Diverse Activities of the Holocaust Commission’s Associate & Chairperson of the New Jersey Commission on Civil Rights

In this issue, we feature Staff Associate Dr. Joan Rivitz who is also chair of the New Jersey Civil Rights Commission and the state-wide Human Rights Advisory Council.

In April 2008, Dr. Joan Rivitz graduated from an 8-week course at the FBI Citizen Academy. The course of study included firearms training at Fort Dix, where she scored 10/10 deadly shots; 7/10 with a Gluck, and performed well on a simulator test. She also displayed “good judgment” in an undercover scenario where she apprehended a suspect and called for backup.

On September 17, 2008, Dr. Rivitz, conducted a workshop at the IAOHRA/NAHRW in Detroit. It dealt with the Holocaust/Genocide programs in New Jersey, as well as Native American issues; the Irish Potato Famine; Armenian Genocide; Stalin’s Tactics; Cambodia; the Nanjing Massacre; Rwanda and Darfur. She further spoke about collaboration between various New Jersey Commissions, such as: the Holocaust, Amistad, Italian, as well as the 9/11 Commission and their relationship to the eradication of terrorism, the bystander phenomenon and the current epidemic of bullying.

Early in the summer of 2008, Dr. Rivitz and her sister organized a memorable celebration of a most noteworthy event: the 100th birthday party honoring the longevity, wisdom and charm of their mother, Mrs. Berta Strass. Mrs. Strass responded with joy to her daughters’ eloquent tributes, as well as the enthusiasm and admiration of family and friends. She shared her philosophy of life that includes the mottoes “Count your blessings” and “Que sera, sera!” At 95, Mrs. Strass accompanied her family and a group of teachers on a Commission seminar trip to the infamous sites.

Dr. Joan Rivitz second from left receiving the Axelrod Humanitarian Award.
Along with twenty other educators who incorporate the Holocaust into the curriculum, Maud Dahme attended the Commission on Holocaust Education’s summer seminar, which transported the group to Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland, and the Netherlands. Two weeks of experiential learning, spanning from July 9th to the 22nd, proved to be a spiritual and historical journey for all.

The twelve days in Europe took the educators to several concentration camps, including Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, and Theresienstadt, which was used as a model camp to deceive the Dutch Red Cross. Whether visiting old Synagogues in Prague, Krakow, and Amsterdam or walking down the now modern streets once inhabited by the European Jewry of Warsaw and Berlin, they were able to witness what was lost as a result of the Holocaust.

Since their travels began in Berlin, they visited the Wannsee Villa, where Nazi leaders discussed the ‘Jewish Question,’ and the Grunewald Station, where they solemnly traversed the platforms used to deport Jews to concentration camps and ghettos. The conclusion in Holland was meaningful. Maud Dahme, guide and former president of the NJ Board of Education, had been hidden in the towns of Elburg and Oldebroek with her sister after the Nazis invaded the Netherlands. Paired with Anne Frank’s Secret Annex and the Hidden Village of the Vierhouten forest, where Dutch Jews were saved by Dutch Christians, the teachers witnessed the humanitarian response to the ‘Final Solution.’

Such an experience will take a lifetime to process, and the stories they can bring to their students are plentiful. Whether describing the sort of bed and toilets that Elie Wiesel used as they read Night or the streets where the Warsaw Uprising was fought, they can speak with insight, encouraging both interest and compassion in their students.

