

High school history teacher is 2025's Upstander

—Sharmila Goradia—
in her own words

I am biracial.

I was born in Chicago and raised in Albuquerque by a white mother from West Virginia and an Indian father from Mumbai. After graduating from Cibola High School in 1990, I earned a history and anthropology degree with a religious studies minor at the University of New Mexico, and completed a political science graduate degree at the University of Texas at El Paso.

I can't pinpoint a single moment that changed my views on intolerance and bigotry but as a teenager, I often believed my father exaggerated the prejudice he faced. With time and reflection, I realized I was wrong.

My father endured both overt hostility—like being told to “go back to where you came from” and physical violence—and subtle acts of racism, such as being ignored at restaurants while others were served first. My mother once recounted a harrowing incident when my father was beaten and robbed while trying to help strangers in Tennessee. While I haven't experienced these extremes, I have faced my own share of microaggressions.

The foundation of my curriculum is based on inclusion and acceptance of others. I encourage my students to see similarities in the human experience and that we have more commonalities than differences. We care about our loved ones and our friends; we love, we hate; we are

La Cueva High School history teacher Sharmila Goradia is the museum's Upstander of the Year. The award was presented September 21 at the annual gala. Sharmila is recognized for building a classroom culture rooted in inclusion, understanding, and compassion.



Sharmila Goradia with student Mikaela Carder

happy, we despair; we have dreams and aspirations. By helping students see similarities in everyone's experiences, connections can be made and understanding and compassion can occur.

I want my students to learn about the various ways in which intolerance has been perpetrated and the harm that it does. The museum focuses on what it means to be an upstander and I want my students to see the impact that one person can have on the lives of others. Standing up for what is right is within their power to do. I want them to become the voices for those who can't defend themselves.

I love developing relationships with my students, watching them grow, getting to witness those Ah-Ha moments, and helping them

become the best versions of themselves so that they can meet the world head on. Empowering them to have a voice, to stand up for what is right, to protect others, and to participate in making our world a better place—that is why I love teaching.

The museum must be supported because it is a beacon of inclusivity, of fighting against injustice and educating future generations to do just that. For selfish reasons, the museum has provided my students with real-world opportunities. Without that support, my future students lose out on working with a community partner that gives them a space to have their voices heard and come to life.

(see Upstander encourages museum supporters, page 8)

Archives *Alive!*

Knitting the past together

by Camelia Caton-Garcia, Collections



Bed linens handmade and embroidered by Lilo's grandmother Laura Schoenberg Lang (1872-1932) and their housekeeper Lissie for Lilo's mother



Porcelain dolls in dresses crocheted by Lilo's relatives

NMHIM is the honored caretaker of [*Hidden Treasures*](#), five “room boxes” and over 500 individual miniatures that belonged to six generations of the Jewish German Schoenberg/Lang/Waxman families. Lilo Lang Waxman (1920-2018), who fled Nazi Germany with her family in 1936 and found refuge with relatives in Las Vegas, NM, gifted this collection to the museum in 2011.

[The Lilo Lang Waxman Collection has around a dozen items of handwork](#) created and accumulated by Lilo's relatives. These works have recently attracted the attention of artisans and needleworkers. In July, Dean of the Honors College at UNM Dr. Naomi Yavneh Klos visited our museum in part to view any items in our collections that have been knitted or crocheted. Dr. Yavneh Klos and others are working on “Yarns of Resilience: Knitting Women's Narratives in the Holocaust,” a project that uncovers the stories behind knitting patterns made and used by Holocaust victims and survivors. After viewing *Hidden Treasures*, Dr. Yavneh Klos and her collaborators will be incorporating the pattern from a miniature potholder made by Lilo's mother Edith Schoenberg Lang into their project. As she wrote, they will “do a mini one (like the original) and also a full size one in memory of all the kitchens lost.”

In September, experienced needlework artist Paulette L. Berner, Bellefonte, PA visited the museum and helped collections staff identify and describe the crocheted, knitted, and knotted pieces in *Hidden Treasures*. This information helps shed light on the works crafted by and for Lilo's family. The handwork of *Hidden Treasures* reveals a family legacy of love passed down from generation to generation, a legacy that survived the devastation of the Holocaust and continues to inspire those who connect with Lilo's story today.

Visit the museum to learn more about Lilo's family story as well as see all of the artifacts pictured here and hundreds more in our *Hidden Treasures* exhibit.

Embroidered tea towel and miniature potholder crocheted by Lilo's mother



Alice Charlasch art shared with community college

by Camelia Caton-Garcia, Collections

A dozen works by artist Alice Charlasch have found a new home as part of Central New Mexico Community College's (CNM) art collection.

Alice Charlasch (1920-1999) was a prolific artist with strong ties to both California and New Mexico. Active from the 1960s to the 1990s, she explored a variety of mediums and produce a vast body of work commonly featuring landscapes and abstractions. She received critical acclaim for her *Crystal Photomicrography* series which takes a microscopic look at light and crystal structures, and highlights Charlasch's fascination for science and color.

