

# Influential Women Showcases Kelley Szany, SVP of Education and Exhibitions at Illinois Holocaust Museum

SKOKIE, IL, UNITED STATES, June 4, 2026  
/EINPresswire.com/ -- Advancing Holocaust Education Through Innovation, Immersive Technology, and Survivor-Centered Storytelling

Kelley Szany, Senior Vice President of Education and Exhibitions at the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center in Skokie, Illinois, is recognized as a leading voice in museum education and Holocaust and genocide studies, with more than two decades of leadership dedicated to expanding how history is taught, experienced, and preserved.

With over 25 years of service at the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, Szany's journey reflects a rare trajectory of growth from intern to senior executive leadership. Today, she oversees the Museum's educational initiatives, public programming, professional training, and exhibition strategy while helping shape long-term institutional vision and development. Her leadership has been central to advancing the Museum's mission of remembrance, education, and the prevention of hatred.



Szany is widely recognized for her innovative integration of emerging technologies into historical education. She has served as an executive producer on multiple award-winning virtual reality film experiences that allow visitors to step into reconstructed environments connected to Holocaust history and survivor testimony. These immersive projects are designed to deepen emotional understanding and foster meaningful connections between audiences and lived history. In addition, she has helped develop interactive experiences using non-generative AI technology, enabling future generations to engage in guided conversations with recorded survivor testimonies. In 2026, Szany also led the launch of an online platform that expands

global access to these interactive educational resources, significantly broadening the Museum's reach beyond its physical walls.

Originally from Syracuse, New York, Szany earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from Canisius University and a Master of Arts in Public History from Loyola University Chicago. Her academic background in history and public interpretation continues to inform her approach to museum leadership and educational design.

In addition to her work at the Museum, Szany serves in several leadership and advisory capacities. She is Co-Chair of the Illinois Holocaust and Genocide Commission and Vice President of the Board for the Educators Institute for Human Rights, contributing to statewide and national efforts in Holocaust education and human rights advocacy.

Szany attributes her professional trajectory to a sustained commitment to the Museum's core mission and the transformative experience of working closely with Holocaust Survivors. Guided by mentorship and a belief in organic professional growth, she emphasizes that meaningful impact is built through persistence, passion, and long-term dedication.

Reflecting on her career development, Szany notes that the most valuable guidance she has received has been observational rather than instructional. Watching experienced leaders in action and allowing her professional growth to unfold naturally has shaped her leadership philosophy more than any singular piece of advice.

She also cautions against the pressures of "hustle culture," particularly for emerging professionals. In her view, some of the most significant career milestones are achieved not through urgency, but through consistency, patience, and the gradual deepening of expertise over time.

Szany's work is deeply responsive to today's global climate, which she describes as increasingly marked by divisiveness, antisemitism, and hatred. In this context, she identifies two primary opportunities for museums and educational institutions. The first is the thoughtful integration of immersive technologies such as virtual and extended reality to expand access to historical narratives and survivor testimony. The second is the continued evolution of museums as spaces for dialogue—places where difficult histories can be confronted and meaningful conversations can take place.

At the core of Szany's leadership philosophy is a commitment to humanization and empathy. She believes that grounding educational work in hope, resilience, and courage enables institutions not only to preserve history, but to actively contribute to preventing hatred. For Kelley Szany, history is not confined to the past—it is a vital tool for shaping a more compassionate, informed, and courageous future.

Learn More about Kelley Szany:

Through her Influential Women profile: <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/Kelley-Szany>

## Influential Women

Influential Women provides a platform where women from all backgrounds can connect, share their perspectives, and create content that empowers themselves and others. Through storytelling, thought leadership, and creative expression, Influential Women amplifies voices that inspire change.

Editorial Team

Influential Women

[email us here](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/917307683>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.