Stacey Goldberger, Teacher Trip Participant 2008

On Sunday, June 1, 2008, the 20th celebration of the Axelrod Award Program was held at Mercer County Community College. Over 20 years ago, Honey and Maurice Axelrod of New Jersey established a fund through the ADL to provide educators with a monetary award for outstanding instruction in combating the evils of bias, bigotry and intolerance through the teaching of the Holocaust and genocide. This program, over the years, has rewarded almost 100 teachers who have used the funds to continue and enhance instruction in their schools and classrooms. These educators have contributed greatly to New Jersey’s meeting the mandate that all students must learn about bias, prejudice and intolerance through the instruction of Holocaust and genocide education. The State of New Jersey and the Holocaust survivors have often thanked and always appreciated the efforts that Honey (now deceased), and her husband Maurice, started. The award is continued by their children, Paul and Susie.
Students from New Milford High School, Jersey City Public Schools in New Jersey and St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Overland Park, Kansas embarked on a ten day journey to Germany, Czech Republic and Poland to study the Holocaust. In preparation for this experience, students read Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust by Alexandra Zapruder. During last year’s trip, Colleen Tambuscio, who leads the students along with Shalmi Barmore from Israel, June Chang from Jersey City and Lisa Armstrong-Bauman from Overland Park, Kansas, discovered that the town of Olomouc, in which the group visited for the first time in 2007, was the hometown of Otto Wolf, one of the diarists in Salvaged Pages. Through Zapruder and the English translator of the diary, Michael Kubat, Tambuscio was able to ascertain that some of the rescuers or descendants of the rescuers may still be living. Information from Yad Vashem – Righteous Among the Nations, provided Tambuscio with the names and addresses of the rescuers.

The group had the opportunity to learn first hand from these individuals the complexity of rescue efforts during the Holocaust, the shared rationale by families to risk so much to help save this family and the constant tension and fear that everyone lived with during these dark days. Marie Zborilova Vrzalova made it clear to the group that everyone in town knew that several families were assisting in helping hide the Wolf family. She indicated that members of the community intensely feared becoming another Lidice, consequently, this fear allowed the town of Trsice and the rescuers to continue their very difficult task of protecting the Wolf family. The conversations with these individuals, visits to the homes where the Wolf family hid and the ability to see the underground hideouts in the forest provided an extraordinary opportunity for these high school students to witness first hand the evidence of the Holocaust.

In cooperation with the mayor of Trsice and all three high schools, next year the students will be spending more time in Olomouc and Trsice to help this Czech community prepare a memorial site for the underground hideouts. The students, along with their teachers, were struck by this unmarked piece of history. The students plan to fundraise this school year to establish a memorial site and return in April of 2009 to work with local students to dedicate a memorial to the rescuers of Trsice and the hiding place in the forest.

At the annual Yom Hashoah Commemoration, Mr. Abe Chapnick, a Holocaust survivor, addressed the student body in an assembly program to share his experiences and survival during World War II. In preparation for this program, the students read several books, listened to teacher presentation and participated in discussions about the events leading up to this tragic part of the history of western civilization.
Kean University Holocaust Genocide Resource Center

Holocaust Resource Center Public Forum Programs

During the 2007-2008 academic year, Dr. Deborah Dwork was Scholar-in-Residence and spoke on “Rescue: Choices and Decisions”. Nesse Goodin, Holocaust survivor and member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Speakers’ Bureau, addressed 900 middle and high school students.

The Center also sponsored two student conferences for high school and two for middle school students, as well as one elementary school conference. In addition, the Center participated in the planning of the first Annual Human Rights Conference on Darfur which featured Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times, Simon Deng of the Sudan, Dr. Jerry Ehrlich of Doctors Without Borders, Jerry Fowler, Executive Director of Save Darfur.org and Lauren Lang from the State Department.

Between October 2007 and May 2008, the Holocaust Center activities further included taking five buses of teachers to visit the Holocaust Memorial Museum. In June 2008, three teachers were sent to attend the JFR Seminar at Columbia University. In July, one teacher attended the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors program in Poland and Israel, and in October, one hundred and fifty teachers visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

On Sunday, October 19, 2008, Drumthwacket, the Governor’s Residence in Princeton, NJ, was the setting for a book signing event and educational kickoff promotion for the latest classroom tool to educate students against the evils of bias, prejudice and intolerance. Words for All Time: Students’ Letters to Holocaust Survivors, presents these important lessons in students’ own words. Many of the thirty-five survivors featured in the book were on hand to speak and autograph copies.