The Charlasch family donated a large collection of Alice's work to the New Mexico Holocaust & Intolerance Museum in the early 2000s with the wish that they be used for fundraising purposes. And indeed, many of her pieces have benefited the museum throughout the years through various sales. However, staff and leadership at the museum were in agreement that her stunning and beautifully crafted art deserved as wide a viewership as possible. With this in mind, we reached out to CNM's art collection manager Tyler Anderson to see if



CNM's art collection manager Tyler Anderson chose both pieces accompanying this article to become part of the CNM art collection.

(see CNM art collection increases, page 6)

"...a life lived fully without compromise."

Passing of steadfast volunteer leaves a void in our lives

For almost a dozen years every week, Shelly Gross drove down from the hills of Placitas in his Chevy truck to open the museum and greet our visitors. But that wasn't enough. He organized then reorganized—as needed—the tool room. He built and painted (making sure the color was just right to match our logo) the stand for the acrylic donation box which he subsidized. Over that time, he also participated fully in events and functions including the monthly Friday volunteer meetings, our summer parties, and the gala evenings. Initially he was a volunteer partner with the late Harold Folley on Thursdays and then on Sundays with Mim Burhans. We missed him those several weeks every summer when he drove to Florida to search and add to a very extensive seashell collection. We know that he also appreciated and collected Navajo rugs. His knowledge in many areas certainly added to ours.



Shelly Gross
2/25/35—8/12/25

A cheerful guy with a great sense of humor, he was special part of our lives and we are sad that we won't see that smiling face or hear that joyful laugh any more.

There's so much more to know about Shelly, so information and "excerpts" from Shelly's obituary follow. It was written by Annie, his widow.

Born and bred in Buffalo, Shelly formed deep friendships in high school which lasted for decades. He attended the University of Buffalo for two years before joining the US Army hoping to continue his education under the G.I. Bill. When that was recalled in 1956, Shelly worked summers at Bethlehem Steel and on the delivery truck for a beverage company while he finished his studies at the pharmacy school of the university then began his career.

(see Young pharmacist heads west, page 6)

Gala Gallery, September 21, 2025



Richard Hammer



Chris O'Riley



Vicente Arellano & Brian Colón



Jackie Wald



Agiola Bejko, Regina Turner,
Aaron Chavez



Brooke Smiley & Sharmila Goradia



Carol & Dave Peters



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Jennie L. Negin

More on page 8!



Diverse Approaches to Teaching the Holocaust

Noteworthy speakers lined up for February conference

World War II era historians are on tap to speak at the New Mexico Holocaust & Intolerance Museum's winter conference for educators.

During this one-day opportunity for professional development, educators will hear from representatives of the Japanese-American Citizens League (JACL), the Institute of Curriculum Studies, and The Pink Triangle Legacies. In addition, there will be a session about the forgotten victims of the Nazis, the Roma and Sinti, by Arizona teacher Sarah Welsh.

Sarah earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona in history and anthropology and a master of arts from Arizona State

University in World War II studies. She teaches at St. Augustine Catholic High School in Tucson.

The JACL is a nationwide non-profit that works to preserve and uplift the rich culture and history of Japanese-Americans. The local chapter has collaborated several times with the museum in our speaker series as well as showing the film *Community in Conflict: The Legacy of the Santa Fe Internment Camp*.

Kristen Hallahan from the Institute of Curriculum Studies will present *Teaching from Primary Sources*. Her nonprofit specializes in providing resources for educators on Judaism and Jewish history.

Kristen's workshop will describe how bringing primary sources into the classroom can enrich lessons on the Holocaust. She also will talk about antisemitism and combatting misinformation.

Jake Newsome, Ph.D., founder of The Pink Triangle Legacies Project, will focus on the treatment of homosexuals by the Nazis. His nonprofit is a grassroots initiative that both honors the memory of the queer and trans victims of the Nazi regime and works to fight homophobia and transphobia today through education and advocacy.

Some of the many possible approaches to teaching the Holocaust will be explored. Intended for

(see Noteworthy speakers, page 7)

CNM art collection increases by a dozen

(continued from page 3)

New Mexico's largest community college might be interested in rehoming some of these works of art. The connection proved a success and CNM will be welcoming 12 of Charlasch's drawings, paintings, prints, and photographs into their collection.

We are thrilled to know that this art will be well-cared for and seen by students, educators, staff, and visitors to CNM's many campus locations, offices, and education centers. We thank Tyler Anderson and the CNM Foundation for partnering with our museum to find a meaningful public home for Alice Charlasch's phenomenal artistic legacy.

If you are interested in learning more about the Alice Charlasch work still at the museum, please email nmhim-collections@nmhim.org.



An example of Alice Charlasch's abstract work



An example of Alice Charlasch's photomicrography

"Crystals are complex, fragile, temperamental and self-destruct, but for that fleeting moment when microscopic imagery, which I have orchestrated, can be recorded, it intensifies my sense of awe as I continue to travel through a very real, very invisible jewelled landscape."

