

SENATOR SCHWANK AND DCED DELIVER FUNDING FOR VIOLINS OF HOPE IN READING/BERKS

Violins of Hope springboards partnerships, creativity, and intercultural, interfaith dialogue.

Reading, PA. (For release on Friday June 11, 2021)

A \$65,000 grant has been awarded to help bring Violins of Hope to Greater Reading and Berks. The grant was financed by the PA Department of Community and Economic Development, thanks to advocacy by state Senator Judy Schwank.

Centered around a collection of rare instruments played by Jewish musicians during the Holocaust, Violins of Hope Reading will offer musical performances, lectures, exhibits, film screenings and more, all designed to foster dialogue about music, art, social justice, equality and free expression.

"Violins of Hope offers people of all ages and faiths an opportunity to learn about the role music played during one of the darkest times in world history. I was proud to support the state grant that helped to make this powerful exhibit possible, and I hope everyone gets an opportunity to experience it while we have it here in the Greater Reading area."

Presented by the Reading Symphony Orchestra and the Jewish Federation of Reading, this historic initiative is a partnership among many local organizations, including Goggleworks, Alvernia University, Albright College, Kutztown University, local schools, and Reading Friends of Chamber Music.

"Senator Schwank's efforts provide a launching point for a community conversation — not just about music and the instruments themselves, but also about social justice and civil rights," said David Gross, Executive Director of the RSO. "This gives us an opportunity to talk as a community about the ways we can address these issues."

William Franklin, President of the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, expressed great appreciation: "Senator Judy Schwank's vital support makes it possible for us to reach out with educational programs against racism and hate for our schools and population. She truly represents the needs of our community."

The Violins of Hope will arrive in Reading this fall, kicking off a series of events, many of them free or low-cost, in which the public will be able to see and hear these instruments in person.

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