

HOLOCAUST MUSEUM HOUSTON



STOP HATE. **STARTING HERE.**

HONORING THE DOCENTS OF HOLOCAUST MUSEUM HOUSTON

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Holocaust Museum Houston

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On behalf of
Holocaust Museum Houston

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the docents
of Holocaust Museum Houston and to the staff for their support.

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Preface

Purpose of the book

The purpose of this book is to highlight the role of docents of Holocaust Museum Houston. It tells the stories of the docents, focusing on their motivations, experiences and tour strategies. The docents represent the Museum; their stories reflect their commitment to Holocaust education and to its victims and survivors. The book also will be shared with Holocaust museums and memorials to assist in the development of other docent programs.

Development of the Docent Program

Holocaust Museum Houston opened its doors March 3, 1996. The first official docent tour was Monday March 4, 1996. Even before the Museum opened, the docent program was developed by Museum volunteers; docents from the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and survivors. The initial content consisted of the historical facts of the Holocaust and stories of the survivors. It also focused on the permanent exhibit, the architectural features of the building and the changing exhibits presented by the Museum.

It soon became apparent to the trainers and the early docents that the tours needed to be more relevant to Museum visitors and to current events. To meet these purposes, they developed methods to engage visitors with the material. Themes of social justice, elimination of prejudice and hatred, and the application of the Holocaust to contemporary events are included in the tours. One technique to engage visitors was the use of a specially designed poster of a triangle that shows at each corner the terms "bystanders," "rescuers/upstanders," and "perpetrators." The word "victims" is placed in the center. Docents are encouraged to show this poster and ask "What role would you choose?"

Another modification from the original program involves providing each docent with a mentor, an experienced docent. Mentors work closely with their "mentees" to ensure that tours are accurate and engaging.

Since its inception, there have been 13 docent training programs. They have continuously been modified and expanded with the goal of providing docents the tools they need to conduct meaningful, informative tours. A new group of 12 docents is trained during an eight-week course, involving two-hour sessions twice a week. The docent trainees learn not only historical facts related to the Holocaust but also tour techniques, how to utilize the Museum's artifacts and how to raise relevant questions. They are taught how to encourage visitors to become committed to taking a stand against prejudice and injustice.

Our docents represent a diverse community. They are males and females, ranging in age from their 20s to their 80s. They are high school and college graduates, some with doctoral degrees or medical degrees. The docents come from various religious backgrounds. They are from American, Hispanic, Asian, European and other cultural backgrounds. Some of the docents are survivors of the Holocaust, and others are children of survivors. Some docents have served since the Museum began offering tours. They consider it a privilege and an opportunity for educating the public about the Holocaust and the lessons to be learned to prevent similar atrocities from reoccurring.

In 2000, The Anna and Emil Steinberger Endowment Fund was established to provide support for the Docent Training Program. The Steinbergers wanted to ensure that future

generations of Museum visitors would continue learning about the Holocaust from well-educated docents.

The success of the docent program emanates from the volunteers who continue to serve the mission of the Museum. Suzanne Sutherland, the director of visitor and volunteer services, provides the glue that holds the docents together. She gives support, compassion, structure and love to all of the docents. As one docent said, "It is because of her that we do our job with love, respect and dedication. She brings these qualities to work every day. I cannot imagine our Museum without her."

[Introduction to the Book](#)

Docents were asked to contribute their stories to this book. In the first three sections, they describe their motivations, experiences and tour strategies. The passages have not been revised; they are the words of the docents. In the final section, quotes from some of the visitors are presented

Section 1: Motivations to Become a Docent

A. Honoring the Survivors and Remembering the Victims

It was not an easy decision [to become a docent]. The subject matter is so very painful for me, personally, as I have been surrounded by Holocaust survivors my entire life and heard of the horrors from a very early age. One of our local survivors, whom I have known since my teens, convinced me that becoming a docent at HMH was not an option; it was an obligation to the survivor community. When a survivor asks me to do something – you bet your life, I'll do it.

I had taken two more trips to Yad Vashem, and I just knew that I had to be part of this effort... so I called [to HMH to apply to be a docent].

Here I was, a non-Jewish Latina from all places, "Vidor," Texas, reputed land of prejudice and hatred! Such an honor! And even though it was almost four hours travel time to Houston and back, I felt that it was part of a divine plan that began six years before. And thus began my incredible journey as a docent for HMH.