The book, edited and published by Rob Huberman, and a project of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education, was compiled from over a thousand letters, poems and writings of New Jersey school children after they had a local Holocaust survivor visit their school and tell the students about their own childhood experiences at the hands of the Nazis. A highlight of the event was the appearance of Governor Jon S. Corzine who spoke to the group of over 85 survivors and family members and stayed to sign their books. To order copy(ies) go to the Holocaust website: (www.state.nj.us/education/holocaust/curriculum/words.pdf).
Holocaust Center News

- Cumberland County Coalition for Holocaust and Genocide Education

The Coalition had its inaugural meeting in October 2007, with keynote speaker, teacher, attorney, author of a book on the legacy of Hitler and son of Holocaust survivors, Harry Furman. His "props" consisted of two large open trunks, sources of books, pamphlets and other educational materials separated into grammar school, middle school and high school resources – the tools to remember the horrors by. At the podium, Harry Furman talked about the way it used to be and expressed anxiety about the old guard of teachers committed to Holocaust and genocide education starting to retire. His was the first Holocaust-related high school class 30 years ago, “The Conscience of Man” – to create awareness of the world’s atrocities. Soon this education will be in the hands of the new guard who must, above all, understand why it matters. He is convinced that it is the goal of 21st century teachers to bring their faith to the classroom door: faith in their students, faith in the process and faith in themselves. Furman’s presentation, “Teaching Contemporary Genocides and the Holocaust: An Examination of Moral Behavior” focused on continued educational efforts in the face of curricular and social change. The audience, composed mostly of teachers, sat in the Cumberland County College conference room and participated in two workshops: one involving Holocaust survivors Myer and Nella Glick, and the other on a present-day genocide taking place in Darfur. Myer indicated the Holocaust must be taught to debunk the deniers. Joyce Powell, New Jersey Education Association President added the Holocaust must be taught to students, also exposing them to other genocides past and present, so that ignorance is no longer an option. Harry Furman, who is afraid that some teachers have become complacent about teaching the Holocaust or any other genocide because we live in a world where ordinary people kill each other in in comprehensible numbers, feels that is all the more reason to keep teaching about man’s inhumanity to man.

- Seton Hall Department of Jewish-Christian Studies

On April 10, 2008, educators and others heard presentations on the experiences of Czechs and Jews from 1938-45, as well as in recent years. Afternoon workshops by the two speakers: The Rev. Dr. John F. Morley and Dr. Hildegonda Rijksenova, focused on Slovakia, along with programs for Czech youth and Anne Frank exhibits.

Barbara Wind, Director of MetroWest, led a workshop on the children of Terezin. The film “The Power of Good: Nicholas Winton” was shown with a response by Hanna Slome, one of the children he rescued.

The Sister Rose Thering Endowment for Jewish-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University was used to enable 28 New Jersey teachers from public, private and parochial schools to take courses at the University’s Department of Jewish-Christian Studies in order to strengthen their own knowledge and instructional skills in promoting interreligious understanding and cooperation through education in their own courses.

On April 6, 2008, the Endowment raised funds for scholarships at the Evening of Roses. Two founding members of the Board of Trustees, Pearly and Seymour Lehrhoff, were named Humanitarians of the Year. Friends and colleagues of Sister Rose presented a program featuring her legacy as a pioneer in interreligious dialogue. Rabbi Matthew Gewirtz of Congregation B’Nai Jeshurun in Short Hills, the keynote speaker, presented his views of the need for such dialogue today.

To mark the second anniversary of Sister Rose’s passing, a group of friends and Board members traveled to Israel. There, Monsignor Robert Sheeran, President of Seton Hall University, dedicated a plaque in her memory at the School of Education at Yad Vashem and laid a wreath in the Hall of Remembrance.

