

Event will examine Poland and Holocaust

By Philippe Buteau
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Miami Dade College's Homestead Campus will host "Poland in the Shadow of Auschwitz," Thursday morning as part of the annual Holocaust Education Week.

The college's Holocaust and Genocide Education Program, and its partner Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach, will put on the all-day presentation to spotlight 1,000 years of history between Jewish and Polish people, and Poland's coming to terms with the Holocaust.

The presentation will describe changes in commemoration and memorialization happening in Poland. It will feature visiting Polish scholar Katarzyna Suszkiewicz, 29, a doctoral candidate at the Jagiellonian University Center for Holocaust Studies in Krakow.

"It will cover more or less the presence of Jews in Poland from the 11th century, to the Holocaust period," Suszkiewicz said.

The presentation will take place from 9:50 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday at MDC Homestead Campus, 500 College Terrace.

Suszkiewicz said the numbers of Jewish people in Poland went from several million before World War II to only several thousand afterward, but there is now an influx back into the country.

"There is a very visible revival of Jews in Poland," she said.

Not only are the numbers increasing, but the relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish people are improving as well.

"It's getting better but [you] can't expect it to change in one day," Suszkiewicz said.

She credited the improvement to changes Poland has undergone during the last 60 years.

For example, the Holocaust has been a mandatory aspect of Poland's education system since 1999. Teachers train on how to teach the Holocaust.

Another reason for the interest is a change in generations, according to Suszkiewicz. She said the younger generation is much more open than the older one.

"There's an urge among young people to learn about the past — about things unspoken," Suszkiewicz said.

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