MUSEUM AT ELDREDGE STREET 2021
MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL AND BONNIE
As an institution that underwent a transformative restoration, the Museum at Eldridge Street is no stranger to rebirth. Little did we know then that we would celebrate another revival in 2021. On June 1, after being closed for over a year, we finally reopened our doors to the public. Rebirth is central to our history, and now it’s become a part of our present.

Although 2021 is marked by positive change, it wasn’t without its challenges. Our ability to work together as a team—and as a community—carried us through the constant uncertainty and unprecedented obstacles brought on by the pandemic. Throughout the first half of 2021, we continued to grow our virtual offerings—even hosting an online version of our annual *Egg Rolls, Egg Creams, and Empanadas Street Festival*, where we reached over 12,000 people worldwide.

Teamwork was integral to moving the Museum online in 2020, and it was essential to reopening our doors to the public this past summer as a fixture within our Lower East Side neighborhood. Once our doors reopened, it didn’t take long before visitors from around the globe returned to the Museum. The excitement of being back in-person was palpable.

Our staff and docents took the challenges of reopening the Museum in stride. While we couldn’t bring our docent tours back right away, our team found new ways to engage our audiences. We launched a self-guided digital tour in English, Chinese, and Spanish so visitors could easily access our tour content while maintaining social distance. Our visitorship steadily grew throughout the year as people became more comfortable returning to in-person activities. Incredibly, we welcomed 129 school groups from around the country and 1,393 international visitors.

One of the most exciting changes from 2021 was the reinstatement of docent-led tours. Little by little we were able to add more tours to the calendar. Visitors were delighted to learn about Eldridge Street’s rich history from our passionate volunteers. One visitor wrote on Google that their docent-led tour was “outstanding.” Another said of their experience: “Spectacular restoration and knowledgeable docents make this amazing sacred space nothing short of a masterpiece!”

Reopening the Museum was a team effort, and the support of our loyal community was paramount—we couldn’t have done it without you. We thank our resilient staff and docents for gracefully adapting to these ever-changing times. Our Board of Directors, Advisory Council, and generous donors have also been invaluable. Last, but certainly not least, we offer our thanks to our dedicated visitors who inspired us to do everything in our power to reopen our doors and to keep them open. What a joy it has been to have you all back at the Museum!

Michael Weinstein, Chairman, Board of Directors

Bonnie Dimun, Executive Director
While COVID-19 greatly impacted our public programs and events, our staff, students, and guests have adapted well to new kinds of virtual engagement. From artistic performances, to seminars and tours, the Museum is proud to have transitioned our tried and true formats to the virtual space with great success, allowing guests to join our programming from all over the world. We hosted forty-five programs and streamed into the homes of thousands of people: from Brazil, to New Zealand, to India. We were thrilled to collaborate both with community partners we have worked with before, and with new friends we hope to work with again. For our NEA Big Read 2021: Yu Hua’s “To Live,” we were lucky to partner with China Institute, Chatham Square Library branch of The New York Public Library, and Museum of the Moving Image to bring this four part lecture series to 2,000 guests on Zoom.

In addition to our ongoing programming, such as our ever-popular Cinema Chats and Lower East Side Walking Tours, we managed to host our signature festival, Egg Rolls, Egg Creams, and Empanadas, for the first time ever over Zoom, engaging over 12,000 people worldwide. While the 2021 festival certainly looked very different, it enabled the Museum to think outside of the box and offer four stages of programming over the course of a few weeks, drawing out the festivities and enabling virtual engagement to thousands of participants. Our programming leading up to the festival week included a special seminar entitled Mahjong: A Chinese Game and the Making of Modern American Culture, where over 120 people logged on live and over 6,000 streamed over Youtube to learn about how the game informed Jewish and Chinese identities in the United States from Professor Annelise Heinz. The focus moved from celebrating the foods of the Lower East Side, to virtually enjoying the music, street games, and other artistic performances and folk traditions that display the richness of our neighborhood. Subsequent programming included a virtual seminar about the author of our beloved tale, All-of-a-Kind-Family, entitled From Sarah to Sydney: The Story Behind Sydney Taylor’s Biography. This special opportunity to delve into the untold life story of Sydney Taylor and her dramatic influence on American children’s literature attracted over 660 attendees, who were delighted by a surprise appearance from Sydney Taylor’s daughter, Jo Taylor Marshall!