Both my parents were Holocaust survivors from Holland, hidden by Righteous Christians. My father's entire family was murdered. He was the only survivor. My mother used to give tours at the Holocaust museum in Montreal. In 1995, she was giving a tour to a school group and had a stroke right there in the Museum and passed away in front of the children. It was a terrible shock. Of course, I knew it was so difficult for my mother to give those tours, but she felt so strongly that people had to know what happened and that the story be told. I felt it my obligation to continue her legacy and do the work that she could not finish.

I would hear mother cry every morning, and by the time I would see her face, she would be smiling at her son. Certain times out of the blue she

would pretend spitting on the ground. "I am here and he (Hitler) is down there!" At the end of every tour, I sigh and remember my Mom and smile!

I became a docent because, as a child of survivors, I believe it is important to continue bearing witness to the events of the *Shoah*.

I was able to tell the stories of the survivors. Because of my relationship with survivors who were my friends, I asked a lot of questions about their experiences. I felt it important to relate these experiences to the young people. I wanted to make sure the survivors' stories were not lost. I felt that I got my message across by talking to youths in schools. I was concerned about that part of history being lost and not being exposed to the present. Remember that many survivors did not talk about their experiences. Their experiences were hidden, and they did not want to talk about what happened many years ago.

I was moved by the Permanent Exhibit, especially the little boy in the top hat on the video of still pictures that runs next to the graphic photos of Nazi experiments, etc. I saw those children and wondered, "What if they had lived? Would that little boy be a terrific entertainer who could bring joy to millions of people? Would a little girl who was killed become a scientist who would make a huge discovery?"

I have the honor of being able to ensure that the stories about what happened to innocent Jews and others caught up in the Nazi horror, continue to be told to people who might never otherwise have heard about them. The people who most influenced me to get involved in this are sadly no longer with us, but the enormity of their wartime experiences still weighs heavily on me and I feel a responsibility to them and to their memory to do what I can to open people's eyes to how we all bear a responsibility to ensure this kind of thing does not continue to

happen. [We need to make sure that children become]... active participants in our society and not to simply sit passively waiting for events to sweep us along.

B. Educating the Public

I have two young sons and I look at them and do not want for them the future that many children face during wars. If future generations can be educated, then hopefully, history will not repeat itself. There will be voices who protest when they witness wrongs being committed.

I came to HMH while I was still teaching at St. Thomas More Catholic School when my fellow teacher asked me to help her arrange a field trip to this "new museum in town." Although that year I was teaching English, I am also a history teacher, and the years between the world wars has always been a fascinating time period for me. So, the minute we came to the museum with our students, we were overwhelmed by a survivor's address to the students. And who isn't moved by her example of how the human spirit survives unbelievable odds!

... I had to be a part of teaching children the lessons of what happens when hatred is allowed and encouraged by a society against innocent people.

I was entrusted to teach it [the Holocaust] to my children, as my parents had taught it to me, and as my children will teach it to theirs, I had to teach the *Shoah* to the world. It was a *Mitzvah*, a commandment.

... My trip [to Israel] changed my life to say the least! One of the two greatest impacts of the trip was my visit to Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem. Here I was, an adult in my 40s, and I didn't know

a thing about the Holocaust! In the '60s when I was in high school, it wasn't mentioned, much less studied. I walked through the memorial in complete shock and disbelief at what I saw and read... horrified at what happened to the Jewish people especially. And the impact was made even greater as dozens of IDF made their way through the corridors as well. You could have heard a pin drop as these young people, visibly moved, made their way through in almost reverential silence. I heard several whisper words in Hebrew that I later found out was "*Never Again!*" I was an emotional wreck! I knew it was by G-d's grace that I was there, and that I would never be the same again... My motto is, "Changing the world, one tour at a time."

In essence, it is teaching. It is very satisfying to me to teach an important, life-altering subject to a group of people, many of whom have no idea what to expect. Some do not want to hear it, but the vast majority are truly enlightened and moved by what they have learned.

It is extremely gratifying to see how you have touched students and adults by what you say... Their questions, impressions are so important. To see some young people cry because of what they are hearing... you realize they have been touched and that we hope they will carry these messages with them as they leave HMH.

