

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
COMMISSION ON HOLOCAUST/GENOCIDE EDUCATION



P.O. Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625
(609) 292-9274
(609) 633-8599 - FAX

E-mail: holocaust@doe.state.nj.us

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*deceased

September, 2014

TO: School District Superintendents
Charter School Leaders/Non-Public & Special Ed Schools

FROM: Dr. Paul B. Winkler, Executive Director *Paul B. Winkler*
New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education

I hope the summer was a pleasant transition both professionally and personally and that the new school year begins well and is successful educationally. Please review and forward this letter and the enclosed information to your school leaders.

New on the Holocaust web site <http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/> is a curriculum about the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide and a 5 year listing of anniversary dates regarding Holocaust/genocide and civil rights.

I have included a number of items with this letter (enclosed and available on the web) that should be forwarded to appropriate personnel in your school in relation to the Holocaust/genocide mandate and the entire issue of teaching about character education, anti-bullying and bias/prejudice reduction.

During the 2013/14 school year, the Commission continued to coordinate programs bringing together students and survivors. Over 3,000 students have been involved in the process over the past year. It is recommended that programs be implemented in the schools bringing together students and survivors.

Darfur and the Congo continue to be ongoing genocides. Please recommend that students become involved in educational programs and learn about the area.

Thank you for your continued support in the battle against bias, prejudice and intolerance wherever and whenever they exist and if the materials are not appropriate for your school age, please pass on to other interested persons.

Before the issues fade from the memory, please review material on 9/11 for instruction in the classroom - <http://www.nj.gov/education/holocaust/911/>.

PBW/jab

Enclosures



2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR

ENCLOSURES

- Letter to Superintendents/Principals regarding Holocaust/Genocide Mandate
- The Law
- Why Teach About the Holocaust
- Curriculum Guide Covers
- Publications – Price List and Order Form
- How to Subscribe to Our List Serv
- Know the ABC's of Reporting Bias Incidents/Hate Crimes
- Teaching Strategies – Holocaust/Genocide Education
- Promoting Diversity in New Jersey's Schools
- *The Last Cyclist* – High School Play
- Social Network Program
- Jewish War Veterans Program
- The Good Deed (The Mitzvah Project)
- A Teachers Guide to A Journey into the Holocaust (**A free CD will be sent in a few weeks and the full teacher guide will be on the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education web site.**)

WEB SITE INFORMATION

- Law Mandating Holocaust/Genocide Education
http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/about_us/mandate.html
- Curriculum Guides Available
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/curriculum/>
- List of Holocaust/Genocide Resource Centers
http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/centers/holocaust_centers.html
- Holocaust Rationale Statement
http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/about_us/rationale.html
- Recommended Books and Materials for School Libraries
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/resources/>
- The Prakhin International Literary Foundation Annual Award
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/stawards/Prakhin.pdf>
- Sister Rose Thering Fund Essay Contest
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/stawards/020113Thering.pdf>
- Teacher Workshops: (Continuously Updated During the Year)
<http://www.nj.gov/education/holocaust/programs/>
- Anniversary Booklet – Significant Anniversaries of Holocaust/Genocide Education and Human Civil Rights
<http://www.nj.gov/education/holocaust/resources/AnniversaryBooklet.pdf>
- Free CEUs Aligned with Common Core Standards
<http://www.nj.gov/education/holocaust/programs/JPEF.pdf>





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September, 2014

Dear Superintendent/Principal:

Over the past few months I have received a number of e-mails from educators preparing to align curriculum this summer in accord with the [New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards \(NJCCCS\)](#) and the new [Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics](#). The specific question has to do with the districts responsibility regarding the Holocaust/genocide mandate.

As a reminder, in 1994 the legislature voted unanimously in favor of the mandate and it was then signed into law by Governor Whitman. The intent of the mandate indicated that issues of bias, prejudice and bigotry, including bullying through the teaching of the Holocaust and genocide, shall be included for all children from K-12th grade.

This mandate remains in place and should be incorporated when developing new curriculum. A review of the new English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical subjects suggests that this document can be used as a framework in developing a well articulated multi-disciplinary K-12 Holocaust/genocide program of study.

In grades K-4 the study is not about the atrocities of the Holocaust or genocide, but about anti-bullying, appreciation of others, and acceptance of differences; in other words good character education. This review should also include the materials to be used.

Please do not hesitate to communicate if you have any questions or need any assistance and/or materials.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul B. Winkler
Executive Director
New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education

PBW/jab

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

ADOPTED MARCH 10, 1994

Sponsored by Senators EWING, McGREEVEY and SINAGRA

1 AN ACT regarding genocide education in the public schools and
2 supplementing chapter 35, of Title 18A of the New Jersey
3 Statutes.