- Raritan Valley Community College

On April 10, 2008, the Institute and the Jewish Federation of Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren counties cosponsored Raritan Valley College’s Annual Make a Difference Award luncheon held in the Conference Center at the College’s North Campus. The Honorable Stuart Rabner, Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court, former New Jersey attorney general, the son of survivors, was the keynote speaker.

The event recognized local Holocaust survivors George Blank, past president of the Jewish Federation and President of Med Tech Group, Inc. and Sara Resnick, owner of the Flemington Department Store. The Make a Difference Award recognizes those who, through their actions, promote and encourage the teaching of tolerance and diversity.

In addition, between April 18-10, the Jewish Federation funded another annual three-day “Learning Through Experience” workshop which benefited 3,000 middle and high school students by offering the students and their teachers sessions led by Holocaust and genocide survivors, their rescuers and liberators. It also included an art and writing competition based on the title of the three-day workshop: “What Can We Do As Individuals and Nations to Prevent and Stop Genocides?”

Finally, the evening included a preview of the “Legacy Project – Second Generation” which featured testimonies of children of survivors.
The Center, once again, welcomed scholars, educators and religious leaders to its major conference, “Memory and Memorialization: What and How Do We Remember? – Lessons from the Holocaust” on October 29, 2007. Keynote speakers and panelists included Dr. Michael Berenbaum, founding research director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; Dr. James Young, premier scholar of historical memory and memorialization, with publications, such as “The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History” and “The Textures of Memory”; Alice M. Greenwald, executive vice president for programs and director of the Memorial Museum for the National September 11 Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Center; John K. Roth founding director of the Center for the Study of the Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights at Claremont McKenna College and Dr. Paul Winkler, executive director of the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education, who received the College’s prestigious Caritas Award from CSE President Sister Francis Rafferty, for his efforts in genocide and prejudice reduction.

Along with an exhibit on “Neighbors Who Disappeared” based on work done by students in the Czech Republic. The 2007 Kristallnacht Commemoration featured remarks by Stuart Rabner, Esq., chief justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court and a presentation, “The Presence of Absence…and the Absence of Presence” by Dr. Michael Berenbaum. The College also honored survivors and their children who had come to the College to share their experiences.

At an Inter-Faith Discussion, Monsignor Edward Cuba and Rabbi Alan Silverstein shared the reasons for beginning these dialogues between their congregations and the “learnings” that had happened as a result.

Together Peacefully featured 12 women of diverse faiths from The Middle East Coexistence House from the Douglass Campus of Rutgers University sharing experiences of learning how to live together. Despite their differences, they have committed themselves to creating a more peaceful world. This was a collaborative program with the Women’s Studies and International Education Center at Brookdale Community College.

The Center’s 28th Annual Colloquium “Little Rock Nine: An Eyewitness Account” on May 28 drew over 2,400 students and teachers. Keynote speaker Dr. Terrence Roberts, one of the nine African-American students who integrated Little Rock High School in 1957, shared his experiences. His address was followed by 44 diverse workshops on topics ranging from Holocaust, Genocide to Civil and Human Rights issues.

This year, once again, the Center has designed programs for special interest groups and non-traditional audiences, such as: the annual collaborative program with the Monmouth County Prosecutor’s Office and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for training law enforcement officers; a 12-week education program for juvenile bias crime offenders in Monmouth, Ocean and Middlesex Counties – and a one-day seminar for the Clinical Pastoral Education Program at Overlook Hospital.

In its 30th year, the Center for Holocaust Studies at Brookdale Community College formally changed its name to the Holocaust, Genocide and Human Rights Education Center. The center’s mission and work remain unchanged. The change lies in its ability to communicate the breadth of its work to others.