Every time I see the "light go on" in a student's head, I feel a rush! When I see a student really "get it," I feel like giving a tour is the most important thing I do in my life! To think that another young human being may have been influenced to be an "upstander" rather than just a safe, easy "bystander" is amazing to me. This represents my youthful idealism that I could possibly "change the world" because I feel that is what we do, one person, one student, one tour at a time.

By far the greatest satisfaction is knowing that you have “reached” a group of students with the message of the Museum. And as docents, we know when we have done that. The look on the young faces, the probing questions they ask and even the emotions they show let us know that “this group understands.” When that happens, I feel that our future is in good hands with those kids as future leaders, and I know with certainty why I wanted to become a docent.

Docenting "gave me a voice," so to speak, and I love the opportunity to instill in others an excitement about learning, appreciating history and taking away its lessons so the visitor to the Museum will hopefully make a positive difference in his/her own community and in our society.

I am a strong believer in the power of education. Docents at HMH have the power not only to teach about the Holocaust and its timeless lessons but also to motivate/inspire people to take a stand against hatred and prejudice to make this a better world. Being myself an educator and a Holocaust survivor, I felt that it was a duty to my family and other victims of the Holocaust, that I become a docent at the HMH.

C. Combating Intolerance

Through the experience of the Holocaust, we can teach the universal lessons of tolerance and apathy in the face of evil.

My daughter... declared that I should be at HMH. I wondered why on Earth she thought I would be interested in a Holocaust museum. Her reply was that I should be at HMH because “your kind of people are there.” Well, that made me curious to know what sort of people might be “my kind of people.” She said the people at HMH were concerned about social justice and social justice was all she heard from me and our friends at Central Presbyterian Church when she was growing up. A few months later, I saw an announcement in the newspaper about classes

for people who wanted to learn how to lead tours at Holocaust Museum Houston. I came to the Museum for an interview... convinced that the Museum would not be interested in having tours led by someone who was not Jewish. That was the start of the greatest adventure of my life.

Sometime in mid-1999, in Los Angeles, an anti-Semite shot up a Jewish Child Care Center. His stated reason: he wanted to fire up the white Aryan people against the Jews. The children were held at gunpoint until rescued by police. The news clip of those precious children running to their rescuers cut me deeply. "Lord Jesus, I prayed, "I must do something." Well, be careful what you pray for – a few days later my wife, for her birthday, wanted to visit the Holocaust Museum. So, I agreed. During the tour, the docent asked questions which I naturally answered. When the tour finished, she asked if I would consider joining her ranks. A new docent training session was about to start. Now when your name is called, like Samuel, you answer "Here I am Lord."

The motivation for my becoming a docent was to be a part of an opportunity in which my creativity and concern for issues of social justice and the joy of relating to all kinds of people could be utilized toward the purpose of forming communities in which there is "no place for hate."

... My son had just encountered his first brush with racism when in the fourth grade, two boys got in a fight on the playground because one called the other a "wetback." Never having lived here or heard the word, he asked me what it meant and why it was an insult. I was truly sad to think that while he'd been going to school in Singapore with 145 different nationalities, we had to move back to the U.S. for him to encounter racism! The Museum's mission and message resonated with me for that reason as much as my family's story which I had yet to learn at that point.

My greatest satisfaction is to make children aware of the horrors of prejudice and to teach them that each person is of equal value to the next. No one is better than anyone else. I feel satisfied, when at the end of my tour I ask them questions, and they remember what I said – in almost all cases, they have listened intently, and that is such a satisfying feeling as a docent. I always hope they walk away with an appreciation for each other.

When people leave the Museum and even think a bit about how their actions and words affect each other or try to help when they see an injustice, then I'm satisfied. If I've been able to whet someone's appetite, to learn more, it's a bonus.

Section 2: Memorable Experiences

About two years ago on a Saturday afternoon two women visited HMH. They said they were in Houston for a conference and had come from the Washington, DC area. One was blonde with blue eyes and the other had dark hair and dark eyes. Both were around age 50. They went on the [last drop-in tour of the day] and came out of the exhibit at just about 5 p.m. when the Museum was closing. I suddenly noticed that the dark haired woman was sobbing on a survivor's shoulder, and he was stroking her head and trying to calm her. Moments later, I encountered her in the ladies restroom, and she was still crying. I asked if she was okay. Her answer stunned me: "I've been married to a non-Jew for 27 years and have denied my Jewish heritage for all those years. After what I saw here, I will never deny my Jewishness again! I will always be proud of who I am!" She splashed some water on her face and we walked out of the Museum together. Just outside the front door, her blonde-haired friend was standing wiping tears from her eyes. I asked her if she was okay? Her answer: "My son died a couple of years ago from AIDS. I can't imagine what his life would have been like had he lived in the Nazi era." She wept.