4
5 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the
6 State of New Jersey:

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:
8 a. New Jersey has recently become the focal point of national
9 attention for the most venomous and vile of ethnic hate speeches.
10 b. There is an inescapable link between violence and vandalism
11 and ethnic and racial intolerance. The New Jersey Department
12 of Education itself has formally recognized the existence of the
13 magnitude of this problem in New Jersey schools by the
14 formation of a Commissioner's Task Force on Violence and
15 Vandalism.

16 c. New Jersey is proud of its enormous cultural diversity. The
17 teaching of tolerance must be made a priority if that cultural
18 diversity is to remain one of the State's strengths.

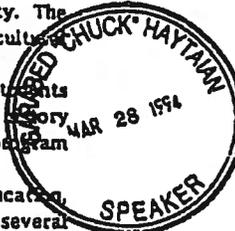
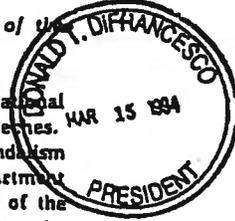
19 d. National studies indicate that fewer than 25% of students
20 have an understanding of organized attempts throughout history
21 to eliminate various ethnic groups through a systematic program
22 of mass killing or genocide.

23 e. The New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education,
24 created pursuant to P.L.1991, c.193 (C.18A:4A-1 et seq.), several
25 years ago expanded its mission to study and recommend
26 curricular material on a wide range of genocides. The Holocaust
27 Commission is an ideal agency to recommend curricular materials
28 to local districts.

29 2. a. Every board of education shall include instruction on the
30 Holocaust and genocides in an appropriate place in the curriculum
31 of all elementary and secondary school pupils.

32 b. The instruction shall enable pupils to identify and analyze
33 applicable theories concerning human nature and behavior; to
34 understand that genocide is a consequence of prejudice and
35 discrimination; and to understand that issues of moral dilemma
36 and conscience have a profound impact on life. The instruction
37 shall further emphasize the personal responsibility that each
38 citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever
39 it happens.

40 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall first apply
41 to curriculum offerings in the 1994-95 school year.



Attest
Peter Verniero
PETER VERNIERO
CHIEF COUNSEL TO THE GOVERNOR

APPROVED
274 DAY OF APRIL 10 94
Christine Todd Whitman
CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN
GOVERNOR

WHY TEACH ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST?



Dear colleagues:

Excellent information for teachers of foreign language.

The UNESCO brochure “Why Teach about the Holocaust?” is now available in the 6 official languages of the United Nations.

Here are the links:

