

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

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For Immediate Release

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Tulare County Office of Education announces: “Remembering the Holocaust” Presentations Continue This Week and Into Spring 2008

The California State History/Social Science Framework 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.” The framework is referring to the crimes committed during the World War II Holocaust by leaders of the Nazi regime in Germany.

The study of the Holocaust will come alive for students at several Tulare County high schools this week. Each day, students will have the opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of the Holocaust from survivor, Elane Geller. Ms. Geller will visit La Sierra Military Academy in Visalia on Wednesday, November 7 from 9:50 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. On Thursday, November 8, she will speak to students at Countryside High School in Tulare from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. and then to students at Tulare Tech Prep from 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Next year, Ms. Geller is tentatively scheduled to visit Visalia Unified High Schools February 25-29, and Porterville Unified High Schools March 3-5, 2008.

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Elane Norge Geller was born in a Polish town not far from the birthplace of the late Pope John Paul II. When rumors spread that the Nazis were coming to Poland, her father began to prepare Elane – age four – to live with a Christian family until the crisis passed. That never occurred. Instead, she survived the next five years in a Nazi concentration camp.

Ms. Geller shares her 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 told one audience of high school listeners. “It’s about prevention of racism, bigotry and anti-Semitism.” She makes her message relevant by connecting it to current modern dilemmas such as gang violence, and ethnic, cultural, and international conflicts.

“The opportunity to hear the personal experience of a Holocaust survivor is becoming rarer and rarer,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “Ms. Geller’s story is both an inspiration and a solemn cautionary tale about what happens when human beings dehumanize one another. It certainly has relevance for students studying world events today.”

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