**Ripple Effect Pilot Episode**

**SUMMARY** Individual actions can drive social change, as highlighted by Kevin Aldridge and Jackie Congedo – the hosts of the Upstander Ripple Effect. stressed acknowledging and respecting others' feelings and perspectives, and asking questions rather than shouting opinions, to overcome division. Jackie and Kevin bring the audience personal stories of connecting with individuals affected by the Holocaust, and discuss the rising tide of anti-Semitism globally. The Upstander Ripple Effect encourages people to lean into their character strengths to be the best of humanity today.

**SPEAKERS**

Jackie Congedo, Chief Community Engagement & External Relations Officer, the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center

Kevin Aldridge, Opinion & Engagement Editor, Cincinnati Enquirer

**Kevin Aldridge** 00:02

What do we mean by the upstander ripple effect?

**Werner Coppel** 00:06

Stand up against hate and prejudice, even if it does not affect you.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:13

From moral dilemmas in today's headlines, upstanders, who rose for justice and stories of survival

**Kevin Aldridge** 00:19

Be prepared to walk away from this conversation inspired and motivated

**Jackie Congedo** 00:29

I'm Jackie Congedo.

**Kevin Aldridge** 00:30

And I'm Kevin Aldridge.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:32

What you do right now, in this moment matters. And over the course of the next hour, we're going to show you just how true that is.

**Kevin Aldridge** 00:38

From stories of courage and resilience from those who survived one of the darkest chapters in human history to everyday people doing their small part, to have a big impact. We want to inspire you and motivate you to start your own ripples of change in the world.

**Jackie Congedo** 00:52

We're also going to have a fresh take on the news of the moment. How can the echoes of history inform how we think about what's happening today? And how can we open up more space for deeper conversation about the challenges that we face, instead of our instincts sometimes just to shut down?

**Kevin Aldridge** 01:07

A lot of care and intention went into the name of this podcast. What do we mean by the upstander ripple effect? We believe that one person can choose to stand up in just one moment in a way that sets off ripples of positive change.

**Jackie Congedo** 01:22

That's something we have been talking about Kevin and I for a long time long before we had microphones in front of our faces like we do today. And it's just really exciting that we're here first episode. Feels like it's been a long time coming.

**Kevin Aldridge** 01:23

Yeah. And I'm really excited about the stories that we're going to tell and lifting up because I think it's something that's really needed in these days and times when we look around at the world. And you can be so discouraged by what you find on your social media feeds or when you cut on the TV and, and it can feel a bit overwhelming. And a lot of folks might be thinking to themselves, well, you know, what can I do about any of this stuff? Well, that's what this podcast is all about how to show, even the smallest things can make a big difference.

**Jackie Congedo** 01:58

Yeah, exactly. And, you know, we think I think, like you said, we get overwhelmed by the magnitude of the issues. And, you know, the the digital media, social media algorithms aren't helping with that, right? It's like, yeah, it feeds us the stuff that we know makes us coming back from makes us come back for more Doom scrolling. And so, you know, how do we sort of flip that narrative a little bit? How do we say, okay, let's instead spend more mental energy on, "What can I do? What is the one thing I can do?" And then the power in that is, it's actually not just one thing. It's, it's one thing in the moment that we know leads to another thing, and another thing, and then someone else inspired to do something else? And so, you know, we just, when we do something in a moment, we don't know what happens later. And we're so excited to have this space to be able to talk about that, and show people how actually just one act in one moment really does make a difference.

**Kevin Aldridge** 02:48

Absolutely. I think it's also great that we get an opportunity to highlight heroes, like the good works that people do. It's like so much we focus on the negative things that happen and the most outrageous individuals get the headlines. And so a lot of times we we wind up hearing about these terrible things that terrible people do. But what I'm gonna love about what we're going to do is we're going to hear about how really good people respond to ugly things. And that's going to be there's going to be exciting part of the podcast. Yeah, they will be uplifted.

**Jackie Congedo** 02:48

Yeah, look for the upstanders. Right. It's like, Where are the people who are leveraging their strengths to do the right thing in any given moment in big and small ways? I think a lot about how, you know, we talk about upstanders in the museum down at Union terminal at the Holocaust & Humanity Center. And, you know, it's easy to get sort of overcome by the magnitude of the loss, right, we think about 6 million people, each of those people and the ripple effects of that loss. And there are the ripple effects of the rescues the moments of rescue the moments of upstanding, and where would we be right? We wouldn't have a museum with survivors, to share those stories without those, those acts of upstanding that happened throughout history. And that continue to happen today. Okay, now, I'm going to bridge from something very heavy to something not so heavy about coffee, because something happened to me this morning, before we get going. At Starbucks, I'm going to give a shout out to the Kenwood Starbucks, even though this really wasn't them. You'll hear in a minute. I'm getting coffees, for you and me and for our amazing producer Anne Thompson because everyone runs on coffee. And I pull up to the window to pay. And this guy opens the window and he says "Actually, the person in front of you just paid for you."

**Kevin Aldridge** 04:31

Wow.

**Jackie Congedo** 04:32

I said the person was gone. I couldn't even see like license plate who like Who was this person? And of course, I was too busy to even notice in the before that who that person was in front of me. And I was like, really? And I didn't know what to do. And then it occurred to me, I'm going to pay for the person behind me.

**Kevin Aldridge** 04:49

Nice.

**Jackie Congedo** 04:50

So I said, Okay, well, here, take this and pass it on. Right. It's like so, and you know, it lifted me clearly I guess the person who did this got something out of it - lifted them? Maybe the person in front of them paid for them? I mean, who knows? It lifted I hope the people behind me, I don't know what they did with the ball when they got it, and it lifted the guy at the window. The guy at the window was like, yeah, man, we're all like stuck on this planet together. So we just got to do what we got to do to help each other and little things like that. It really set the tone for my whole day.

**Kevin Aldridge** 05:21

Absolutely. I mean, and that's you said it, that's an example like, how that change that small act might have changed your trajectory of your day, even in a small way, even if it's just like an attitude adjustment or an energy adjustment. And then the thought that you had to then pay it forward to the next person. And like you said, you don't know what that person might do with the ball. And that's not really even the point. You know, it's not important that we necessarily understand what someone does with the ball and what they what they take with it. That's that's part of the idea, the ripple effect. I think, so many people that we'll hear about on this podcast did things not knowing what their action was going to have on down on down the road? And so yeah, that's that's a great story. Thanks for - Thanks for sharing that.

**Jackie Congedo** 06:08

Yeah. So your coffee this morning, brought to you by upstander of the day, who

**Kevin Aldridge** 06:13

absolutely

**Jackie Congedo** 06:14

thought to just do their little part in their little moment. So it's going to be a great, a great series of conversations. We're so glad you're here along with us for the ride, because we live in turbulent, bumpy times, and we all need spaces to think about to think about our own agency to be the best of humanity today. So you know, from coffee to other things that are maybe more meaningful or substantive. You you've got a ripple effects, or you've got to share with everybody because this is so this is really so powerful.

**Kevin Aldridge** 06:45

Yeah, no thanks. So for the listeners who might not know, in addition to the work that I do with the Enquirer, and here with the podcast, I also own a semi professional basketball team here in the city of Cincinnati, called the Ohio Kings

**Jackie Congedo** 07:01

You're a Kevin of many talents of all trades,

**Kevin Aldridge** 07:05

you know, blessed and highly favored. But we came into some information. There's a community activist here in Cincinnati named Iris Roley, and she came to us several months ago, about a group of young men that she had been working with and these young men and had an unfortunate encounter with police, they were in the middle of the street there near Reading Road, these were Woodward students, and they were selling bottles of water in the middle of the street, trying to you know, trying to make a little money as kids do, as I did when I was a kid.

