

Stories Among Us: Personal Accounts of Genocide

10 Today our Wednesday series concludes for **Stories Among Us: Personal Accounts of Genocide**, exploring past and present atrocities through the oral histories of genocide survivors in our region. Produced in partnership with the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE STORIES OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS? Winning entries from the 2008 Jacob Friedman Holocaust Writing and Art Contest.

This year, 800 students from 68 schools across Washington state submitted entries to the annual Holocaust Writing and Art Contest. The contest is open to students in grades 5-12 in Washington.

A panel of 16 judges selected the winners. Their task was not an easy one – the entries were outstanding this year.

Here is a selection of excerpts from the winning entries. To see all of the winning entries, please visit the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Web site at www.wsherc.org.

1st Place: Writing Grades 5 – 8

Steven Weier, Grade 8

*Cedar Heights Middle School, Covington
Teacher: Sylvia O'Brien*

By acquainting ourselves with the stories of these survivors, we can learn things that only people who have experienced such atrocities could ever teach. They are willing to share their knowledge, but if the future is to be spared of any iniquity that is at all comparable to the Holocaust, then we, the people of today, must listen with the utmost intent. The stories of Holocaust survivors contain keys that will unlock the doors of a brighter future ... I feel privileged to have the opportunity to carry history into the future, especially because the knowledge at hand is of such importance.

1st Place: Writing Grades 9 – 12

Skye McConnell, Grade 10

*Seattle Preparatory School, Seattle
Teacher: Matt Barmore*

He had not forgotten his papa's words. It was this reflection that was giving him the strength to touch the pocket watch one last time. As his trembling hand placed the watch inside the display case at the Holocaust museum, his soft voice carried in the open room, "May this remembrance help others to learn from our story and to not forget what has happened to our people." He continued with the solemn benediction, "Mutter und Vater ... Mother and Father, just as you were helped in your escape, let us never forget that not everyone is to blame but everyone is responsible."

2nd Place: Writing Grades 9 – 12

Olivia Vargas, Grade 10

*Seattle Preparatory School, Seattle
Teacher: Chris Kiehn*

We as a world community, need to confront injustice directly and not think about ourselves as individuals, but as a whole. It is only through this collective mindset and direct action that we will truly achieve "Never Again."

3rd Place: Writing Grades 5 – 8

Nathan Poindexter, Grade 7

*Seattle Academy, Seattle
Teacher: Emily Cherkin*

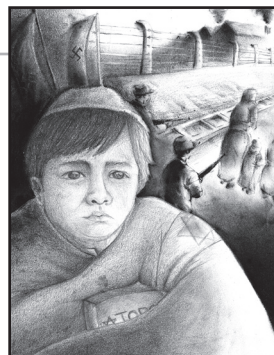
We can help make a world of compassion and peace, and stop anything like the Holocaust from ever happening again. We can do this by telling others what happened, contributing support in our everyday lives and finding compassion instead of anger and hate.

3rd Place: Writing Grades 9 – 12

Sofia Smith, Grade 10

*Seattle Preparatory School, Seattle
Teacher: Tim Reilly*

This [essay] is my feeble attempt to honor my Omi as well as all the other brave souls who lived through the Holocaust.



1st Place: Art Grades 5 – 8

Sungmin Ro, Grade 8

*St. Luke School, Shoreline
Teacher: Rosemary Conroy*

Never Again: My picture shows how hatred and discrimination can take away hope and life. We must remember so that events like the Shoah never happen again.

1st Place: Art Grades 9 – 12

Allison Cutuli, Grade 10

*Seattle Preparatory School, Seattle
Teachers: Tim Reilly and Sandy Whiton*

Symbolism: By recently visiting Dachau, listening to speakers and reading personal stories, I have learned that we must educate others and study the past to end the cycle of ignorance and hatred in the world.



2nd Place: Art Grades 9 – 12

Krista Beyer, Grade 10

*Seattle Preparatory School, Seattle
Teacher: Tim Reilly*

Ring of Hope: One major lesson we should learn from stories of the Holocaust is to join our neighbors and fight the racism that lies within our community.



Honorable Mention: Art Grades 5 – 8

Skye Phinizy, Grade 5

Columbia Elementary, Mukilteo. Teacher: Mari Atkinson

Never Give Up Hope Even When Hope Seems to Break Apart: One important thing I learned from stories of the survivors is to never give up hope. Even though they were separated from their families at times, frightened of being discovered by the Nazi soldiers and being put in concentration camps and/or death camps, they never gave up hope.



Interested in participating in next year's contest? E-mail Ilana Cone Kennedy, Director of Education at the Holocaust Center: ikennedy@wsherc.org, and she will notify you when the 2008-2009 topic is announced.