language: Arabic

URL : <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002186/218631A.pdf>

language: Chinese

URL : <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002186/218631C.pdf>

language: English

URL : <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002186/218631E.pdf>

language: French

URL : <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002186/218631F.pdf>

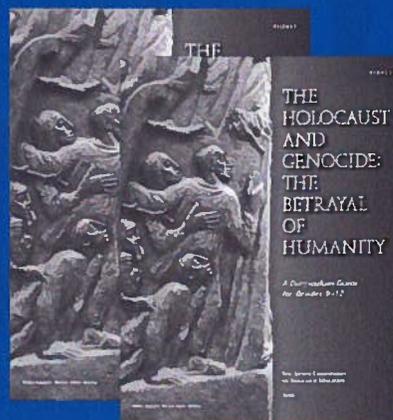
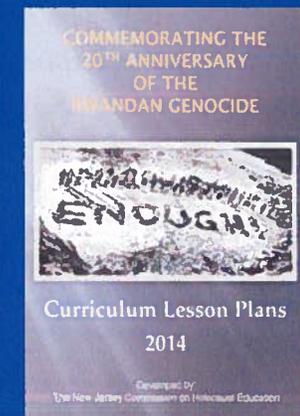
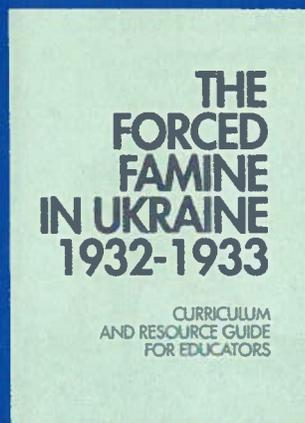
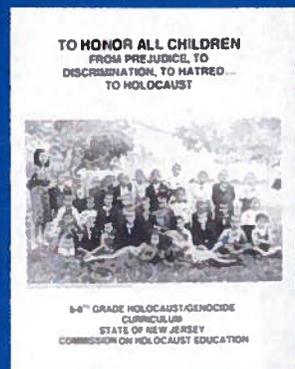
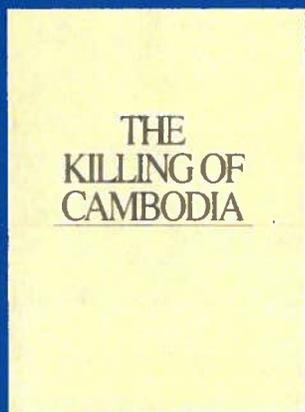
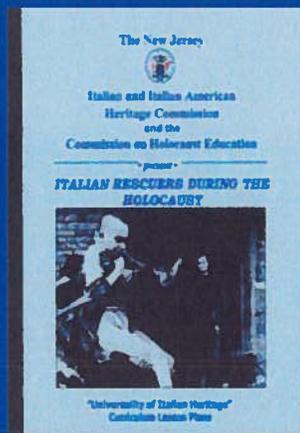
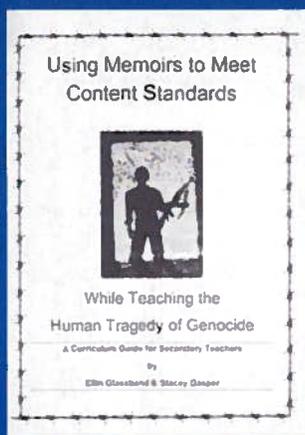
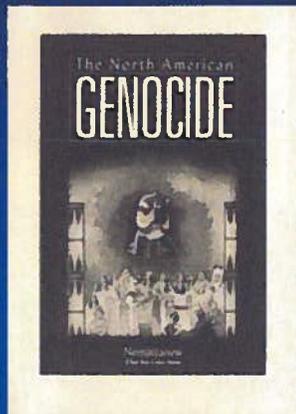
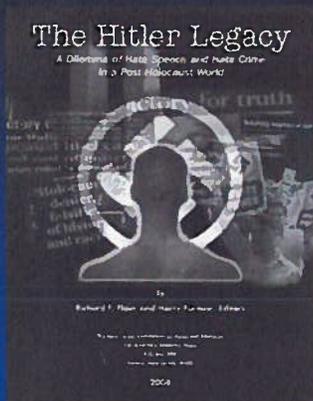
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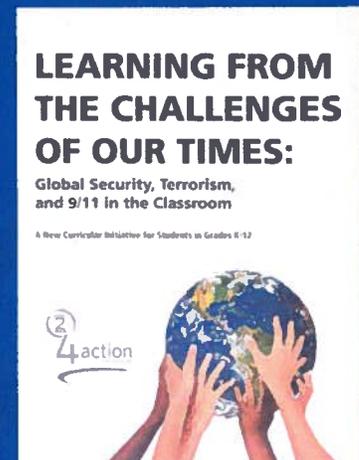
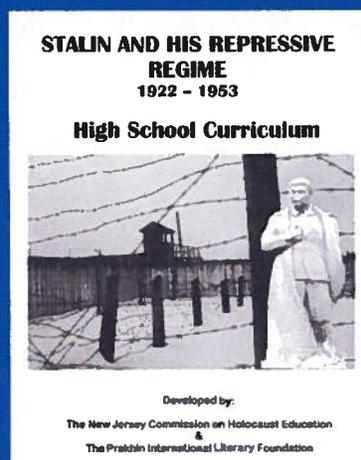
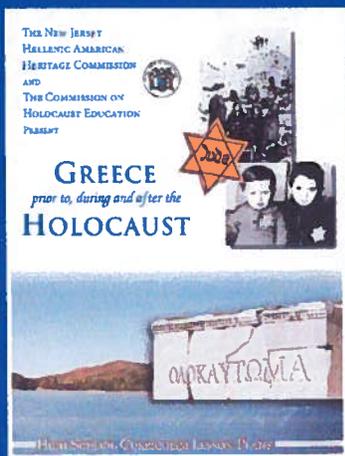
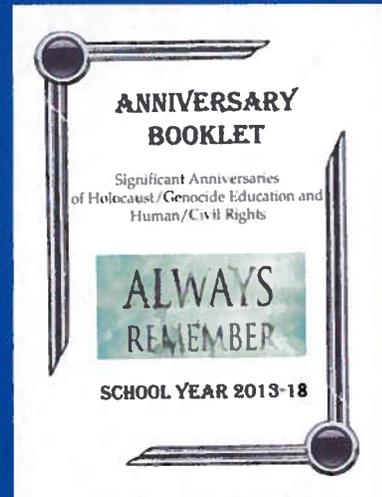
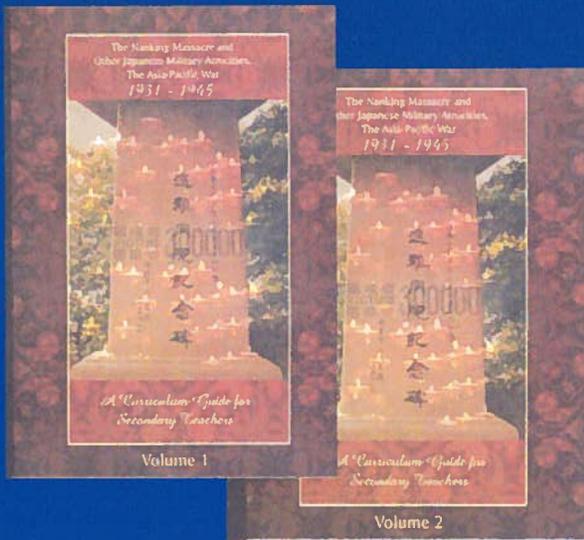
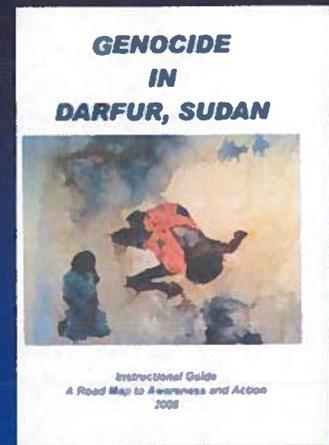
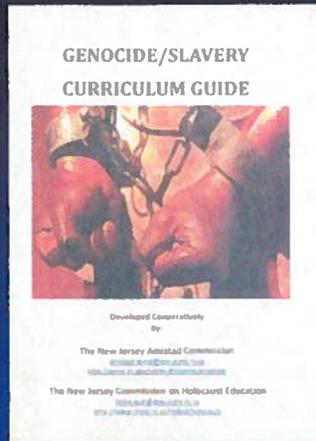
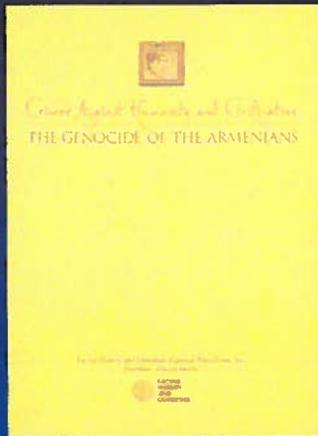
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language: Spanish