**Cinema Chats**
- **Bombshell: The Hedy Lamarr Story** January 18
- **Love and Courtship Virtual Walking Tour** February 8
- **Restoring Stories: Decorative Paint** February 11

**Cinema Chats**
- **Under Known Jewish Heroes** February 17

**NEA Big Read 2021: Yu Hua’s “To Live”** March 8
  - Bilingual Book Discussion March 10
  - China’s Literary Giants: The Legacy of Yu Hua March 16
  - Bidding Farewell in Zhang Yimou’s *To Live* March 18

**Passover Poetry Reading with Marge Piercy** March 23

**Cinema Chats**
- **Barry Levinson’s *Avalon*** March 24

**Film Screening & Talk About the Iconic Soda Drink**
- **Egg Cream** April 8

**The Lost World of African-American Cantors 1915-1953** April 13

**Lower East Side Walking Tour** April 18

**Cinema Chats**
- **Jewish Women on TV** April 28

**Virtual Walking Tour**
- **Mamas with Chutzpah** May 5

**Mahjong: A Chinese Game and the Making of Modern American Culture** May 11

**Activism, Athletics & Advice: Immigrant Newspapers in NYC** May 20

**Lower East Side Walking Tour** May 23

**Cinema Chats**
- **Colette** May 26

**Egg Rolls, Egg Creams, and Empanadas Festival 2021**
  - **Celebrating Food** June 6
  - **Music and Performance** June 13
  - **LES’s Street Games** June 20
  - **Folk Arts** June 27
EXHIBITIONS


Haunting and provocative questions such as, “Is it considered a charm for a pregnant woman to wear an apron?” are paired in Olin’s large, mixed-media works with her own symbolic language, where a sonogram image becomes the modern equivalent of a traditional amulet, a token of protection and safety.

When the Museum reopened in June 2021, our exhibition *Pressed: Images from the Jewish Daily Forward*, was still hanging on our gallery walls. It had been slated to come down in April 2020, but remained on view until October 2022, much to the delight of our visitors. The show focused on vintage printing plates that were used to produce photographs and illustrations in the pre-digital newspaper during the first half of the 20th century.

*Debra Olin: Every Protection, Folk Culture and Motherhood in the Jewish Pale of Settlement* opened on October 24, 2021. While it was not possible to have a traditional opening with speeches and refreshments, we welcomed the artist and 75 visitors eager to see the exhibition. For the first time, we offered an audio guide, in which the artist discussed her inspiration, iconography, and process.

At the heart of Olin’s *Every Protection* series is an exhaustive survey developed in 1912–14 by Russian ethnographer S. An-sky, who sought to document a traditional way of life he saw disappearing in Jewish Eastern Europe.
The artist’s work suggests her fascination with superstition, folk belief, and her connection to the women of a vanished place and time. The exhibition gave viewers a window into the minds and memories of the immigrant women who prayed at Eldridge Street in the years following its founding in 1887. Did they find that their traditional customs had meaning in a new, unknown world, or would these beliefs be replaced by new ones, as women continue to ask for protection at a time of great vulnerability and hope?

Also in 2021, just in time for Hanukkah, we offered a new digital guide for the ongoing show *Lighting the World: Menorahs Around the Globe*. The show presents 89 Hanukkah lamps from the collection of Dr. Aharon Ben Zalman, and spans five continents and more than five centuries.
EDUCATION AND FAMILY PROGRAMS
Our adult education courses were perhaps our best-suited programming when it comes to this transition to online engagement. While there were some challenges in adjusting to this new medium, Zoom also opened up participation to a much wider audience than we could have ever imagined pre-pandemic. We have students “Zooming” in from all over the state, the country, and the world! Our scholar-in-residence, Dr. Regina Stein’s knowledge and teaching style brings in folks from varying backgrounds, who all gather to learn weekly during our course blocks. Adult Education courses with Dr. Stein, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Reading, From the Zohar to Modern Hasidism I,* and *Deuteronomy: One God, One People, One Sanctuary, One Land I* served over 50 students in 2021. We are always expanding our course offerings; this year we added a biblical Hebrew language course, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Reading,* to our selections, and we have plans to add more!

**Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Reading** February 4, 11, 18  
**From the Zohar to Modern Hasidism I** October 5–December 31  
**Deuteronomy: One God, One People, One Sanctuary, One Land I** October 7–December 23

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**FAMILY PROGRAMMING**

Family-friendly walking tours are a great way to bring generations together outside in the neighborhood, and have been especially valuable during the pandemic as a way to engage in-person. In 2021, we offered a variety of options to families with children of all ages. Children have been learning from home for a while now, and being able to engage them out and about at Lower East Side sites was a success for all involved. While outdoor walking tours were successful, we offered both in-person and virtual options to accommodate all interested parties. Our most popular family tour, *All-of-a-Kind-Family,* reached over 100 guests, while our other family programs this year, *Time-Travel Storytime: Frances Perkins, Champion of Workers’ Rights,* and *Architecture Walking Tour for Families* (presented in partnership with Archtober) attracted almost fifty! Attendees learned how the legendary Frances Perkins, moved by the horrors of factory work in the early twentieth century, advocated for labor laws that would keep children in school and out of the factory, and how historic buildings on the Lower East Side can tell their own stories about the past if you only know how to read them!