A family of four adults, two or three children and a couple of babies in strollers came in for the drop-in tour. They looked like homeless folks said – dirty, hair unkempt, broken teeth, tattooed arms.... As the tour progressed, the women and children left the exhibit. One of the men, I noticed, kept his crystal blue eyes on me all the time, made certain he was in the front of the group, as close to me as was possible. I felt a bit uncomfortable, but hoped it didn't show. When I gave the "closing statement" at the end of the exhibit, his eyes were filled with tears. He walked away, visited the bookstore and went to the Memorial room. After about 45 minutes, he came up to me at the front desk holding the book "Tell Them We Remember." With a quiver in his voice, he told me that one of the other visitors, a teacher from San Antonio, bought the book for him because he had no money. He asked me to sign the book for him and asked a few more questions regarding the Holocaust. When we finished talking, he shyly asked, "Can I please give you a hug around the neck?" I had made assumptions about him and his family strictly by their

appearance! I was so ashamed of myself. So embarrassed that after all I knew about the Holocaust I had not learned that lesson and he was there to teach me.

Many years ago (2002), when a group of students was in the Memorial Room, I was explaining to them that most Holocaust victims were buried in mass graves. Thus, there are no individual grave sites that survivors can visit to remember their loved ones who perished in the Holocaust... They only have the wall plaques as their memorials.... For some reason (and only that one time), I lost it... and got all choked up... The 20 students, their teachers and chaperones immediately surrounded me trying to comfort me as best as they could... Many started crying... It took us a few minutes to regain control and continue the tour. A few days later, I received a beautiful letter, signed by all thanking me for a most memorable, life-changing tour and a copy of "The Hiding Place" by Corrie Ten Boom as a present.

I was giving a tour to this wonderful family of maybe 15 to 20 people. It wasn't a scheduled tour, it was a drop-in, and I was already impressed with this family because the patriarch, a young man who appeared to be in his 30s or maybe he was a young-looking 40, had brought his wife, kids, nieces and nephews to the Museum because he thought it was important. They were very engaged and attentive and responded to all my questions. I ended the tour in the Memorial Room at the wall of Hope, where I briefly described that it depicted trees, which signified life in Judaism, and that it went from the brown color of a dead tree to a verdant, living green. When I finished, one of the smallest children in the group, a boy who was 8 years old raised his hand and said, "I know what that means!" And I said, "What?" He replied, "That means that you can never completely kill the Jewish people."I told him, "That's the most meaningful thing anybody has ever said to me at this Museum! THANK YOU!" I wish I knew where that family and little boy were now!

The way we usually end a tour is to ask the students whether they think the Holocaust will happen again. In one particular tour, a young man had been silent throughout the tour but seemed to listen intently to everything. When I asked the question, he answered that the Holocaust would not happen again. When I asked why he thought this, his answer was, "Because I'm here." Because Holocaust Museum Houston is here, because we as docents are here, because the students come away from the Museum realizing that they can make a difference, that our communities will be free of hatred and prejudice, that the world will be better because they are here – wow, what an adventure.

My most memorable experience, hands down, is this: One day, I was touring with a group of high school students, and I noticed that two older ladies were staying with my group and listening to the presentation. I invited them to join us; one of the ladies declined politely, but the other lady just nodded that they were going to follow a bit behind us. My group continued... Each time I asked a question, one of the ladies leaned in to hear the answer, and she would agree or elaborate on the answer. I could tell that this lady had a strong middle-European accent, so I guessed that she had some real connection to the Holocaust, perhaps even a survivor herself. She never intruded or really interfered with the presentation, so we continued. When the tour finished with the Core and we were ready to go into the theater for the film, this lady stopped my group, looked at me, and said: "Boys and girls: listen to this lady because she tells you the truth. You must learn truth so that you will be able to defend it always. This lady honors the people who died in the Holocaust." Then she turned to me and said, with tears in her eyes, that I was an angel G-d had sent to tell the story of her people, her family, her neighbors so that this hatred would never happen again. She said that those whose pictures were on our "Life Before" wall were looking down on me with love.