—Alice Charlasch

The Herald

Finding its way to you four times a year from staff, volunteers, and board members.

Young pharmacist heads west

(continued from page 3)

"As a member of a local ski club, he developed a lifelong love for skiing that would shape much of his future." After several seasons skiing in the Northeast and Europe, he set his sights on Colorado's famed powder snow. Packing up his Mustang, he headed west. He first worked as a pharmacist in Denver before moving to Aspen during the winter of 1966–67. "Shelly embraced the Colorado lifestyle with enthusiasm. He spent countless days skiing, jeeping through the mountains, and exploring old mine dumps."

In 1983, he met Annie Tobin at a friend's birthday party and the two became inseparable. Their many adventures included skiing, beachcombing, and hiking 20 of Colorado's 14-thousand-foot peaks. After he retired in 2005, Shelly and Annie settled in Placitas where they continued to embrace the outdoor life of skiing, hiking, and horseback riding. "Shelly continued to ski in Santa Fe until the age of 85."

Annie (Tobin) Gross concluded, "Though he slowed down physically in later years, his spirit remained vibrant, a reflection of a life lived fully and without compromise."

Community involvement sought

Upcoming civil rights exhibit in research & development stage

by Lewis Twite, Programs

In our effort to highlight the rich history of New Mexico, museum staff are developing a new permanent exhibit centered around civil rights. The exhibit will focus on the struggles and triumphs of Indigenous, Chincano/hispano/nuevomexicano, and African-American communities in New Mexico.

Building a new exhibit from the ground up takes a village, especially when it concerns local communities who still are fighting to get their stories told. It is crucial that we listen to and learn from as many people in the community as possible while we develop this exhibit. This will ensure that we are telling these stories respectfully.

Our first community outreach event took place October 2 when staff

met with the UNM Historical Law Society.

We discussed our exhibit plan and elicited feedback on potential topics and our plan for community outreach. We received useful information relating to future directions to take our research, specific individuals to reach out to, and advice on how to talk to begin conversations with affected community members. It was a great first step in the long yet rewarding road to a finished exhibit.

In the coming months, we hope to hold an initial gathering in the museum so various community members have the chance to share their stories and to offer direction on the development of this evolving exhibit.



Noteworthy speakers to be featured at winter conference (continued from page 5)

educators of history, social studies, and English language arts in grades 6 through 12, this professional development will equip teachers with the tools they need to teach the Holocaust and other difficult subjects in ways that fit their classrooms.

The conference is scheduled for

February 28 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the CNM Workforce Training Center, Albuquerque.

Participants will receive a stipend. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

For more information, reach out to nmhim-education@nmhim.org.



Workshop set for teachers in Northern New Mexico

Learn to teach the Holocaust with confidence!

This professional development workshop in Pojoaque on February 4 is intended for teachers of grades 6 to 12 history, social studies, and English language arts. Reimbursement for substitutes is available. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Qualified leaders with decades of experience will empower attendees to share this difficult topic with their students. Participants will network with peers and come away with classroom-ready materials. Teachers from all areas of the state are welcome to sign up. Plan to spend the day from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more details or to save your place, reach out to nmhim-education@nmhim.org.

New Mexico
Holocaust & Intolerance
Museum
616 Central Avenue SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

(505) 247-0606

nmhim.org

Send mail to:

PO Box 1762
Albuquerque, NM 87103

Ninth annual gala nets \$125,000!



Kevin Hoover & Judy Berner

More than 125 supporters attended, and almost \$125,000 (after expenses) was raised at the museum's ninth annual gala on September 21. We appreciate everyone who attended and, of course, those who supported the event through sponsorships, advertisements, and silent auction items.

Many thanks to master of ceremonies Chris O'Riley, former NPR host of *From the Top*, and to Brian Colón and Joanie Griffin who led the masses through the exciting paddle raise event for pledges.

We couldn't move forward without your support, and we can't thank you enough!

Other upstanders recognized

Sharmila Goradia joins other museum-recognized upstanders: Brian Colón, Rachel LaZar and El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos, Deb Haaland, Rita and Joe Powdrell, and Nikki Nojima Louis. All have displayed courage by choosing to make a difference in the world by speaking out against injustice and creating positive change.



David & Julie Ornelas



Mary V. Pratt

Upstander encourages museum supporters

(continued from first page)

Over the past two years, my students have worked with the museum to create exhibits for public display, covering topics such as LGBTQ+ issues and immigration. The museum supported these projects by offering workshops on exhibit design, funding transportation, managing the construction of exhibit panels, hosting exhibit openings,

and displaying the completed work. The museum's dedicated staff is eager to expand their educational programs and to reach out to more schools, and they cannot do that without support.

Supporting the museum supports our kids, my kids, and yours.



A teacher takes a hand, opens a mind, and touches a heart. —Unknown