**Jackie Congedo** 07:38

Yeah.

**Kevin Aldridge** 07:39

But unfortunately, in that, in the process of that they were kind of obstructing traffic, it kind of became a thing. And it was a not-so-positive interaction that they had there with the police. And so Iris got involved with these young men. And she wanted to give them an opportunity to show them how to take what was a positive kind of an entrepreneurial idea, but show him kind of how to do it in a right way. So she began working with these young men, and they they formulated their own group called Brothers N Motion. And she was trying to help them develop their own brand of bottled water with with their label on it and everything. So Iris came to me and she said, Hey, I know you, you know you, you've started a... this basketball team. And I think it's important for these young men to see someone who looks like them, who's in an entrepreneurial space, doing some things. So would you be willing to come in and kind of take on a mentoring role and sort of work with these young men? And so we got together and we came up with this idea that we were going to allow these young men to come in and sell water at our concession stand during our game. And, and so we went... I went in, we negotiated terms of a contract, you know, I kind of talked to them about that. They were Yeah, they were they were gonna they were gonna give me the farm basically. And I had to kind of teach him like, No, you know, don't give away all of your, all of the leverage and what you have, you know, this is how you kind of negotiate the deal. And for the entire season, they sold water at every one of our home games.

**Jackie Congedo** 09:11

Wow

**Kevin Aldridge** 09:11

And it was a great experience for them. Great experience for us. And it was a perfect example of you know, the ripple effects sort of starting with starting with Iris you know, who saw young men who were trying to do something that came out of a not-so-positive situation. She acted on that kind of got these young men together and then came to to us and said, Hey, is there something that you can you can do and of course, we were in a position because we had a platform to be able to assist these young men and and just hearing from them after their experience, sort of what they learned and these guys were like sponges they were, they watched everything that I did every move that I made, and it was it was interesting to hear them just kind of talk about after the games what they had observed and, and learned and it was just a great experience for them. And who knows, you know, one of these young men could go on one day to be the CEO of Pepsi, or Coca Cola or something like that you, you just never know. But but you know, that's my ripple effect story. And

**Jackie Congedo** 10:16

I love that story. I love it because it came from a moment of real, you know, wasn't a happy start, right? And you had an upstander. In this case, Iris and you, who stepped in and said, like, what can we do to like, actually harness the parts of this that are really good?

**Kevin Aldridge** 10:31

Yep.

**Jackie Congedo** 10:32

And make this an opportunity and look what's become of it. So next season, they're coming back, I'm assuming?

**Kevin Aldridge** 10:37

yeah, we're going to try to... we're... I don't know if the same group of young men are going to try to come back. But it actually, a ripple effect of that was we looked at it, and what we're trying to do now is create sort of like an entrepreneurial program to where we can bring in more and different kids to come in and give them an opportunity to engage in, you know, some entrepreneurial endeavors that match up with what we do with basketball. So so that's another tendril of the ripple effect is that it's kind of inspired us to say, "Hey, how can we scale this, expand it, and open it up to... open it up to more young people so they can have that have that same experience?"

**Jackie Congedo** 11:13

That's awesome. That's awesome. So you know, we're moving from sort of, into our first segment. And we really couldn't have asked for two stories that better illustrate the power of the ripple effect, maybe other than the basketball one that you just shared, except for the two we're going to share with you today. And when we think about how most people, students, really so many students, you know, millions of students around the world learn about Holocaust history. Usually it's through, at least at first through one of two books, right? Elie Wiesel's Night, or the Diary of Anne Frank, most kids read these some at some point in their sort of, you know, middle high school careers. And today, we have stories of two people who have personal connections to both of those stories.

**Kevin Aldridge** 11:23

First, though, we want to talk about some things going on in the world right now. Our goal is for this to be a place where you can come to get help processing news and issues with a humanity-first lens.

**Jackie Congedo** 11:44

Humanity-first lens, who's going to be the keeper of that mantra? Because the stories we're going to talk about aren't always so rosy and happy. And you know, pollyannish, they are tough stories, we're living in a time when there's a lot of challenge in our world, and a lot of upheaval. But, you know, we're committed to this being a place where we can look for the upstanders in these moments, and where we can think about how what we know about history, that kind of history that we teach at the at the center, can maybe just give some context for how we think about things that are happening today, the first sort of set has to do with what we've been seeing across college campuses. You know, in the last several of months, really, you know, now, across 22 states, at least, like the latest numbers, we had seven of eight Ivy League schools, you know, more than 50, some encampments and protests having to do with the conflict in the Middle East, and and, you know, students raising their voices, and more and more unfortunately, as part of those protests, so, you know, this is a, this is a tough moment, I think, for universities to navigate, because they're, they're trying to walk the line between protecting, you know, a campus is an environment where free speech is celebrated and protected, where, you know, freedom of ideas is critical. And to keep people safe. And unfortunately, we've seen in some of these protests and men, I would, I would argue, many of them more than some, the kind of language and action that that actually bumps up right up against, if not crosses the line into creating an environment where students are not actually safe. Yeah, some of them have gotten really violent.

**Kevin Aldridge** 13:33

for sure Yeah, absolutely. Well, I think in addition to educating, I think creating a safe space is one of the top priorities of any institution of learning. I mean, I think when most parents send their kids away to college, they expect them to be educated, but they also expect them to be safe. And so I think that, you know, we can have this conversation around, you know, these protests and free speech, which is a right, you know, I know you and I both agree,

**Jackie Congedo** 14:38

Yeah we come out of news

**Kevin Aldridge** 14:38

very strongly, yeah, lately, but free speech up to the point where, you know, people are put in danger. That's, that's where you do have to draw the line. And I think, you know, more colleges, whether they, whether they were unprepared for this or don't have the infrastructure to meet the, you know, to meet the moment. I think it's something that they certainly have to, you know, make a stronger investment in, you know, if you're going to allow your campuses to be places where you're going to where you're going to have this type of demonstration and expression, you've got to make sure that you've created a safe environment there, where people can have the right to exercise their free speech, but also everybody feels like, you know, they are they're protected, they don't have to worry about physical injury, things of that nature. And so I think, you know, colleges really have to really have to focus in and zero down on that and making sure that that, that these demonstrations remain peaceful, that they follow the law, and that everyone feels like they are safe and protected.

**Jackie Congedo** 15:42

Yeah. And I think it's it's a physical safety issue. And I was I was reading, you know, the statement that President Carter, of the Ohio State University, not the other President Carter, made on April 29. After you know, they had to sort of disband an encampment on campus, talking about the his decision to do that and talking about how, you know, the reason these aren't allowed is because they create the need for around-the-clock security, which takes resources away, right. And so to your point, just trying to level up with like, we don't, we can't, we can't have this in a way that maintains the safety of our students. So there's a physical safety concern. But the other thing is, I think there's a lot of confusion over language that's happening at these protests.

**Kevin Aldridge** 16:34

Right.