One [memorable experience] that will always send a chill down my spine as a memory was when my dad was still living... [It] must have been about 13 or 14 years ago and he finally felt emotionally prepared to

accompany me on a tour. He stayed in the back of the pack of boys... and when we got to the section that mentions the 1936 Olympics, he spoke up. He said that he'd attended them after being forced to quit school at age 13. He spoke of how scary it was when the crowd all stood and saluted with "Heil Hitler..." Dad took questions [after the tour]. One of the students asked him what happened to the "rest of this family" and Dad choked up, unable to respond. The boys *en masse*, encircled him and hugged him. I am getting teary remembering this experience.

My most memorable experience... was a tour of about 20 or so teens. When we went into the film [of survivors telling their stories], the students sat with all of the Caucasians on one side and the African Americans. One young girl stood up and said, "We are being prejudiced in the way we are sitting." I asked her what could be done and she said, "We should all change seats."

In March 2003, about four months after becoming a docent, I gave a tour to a seventh-grade class from a very small Texas town. Very few of them had ever been to Houston before and to them the "Holocaust" was just a word. Their teacher fought tooth and nail with her school board to enable her to bring the class to HHM, and she eventually was allowed to bring them.... They hung on every word I said. They blossomed right before my eyes. They saw that diversity teaches tolerance, and that their lives were now richer for having learned of a world beyond their town.... They vowed to me that they would never forget what they had learned on that day. I was so proud of that group of young people and the teacher who saw the need to bring her students to a Museum that teaches diversity and would not take "no" for an answer.

About two to three years ago, I was giving a tour for some University students. I was standing in front of the Auschwitz picture of the deportation of the European Jews, and I was telling them about how

several thousand people per hour were murdered. One of the young men asked me that he heard that the Jews were G-d's chosen people. If they were G-d's chosen people, where was G-d at Auschwitz? There was complete silence. I was stunned at the question. Thank goodness I had a book by Elie Wiesel. The answer to the question was "G-d was at Auschwitz; where was man?" I thought, "Thank goodness I was here to answer that man's question. That's why I am a docent."

I gave a tour for a group of elderly folks from the Philippine Baptist Church. The staff had warned me to be careful of what I said; some were survivors of Japanese prison camps. At the Dachau display, I mentioned that the camp had been liberated by the 42nd Rainbow Division. When I mentioned that the division had originally been set up by General Douglas MacArthur in WWI, their eyes lit up. From behind the group, a small, elderly man stepped out. Looking me square in the eye, he said proudly "I was with General MacArthur in the U.S. Army on Bataan." The pastor whispered in my ear that he was a Bataan Death March survivor. Now, there have been very few times in my life that I was speechless; this was one of them. All I could do in the presence of this American Patriot was shake his hand and stammer about what a privilege it was to meet him.

One Saturday afternoon, a Holocaust survivor [the father of the docent telling this story] and I were invited... to stay after closing for a performance that was to be given to the board members by a group of young teens who were on a tour from Japan. Shortly before the Museum closed to visitors, the group of about 16 youngsters arrived. They were escorted by two adults who were their chaperones. One of the men started a conversation with us as the children had gone to change to their costumes. He spoke perfect Hebrew and told us he had lived in Israel for about two years to study for his ministry. He had returned to Japan (Hiroshima Province) and started the youth organization that is named "Small Hands," where the teens study the history of the Holocaust and dedicate their work to Anne Frank. They meet in a two story building with a large Star of David carved in the stone above the

entrance and plant a rose bush in their garden every time they have a visitor who is connected with the Holocaust. The children entertained us with lovely songs in Yiddish, Hebrew, English and Japanese. They had obviously practiced very well! For me, this was a revelation! I was so moved to know that young people in Japan are not only taught the history of the Holocaust, but dedicate so much of their after-school hours to the memory of a Holocaust victim and the legacy of the survivors.

This [particular] Sunday afternoon, a long time ago, I had a relatively large group of “drop in” [visitors]. After a short introduction, I opened the door to the “Bearing Witness” exhibit and let the visitors enter. The last person was a male in his late 30s, dressed as a European. I thought he may have been French. The tour took about an hour, and I noticed that this gentleman was intensely listening to every word I said, while trying to read every caption under the photographs. He was serious and in a profound state of concentration. At the end of the tour, I was delivering my conclusion, facing this group of about 35 to 40 people. When I finished my concluding remarks, the gentleman, who was on the first line, came toward me and hugged me so hard that he broke the sunglasses he was carrying in his shirt pocket. He was very emotional and was crying. He turned around to face the group and told them that he was born in East Germany (Democratic Republic), and that “every word I had pronounced during the tour was true,” and that he was ashamed of the behavior of his nation and for the actions of his people. I responded that as a Jew, as much as I held the Nazis responsible for their atrocities and their carnage, I did not hold a grudge toward him or toward the Germans of today.