URL : <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002186/218631S.pdf>

New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education Curriculum Guides







NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625

Holocaust Publication Price List

TITLE	AVAILABLE ON WEB SITE	GRADE LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	PRICE/HARD COPY	PRICE/DVD
K – 4 Caring Makes a Difference	Yes	K – 4	Curriculum guide	\$17.00	N/A
5 – 8 To Honor All Children	Yes	5 – 8	Curriculum guide	\$19.00	N/A
9 – 12 The Holocaust and Genocide: The Betrayal of Humanity (Volume I & II)	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$26.00 <i>(currently unavailable)</i>	\$5.00
Hitler Legacy	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$10.00	N/A
Italians and the Holocaust	Yes	8 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$ 6.00	N/A
The North American Genocide	Yes	6 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$10.00	N/A
Nanking Massacre (Volume I & II)	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$15.00	N/A
Armenian	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$15.00	N/A
Darfur	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$10.00	N/A
Irish Famine	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$10.00	N/A
Forced Famine in Ukraine	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$10.00	N/A
Cambodian (2 books)	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$15.00	N/A
Slavery and Genocide	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$10.00	N/A
Greece Prior to During and After the Holocaust	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$20.00	\$5.00
Commemorating the 20 th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide	Yes	7 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$10.00	N/A
Stalin & His Repressive Regime	Yes	9 – 12	Curriculum guide	\$20.00	\$5.00
Words for All Times	No	5 – 12	Letters from students to Holocaust survivors after hearing presentations	\$20.00	N/A
Margit – A Teenager's Journey through the Holocaust and Beyond	No	8 – 12	One persons journey through the death camps during the Holocaust	\$20.00	N/A
In Sunshine and in Shadow	No	8 – 12	The story of a hidden child saved by Wallenberg during the Holocaust	\$20.00	N/A
Teaching the Unspeakable The NJ Story of Holocaust & Genocide Education	No		The history of Holocaust education in New Jersey	\$20.00	N/A

Post



SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MAILING LIST

**RECEIVE INFORMATION ON UPCOMING
PROGRAMS/EVENTS**

To receive updated information regarding the Commission via e-mail, please subscribe by logging onto the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education web site: <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/holocaust/> and entering your e-mail address under “**Subscribe to our mailing list**”. Also all upcoming events/programs, etc. can be viewed on this site.

Remember

Remembrance is Continuing the Resistance
NEW JERSEY COMMISSION ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Post

KNOW THE A B C's OF REPORTING BIAS INCIDENTS/HATE CRIMES

Don't be a bystander



Be an upstander!

Take action, document and report the following:

- A) WRITTEN OR VERBAL WORDS that target...**
- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Religion | Physical Characteristics |
| Race | Disabilities/Challenges |
| Gender | National Origin |
| Sexual Orientation | Culture |

- B) AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR (Based on A)**
- Fights
 - Sexual Harassment
 - Gang Activity



- C) VANDALISM/GRAFITTI (Based on A)**

BE SURE TO PRESERVE THE EVIDENCE AND DOCUMENT IT!