**Jackie Congedo** 16:34

Right. When people are vilifying "Zionists," or, you know, talking about globalizing the Intifada. You know, there may be folks who are caught up in the frenzy of protests on campus who might not realize what those terms mean, you know, but the idea that Zionism you know, the right to just national self determination for Jews, like any other ethnicity, which is so core to Jewish identity,

**Kevin Aldridge** 17:00

right

**Jackie Congedo** 17:01

Is is vilified to the point of saying, you know, we're going to destroy or eliminate this movement these people. That's, I mean, that's, that's an inciting threat.

**Kevin Aldridge** 17:12

Absolutely.

**Jackie Congedo** 17:12

So there's, there's a lot of that happening, too. And I'm just not so sure that everybody who's caught up in these protests realizes what they're saying, I want to believe - the goodness in me wants to believe that.

**Kevin Aldridge** 17:23

Yeah. Well, I think that I think that that's true. I mean, I think that's one of the dynamics of sort of like protest movements or demonstrations is that you have people who are, who are a part of these things, and they're in it for the right reasons, they're in it for the cause. But then we also have to recognize that there are what we call sort of like these, these professional disruptors, or demonstrators who come in with a specific agenda. And they can come in and they can hijack, or they can muddle the messages. I mean, we, we see this and in all sorts of protest movements across the country, whether we were talking about George Floyd or whether we're talking about this, that there are people who come into and make themselves a part of these protests, movements and demonstrations, who who don't have the best of intentions, who are trying to incite and do different things. And so when you have, you know, maybe well-meaning college students who do want peace in the Middle East and want a resolution and hostages released, and you know, and these are the things that you're protesting for, when suddenly elements come in, and they join this protest that you've maybe started or that you're a part of, and those voices become a part of that. It can be, yeah, it takes on sort of a sort of a life of its own and different elements. So so I wouldn't go so as far as to say that, that perhaps every student who is involved in that even knows or understands some of the language or even cosign some of the language that's in there, but unfortunately, I think that sometimes what happens when you get these, these big protests and demonstration movements, they become so large, you can't really control who becomes a part of these.

**Jackie Congedo** 19:07

Yeah, yeah. And I mean, I think I'm, I'm a little a little bit further from where you are on it, because I was willing to say that in the beginning, and now that I, you know, I think it's been so widely publicized, like, how not only violent but like, you know, some of what these things are calling for. I just think that like, students have to be somewhat aware that when there are giant banners that are calling for, you know, this is the Jews are the next target or Israel's the next target or, you know, like what you saw on October 7, guess what, there's more coming, celebrating that it's a really hard thing for me to just kind of give people the benefit of the doubt that they don't realize they're supporting that. I realized that like, Okay, well, where's the movement? Where's the protest with responsible rhetoric that calls for a two-state solution and peace and, you know upholding everybody's right to self-determination and returning the hostages, like that isn't the movement that's not what's out there. And that's I'm sure frustrating for a lot of people. But it's it's, you know, I'm thinking about what it must be like to be Jewish, walking through Columbia right now trying to take a final exam, trying to get to your class, and you literally in some cases they haven't been allowed through. Because these encampments are so large, and they've, you know, they're not allowing people who have visible signs of Jewish identity into that. And so that is like, that is, I think, deeply problematic to say,

**Kevin Aldridge** 19:16

Without question, yeah

**Jackie Congedo** 20:10

but but it is, you know, this is, this is a struggle, I think that we're going to continue to as a country, and, you know, certainly universities are going to continue to have to wrestle with because it is really important, you know, that, that they, universities, remain space where people can debate and discuss ideas that are, you know, in some ways provocative, obviously, or, you know, this is this is how social movements in some ways happen. But I think that, like, this one seems to have really crossed some lines, red lines in my book, and, and I hope that the pendulum can swing back.

**Kevin Aldridge** 21:16

Yeah. And then I also think you got to think like, what is the end goal of the protests, right? So is, is, is our goal just to just who's, you know, to scream and yell at each other and say these things? Or is it to try to create some type of dialogue where we can have some sort of understanding or reach a, you know, reach a common ground or, or general understanding of where everyone's position is, and so I sort of wonder, like, on these college campuses, you know, are those sorts of efforts underway are taking place where we're actually trying to bring together, you know, opposing groups and conversation, you know, and understanding and trying to help understand, you know, hey, how do we take the, the, you know, what may be some legitimate concerns, and, and hear one another and have a conversation and create, you know, a campus environment? Or is it just, you know, to maintain disruption into perpetuity? You know, I always feel like some of the greatest movements, the demonstrations, were a means to get a seat at the table to begin to have a conversation to try to resolve things. I don't know that I'm getting the sense that, that there's much of that, you know, particularly when I see, you know, some protesters, you know, shouting down people who, you know, may even be trying to engage or say, hey, we hear what you're saying, and let's, let's have a conversation about this. So I think we have to, you know, not just in this instance, but on so many instances in our country, is, is the point the argument, or is the point to try to reach some kind of reasonable conclusion or resolution? I feel like too often today, that the point is the argument.

**Jackie Congedo** 22:58

Yeah, yeah. And, and, you know, we're now worked up - this whole thing has been worked up into such a fervor that, you know, it's not just the argument, that I think that there's, there's some real harassment that's happening.

**Kevin Aldridge** 23:11

Yeah, yes

**Jackie Congedo** 23:12

and that's, that's a deep, I mean, if I had kids in college right now, I would be, I would be concerned about England. So we'll keep an eye on that. There are upstanders, though, I mean, there are upstanders, who are who are trying to do their small parts, I'm thinking about this piece that, you know, in my mind, President Carter at Ohio State, you know, to take a take a stance on this and say, and he was very deliberate in his letter is isn't about free speech, you know, but at the end of the day, there are, there are rules about what you can and can't do on campus. And we have to be able to allow people to go to class to take their final exams, we have to create, you know, ensure an environment of safety in these things, compromise that. And so I think, you know, it's it's not an easy thing to stand up and say that right now, and I think that that that took a lot of courage and upstanding to do it.

**Kevin Aldridge** 24:05

Yeah. Well, I mean, I think you've seen, you know, it's a sign of leadership. I mean, I think you've seen good leadership. And I think you've seen bad leadership, and in the cases in some of these universities and bad leadership as costs, you know, some of these college presidents, they're their positions. And so, I think we always have to stand on the side of rules and law and safety. Certainly, you know, again, free speech, something that we believe in, but when that crosses a line, I think leadership does have to stand up and say, "Hey, this has gone a step too far." You know, we want to create space for that accommodation for that. But we cannot allow, you know, rules to be broken laws to be broken people's lives to be put in danger when it crosses that line. We have to act on it and that can't be looked at as suppressing free speech. I mean, look, he was very clear that the rules were made apparent to the students about, you know what the rules were on the encampment ahead of time, they said they understood that. They went forward. And you know, anyway, and I get that sometimes in protest movements disruption is a part is a part of the thing is a part of the tactic, but also folks who were in those positions knew and understood, and were even prepared to deal with the legal ramifications of that at the time, you know, that was that was kind of the kind of the point behind it. So but you can't you can't cry after the fact when, you know, you're breaking the rules, that somehow this is suppressing free speech, because that, you know, we can't we can't do that either.