Program Highlights
Conversations About … Living
The Holocaust Center featured the documentary film “Steal a Pencil for Me” based on the book of the same name by Jack and Ina Pollack. In it, Academy Award nominee, Michele Ohayon, explores the power of love and the ability of humankind to rise above unimaginable suffering. Over 500 students from eight area middle and high schools viewed the film with rapt attention, listened to the Pollacks speak and lined up along the wall of the gym in large numbers to ask them questions. For many students, this program provided the first opportunity for personal contact with a Holocaust survivor. Each participating school received a copy of the “Steal Me a Pencil” DVD and book, as well as associated teaching materials.

On April 1, the Center hosted a roundtable discussion on “Genocide, Forgiveness and Healing”, dealing with one of the most difficult decisions any genocide survivor needs to make. Panelists included Dr. Ani Kalayjian of Fordham University, President of the Armenian Association for the Study of Stress and Trauma and second generation survivor of Armenian genocide; Joseph Sebarenzi, Tutsi survivor of Rwandan genocide and former President of the Rwandan Parliament; Dr. Eva Gossman, a hidden child during the Holocaust, former Associate Dean of Princeton University and author of “Good Beyond Evil: Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times”; Dr. Allen Nadler, Professor of Religious Studies and director of Drew’s Jewish Studies Program and Dr. Christopher Boesel, a member of the Christian Theology faculty at Drew’s Theological School.

On March 19, 2008, at its Annual Lecture on Women and Genocide attended by about 100 students, the Center sponsored a lecture on Women of War: Female Victims of Genocide. Dr. Adinka Akinsulure-Smith addressed the issue of sexual violence against women prevalent during periods of war. She stated, “women and girls are more likely than soldiers to die as a result of today’s warfare.” By the tens of thousands, Asian, Bengali, Bosnian, Jewish, Rwandan women, as well as their sisters of many other ethnicities and nationalities have been brutally victimized during genocides. Dr. Akinsulure-Smith has clinical experience in working with trauma survivors, as well as in human rights investigations in Sierra Leone with Physicians for Human Rights and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. She is also one of the co-founders of a non-profit organization that provides social and psychological services to displaced African war victims in the New York Metropolitan area and, as such, recipient of New York City’s Union Square Awards in 2003.

Dr. Joanne Plescia, discussed the psychological profiles of people who bully, those who become victims, as well as bystanders. She also compared and contrasted these profiles with those of terrorists. Dr. Janice Cohn, author, educator and psychotherapist, re-examined the characteristics of “upstanders” while presenting the case of a Montana town that stood up against hate, as well as the rescue of Danish Jews in 1943, by their fellow citizens, in Nazi-occupied Denmark. MCCC Professor Emeritus Saul Goldwasser, Director of the Holocaust Genocide Resource Center, emphasized the importance of gaining greater awareness of all forms of prejudice and the critical role teachers play in their own classrooms in helping to achieve that new perspective.

On May 28, 2008, the Center, located on the campus of Mercer County Community College, held a most significant Educators’ Workshop attended by 125 primary and secondary school teachers, on the theme of “Changing the Bystander Into an Upstander”. The major focus was on instructional strategies applicable to students encountering prejudice in all its forms – and their tormentors - in school, as well as in the community-at-large. The five-hour workshop addressed prejudice, its undercurrents and proactive solutions. Topics ranged from bullying to psychological torture and other atrocities perpetrated during the Holocaust.

Opening the workshop, Dr. Paul Winkler noted the importance of education and the need to take on the role of “upstander” in life. Participants shared successful efforts at their respective schools, such as “Acts of Kindness Days”, to promote good will. Keynote speaker, Dr. Joanne Plescia, discussed the psychological profiles of people who bully, those who become victims, as well as bystanders. She also compared and contrasted these profiles with those of terrorists. Dr. Janice Cohn, author, educator and psychotherapist, re-examined the characteristics of “upstanders” while presenting the case of a Montana town that stood up against hate, as well as the rescue of Danish Jews in 1943, by their fellow citizens, in Nazi-occupied Denmark. MCCC Professor Emeritus Saul Goldwasser, Director of the Holocaust Genocide Resource Center, emphasized the importance of gaining greater awareness of all forms of prejudice and the critical role teachers play in their own classrooms in helping to achieve that new perspective.
This fall, through the generosity of the Goodwin Holocaust Museum, the Center is featuring a remarkable exhibit and multimedia display. “The Holocaust and Genocide: The Betrayal of Humanity” Fourteen panels portray different aspects of the Holocaust and the war years, from persecution and death camp horrors to liberation. A 22-minute video loop provides oral history accounts by New Jersey survivors. Visitors have an opportunity to better understand the past and learn about the consequences of genocide in our world today.