HOW TO REPORT

IN SCHOOL* - Guidance and/or the Principal
OUT OF SCHOOL* - The local police and/or the school

**The county prosecutor is an excellent office to call toward determining the level of the incident (possible hate crime) and recommendations for next step.*

REMEMBER

**"Victims should know that they are not alone
and that they have an ally—Be that ally!"**

Schools must create a safe environment

**The New Jersey Commission
on Holocaust Education
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Trenton, NJ 08625**

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Teaching Strategies

Holocaust/Genocide Education

Simulations –

These activities are not recommended as a strategy to teach students about the issues of bias, prejudice and the Holocaust/genocide.

There are many other ways to provide content and effective approaches in the classroom. While on the surface it might sound like a good idea to have children simulate a death camp, a beating, etc., but it does not have a positive or lasting impact and might harm the child psychologically and prohibit real learning from taking place. For instance, you would not or should not have an individual be Hitler, a slave owner or a terrorist for the same reason and it may cause others to criticize that youngster. Films, stories, debates, trials, readings, first-hand accounts, discussions, etc., are much better and have a deeper, longer and lasting impact on the students. Teachers should consider their goal of the activity and what type of student learning they anticipate. For example, why reproduce the hate and discomfort when it would be so much better to explore the choices people made and why, and what the impact of those choices was. The bottom line is no matter how prepared the simulation it can never truly replicate the horror. We recommend simulation not be utilized, but the more in-depth approach that the students may learn and fully understand be utilized.

Fictional Material –

The use of fictional material sounds like a good approach to reach students rather than through non-fiction documentaries, first-hand accounts, but it will work only if the fiction is first presented in a historical or factual context. The students may then utilize skills such as critical thinking, comparing, analysis, etc., when reading or viewing the fictional accounts. To just read the fictional account will not give the students a solid foundation of study as suggested in an excerpt from Lindquist, D. (1998). *Developing Holocaust curricula: The content decision-making process. The Clearing House, 82(1), 27-33.*

The matter of historical accuracy is especially critical when using literature to teach the Holocaust. Teachers must draw a careful distinction between historical truth and literary truth. Historical truth—the acknowledged factual record regarding a given situation—must coexist with literary truth—the establishment of the essence of a particular event—while allowing for literary license to be used as a means of advancing both the story line and the reader’s understanding of the situation. The historical record thus establishes what happened, whereas literary truth, if properly and carefully applied, addresses the tone of what happened. Several problems arise as Holocaust educators attempt to establish an appropriate balance between the imperative of historical accuracy and the ability of literature to enhance student learning through its power to express truths about the human experience.

When using literature to teach history, it is necessary to suspend belief at some level if the literature is to be allowed to develop fully. It is vital, however, that literature used to teach the Holocaust fulfills “the promise of truthfulness” (Wyschogrod 1998, 10), so that historical accuracy is maintained.

September 2014

TO: New Jersey Educators
FROM: New Jersey Human Relations Council
New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education
RE: Promoting Diversity in New Jersey's Schools



New Jersey is one of the most diverse states in the nation – a state with many racial and ethnic backgrounds, religious affiliations and over 120 languages spoken – a few of the diversities of our residents. We in New Jersey should be proud of this diversity, for learning about others is a very important way to reduce bias, bigotry and intolerance. However, New Jersey ranks number two (2) in the country in the number of hate crimes reported by its' citizens against a person(s) or their property.

One of the factors preventing students from greater understanding and appreciation of one another is that only four other states have more segregated school systems than New Jersey. Former Chief Justice Deborah Poritz, when speaking about a state Supreme Court ruling, cited a “constitutional imperative to prevent segregation in our public schools”; “as a state, we are losing ground,” Poritz wrote. “We have paid lip service to the idea of diversity in our schools, but in the real world we have not succeeded. Students attending racially imbalanced schools are denied the benefits that come from learning and associating with students from different backgrounds, races and cultures, and as research has demonstrated this understanding reduces prejudice.”

In spite of the many efforts of citizens, educational institutions, the legislative, judicial and executive branches of government, and human services agencies and organizations, the housing patterns of New Jersey continue to keep many of our school districts segregated. Therefore, since changing the housing patterns in New Jersey will take many years, it is up the schools to work toward integration NOW, not just thinking that housing, busing, school redistricting or open enrollment will effect a cure for our segregated schools.