**Jackie Congedo** 25:39

Yeah. And so the second piece we want to kind of address is another aspect of free speech, in some ways, you know, having to do with symbols and flags, and what symbols mean to different people and where they're posted and flown and what's allowed and what's not, and, and how to respond to those things. There's been a couple of these recently, you know, thinking St. Patrick's Day weekend, which was the day of the St. Patrick's Day race, there was this banner that was hung over Columbia Parkway, save Ireland, from the Jews. Deeply concerning. And, and, you know, there's a number of other things. We see these on occasion, but it seems like there's more and more of them, where we have the, you know, swastika flags. There's one in Colerain Township. There's, Dan Horn did an amazing job, sort of trying to tell the whole story of this confederate flag that's been flying. Now there's three of them from what I understand, in Harrison. And so, you know, it's interesting, I think, as we think about symbols and speech. We, again, we live in a country that we're that's protected. And there's reasons for that, right? It's like, well, who decides what's hateful and what's not. And that's a slippery slope. And things like swastika flags, or Confederate flags, serve a purpose, right? And that's to, in some ways, normalize ideas that are connected to those flags, or those symbols that make certain people feel a certain way. And that project this level that this is permissible, this is okay. And that that creates space for violence. I mean, we saw it and we see it in the history, right? I think about Al Miller's quote, "The Holocaust didn't start with bullets. It started with words."

**Kevin Aldridge** 27:34

Sure.

**Jackie Congedo** 27:36

And so, you know, while it's allowed, I think we've got to pay attention to those things. And what I love about each of these stories actually is their upstanders in each one who said, "That's their right to free speech, and I have my right to speech. So we're going to speak louder."

**Kevin Aldridge** 27:54

Yeah. Yeah. And I think that's the thing that you have to do when you run up into these types of situations. I mean, look, these symbols, you know, some people will say, Well, you know, these symbols only have the power in which you know, you give 'em. It's just a piece of cloth is just a, you know, this old relic, it doesn't mean it doesn't mean anything, but I think it's easy for those who are not the targets of the symbols, you know, who historically have not been the targets of these symbols to kind of feel that way. Because those who fly those banners, they don't just do it without intent. If you fly a confederate flag, these days, if you fly a flag that has a swastika, you're trying to send a very clear message. I think in these days and times, it's kind of like what you were saying about the banners on college campuses, you have a hard time believing that people don't know what that is or her right, especially in these days and times if you're doing that you're doing it with an intention to send a message to someone. And you know, for many African Americans, you know, Black people, the Confederate flag sends a very clear message, "You're not welcome." You know, it's trying to intimidate, send a message of fear. Some will say, "Well, you know, it's it's a sign of Southern Heritage." Yeah, but what does that what did that Southern Heritage represent? What did it you know, what did it stand for, in those days and times so you can't get away from the messaging of these types of things. And the the discomfort and the fear and the the message that it tries to send and so I think that you know, those of us who want to stand up to those types of things and hate you know, have to have to vocalize have to stand up and as they did in Harrison and say, "Hey, this doesn't this doesn't represent me. This doesn't represent, I believe, you know, the vast majority of people who live in this community." And if you if you don't do that, the silence implies complicity.

**Jackie Congedo** 29:53

Speaks for itself. Right. And I mean, I gotta give the mayor credit for spending the first couple months well, until now, I guess of his of his term right after he was elected, this is pretty... dominated his desk and he has been unequivocal that you know, there's nothing I can do about these. They're on private property but I want to be clear as day that this doesn't reflect me. This doesn't reflect the city of Harrison. You know, he's he's been returning phone calls after phone calls he's been proactively reaching out, particularly to people of color in that community to help them understand that he's on their team here that he sees that and what I love, probably actually more than the upstander story in this piece by Dan Horn. I love this bit about this 15 year-old Kaylani. So this is this is a 15 year old high school sophomore, Black young lady who, who was sort of asked about how you... this makes her feel? (That was one of the things that I used to really like get under my nails in journalism is like, here's this terrible thing. How does it make you feel? How do you think it makes me feel?) Regardless, she in sort of, you know, I think she so eloquently speaks in this piece about, you know, I'm just a 15 year old kid, I'm trying to live my life like I didn't think much about it. Now. I'm thinking more about it. And what I what I love about this interview is she stood up. Just just just projecting your own humanity....

**Kevin Aldridge** 31:22

Yes

**Jackie Congedo** 31:24

...In a moment where the intention is to dehumanize is an act of upstanding.

**Kevin Aldridge** 31:28

Yes.

**Jackie Congedo** 31:29

It reminds me of Jesse Owens, we have this on our mural wall in the museum, you gotta come down and see it - Union Terminal. If you if you haven't. Al Miller, one of our survivors was, you know, a young boy in Berlin. And he's standing there he was at the Berlin Olympics. And he watched Jesse Owens win gold, and refers to him as his hero. He watched his hero win gold. And he watched Hitler leave the stadium. And, you know, just existing, just Jesse existing in a space where he wasn't wanted. And by the way, Jesse wasn't supposed to run. Sam Stoller, Jewish guy from Cincinnati, Hughes High School grad was supposed to run. Couldn't run, because it was 1930 - 1930s Germany. So both of them actually just by existing in this space where they weren't wanted, asserting their own humanity

**Kevin Aldridge** 32:17

Yes

**Jackie Congedo** 32:18

is an act of upstanding. So shout out to 15 year old Kaylani, in Harrison, who is asserting her humanity every day in the face of dehumanizing symbols.

**Kevin Aldridge** 32:29

Yeah. Well, you know, and I think another way that we can be upstanders not just asserting your humanity as being an outstanding quality, which I think it is. But also, we can be upstanders by not dismissing, you know, the humanity in others that doesn't match ours. And here's what here's what I mean by that, is, each of us are affected differently, can be affected differently by the same thing. You know, but what we have a tendency to do is, is because we may not be bothered by something, or it doesn't impact us in a certain way, we tend to diminish someone else's humanity and how it impacts them. We say, well, well, why are you making such a big deal out of this? Why does it matter to you so much? The part of us that can be upstanders is resisting that, and just acknowledging the feelings in the humanity of somebody else that, that if that if this is so bothersome to somebody else, like it doesn't matter that we don't understand it, or we don't quite get it. I've had to learn this in my own interactions with my wife, you know, at home there, there's something she gets riled up about that as a man, I just, I just don't get it. And I had to reach the point where I said, you know,

**Jackie Congedo** 33:44

She probably has none of those things about you.

**Kevin Aldridge** 33:46

I'm sure she does. But I had to arrive at the point that said, you know, it shouldn't matter that I don't understand it, it should matter that it matters to her.

**Jackie Congedo** 33:56

That's right.

**Kevin Aldridge** 33:56

And so when we, when we look around, and we see so much division in our world, this is why, you know, I just want to speak to people who are wondering, like, well, who are thinking that way? Like, why does this matter? And why is this such a big deal? It doesn't really hit me like that. If you're sick of the division that we have in our country right now, understand that that type of attitude lends to that because if more people spoke up in these types of situation, and I really do want to believe that there are more people who don't support this kind of thing that do, but it's the silence. It's the oh, I don't understand or I don't see this as such a big deal thing.

**Jackie Congedo** 34:35

Yeah

**Kevin Aldridge** 34:35

that keeps people silent from being just the upstander that allows them to just, you know, commiserate with someone or feel their their pain in a situation creates those divisions because it makes you feel if you feel that way it makes you feel like you're alone.

**Jackie Congedo** 34:51

Yeah

**Kevin Aldridge** 34:51

That nobody has my back. That other people... that more people than I think think this way.

**Jackie Congedo** 34:57

Yep.

**Kevin Aldridge** 34:57

And so that's why it's important for us to to recognize why this stuff matters, because it creates the division that we say that we hate.