**Time-Travel Storytime: Frances Perkins, Champion of Workers’ Rights** March 14  
**Secrets of All-of-a-Kind Family (WT and Virtual)** May 23  
**All-of-a-Kind Family Walking Tour** August 29  
**Architecture Walking Tour for Families** October 24  
**All-of-a-Kind Family Walking Tour** December 12
In 2021, the Museum’s Education program proved resilient in the face of positivity rates and variants, serving students from our local community and countrywide. From January to May, our programs remained entirely virtual. This success was only possible due to the quick adaptation of our entire line of existing Education programs to a virtual format. The programs include: “Immigration,” “Ways We Worship,” “Architecture Building Tour,” neighborhood walking tours, and our Hanukkah and Passover Holiday programs. We also introduced two new programs: “Shapes and Colors: Stained Glass” and a virtual Lower East Side walking tour, which was met with great enthusiasm by both our teachers and students.

While we are proud of these accomplishments, we gained the most satisfaction helping teachers educate, and students learn while still dealing with the lingering effects of the pandemic. Programs during this period were often complicated by technical and logistical challenges faced when trying to conduct a program over Zoom to a classroom full of students or to individual students attending from their homes. Even in some cases, a hybrid of the two. Despite all of this, our students were eager to dig into the content. In these trying times, it was particularly meaningful for us to help our teachers educate and bring our students—from wherever they were—into the past of New York, our historic synagogue, and the Jewish Community of the Lower East Side.

We introduced in-person education programs the same day we reopened to the public, June 1st, 2021. These programs were modified to be consistent with CDC recommendations and prioritized the health of our students. Our local schools within walking distance were our most frequent visitors during this period.

As to the success of the Education department, the facts speak for themselves. We welcomed 1,875 virtual and 858 in-person PreK-12 grade students over 131 programs in 2021. We additionally welcomed 21 in-person college students. These groups came from New York, New Jersey, Texas, California, Delaware, Minnesota, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, Louisiana, and the District of Columbia. As has been the case in other departments, our virtual offerings allowed us to reach students who, because of distance, would not have been able to visit us in person.

Ultimately, our success lies in the fact that despite the vagaries of the pandemic throughout 2021, students and teachers alike chose the Museum at Eldridge Street as a place to learn and grow.
Since we reopened to the public, we have seen visitors from almost all 50 states and over 60 countries and territories, including:

Afghanistan  Armenia  Azerbaijan  Belarus  Belgium  Bolivia  Brazil  Bulgaria  Canada  China  Colombia  Czechia  Denmark  Djibouti  Estonia  Finland  France  Georgia  Germany  Ghana  Greece  Guatemala  Hungary  Iceland  India  Indonesia  Ireland  Israel  Italy  Japan  Jordan  Kazakhstan  Kuwait  Kyrgyzstan  Latvia  Lebanon  Lithuania  Luxembourg  Madagascar  Malawi  Malaysia  Malta  Mauritius  Mexico  Moldova  Morocco  Myanmar  Nepal  Netherlands  New Zealand  Nicaragua  Nigeria  Norway  Oman  Pakistan  Panama  Peru  Philippines  Poland  Portugal  Qatar  Romania  Russian Federation  Rwanda  Samoa  San Marino  Saudi Arabia  Senegal  Serbia  Seychelles  Sierra Leone  Singapore  Slovakia  Slovenia  South Africa  Spain  Sri Lanka  Sudan  Sweden  Switzerland  Syria  Taiwan  Tajikistan  Thailand  Tonga  Trinidad and Tobago  Tunisia  Turkey  Turkmenistan  Turkmenistan  Tuvalu  Ukraine  United Arab Emirates  United Kingdom  United States  Uruguay  Uzbekistan  Vatican City  Venezuela  Vietnam  Yemen  Zambia  Zimbabwe

After the Museum doors shuttered for 15 months due to the pandemic, we finally reopened to the public for in-person visitation and tours in June 2021. By the end of December, we had welcomed almost 6,000 walk-in visitors from 46 different states and 42 different countries. Visitors had the option of enjoying our new digital self-guided tour, available in English, Chinese, and Spanish, or attending a guided tour led by one of our dedicated docents. Visitation grew stronger month by month as the world opened its doors to travel once more, and we were delighted to welcome all with open arms.

“A true gem and well worth a visit...
This is a monument to the spiritual and social life of a vibrant immigrant community. An amazing American story with connections to the past and the “old country.”