We would like to suggest some school exchange opportunities for suburban, rural and urban students that are easily available to support the goal of integration:

- Mix It Up At Lunch
- Special Programs and Assemblies
- Teacher In-Service Days
- Cultural Diversity Days



- Study Circles
- Trips
- Informal Sports Program
- School Exchange Days

It all begins with a phone call, e-mail, or text message to a fellow school educator in another district. There is no better way to reduce prejudice than by having OPEN AND HONEST DIALOGUE in order to have the educational community partnering to rid our schools and community of bias, bigotry and intolerance

We look forward to establishing greater communications on this process in order to promote better understanding of the needs and expectations of the diverse population in New Jersey.



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The Last Cyclist - High School Play

Dear High School Principals:

The New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education is pleased to update you on a powerful, innovative Holocaust education experience we think would be excellent program opportunity for schools that have an existing extensive Holocaust/Genocide program. *The Last Cyclist*, a daring, bitter comedy, was originally written in the Terezin Ghetto in 1944 as a way to help fellow inmates stay human in the deplorable, terrifying concentration camp conditions under which they were forced to live. At the same time, the play slyly, hilariously and implicitly mocks Hitler and the SS through an allegory that sets lunatics (read: Nazis) on genocidal discrimination against bicycle riders (read: Jews).

Although the original script was lost, Naomi Patz has reconstructed and re-imagined the play in an adaptation specifically geared to high school audiences.

The Last Cyclist powerfully demonstrates the potential evil consequences of intolerant behavior, prejudice and bullying. In a non-confrontational way, it makes clear that it is the personal responsibility of every human being to fight racism and other prejudices wherever they may be found. **The cognitive and affective understandings learned from this play meet many of the New Jersey core curriculum standards in bullying and language arts education as well as the State's Holocaust/Genocide mandate.**

The play has been performed with great success for their fellow students and for adult audiences by drama classes at Cedar Grove and Columbia High Schools during the spring of 2012, and at Cherry Hill West in 2013. The principals and theater arts teachers whose classes studied and performed the play would all be pleased to share with you its impact on their students and the rest of the student body and adult audiences who attended the performances. The performance is by the students and for the students and community.

A new musical score has been composed for the play based on music originally written in Terezin and capturing the edgy style of avant-garde music of the period. A DVD of the score for piano is available for your use, as is the sheet music arranged for violin, cello, clarinet, percussion and piano.

For more information about the play, its background and the various adult and high school performances that have taken place (including photographs and some newspaper articles), please visit the website: www.thelastcyclist.com.

The Commission is pleased to offer the services of retired Holocaust Education teachers who are willing to visit your school and give the appropriate classes an overview of the Holocaust in general and the elements that made Terezin a unique "show camp" and its inmates an extraordinary example of spiritual resilience. Naomi Patz, author of the adaptation, herself a New Jersey resident, is also willing to make herself available to you both to answer your preliminary questions and to meet and work with the students who will be performing the play to help deepen their knowledge and understanding of the performance. If you are potentially interested in a production of the play at your school, please communicate with me so that we can arrange for you to meet with her.

Sincerely,

Paul B. Winkler

Dr. Paul Winkler, Executive Director
New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education

Visit our web site at: nj.gov/education/holocaust

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Social Network Program

The expansion of technology has had large influences on the sphere of education. This particular generation of students has become increasingly connected and progressively fast-paced, a plethora of information available to them at the click of the button.

Therefore, we have taken on a project that relies on the fusion of past in present. The newly created website, "Channels of Change," <http://channelsofchange.weebly.com> attempts to appeal to adolescents who are immersed in a culture of connection, but are often discouraged from grappling with the heavy tasks of memorialization and proactive resistance to human rights abuses. This particular site, however, presents a plethora of information in an aesthetically appealing and comprehensible way, ranging from an interactive map of historical and modern genocides to modern YouTube videos of music that reflect post-memory of the Holocaust. In this way, this particular website transitions effortlessly into the realm of pedagogy. It fits into many of the mandatory objectives set for teachers by the state that involve Holocaust and Genocide education, concurrently providing resources for teachers who plan on designing a unit centered upon this subject. Overall, it gives a space for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners to process the dense and expansive world of the Holocaust, genocides, and human rights.

Nonetheless, the project relies upon the classroom itself. This site encourages individual classrooms, led by a teacher, to explore the different components listed, and generate a "project" that directly relates to the material. A particular group of students could be inspired by one of the films listed on the site, a particular song, a New Jersey survivor's story, or something as simple as a drawing by a child from Auschwitz. From here, with the help of the teacher, they will be asked to create an "experience" with the particular subject. For example, students could create a photo-journey, or YouTube video, documenting their interaction with a visiting survivor. This project, upon completion, will be posted on a "wikispace" page, created by the teacher. Once this is finalized, the teacher will submit the project to the larger Channels of Change site, which will feature the link for the public to view. From here, students will be encouraged to share their projects on their personal social media sites, opening the exploration of human rights to the larger community.