**Jackie Congedo** 35:06

You know, I think there's more we could say about all of this. And I'm curious to hear from folks who are listening, what their thoughts are, you know, in our show notes, you can you can find out how to contact us. We'd love to hear from you, you know, what are your experiences around free speech and hate speech in this moment? How you feeling about what you're seeing on the news related to what's going on on college campuses? And what do you think about this idea of symbols, and, you know, how they, how we receive them in our world and what that does to our communities? We'd love to hear from you. But in the interest of time, we're gonna pivot to our segment from the archives. This is a really special place for us at the Holocaust & Humanity Center, because in the basement of Union Terminal- most people don't know about this - are thousands of documents and artifacts that have been given to us mainly by Cincinnati Holocaust survivors or others with connections to this chapter of history. Many of them many of these pieces, these sorts of priceless and timeless pieces, until now have not been shared publicly because we don't have the space to exhibit everything in our collection at the museum at Union Terminal. This artifact we're about to share with you is an incredible piece of history. And a terrific example of the power of the ripple effect. One question from one student led to a friendship that spanned thousands of miles between a Cincinnati nun and Anne Frank's Father. I'm so excited to share this. We have this incredible artifact that tells the whole story. There are two clips we're going to share with you. I got to hear the story of this artifact firsthand from our Director of Collections & Exhibitions, Cori Silbernagel, who is such an amazing caretaker of our collection. And then then as if that wasn't good enough, we were lucky enough to find sister Nancy herself doing well, Sylvania, Ohio, and she actually made a trip all the way down. She refused to let us come to her. She said no, no, I'm coming down there. I'm doing just fine. To visit us at the Holocaust & Humanity Center, and Cori hosted her for this amazing conversation about this story. Take a listen.

**Cori Silbernagel** 37:06

This album belonged to Sister Nancy Linenkugel, who was a teacher in Cincinnati at St. Ann's school. She was teaching eighth grade students in 1974 when they were learning about Anne Frank, they had a lot of questions that she just didn't know the answer for so she told her students well, let's let's write a letter to Otto Frank as a classroom exercise.

**Jackie Congedo** 37:31

Her father - Anne's father

**Cori Silbernagel** 37:32

yeah, yeah. So Anne Frank's father is still alive at that point. The students write questions, and she sends them to the book publisher for Anne Frank's Diary, Doubleday. So the letter goes to Doubleday. And it makes its way to Otto Frank. And he responds to it. So Sister Nancy documents everything that happened following that in this sort of scrapbook.

**Jackie Congedo** 38:10

So smart to keep it to keep the documentation of it. I mean, just

**Cori Silbernagel** 38:14

Yeah, yeah, absolutely

**Jackie Congedo** 38:15

So thoughtful.

**Cori Silbernagel** 38:17

So here, this is the letter, January 26, 1975. She writes. Otto, whose signature is here, writes back to her saying "29 of your students wrote letters to me. I'm very pleased to receive them as they show their deep understanding for an her diary in the suffering of the Jews." And he encloses

**Jackie Congedo** 38:48

I love... "I enclose here with my answer to all of the young people as I cannot write to everyone separately, I hope they will be satisfied. Anyhow as I tried to answer all the questions they had as I did not make a copy of my first letter to you I do not know if I drew your attention to two books which may be of interest to you and your pupils." So he actually responds, answers the question, and says "For more information, here's these two books you might like.

**Cori Silbernagel** 39:13

So So then here is is the actual letter that he writes to the students you know, it's quite long but a few really interesting things you know, "How was life and the secret annex? Anne herself describes it so well, that I could not do better." You know, there's there's different notes that that he puts in here that give really interesting perspective and really give you know those the students reading this a direct connection, you know, with this story that is so, such a global story is such a recognized name.

**Jackie Congedo** 39:58

Yeah,

**Cori Silbernagel** 39:59

Almost everyone knows who Anne Frank is.

**Jackie Congedo** 40:01

Yes.

**Cori Silbernagel** 40:02

But these 29 students had an opportunity to really get to know her more

**Jackie Congedo** 40:08

To connect, to connect with the history, to connect with her family.

**Cori Silbernagel** 40:12

Absolutely.

**Jackie Congedo** 40:13

You know, the, you know, Sister Linenkugel, who, you know, had sort of the audacity, right? In a good way to say, You know what, let's, let's ask her dad. I mean, who, who thinks you're gonna get a response? It's gonna get to him. And then what follows is that he writes back, and not only does he write back, but there's more. There's more to the story. Yeah, yeah.

**Cori Silbernagel** 40:37

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So in addition to answering some of the questions, he sends the children, some photos of he and his wife. Anne Frank's mother did not survive and did not survive. Otto's the only survivor of their immediate family and he remarries after the war. So here he is, with his second wife. He sends the children some postcards of Switzerland, that's where he and Fritzi his wife are living. You know, again, helps those students make that connection to to space, to place. He continues corresponding with Sister Nancy. They write.

**Jackie Congedo** 40:41

This is her it says Gilbert, but this is her.

**Cori Silbernagel** 41:25

It is yeah. So this is still this is still Sister Nancy. They continue writing. Otto first writes back to the students in January of '75. By the end of that year, she takes a trip with her sister to Switzerland, and meets Otto in person.

**Jackie Congedo** 41:47

Wow.

**Cori Silbernagel** 41:48

So you know much of, much of this correspondence is planning for the trip, checking in with each other. Then she arrives in Zurich.

**Jackie Congedo** 42:00

Wow.

**Cori Silbernagel** 42:01

This these are some memories of that trip. A really great photo of Sister Nancy and her sister. They travel together. Yeah,

**Jackie Congedo** 42:10

And she and she looks like she was in, I don't know in her 30's at the time, maybe?

**Cori Silbernagel** 42:14

Oh, yeah. Young. Yeah, definitely young. And probably more adventurous than I am in my 30's now. So these photographs document meeting Otto Frank. Here they are walking on the street together. I recall sister Nancy telling me that these photos were taken as, as Otto and Fritzi are giving her a tour of their garden. Just a normal, a normal couple.

**Jackie Congedo** 42:44

Amazing. Wow.

**Cori Silbernagel** 42:47

So they continue to correspond with each other through the end of Otto's life. They become friends, you know, a world apart, but have this connection through education. And there's a letter somewhere in here where Otto tells Sister Nancy that, you know, "Surely her work in revealing the depth of the story will have an impact on those students, and will inform the rest of their lives." So I think, you know, they were connected through like this desire to understand and want to share and understand.

**Jackie Congedo** 43:34

Yeah, and I think about, you know, where are those kids now? You know, student those 29 students?

**Cori Silbernagel** 43:39

Yeah, that would be interesting,

**Jackie Congedo** 43:41

went out into the world. And some have probably had families of their own and what are their kids doing? I think about like, you know, those moments that you had in school that were particularly memorable or really special, you know, a field trip, you got to take the other classes didn't or, you know, some experience and for these kids, I'm sure that this ongoing sort of pen pal relationship through their teacher with with an incredible figure from history really, is something that made a lasting impression. I mean, there's no way to walk out of an experience like that at a school and not be completely changed by how it's impacted you.