“Spectacular restoration and knowledgeable docents make this amazing sacred space nothing short of a masterpiece!”

“...It is seriously one of the most inspiring and beautiful spaces in the city with a story of hope and rebirth....”

—Google Reviews

Our donors, acknowledging the tremendous financial strain the Museum faced, stepped-up their support in an unprecedented time. 1,686 individuals either made their first gift, increased their previous year’s gift, or made multiple donations in 2021. Donations totalling *$1,314,140, represented 93% of the institution’s overall income. The remaining 7% came from earned income which includes building tours, educational and cultural program admissions revenue, gift shop sales, and investment income.
It is important to note that the Museum derives a substantial portion of its contributed income from our fall Gala. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we did not hold our annual event, but rather asked our donors to contribute directly to the Museum. We were delighted that our “non-Gala” Gala campaign raised $362,318 in support of the Museum’s programs and operations. As COVID-19 restrictions ease, we look forward to gathering together in-person again, at the magnificent Bryant Park Grill in November 2022.

As stewards of this magnificent historic site, we are deeply grateful to those who remembered the Museum in their wills. Estate gifts are used to continue our restoration efforts and support the urgent needs of our building. In 2021, we received bequests from the estate of long-time docent, John Heller and the estate of generous donors Miriam and Raymond Freedman. Their names have been added to our 1887 Society roster.

Heartfelt thanks to Mark Wenger and DUGGAL Visual Solutions for their donation of time and materials for our Tribute Wall, ensuring that all Tribute Wall donations directly support the Museum’s programs and general operations. We hope you will consider memorializing or celebrating loved ones, special family occasions, and other milestones by placing your dedication on the Museum’s Tribute Wall.
ANNUAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS AND PUBLIC SUPPORT
ANNUAL FUND CONTRIBUTIONS AND PUBLIC SUPPORT

January 1 through December 31, 2021

On behalf of everyone at the Museum at Eldridge Street, we thank all of our donors for your generosity.

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2021 INCOME BY SOURCE
PERCENT OF TOTAL

- Foundations and Corporations: 24%
- Bequests: 12%
- Individual Support: 18%
- Gala/Special Events: 23%
- Government Grants: 11%
- Tours/Programs: 5%
- Other Earned Income: 6%

2021 EXPENSES BY SOURCE
PERCENT OF TOTAL

- Programs: 48%
- Management/General: 17%
- Facility and Restoration: 22%
- Fundraising (Including Gala): 13%

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Scott Branda
The 20-year restoration of our landmark building was a team effort, uniting people with vision, people with drive, and artisans with the skills to make our dreams (and memories) come alive. Today, the continued success of the Museum is a team effort, too! The Museum truly would not function without our dedicated supporters. When you donate your time, your energy, or your hard-earned money, you keep the wheels turning at 12 Eldridge. Our valued supporters are involved in ways as diverse and exciting as the Lower East Side itself. But what they all have in common is their invaluable contribution to our Museum.

DONATE  Your tax-deductible contribution to the Museum at Eldridge Street supports all the exciting things happening at our landmark cultural site. Special opportunities include a fund dedicated to architectural restoration, gifts to honor or memorialize loved ones, a tribute wall dedication, permanent naming opportunities, and the 1887 Society planned giving program. To learn more and to donate, please contact vball@eldridgestreet.org or 212.219.0888 x202.

VOLUNTEER AND INTERN  Becoming a docent means becoming part of the legacy of Eldridge Street. Our docents share the story of our Museum and Lower East Side culture with visitors from around the world. And our student internship program brings new life to the Museum while teaching invaluable on-site lessons about Museum management. To learn more, email contact@eldridgestreet.org or 212.219.0302.

CELEBRATE AT ELDRIDGE  You can host your lifecycle event, family reunion, wedding or other important occasion in one of the most stunning interiors in New York City! To learn more, email contact@eldridgestreet.org or 212.219.0888 x204.

CONNECT WITH US  Keep in touch with us online to make sure you don’t miss out on anything happening at the Museum at Eldridge Street. Join our weekly newsletter at eldridgestreet.org. Connect with us on social media. And follow our blog at eldridgestreet.org/blog to read behind-the-scenes posts about the Museum, the neighborhood, and fascinating history.

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The Museum at Eldridge Street, a non-sectarian cultural organization in Lower Manhattan, is preserving and interpreting the historic 1887 Eldridge Street Synagogue, a magnificent National Historic Landmark that re-opened in December 2007 after an extensive, $20 million restoration. Since then, more than 450,000 people from around the world have participated in tours, cultural events, exhibits and educational programs that present the history and heritage of this historic house of worship and the Jewish immigrant community of the Lower East Side.

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