Therefore, when considering this website as a part of your classroom, understand your broader role. As a teacher, administrator (etc.), you have the power to lead students down a path that involves an awareness of social responsibility and acceptance of diversity. This may be the first step in incorporating technology in a positive way, and expanding your students' world to fit essential understandings about the memorialization of victims and preservation of human life. Thus, view this website as yet another tool for an educator who is dedicated to making a difference, one student at a time.

Visit our web site at: nj.gov/education/holocaust

An exciting new program has been offered to our middle and high schools of Central and Southern New Jersey regarding Holocaust/Genocide. This program from the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware is coordinated by the:



Fegelson – Young – Feinberg Post 697

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.

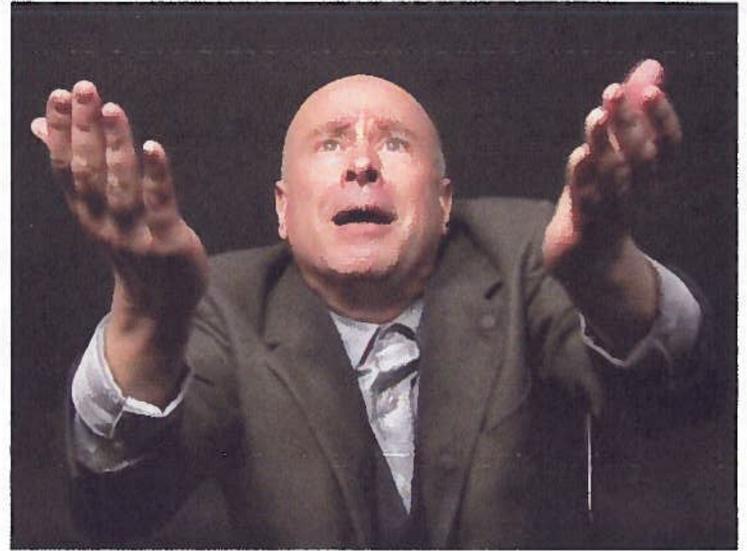
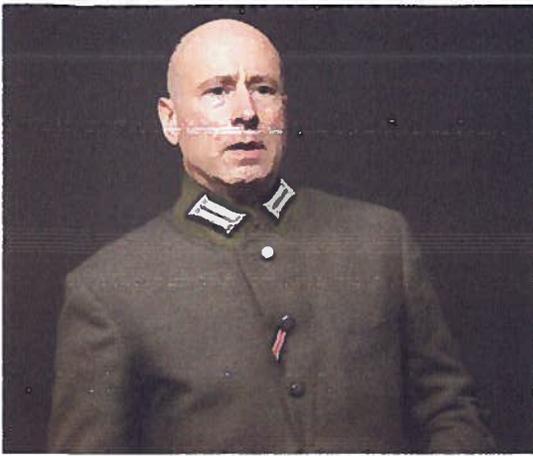
P.O. 802 * Levittown, PA 19058

Email: jewishvetspost697@gmail.com

Website: jewishvetspost697.jwv.org | Phone: 267.573.9697

If you are interested in speaking to someone, about having this memorable program at your school, please make contact to discuss details including dates, time and place.

Of the many efforts of the post, one they are most proud of is their nationally and internationally acclaimed Holocaust Education Program. Initiated in 1995 by displaying Holocaust information in local malls, it has evolved into a completely cost free multimedia program presentation at schools and other facilities so that children and adults can become aware of what really happened in Europe during the Holocaust. With first hand presentations from Holocaust survivors and veterans who were part of the camp liberations, the enthusiastic response from the school administrations, children and adults make clear that these programs are powerful and profound reminders of events that humankind should learn from and never forget. Each presenter speaks of what students can do today to present issues of bullying, bias and prejudice wherever and whenever they exist.



The Good Deed

A one-act, one-person drama and lecture that examines how prejudice deforms human beings and how history and culture produced 150,000 Germans of Jewish descent (“mischlings”) who served in Hitler’s army.

Running time: 1.5 hours (including post-lecture audience discussion).
Suitable for ages 15 years and up.

The Good Deed (The Mitzvah Project)
engages a number of socio-historical issues:

- How could someone of German-Jewish heritage serve in Hitler’s army?
- Who decides what culture, race and ethnicity mean?
- If you’re not one of us you’re “the other.” Bullying and war.
- What is identity? Who decides?