To complement the Exhibit, the Center sponsored a lecture series including “The Ever-Changing Role of Women in the Holocaust” on October 13. As their lives spiraled out of control, women of the Holocaust were forced to assume roles that were alien to them, with daily changing responsibilities and challenges. Professor Diane Bannon’s presentation considers the Holocaust in terms of gender. The discussion deals with how women faced these challenges while working to stabilize life in the home, as well as in camps.

In “Root Causes of the Holocaust”, Professor Larry Glaser of the Richard Stockton College, provides and introduction to the historical origins of prejudice in Europe, the economic and political impact of the Treaty of Versailles on Weimar Germany and the evolution of Nazi political power from 1924-1933, with a focus on how these phenomena led to the occurrence of the Holocaust. Attention is directed to the events that allowed the oppression of minorities to grow unchecked and the way in which the population accepted the early stages of dictatorial power. This raises questions as to how and why all this happened and what individuals might do to prevent recurrence of similar situations.

On April 1, 2008, the Center held a symposium, “Beyond Guilt: The Role of Retribution and Reconciliation After Genocide”. Dr. Miryam Wahrman, the Center’s Director introduced and moderated a panel of experts: Professor Elazar Barkan, Co-Director, Center for Study of Human Rights, and SIPA Human Rights Program, Columbia University; Mark Weitzman, Director of the Task Force Against Hate at the Simon Wiesenthal Center and Jeffrey Odell Korgen of the Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors, National Pastoral Life Center who has worked on and written about reconciliation in Rwanda. The panel addressed issues of retribution and reconciliation with regard to the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide and other atrocities, reflecting on several important questions. “What steps are needed for victims and perpetrators to come to terms with atrocities? What mechanisms for retribution have been used effectively to move forward after genocide? Can and should victims and perpetrators be reconciled? What different approaches have been used effectively? What can we learn from such experiences?”

On April 15, 2008, the Center offered a unique, exceptionally successful spring workshop: “Native Americans in New Jersey – Subjugation Exploitation, Marginalization and Survival” in conjunction with a report presented to Governor Corzine on the three indigenous Native American tribes in New Jersey. Attended by more than 70 participants from all over northern New Jersey, the workshop provided middle and high school educators with strategies for teaching the history and culture of Native American peoples in the United States, particularly in New Jersey.

The overall goal was to enable students to understand the forces and processes that shaped the history and culture of Native American peoples in their midst. It was intended to provide students with insight into the issues of discrimination, civil rights, citizenship, activism and environmental justice.

Autumn Scott, artist and member of the New Jersey Commission on American Indian Affairs, spoke about “Civil Rights, Education and Environmental Justice in the Spotlight: the Report of the New Jersey Committee on Native American Community Affairs”. Dr. Carter Jones Meyer, professor of history at Ramapo College, addressed the issue of “Appropriation of Native American Culture”. Dr. Maria Lawrence, professor of elementary education at Ramapo College, dealt with the “Native American Experience in New Jersey Compared: At Home and Abroad” and Joel Barrett, a teacher in Califon, New Jersey, shared his approach to “Bringing the Story of Native Americans Into the Classroom”.

