

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

March 10, 2009

Media Alert

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Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

***Remembering the Holocaust* Events for Visalia, Tulare and Porterville Students**

March 9-12, 2009

The study of the World War II Holocaust will come alive for students attending a variety of schools in Visalia, Porterville and Tulare March 9-12, with the visit from Holocaust survivor,

Elane Geller. A schedule of Ms. Geller's presentations follows:

Monday, March 9

10:00 a.m. Visalia Christian School, 3737 W. Walnut, Visalia

1:00 p.m. Visalia Court Schools, 11200 Ave. 368, Visalia

Tuesday, March 10

9:25 and 10:40 a.m. Granite Hills High School, 1701 E. Putnam, Porterville

Wednesday, March 11

9:00 a.m. Sundale Elementary, 13990 Avenue 240, Tulare

1:00 a.m. Success Community School, 14871 Road 192, Porterville

Thursday, March 12

9:00 a.m. Palo Verde Elementary, 9637 Avenue 196, Tulare

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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 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.

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 films like: *Schindler’s List*, *The Pianist*, *The Color Purple*, *Hotel Rwanda*, or *Life is Beautiful*.

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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 appreciate Ms. Geller coming to Tulare County year-after-year to share her experiences with our students.”

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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