Sliding scale fee: \$500 - \$800 + travel (from NYC)

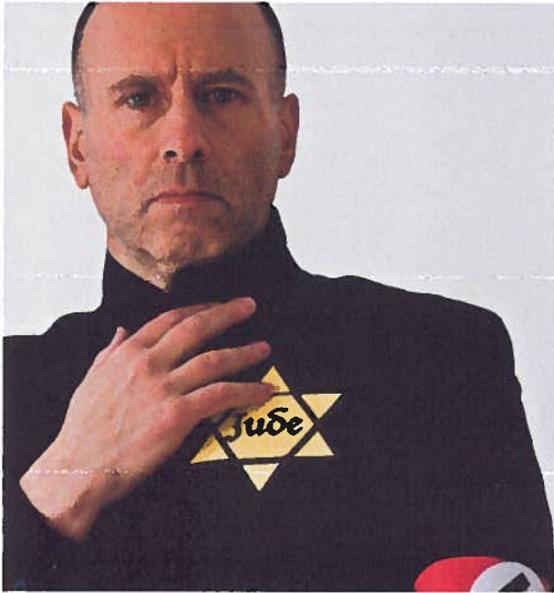
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The Star-Ledger

THURSDAY, MAY 01, 2014

'The Mitzvah Project' tells a different story of the Holocaust

By Ronni Reich



Roger Grunwald as Christoph Rosenberg in *The Mitzvah*. The Rosenberg character is a German half-Jew ("Mischling") and a First Lieutenant in Hitler's Wehrmacht. He is a man who discovers too late that the blood flowing in his veins is no different from the Jewish blood being spilled in the killing fields of Poland. (Roger Grunwald)

Yom Hashoah, also known as Holocaust Remembrance Day, took place from Sunday night to Monday night.

But for Roger Grunwald, a mission to help people — of all faiths — learn from the past continues.

"It's not just about 'never again' for me as a Jew," he said in a recent interview. "The saying is not just for Jews, it's 'never again' for anyone."

Grunwald is a writer and actor who grew up all too aware of the legacy of genocide. His late mother was a survivor of Auschwitz and his aunt, who is now 100, endured the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen.

A few years ago, his aunt gave him a book, "Hitler's Jewish Soldiers" by Bryan Mark Rigg, that became the basis for "The Mitzvah Project," a combination of a one-act play titled "The Mitzvah" — or, "The Good Deed" — a lecture and a discussion with the audience.

Created in collaboration with Annie

McGreevey, an actor and director with Broadway experience, the performance piece is now making its way around New Jersey. Grunwald is scheduled to appear tonight in Franklin Lakes and tomorrow in Toms River.

"It explores the relatively untold story of about 150,000 mischlings, which is the derogatory term that the Nazis used to describe Germans of partial Jewish heritage," Grunwald said. "It's roughly translated as half-breed."

Some of these "mischlings" went on to become part of the German army, as a half-Jewish character in "The Mitzvah" does. Grunwald's presentation asks the question, "How did this son of a Jewish father become Hitler's ideal soldier?"

"I think some people may think, 'Why is this important?' Or, 'This is a stain on Jewish history,'" Grunwald said. "In my opinion, it's really helpful that we learn about the history that produced these 'mischlings.'"

In his lecture, Grunwald speaks of how Jews assimilated into the German culture as a way to break free of a world that placed them in ghettos and denied them citizenship. He understands how their sense of identity shifted.

"My mother came from an orthodox Jewish family in Frankfurt," he said. "Her family identified as German as did many of these assimilated Jews. Germany was their homeland; German was their mother tongue."

"It's a very complex sociological historical issue."

While Grunwald's drama focuses on a particular facet of history, he intends to draw attention in a larger sense to how prejudices are formed, and their consequences — ideally, to prevent future tragedies.

"Part of why I'm doing this is that my mother's generation is dying out, so who's going to carry the torch?" he said. "My understanding of how I ended up doing what I do with my life has a lot to do with that, because I don't want to see a world where people of any

kind have to suffer prejudice."

In addition to his work in performance, Grunwald spent 27 years as a community organizer.

He was also an activist-builder of the All Stars Project, a nonprofit organization that approaches youth development in underserved communities, including Newark, through theater.

Grunwald's mother nurtured his need for activism by speaking out about her experiences, even though doing so was very difficult for her.

"There are a lot of survivors who don't talk about their experience for a number of reasons," he said. "One, because it's too painful to bring up for themselves. It's also that they don't want to visit this kind of horror on others."

"On some level, I think there are some who are very, very cautious because they're afraid that people won't believe them — that people won't believe that it's possible for this to have occurred. . . . The degree of horror they had to live through borders on unimaginable."

His mother believed she had a responsibility to teach what she experienced, and she did until nearly the end of her life.

With his latest venture, Grunwald hopes that he will open peoples' eyes to a unique story with wider importance.

"I also think it's a story about how we see each other," he said. "The ways that the Nazis demonized Jews and gays and gypsies was how everybody who wasn't one of their Aryan ideals was 'the other,' and the answer to 'the other' is genocide."

He went on to reference a poem by Martin Niemöller. "First 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 for me." "We still see it happening," Grunwald said. "It's not enough to feel that things are getting better. We have to assume responsibility."

A Teacher's Guide to ***A Journey into the Holocaust***

A film by Paul S. Bachow

**Why the Holocaust and other genocides happened
and genocide continues to happen**

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