



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
AMERICAN JEWISH  
HISTORY  
A Smithsonian Institution Affiliate

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 5, 2017**

**Media Contacts:**

NMAJH  
Ilana Blumenthal  
215.391.4662 / [iblumenthal@nmajh.org](mailto:iblumenthal@nmajh.org)  
267.294.8425 (c)

Esperanza  
Joy Huertas  
[jhuertas@esperanza.us](mailto:jhuertas@esperanza.us)  
215-324-0746 Ext. 480

**NATIONAL Esperanza Academy Charter High School students will showcase their  
personal histories in the *My Home, My History* exhibit at the National Museum of  
American Jewish History on Tuesday, June 6 at 5:30 P.M.**

Thanks to a workshop in which students examined documents from the [National Archives](#) to understand how to analyze primary sources they were able to utilize primary documents from Ancestry.com, US records, and personal interviews to explore their identities at this exhibit through their family histories and the histories of the homes in which they currently reside. More than a history project, their research gives insight as to who they are and where they belong in the context of their communities and American society.

This is the fifth year [Esperanza Academy](#) students have presented their exhibit in partnership with the National Archives and the fourth year that the [National Museum of American Jewish History](#) has hosted. These institutions along with the Philadelphia History Museum have supported the project through visits to their facilities and access to their own primary resources and workshops in how to utilize these documents and objects. All of the institutions demonstrate a strong dedication to giving underserved youth access to their history through the public archive.

“The National Archives is proud to again partner with Esperanza and the National Museum of American Jewish History” says Andrea Reidell, Education Specialist. “This collaborative project is an important part of our institutional mission and education outreach goals.”

“The National Museum of American Jewish History is a place where people of all backgrounds find a connection,” says CEO and Gwen Goodman Director, Ivy Barsky. “We are honored to be the host site once again for this important initiative as the Museum mirrors the students’ projects by exploring and sharing the stories of those who came before us and the choices and challenges they encountered as minorities and immigrants in a new country.”

“Through the ‘My Home, My History Project’ students connect historical forces that have shaped the Latino and African American experiences in the United States to the stories of their own families,” says Zac Steele, Social Studies Teacher at Esperanza Academy, “Students also analyze the forces that have shaped the communities they live in, particularly North Philadelphia. Our students often have ‘ah-ha moments’ when they learn a new family story, or understand the immigrant experience of their own grandparents, or examine the importance of cultural identity within the context of family. Overall, I think the project gives good closure to our course, as it allows students to intimately investigate our guiding question: Who am I?”

Arianny Diaz-Ramos, Esperanza Academy Student says, “This year we did a lesson about misrepresentations and stereotypes about different racial identities and how Hispanics and African-Americans were viewed in the eyes of other people. We went to the National Museum of American Jewish History and to the Philadelphia History Museum. In the first museum, I learned how Jewish people migrated to Philadelphia for a better life and how hard they worked. In the second museum, I saw how the map of Philadelphia changed over the years.”

The struggle and triumph of the immigrant experience is shared by many communities is well documented by both the National Museum of American Jewish History and by the National Archives. The partnership gives perspective to students navigating the current sociopolitical climate.

*My Home, My History* opens at the National Museum of American Jewish History with a reception honoring the participating students on June 6 at 5:30 PM, and will be on display through July 15. The opening reception is free and open to the public.

###

#### About Esperanza Inc.

Esperanza, Inc., is a national community-based organization founded in 1987 by Rev. Luis Cortes & the Hispanic Clergy of Philadelphia & Vicinity with the biblical mandate to serve and advocate for “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40) in mind. What began as a local initiative, with programs targeted to address the unmet needs of North Philadelphia’s Hispanic community, Rev. Cortes is now sought by national and international leaders alike on issues of economic and workforce development, housing, immigration, and education. Under his leadership, Esperanza has grown from a small 20-person operation to more than 350 employees and a \$40 million organization. For more information, please visit [www.esperanza.us](http://www.esperanza.us).

#### About the National Archives at Philadelphia

The National Archives at Philadelphia is one of 15 archives across the United States that comprise the National Archives’ nationwide network. The National Archives is our nation’s official record keeper. It holds the permanent records that document the rights and entitlements of Americans and our national heritage.

#### About the National Museum of American Jewish History

The National Museum of American Jewish History, located on historic Independence Mall in Philadelphia, brings to life the more than 360-year history of Jews in America. Tracing the stories of how Jewish immigrants became Jewish Americans, the Museum invites visitors of all backgrounds to share their own stories and reflect on how their histories and identities shape and are shaped by the American experience. An open door for all, NMAJH honors the past and contributes to a better future by sharing the power of imagination and ideas, culture and community, leadership and service, in ways that turn inspiration into action.

The National Museum of American Jewish History is located at 101 South Independence Mall East at the corner of Fifth and Market Streets in Philadelphia. Museum hours are Tuesday to Friday, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday 10:00 am - 5:30 pm. NMAJH is closed most Mondays, including federal holidays and some Jewish holidays. Museum admission is \$12.00 for adults, \$11.00 for senior citizens and youth, free for children 12 and under, Museum Members, and active military with ID. Connect with the Museum on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Pinterest](#). For more information, visit [NMAJH.org](http://NMAJH.org) or call 215.923.3811.