Dr. Paul Winkler, Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education, provided and overview of the state Mandate on Holocaust Education and how it related specifically to the situation of Native Americans in New Jersey. Participant evaluations and follow-up with presenters was a testimonial to the gratifying success of the program and the need to enhance quality learning about the history and current situation of Native Americans in New Jersey.
In the spring semester of 2008, the Center began offering History of the Holocaust, an innovative course attended by 25 New Jersey educators currently teaching or planning to teach the Holocaust in their districts. This eight-session course provided them with the knowledge and skills needed to guide their students through a meaningful exploration of this difficult subject.

With a lecture by Professor Stauber and “master teacher” Rebecca Aupperle’s introduction of practical methods for classroom implementation, the course was designed to help teachers gain understanding of the Holocaust and incorporate that learning and understanding into their classrooms, while sharing newly acquired historical and contextual perspectives with their students. The program included a visit to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

This new course taught about the Holocaust as the culmination of a longtime hatred against the Jews - rather than an isolated event - an extreme racial concept that became dominant in Western civilization since the end of the 19th century and paved the way to the genocide of the Jews and other groups. Paralleling Echoes and Reflections, a multimedia curriculum developed by Yad Vashem, the Shoah Foundation and the Anti-Defamation League, History of the Holocaust’s central themes examined the ideological roots of Nazi racial policy, the historical developments of the Holocaust and the fate of survivors in the wake of World War II. Participants read about research and examined literature. They also took back to their classrooms a copy of Echoes, as well as materials developed by the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education.

Since discussion of the Holocaust is often the starting point for a dialogue about tolerance and diversity, the rich mix of general and special, new and experienced, middle and high school teachers participating in one-on-one discussions enhanced the value of the course.

They all took away powerful tools for teaching acceptance and demonstrating the damage caused by intolerance.

This cadre of educators, well-prepared for a difficult task, recognized the power and importance of the course in enabling them to communicate essential concept to their students, as well as their colleagues.
Holocaust Center News

The Goodwin Holocaust Museum

From November 9, 2007 to June 15, 2008, the Center’s unique “The Holocaust and Genocide: the Betrayal of Humanity” was seen by 100,000 visitors to the Battleship New Jersey. It was also the basis for a student video conference involving ten different schools throughout New Jersey. Having left the Battleship New Jersey, the exhibit became a traveling educational exhibit on display at the Cherry Hill Jewish Community Center, as well as Salem County College. In September 2008 it went on display at the Cherry Hill Campus of Camden County College. Any Centers interested in showing the exhibit, please contact Helen Kirschbaum at (856)751-9500, ext. 249.

In March 2008, the Center worked with the Katz Jewish Community Center Jewish Film Festival and offered special student screenings of the documentary “The Devil Came on Horseback”. This powerful movie helped about 1,000 students understand the current genocide in Darfur. Following each screening, pediatrician Dr. Jerry Ehrlisch, a volunteer with Doctors Without Borders in Darfur and student leaders from Egg Harbor Township answered questions about the genocide and ways of becoming involved in helping the victims of this crisis.

After one year of gathering photographs from local Holocaust survivors – showing them before, during and after World War II, the Center has mounted a permanent photo montage to honor and remember them. The collection includes photos from concentration, labor and displaced person camps, in hiding places, in hospitals following liberation, aboard ships headed for the United States and at stops on their way to Palestine. This varied assortment of photographs is a wonderful tribute to the Holocaust survivors of the community who had so generously shared their experiences and insights with others.

The 2008 school year is marked by an expansion of the video conference programming and meetings between survivors, liberators and students to include tours of the Goodwin Holocaust Museum, a Guest Reader program for Elementary School students and a Book Talk on “Night”.

Metro West

The 2007, The MetroWest bus trip to Whitewell, Tennessee, home of the Paper Clips Project, inspired educators, survivors and the MetroWest Community-at-large. It also cemented the relationship with principal Linda Hopper and her colleagues by bringing the Lego Warsaw Ghetto Project and Survivors Speak to their community.

