

THE OAKLAND PRESS

Always remember our role as protectors,' says Sheriff Bouchard during Holocaust Memorial Center visit

By Mark Cavitt

March 2, 2020



Holocaust Memorial Center CEO Eli Mayerfeld (left) stands with Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard during a visit on Monday, March 2, 2020.

Mark Cavitt/The Oakland Press

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard said it now feels "real and personal."

On Monday, Bouchard and members of his command staff visited the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills to learn about the history of the Holocaust and to educate themselves on the dangers of hatred, bigotry, and anti-Semitism in an effort to better serve the community. They also heard from [Edith Manniker](#), 88, whose parents and many other relatives perished during the Holocaust.

He said it's important to be reminded of the hatred that took place during the Holocaust so "it can never happen again." He added that law enforcement needs to continue to be proactive partners with communities and houses of worship in order to protect residents from any potential extremist attacks, including those made against the Jewish community.

"One of the things that struck me very much so when I visited the (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) in Washington D.C. as part of an international law enforcement executive tour was how many of the photos showed German police officers participating in the roundup of Jewish people," he said. "That chilled me to the bone to think that people who were sworn to protect people, not just stood by, but co-opted and participated."



The Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills, Mich., on Monday, March 2, 2020.

From 2018 through 2019, there were 7,743 incidents of extremism or anti-Semitism in the United States, according to the [Anti-Defamation League](#). Over that same time period, there were 118 incidents of extremism or anti-Semitism in Michigan, 29 of which were in Oakland County.

Holocaust Memorial Center CEO Eli Mayerfeld said the sheriff's office visit was a "sign that the law is on the right side and that they understand we have to protect against hate and discrimination."

Bouchard said he wanted the visit to be a simple reminder to his staff "to always remember our role as a protector first and foremost."

"I also wanted them to see what hate motivated to action looks like," he said. "We see a lot of hate crimes all across America and we've seen spikes in some of those numbers. We've seen attacks on individuals and institutions that are motivated by hate. Our job is to not only be constantly aware of it, but stand between that evil and who they seek to violate."