

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

February 20, 2008

Media Alert

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

Remembering the Holocaust Events for Visalia and Porterville Students

February 25- March 5, 2008

The study of the World War II Holocaust will come alive for students attending high school in Visalia and Porterville Unified School Districts February 25 - March 5, 2008, with the visit from Holocaust survivor, Elane Geller. In addition to numerous student presentations, Ms. Geller will speak at a free, public presentation on March 4, 2008, from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at Granite Hills High School in Porterville. A schedule of Ms. Geller's presentations follows:

Monday, February 25

8:30-9:25 a.m.	Golden West High School, Visalia (Cafeteria)
10:42-11:37 a.m.	Golden West High School, Visalia (Cafeteria)
1:30-2:19 p.m.	Golden West High School, Visalia (Cafeteria)

Tuesday, February 26

10:00-11:00 a.m.	Sequoia High School (Rotary Theater at 300 S. Dollner, Visalia)
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Wednesday, February 27

8:20-9:20 a.m. Redwood High School (Rotary Theater at 300 S. Dollner, Visalia)
9:30-10:30 a.m. Redwood High School (Rotary Theater at 300 S. Dollner, Visalia)
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Redwood High School (Rotary Theater at 300 S. Dollner, Visalia)

Thursday, February 28

8:30 - 9:30 a.m. El Diamante High School, Visalia (Campus Theater)
11:00 - 12:00 p.m. El Diamante High School, Visalia (Campus Theater)
1:30 - 2:30 p.m. El Diamante High School, Visalia (Campus Theater)

Friday, February 29

9:30-10:30 a.m. Mt Whitney High School, Visalia (Cafeteria)
11:40 a.m.-12:36 p.m. Mt Whitney High School, Visalia (Cafeteria)
1:22-2:18 p.m. Mt Whitney High School, Visalia (Cafeteria)

Monday, March 3

9:12 - 10:07 a.m. Citrus High School (261 E. Mulberry Ave., Porterville)
11:41 a.m.-12:37 p.m. Prospect Education Center (645 N. Prospect St., Porterville)
1:30-3:00 p.m. Strathmore High School (22568 Avenue 196, Strathmore)

Tuesday, March 4

1:17-2:13 p.m. Monache High School (960 N. Newcomb St., Porterville)
2:19-3:15 p.m. Monache High School (960 N. Newcomb St., Porterville)
7:00-8:30 p.m. Granite Hills High School (1701 E. Putnam Ave., Porterville)

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Wednesday, March 5

- 9:26-10:22 a.m. Porterville High School (465 W. Olive St., Porterville)
- 11:41 a.m.-12:37 p.m. Porterville High School (465 W. Olive St., Porterville)
- 2:19-3:15 p.m. Granite Hills High School (1701 E. Putnam Ave., Porterville)

The state of California requires students to engage in “thinking about why one of the world’s most civilized nations participated in the murder of millions of innocent people mainly because of their religious identity” (p. 88 California State History Social Science Framework). To help students understand the Holocaust, Elane Geller shares a message of human dignity, compassion, and remembrance for those who gave their lives during World War II. “You would do well to ask yourself why a sane person would relive this story about such great pain,” she tells audiences of high school students. “It’s about prevention of racism and bigotry and anti-Semitism. If you’re not safe, I’m not safe.” She makes her message relevant by connecting it to modern dilemmas such as gang violence, and ethnic, cultural, and international conflicts.

Ms. Elane Norich Geller was born in a Polish town not too far from the birthplace of the late Pope John Paul II. When rumors started that the Nazis were coming to Poland, her father began to prepare four-year-old Elane to live with a Christian family until the crisis had passed. Instead, she survived life in a Nazi concentration camp, imprisoned for nearly five years. Her personal story is an inspiration as well as a solemn cautionary tale about what happens when groups of people are dehumanized and acknowledged stereotypically rather than as individuals.

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Students are encouraged to prepare for her visits by reading works such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*, or *Night* by Eli Wiesel, and watching videos like: *Schindler's List*, *The Pianist*, *The Color Purple*, *Hotel Rwanda*, or *Life is Beautiful*.

Tulare County Office of Education proudly sponsors Holocaust survivor visits each year and appreciates B'Nai David Temple for support in expanding this crucial program. "The opportunity to hear the story of a Holocaust survivor – first-hand – is a rare one," says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. "I encourage the public to attend Elane Geller's presentation on March 4 at Granite Hills High School. It will be a memorable experience."

Information about the Tulare County Office of Education is available at www.tcoe.org, or by calling the Public Information Office at (559) 733-6606. For more information on "Remembering the Holocaust," call Marsha Ingrao at (559) 651-0680.

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