As part of Women’s History Month and in conjunction with the Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation, the Council organized a Women Partisan Workshop for Educators. Educators heard from two local women, former partisans; they were also introduced to a little known part of Holocaust history, learned about online resources and received digital and printed materials.

In collaboration with Newark filmmaker Hafiz Farad, the Council helped create the film “Darfur, Too Far, Too Dark”. One of several showings was co-sponsored by the African-American Heritage Parade Committee. The film connects the current situation in Darfur with the Holocaust and other genocides. The screening was followed by a panel discussion in a highly diverse setting. The Council also designed a Veterans Day Program on World War II., with the Holocaust seen through the eyes of four area witnesses and veterans.

A photographic exhibit of survivors, “One School Remembers”, inspired by the 2007 prom for survivors, was created in collaboration with the Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Clifton. Three programs for Holocaust survivors and their descendants took place under the titles of “Memorial Candles”, “Their Voices” and “Our Voices”.

The Council hosted “Generation to Generation: Using the Arts to Remember the Holocaust” created by Randolph High School students and teachers, as well as survivors.

Burlington County College Center for Social Justice

In May 2008, this Center has become an active member of the community of Holocaust/Genocide Resource Centers of New Jersey. Its advisory committee of educators, as well as a survivor and a student representative, is headed by Center Director, Dr. Jonathan Alexander. It also has the enthusiastic support of the College’s President, Dr. Robert C. Messina, Jr. and Dr. Kathleen Carter, Vice President of Academic Programs.

A Day for Darfur program on October 9, 2008 included “Dolls for Darfur” during the day and viewing of the film “Darfur Now” in the evening. The Center also sponsored a trip to the Holocaust Memorial Museum on October 11.

There is ongoing work with the Jewish Partisan Education Foundation on the premiere for a new exhibit, “Pictures of Resistance: Faye Shulman’s Photographs’.

During five years of a rewarding partnership, a collaborative project with the Morris Museum has been reaching more than 1500 students and teachers each year.

In reflecting upon the Jewish New Year and the start of the current academic year, Director Barbara Wind has become convinced, once again, that “we must never lose hope, even in the face of utter despair.” This feeling was greatly reinforced when she recently met Fr. Patrick Desbois, a French Catholic priest who is dedicated to uncovering the mass graves of Jews that extend from Poland, Belorus and the Ukraine to the Caucasus. His energies and the royalties from his book “The Holocaust by Bullets” will be used to unearth, recover and record what time is erasing, and the interviews with eyewitnesses, some of them perpetrators, will become irrefutable evidence to counter the claims of deniers.
Over the past years the Holocaust Commission has completed and/or disseminated curriculum in a number of areas and are currently working on some meaningful guides for the future.

Current Guides Available –
- K–4 Holocaust and Genocide
- 5–8 Holocaust and Genocide
- 9–12 Holocaust and Genocide
- Native Americans
- Nanking Massacre
- Armenian Genocide – Teacher Guide
- Darfur
- Irish Famine
- Forced Famine in Ukraine
- Cambodian Genocide

Recently Completed Projects –
- Revised Hitler Legacy – a guide describing the ways teachers may present Hitler in the evil form he represents.
- Italians and the Holocaust – a guide for educators highlights the Italians who saved Jews during the Holocaust.

Current Efforts –
The Holocaust and Amistad (Black history) Commission are working cooperatively toward developing a guide for educators exploring the relationship of genocide and slavery.

Future Projects –
The families of the victims of 9/11 have requested that the Holocaust Commission develop curriculum related to the 9/11 events and its relationship to terrorism. It is anticipated that this guide will be for all students. The Liberty Science Center of New Jersey, a partner in this efforts, hosted a kickoff program that featured former Governor Tom Kean who was co-chair of the 9/11 Commission.
The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission and the Commission on Holocaust Education present

ITALIANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

“Universality of Italian Heritage” Curriculum Lesson Plans