Center, the Galicia Jewish Museum, and the Praga Museum.

Lastly, it was truly the opportunity of a lifetime to be able to share such a powerful experience with a group of thoughtful and brilliant colleagues, whose perspectives never ceased to both inspire and challenge me. I cannot thank CAJM enough – not only for the opportunity to experience this program myself, but also to share it with colleagues who I look forward to remaining connected with through my career.

Sincerely,

April Slabosheski  
Manager of Holocaust and Museum Education