Section 3: Tour Strategies

A. Respecting the Visitors

... Mr. Rogers' method of dealing with visitors on a Museum tour is a good model. When students are treated with respect and constantly affirmed and encouraged, they respond by being attentive and supportive of what the docent is trying to do. I want them to feel that they are valued and appreciated and that we are confident in putting our hope in them that they will not be silent bystanders in the face of injustice toward anyone.

I shake the hands of everyone in the group, and I ask their names. I remember their names. I make them feel welcome because there is such apprehension about the subject. I make myself a part of the class unit.

B. Personalizing the Victims of the Holocaust and the Events in Their Lives

I feel very strongly that "Life Before" is a huge window of opportunity to humanize the victims of the Holocaust, and therefore make a more personal connection with the group rather than just teaching a history lesson. I tell stories using the *Judaica* in the display as focal point. Also, I often ask the students to select a child from the pictures... to give that child a name, color of clothes, hair, etc. At the conclusion of the tour, when we place stones at the Memorial, I ask them to fight hatred and spread the lessons they learned in memory of the person they selected as they place their stone in his/her memory. This becomes a more personal responsibility.

I personalize the stories in the photos on the first wall [of the survivors].... In the history section, I tell a story of a young man who worked for the municipality when the law in France says that Jews are not allowed to hold public office. I ask the visitors what they would do if they had a family to support and found themselves unable to keep their job. Would

they move away? Would they become an apprentice in a tailor shop? This [situation] demonstrates how Jews in Europe lived in constant flux and always under threat. The Nuremberg Laws were not an original Nazi document, [but were]... a compilation of what had been enacted over 1,900 years.

I try very hard to personalize the tour. I keep asking my group to imagine themselves in those circumstances. I ask what sort of decisions they might have made. Where would they flee to? How? What would they pack to take with them into the Ghetto or onto the deportations trains? What choices might they have made in the difficult circumstances that both the victims and the rescuers faced? Which group would they join, the perpetrators or the bystanders? I challenge their answers.

I save buttons from all sorts of things, mostly the extras you get when you buy new clothes, but also old buttons. I use these buttons on my tours, as I give each person a button and get them to think about what they have just received. Everyone uses buttons – men, women, children, whatever walk of life. I get the group to think of who could have worn this button, but make certain that they know that these buttons came from my home and not from a survivor. Then, I get the group to think of that person as though they may meet someday, or perhaps even did meet at some time. I ask: "What was your reaction to that person? Did you look at the person and want to visit with him or her? Did you see that person in some sort of distress? Did you offer to help? Did you give that person any sort of acknowledgment?" I tell my group to keep that button in some place where they can see it often and think about the person "connected" to the button. [I tell them] to remember that we are all members of the human race. We are all here to help one another. The only way we can do any good at all is first to do something good.

... I tell them [the visitors] to visualize a triangle.... I discuss all the aspects of it: victims in the center, perpetrators 10%, rescuers 5% and

bystanders 85%. I tell them that, in the Core, we will see faces of all of these. [I tell them] to look at them closely and remember them. Some will stand out to them. Then during the tour, I try to point out one or two of each category. At the end of the Core, I have them close their eyes... Once they have their eyes closed, I tell them to picture a triangle and in the center one of the faces of victims they saw in the Museum. I do the same with them, visualizing in the center of the triangle a perpetrator, then the face of a rescuer. I then have them place their self in the center of the triangle. I ask them if they have ever been the victim of abuse by other kids such as being bullied or even talked about behind their back. Next, I tell them to picture a loved one or a good friend in the center of the triangle and ask if that person has ever been a victim and so forth.... At the end, I ask them when they see someone who is being a victim, I hope they will, of course, NEVER be the perpetrator, but will they be the bystander or the rescuers? I then have them open their eyes....