**Cori Silbernagel** 44:18

Yeah, I mean, I also think, you know, Sister Nancy must have been such an incredible educator, right? Like she could have taught her Holocaust unit shared, shared about the Diary of Anne Frank and just ended it at what she had to do. But she took it one step farther. And, I mean,

**Jackie Congedo** 44:20

in the power of sort of inquisitive, you know, the idea like, it's all about asking questions, and if I don't have the answers, we can find the answers or

**Cori Silbernagel** 44:56

promoting, promoting critical thinking

**Jackie Congedo** 45:00

She really was ahead of her time in a lot of ways, I think probably at that time, how exciting. She must have been thrilled when they got that response. Can you imagine? Absolutely, yeah, I think she,

**Cori Silbernagel** 45:11

you know, I think that she had the students write the letter is a classroom exercise, assuming you know, that the publisher would never forward that letter on, that it would just be, you know, lost on someone's desk. Yeah, but, but it wasn't.

**Jackie Congedo** 45:29

Look, and this is this is, I guess what he wrote her after she had returned home, "It's so nice to hear from you. And to know that you enjoyed your trip to Switzerland, so much, my wife and I were very glad to have had you and your sister in our home. And we really appreciated your keen interest in all we showed you, your wonderful self made Star of David is on the wall of my study, and I show it proudly to all of my friends and visitors." So she came with

**Cori Silbernagel** 45:54

she brought him a gift. Yeah

**Jackie Congedo** 45:56

Wow. Yeah, it's just hard to overstate, you know, we make these connections. And what happened? What becomes of that, like, what happened as a result of that, and what happened to the 29 kids that were in that class? What you know, happened as a result of who knows where that Star of David is right now. And who's telling that story. So yeah, what an incredible moment captured in this album, and, and what a really incredible example of the power of connection. Thank you for sharing.

**Cori Silbernagel** 46:24

I think so too. Thank you. Thank you

**Sister Nancy Linenkugel** 46:26

I was so taken by the goodness of Otto Frank, the thing I remember most about him is that he said, Do not hate. If you hate, nobody will know you hate them. But you'll be miserable. And I always thought that was the most wonderful thing. Because if anybody had a reason to be hateful. Look, what all happened to him.

**Jackie Congedo** 47:03

What a story.

**Kevin Aldridge** 47:03

Yeah, that was, that was great.

**Jackie Congedo** 47:05

I mean, it's so it's actually amazing. It's it is an amazing example of the ripple effect. Just one student in one Catholic eighth grade class said, like, "I got a question," and launched an entire relationship that spanned all this time in this space. I really do want to find those kids. Yeah, I mean, 29 now not-kids.

**Kevin Aldridge** 47:31

Yeah. I mean, that's it's a great story. Because it's a it's a testament to - it reminds me in journalism, you know, they say the only dumb question is the one you don't ask, right? And so this, this student asked this question, and it sets off this, these ripple effect of events and to see the Sister take that and turn it into a class assignment. Again, as they said in the in the video, that it would have just been very easy just to teach, you know, straight from the book, you know, do you do your what you got in your lesson plan, she took the learning to another level and, and look what it spanned not just for those 29 students in our class that day, but for all of us all of these many years later. And the fact that she kept all of that correspondence and documentation and postcards and stuff written on that. I mean, it's just amazing. It's like, most stuff these days, we just kind of toss in the trash, you know, we're so, such a disposable society pretty much anymore. And the fact that she was able to maintain all of these things, and keep them in such great shape to where you can, you know, look at them and read them and almost transports you back into history, it really is just an amazing story that just shows how things can stack on top of each other just by the smallest of actions. And as someone who gets a ton of correspondence on their desk every day,

**Jackie Congedo** 48:55

how many letters are you saving? Kevin?

**Kevin Aldridge** 48:57

Oh, yeah, I mean, it's like, man, that and, you know, the fact that the publisher passed that along to him. I'm just thankful I wasn't in that publishers office that day, because I probably would have never made its way to Otto and we we wouldn't be talking about that here today. But But thankfully, you know, you had some conscientious people at the publisher who who took that.

**Jackie Congedo** 49:16

That's right, shout out to the student who asked the question to sister Nancy, for for leaning in with curiosity for really just saying, like, I'm gonna be curious about that. And like, let's just actually see, and then to the publisher for saying, "I don't know, but I know a guy who does know, and I'll send it along to him." So really a special special story, a treasured part of our collection. And yeah, and we're just so grateful for, that Sister Nancy was able to come and sit down with us and share a little bit more about this journey for her. So

**Kevin Aldridge** 49:46

Yeah, for sure. Well, every month we'll also bring you a story of someone who is an upstander, a person who uses their character strengths to stand up for themselves and others.

**Jackie Congedo** 49:56

Elie died in 2016, his son now works to carry on his father's legacy. Most of us know Elie Wiesel as a scholar and author. But for Elisha, he was just Dad, we're honored to share parts of this conversation here. Yep. And this month we're sharing a part of a conversation I had with Elisha Wiesel. You're probably familiar with the name Elie Wiesel, Elie survived the Holocaust, was liberated from Buchenwald, and went on to become an author, of course at the esteemed book, Night, as well as other works. And a Nobel Laureate. And sort of through that path, you know, you had certain milestones from what I've, you know, listened and read about your, your relationship with your dad and some of the experiences you had, you know, you went back with him to Romania, I did to see sort of, for yourself some of those early chapters in his life, can you can you tell me a little bit what that was like to be there with him?

**Elisha Wiesel** 50:49

Yeah, I can. But I would, I would just say one thing on the bumpiness question, which is, the resolution to my relationship with my father didn't start magically on that one trip to Romania. It really had to do with the way my father dealt with me. And the patients that he showed, and there are Hasidic stories that I can tell you that inform how and why he did that. But he was an incredible father, because he gave me the space, he recognized what a burden it was to be the son of such a prominent Holocaust survivor, and he realized what a burden it is to be a Jew, that it can be a burden in this in this day and age. And he was so respectful and so patient with me that the groundwork for an eventual return, I think, was laid very early. We went in spring of 1995, or maybe even summer to see get Romania, we did a trip to Sighet. And then we went to Auschwitz and it was me, my father, and my cousin Steve, who really is a brother to me, it's my father's sister's son. And it was a turning point for me, I had just finished doing a military training program in Israel. I was just before I was returning to the workforce properly. And the trip to Sighet, for me was the first time that I started to see the world the way my father saw it, walking around this town that used to have a thriving Jewish population. And observing my father responding to Jews who are no longer there... It was almost as though he had a radio that was picking up signals that the rest of us could not pick up. But the signals were there. These people had lived their lives. You could imagine him running around a street corner, picking up the challah, you know, through the windowsill at his grandmother's house, she asks him questions about the weekly Torah portion, racing off to cheder where he was learning, making sure he got home in time for Shabbat you could feel the brush of air as that younger man who was my father was sort of running past us. It was the first time that I think my I saw my father was vulnerable. He was always so strong. And to see him really start to break down in that place had a very powerful effect on me. It really opened up something within me.

**Jackie Congedo** 53:14

Wow, wow. And then from from that experience, to Auschwitz itself, and being with him side by side, to sort of experience that I can't even imagine the power of that moment.

**Elisha Wiesel** 53:25

Listen, Auschwitz was was terrifying and sober and somber. But if I had to tell you between the two experiences, see, that was by far the more powerful because Sighet is where the Jews lived. They'd spent a century or more there, there, there, you know, they taken root. You felt their presence in the, in the spot where like, you could see the faded place where a mezuzah had been, or the synagogue that had been repurposed or was now full of abandoned scrolls. The Jews went through Auschwitz on their way to their death, but it wasn't a place where they made their mark. Sighet was a place where our people lived, and you felt the immensity of the tragedy and being there

**Jackie Congedo** 54:06

Yeah, and the loss of that life. The loss of that experience of living and the the right the vibrancy that.