C. Promoting the Acceptance of Others

I have the students look at the stones in the basket in the hall in front of the children's garden. I say to them, "Look at the stones. Are they all alike?" They say, "No." Then I say, "Are they all together?" They answer, "Yes." Then I ask, "Are you all alike?" They say, "No." Then I say, "Now you see how different people can live together and understand each other, even if they are different. As human beings, we all have the same rights."

I have, since day one, asked the students what happens when one kid knocks the nerdy kid's books off the lunch table in the cafeteria, etc. I point out how difficult for even an adult to know what to say when someone tells a joke that is racist.

I ask the students to think of that one classmate who is always picked on – "you know who I mean" – not because they did anything wrong, but just because they are different. They think a minute, and understand what message I'm trying to convey. I relate it to the Holocaust and what Jewish students had to endure.

D. Standing Up For Others

When we get to *Kristallnacht*, I say, that if one person had stood up for the Jews who were beaten, maybe others would have followed. I then talk about bystanders and show the yellow triangle.

At the end of the Core, I discuss with school children the dangers of bullying and witnessing bullying and not reporting it.

I encourage strongly the public to ask questions and be “involved,” in the sense of **NOT BEING A BYSTANDER**.

E. Offering Hope and Preventing the Repetition of History

I read a poem from the book “I Never Saw Another Butterfly,” which is a compilation of poems written by children while in Terezin. The title of the poem I read is “On a Sunny Evening,” and it speaks of hope. I always read the poem in front of the monitor with the faces of the children lost in the Holocaust. We speak of lost generations and of the children that never got to grow up and bring their own children into the world. We speak of loss, but mostly we speak of hope; a hope expressed by a group of children who knew in their own minds that they would never see the world they described in the poem but nonetheless had a longing for the beauty around them. We speak of the hope as evidenced by the survival of the Jewish people and of their indomitable spirit.

Some of the techniques I use are asking the group to read some of the panels to the class. When we get to the first set of slides, there is a slide of a young boy sitting on a bench, and the bench says “For Aryans Only.” At this time, I ask if we have learned from the Holocaust because

we had segregation right here in the U.S. up until the late 1900s and, in some cases, in the 1900s.

F. Strategies Used at Different Areas in the Museum

As I begin my tour, when I have school groups, I ask them to consider why their school thought it important to bring them to visit our Museum instead of taking them to see the pretty pictures around the corner from us. At the end of the tour, I ask them if they can answer that question.

At the beginning of a tour (usually with children), I tell them that, at the end of the tour, I will ask them to tell me one thing that stood out in their minds. I ask them to think of two or more things because I will only accept two repetitions of the same topic. At the end of the tour, I ask the students to tell me what the one thing that was most significant to them. Then, I tell them to be sure to tell one person outside of school about that one thing. I sometimes ask the chaperones to answer as well. I usually add “bystander” to the mix because very few children select that concept, and I want them to remember it.

I always start at the big photograph of arrival at the rail road station because I try to set the scene. The visitors can immediately become involved. Then, I can paint the picture of what happened to the people in the picture. The students feel a part of the scene. I then talk to them about simple things, like “Can you spot the girl who is looking at you? Tell me what she’s thinking.” After they respond, I say, “Maybe she’s looking at a blue sky” because we all relate to that. Or I say, “She’s taking a deep breath. She’s listening for birds. How much freedom means to this young lady who has a pretty good idea of what is going to happen to her and all of the others in the photograph.” Then, we start the journey. Then, we walk through the Museum. The most important thing is that I have put them in the time, the place and situation.

I ask the visitors to capture a child's face from one of the photos in the "before" section to keep for later and then recall it when they are viewing the film of the ghetto children. I often suggest that they remember the same child's face when we visit the children's memorial because that child may have no one else who lived to remember him/her.

I have been giving students a stone right at the beginning of the Permanent Exhibit when I talk about Alice Cahana's brother's school picture. I tell the story and then ask the students to choose one child from the picture and transfer it to their stone, and as we go through the Permanent Exhibit, think about that child and that she/he never had any choices in life. I always talk about choices that they have and refer to the triangle at all times. At the end of the tour we go out to the Eric Alexander Garden of Hope and tell them they can either place the stone there in memory of that child or take it home with them and when they think that life is "rough" for them, pick up the stone and remember that child and what they have learned from their tour.

I have laminated the notes from the Wannsee conference because I want the audience to understand that the goals of the Nazis were worldwide. They could have come to America and killed anyone who did not believe in the Nazi philosophy. The notes also include words, such as "The Final Solution" and "Procedure" to cover up what they were doing. They did not use words like "murder, extermination and gassing." The Nazis hid their intent by using code words.

After the Core, I show the paintings of Alice Cahana. They have no idea of what they are looking at. When we get to the last one, I say, "And now we all get to become art critics. Each art critic in the world has been 100 percent correct. Today, each one of you becomes an art critic. Whatever you say, I am going to tell you that you are the best art critic in the world." I ask them, "What do you see in the painting?" I pick the students who don't volunteer at first. I tell the ones that do volunteer, that I will pick them later. I accept all of their responses. I tell them,

“Remember, that when you say something, it makes you very special. This relates to the lady who painted this painting.” After the students make some comments, I say, “Now, we have very special things in this painting that are not obvious. They are parts of a puzzle. Look for them.” Then they look more closely at the painting. The unit becomes one community, united with one thing in common. Then we find the horse, the butterfly and a fish [in the painting]. They [the visitors] have become a unit on the Holocaust. My goal is that they become aware of the Holocaust and that they will never forget it. The art critic is how they will remember the Museum.

At the end of the tour, I also ask, “Can the Holocaust Happen again?” I pause to wait for a response.

I end with the statement that the German Pastor Martin Niemoeller said, “First they came for the Communists and I did not speak out – because I was not a Communist. Then, they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a socialist. Then, they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out – because I was not a trade unionist. Then, they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out – because I was not a Jew. Then, they came for me – and there was no one left to speak out for me.”

Section Four: Impact of the Tours, Reactions from the Visitors

A. Quotes from Visitor Comments

The tour gave me a different view on life. I'm starting to appreciate who I am, where I come from and my life.

... It [the tour] was compelling, moving, powerful and most of all FRUITFUL. Based on what I'm hearing from the kids, you planted a powerful seed in them that day that is already sprouting with ideas, newly formed opinions and noteworthy personal goals about how to effectively be a witness for the Holocaust victims who can no longer speak for themselves. Some say teachers touch eternity; I truly believe you do too.

I will keep all of the people who died and who survived in this horrible experience in my prayers.

... My son was so moved it actually made him reflect on his life, and he put himself in the shoes of those 13-year-olds through that time and said it really hurt him to even think that someone would separate him from his little brother.... He actually said that he could feel [the docent's] pain as he narrated his stories and wished he could hold his hand to make him feel better.

... Hopefully if everyone treats everyone right and respectfully the way we should, the Holocaust won't happen again, and we will all live in peace.

... Coming to your Museum made an extreme impact on the way I now view this event. I can finally grasp the travesty of what happened to many innocent people and how truly blessed I am to have the freedom to practice any religion I want. Thank you immensely for finally providing me with the enlightenment on the Holocaust I've been looking for and making me realize how lucky we are to have the opportunities and privileges that I took for granted daily.... Thank you for this experience I will definitely never forget. I will be back soon.

... I now realize how lucky I am because I have food, shelter and most important of all, I have my family with me. I am going to ask my mom and stepdad if we can go back so I can show them all the things I learned.

... This trip to the Museum had opened my eyes and it somehow enhanced my mortality. From the help of people like you, we can shape a better future by learning about the past to prevent it from happening in the future.

You were so informative and engaging that it deeply enhanced our Holocaust knowledge and thinking. I especially appreciate you volunteering your time and passion to share with our small-town kids so they may grow up to be people who stand for what is right and just. Our world is brighter because of you!

... Thanks... to you, I know that it is my responsibility to stand up for those who cannot....

My kids were so into what he had to say, they were very moved by his emotions. I want him (the docent) to know that he made such a huge impact on them. I have had them for four months, and he touched them in three hours in a more personal way than I ever could. They will remember and be better people for the time they spent with him.

Everyone was so impressed with your presentation... keeping that many teens interested and listening for more than two hours is quite an accomplishment... Your presentation held the attention of even the youngest... and they were actively involved in discussions on the way home... [it] is a testament to your knowledge, skill and patience.

Thank you for being so kind and generous. You have truly made an impact on my life; one filled with good memories and things I will never forget. You have brought me to see the Holocaust in a new light. Signed, "A witness."

... Your amazing knowledge of the Holocaust and interesting facts have opened our eyes and made us want to prevent anything like this from ever happening again.

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