**Elisha Wiesel** 54:12

Yes. They died in Auschwitz, but they lived in Sighet. They lived in all of these towns across Eastern Europe. They put down roots. They they bartered with their non-Jewish neighbors, they built shuls, they built schools, they - some of them were more secular, some of them were more observant. They wanted to become doctors, they had this incredible... they had life.

**Jackie Congedo** 54:33

Yeah

**Elisha Wiesel** 54:34

They had well we have. They had life. And to go there and feel its absence was very profound.

**Jackie Congedo** 54:38

I think that's so important. And we talk about that a lot in the work we do here at the center around the the need to start with humanizing In fact, for those again who are listening, behind you is the part of our museum that really opens the experience for visitors. And the first thing people see when they come into the museum is life. It was critically important for the for the folks who designed this space, that we start with the humanizing and shrinking the distance between us and them. So that so that we really can confront the humanity that was lost in this in this horrific tragedy. Let's talk a little bit about this current moment. And I'll sort of say that generally, because there's a lot to unpack, you know, we're sitting sort of broadly, in the midst of an era of rising anti semitism. You know, and if you zoom out and look at sort of the scope of Jewish history all around the world, and for thousands of years, it seems that we're unfortunately, in this cycle of, you know, an uptick in anti-Jewish rhetoric and violence against against Jewish communities. You know, this past October was the deadliest day for Jews since the Holocaust, in Israel specifically. And I think that the Jewish community, it feels to me and this is interesting, you bring it up in the context of students reading Night, is really trying to calibrate - what does this mean today? What is my role today? Where are the red lines? And I'm just, you know, I'm trying to think about the sages who I've known in my life, you know, my grandparents and what they would say about what's happening right now, and how they would help me calibrate and I'm wondering if, in quiet moments, your dad's voice creeps into your head? And what does it say about about what's happening right now.

**Elisha Wiesel** 56:39

I can't say what my father would say, I don't want to be an AI and natural language processing model trying to try to do that. I can tell you as someone who is his son, who was extremely close to him, who has studied him deeply, and you know, knew him, I think on every level, it's possible to know him, I can tell you how I feel and you can choose to accept whether or not that is a reflection of who my father was, and what he would have thought here. This is kind of for all the marbles right now, is the way I see it.

**Jackie Congedo** 57:15

What do you mean by that?

**Elisha Wiesel** 57:17

This is the moment where we have to decide how we're going to respond to antisemitism. Because Israel's future I do truly believe is at stake. I don't want to say Israel is so vulnerable, that we can just blow on it, and it's gonna bend over. It's not, but it's hurting, it's hurting very, very badly. And if we are going to have, I think, any self respect for ourselves as American Jews, we have to stand very, very firmly with Israel. And we have to change our own radar sense of what are we going to tolerate in polite company? And what are we not going to tolerate in polite company? I am sure that in the 1930's, in civilized society, you would have people say, "The Jews, like they're disease-ridden and they steal," and there were some people who'd say, "Well, that's just them talking, you know, like, he doesn't really think that it's just the, you know, the polite thing to say." And I feel that now there are lies being spread about our Jewish brothers and sisters in Israel, that if we don't call them out and oppose them, we are allowing otherwise well-meaning people to be mistaken, and rationalize what we saw on October 7, and there is no rationalizing what we saw on October 7, what we saw on October 7, was absolute, brutal, gruesome, inhumane barbarism, the worst that is possible for one group of humans to do to another. And in my view, when we hear things like, well, Israel's guilty of apartheid, whoa, whoa, whoa, slow down. I think American Jews have an obligation, not an opportunity, but an obligation to double click on that and say, Actually, no, there's a pretty complex history here of Israel, offering peace on multiple occasions. These are people who have hated us. They elected Hamas into office on the premise that they were more anti Israel than the PA not only less corrupt, but explicitly in the charter to destroy Israel. And now we're basically saying that we're going to try it start introducing moral equivalence and say that Israel is guilty because it doesn't let the people who want to destroy them move freely around their land. There's there's, I hate to be quote unquote, political because I know that there are many people who disagree on this issue. But if you want to know about my father, one must know that my father was not only a humanist, not only an activist for the Muslims in Bosnia, you know, where he went to President Clinton at the opening of the opening of the Holocaust Museum and said, "We must do something about what's going on in that country." My father was not just the gentle teacher, and writer and witness, my father was a Zionist. It's become a bad word in certain circles. And that is a very, very sad day for American Jewry. So I think we need to rediscover our backbone and rediscover our history on this issue.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:00:23

Some powerful words that, that was recorded a number of months ago, this was I think, in November, or maybe even late October, several weeks after October 7. And of course, things have continued. And there's there's been many developments since then. But really, I mean, a very clear clarion call and, and, you know, yeah, just thinking about, about his, his perspective, having known his dad, as well, and, and where the red lines are, I thought it was very sobering to hear him speak about that.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:01:01

Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I think, you know, he was very wise to kind of take the approach to not try to speak for his father. But as someone who knew him intimately, and we are all as someone who was close to his father, we're all reflections. All sons are sort of a reflection of their of their dads, if we're, if we're lucky enough to have that type of relationship with them. And so, while we can never say fully, because we can never be in someone else's mind to say what they would have said, I think what they instill in us - the values, the thought processes, the morals that, then you can speak with a fair degree of certainty, you know, where you think they would have come down. And I think, you know, hearing from from Elisha, just the, the sense of urgency of the moment, and the need to really just kind of stand on truth and stand on history and stand on, you know, the right to self determination for, for, for Jews in Israel, and, and here in America, I think, you know, sent a very clear message, at least to me of the of the critical, critically important time that we're that we're in right now, the delicate time that we're in right now. And it just seems like we're in a moment of, of an inflection point in American history and world history in the history of Israel, where the stakes just seem so incredibly high, right now. And we're living in times where we all have to be as as thoughtful as we can be, as as well read and knowledgeable as we can be the most dangerous thing that we can be right now is uninformed and knee jerk. And and I think, you know, the, the part that scares me the most right now is that far too many of us live in that space where, where we, where we respond sort of gutturally to things that are going on instead of, you know, really trying to inform and, and learn and listen, that, that were more reactive than responsive. And I think that's dangerous at moments like these. And that's, that's the part that gives me the most concern about where we are and hearing the gravity of Elisha's words.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:03:29

Yeah, yeah. I think also, you know, what happens when we're uninformed? What happens when we jump to react? And we were talking about earlier, you know, language in this conversation around Israel, Palestine and advocacy, why it's so important. If we're not aware, and we're not informed, then we actually might be trafficking.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:03:52

Sure, absolutely

**Jackie Congedo** 1:03:54

without realizing it in language and rhetoric and ideology that we wouldn't otherwise want to traffic in, right? And so to your point, I think you shared this about, you know, just creating space to absorb other people's concerns and reality and lived experience in history, which is hard, because we're all just trying to live our lives and get through the day and like, what time is bedtime for my kids? And how do I get there fastest and all that, but, you know, the space like this for conversation to be able to say, wait a minute, I hear that you have some concerns about what's happening in Gaza or, but when you use this language, when you use language like apartheid, like genocide, first of all those things have actual definitions and second of all, they are - they they can be used as dog whistles for "the Jewish entity in our time is uniquely evil." Is is the the worst thing you can think of. It's not to say that there aren't issues or or concerns or challenges or human rights, you know, problems. And but but it is to say that when we jump right away to these terms, these dog whistles, you know, we got to be aware that antisemitism - this is how it shows up. It shows up as projecting the worst of humanity on this group of people called the Jews throughout history. And that's looked different in every chapter. But whatever society finds most abhorrent, that's the default. Right?

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:05:28

Right.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:05:28

It's, it's easy, it's easy, relatively easy to scapegoat because the Jewish community is, relatively speaking, such a small community. So, many people don't even know someone who's Jewish. Many of the people in this conversation have never stepped foot - they have never even been to the piece of land that they're talking about that they're so sure they know how to fix. Right?

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:05:52

Yeah.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:05:52

So I just think being aware of where our knowledge begins and ends on things

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:05:56

absolutely

**Jackie Congedo** 1:05:57

Live in in the spirit of Sister Nancy and that student, in a space of curiosity, and not jumping to a place of "I need to have an opinion on this." Like, can I just be curious enough to learn more? is so important?

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:06:10

Absolutely. And we don't live - we currently don't live in times where that is valued is...Yeah, we're that's where that's valued. We live in a click-baity, we live in a you know, instant comment, society that doesn't even allow... I think I've shared this many times, like, you know, there'll be times at the Enquirer where I will post an article online, and within 30 seconds, everybody has posted. Somebody has commented. And I'm saying to myself, like, there's, there's literally no way that you did anything beyond reading the headline, and

**Jackie Congedo** 1:06:48

You didn't even read the piece

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:06:49

Yeah, and how can you possibly, how can you possibly venture an opinion? You know, I mean, I've been very careful, you know, in, you know, since October 7, in terms of, you know, kind of my commentary or, you know, sort of how I've approached discussion on this mainly because, you know, I have the humility to understand that, you know, I am not learned enough on the subject matter to be able to say anything with any sense of definition, other than the deaths are horrible.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:07:26

That's right

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:07:27

The attacks are horrible, and, and holding hostages is horrible. And I really wish we could find some type of resolution to where people didn't have to die. And I feel like for me, like, that's, as far as I'm comfortable in going and saying things right now, in terms of, of making a determination, because we're talking about, you know, history that's hundreds of years old, and conflicts that go, you know, way back and, and as you said, there was some celebrity that I heard that, you know, wanted to go to the Middle East, because they wanted to see for themselves as if even taking a trip there was somehow or another going to inform them in such a way where they would be able to make, yeah, where they would just be like this, like that. Now I get it. And it's like, it's that kind of is that kind of arrogance and hubris that we have? Yeah, that allows us to have the audacity to think that we can have an absolute 100% I'm right, you're wrong opinion on something like this. And I think that, you know, we could all just use a little bit more of a dose of humility. It's okay, to feel bad about the death on both sides, whether that's whether that's Palestinian, or whether that's Israelis who are who are losing their lives, we should all be hurt, we should all be moved by that. And we should all want it to stop as soon as possible. There's nothing wrong in advocating for that and saying that, because I believe that's true. You know, for the vast majority of people who have concerns about this, but I think I think we also just have to be just very careful about how we talk about it.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:09:03

Yeah, I think, you know, I think that maybe a challenge could be when you feel like you have an opinion, instead have a question.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:09:12

Exactly.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:09:13

Instead, have a question. Instead of you feel that urge to just express how you think or feel. Maybe instead just say, "You know what I'm going to ask," I want to I have a question I'd like to ask instead, because you can always have an opinion down the road. You can... it's not going anywhere, guarantee it. But I think we need more questions in our world. And Elisha said that in the interview, which we have more of on, on our YouTube channel. You know, I wish people were more curious.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:09:41

For sure. Yeah. I mean, you know, because because I pastor as well, you know, I always tend to fall back to the Bible, and I'm reminded of the conversation that Job had with with God and you know, God's kind of putting him in his place by kind of letting him know what he doesn't know? Right? Right? Can you can you tell me how this happened, how this got made, how this was created, and you sort of realize that, you know, even in even in your own situation, as you're looking at looking at things and trying to figure it out, that what you know, is vastly outstripped by what you don't know. And how can you have the audacity to, quote to make declarative statements when you know, so when you know, so very little, yeah. And so that that gets to your point of, you know, curiosity, asking questions, learning, listening, like, that's the that's the big part, you know,

**Jackie Congedo** 1:10:38

If people only realize like, I feel like if these folks in these protests only only realize that, they might be advancing closer and faster, towards the kind of resolution we all want to see. If they asked more questions, instead of stating more opinions. Yeah, it's like, if, if they only realized that, then, but but I think that's that is the challenge is, you know, dealing with our own how that feels to for ourselves to feel like this, because I have no doubt that folks who are protesting, you know, that, that this comes from a place of like, deep concern for humanity, like, in most cases, with some exceptions, but in most cases, and I think that, like if people could just be convinced that like, if you care about humanity, if you are concerned about wanting to reach an end to this, that does not result in any more innocent life lost, then, when you think to speak, instead, ask, instead ask, lean in and learn. That's got to be the first step.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:11:41

Absolutely. And when you hear things that people say that might set off a red flag for you, instead of immediately responding to that, ask another question.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:11:50

That's right.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:11:50

What did you mean,

**Jackie Congedo** 1:11:51

you can ask them- You can start with one, but you can ask more than one.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:11:54

Absolutely.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:11:55

Please ask many questions.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:11:56

I heard you say this, I heard you say this about Israel. You know what, what exactly did you mean by that? When you say that- help me understand what you meant by that, you know, like just just techniques like that. But the challenge with that, Jackie, is that that takes time. And that is what we're always up against, isn't it? It's this sense of urgency that we have that we just don't have time for that. But we don't have time to not make time for that.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:12:23

Well, and that's what we've done. For more than - we've we've taken more of our, more than our fair share of time today. But it's been it's been great. It's been great to have in this first journey of our first episode, and we're going to be back for more.

**Kevin Aldridge** 1:12:34

Absolutely. And we're so grateful to all of you who joined us today. We we'd love to hear from you about how the ripple effect has played out in your life, or how you might have been inspired today to start your own ripple effect.

**Jackie Congedo** 1:12:47

Yeah, so we want to know, what did you learn? And maybe more than what you learned and what you're thinking? What are your questions that you have for us? What would you like to hear us talk about? What do you want to answers to? Remember, remember that what you do right now, when you take off your headphones, what you do today, how you treat people in this moment, it matters. The power to start a ripple of change lies in you. Thanks for joining us. Let us know your thoughts on this episode. Our email is in the show notes. You can listen anytime on Spotify, Apple podcasts or visit Holocaustandhumanity.org/podcast. You can also connect with us on Instagram and Tiktok @holocaustandhumanity and X and Facebook @cincyhhc. The Upstander Ripple Effect is a production of the Nancy and David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center. The Center's mission is to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust inspire action today. This series is part of the Cynthia & Harold Guttman Family Center for Storytelling. Visit us in person at historic Union Terminal in Cincinnati, Ohio or online anytime at holocaustandhumanity.org. Executive Producers are David Wise and Jackie Congedo. Managing producer is Anne Thompson. Consulting producer is Joyce Kamen. Technical producer is Robert Mills and Technical director is Josh Emerson. The opening sequence is by Ken Furman. Select music is by Kick Lee. Videography and editing are by Michael Holder. This is recorded at Technical Consulting Partners studios in Cincinnati, Ohio.