

Tulare County
Office of Education
Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

May 16, 2008

Media Alert

Contact: Robert Herman
Public Information Officer
(559) 733-6606 – office
(559) 303-8568 – cell

Tulare County Office of Education Announces:

Remembering the Holocaust Presentations
Scheduled for Rural School Districts

May 19 - 22, 2008

Holocaust survivor Elane Geller is making a return visit to Tulare County next week to talk to students in several rural high schools and community schools about her experiences as a child in a Nazi concentration camp. In addition to her school presentations, Ms. Geller will speak at a free noon-time event sponsored by the Visalia Kiwanis at The Club House in downtown Visalia. Seating is limited and reservations are required. A lunch is also available for \$10 per person. For reservation information, contact Olivia Velazquez at (559) 651-3031. A schedule of Ms. Geller's presentations follows:

Monday, May 19, 2008

| | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|
| 9:00 a.m. | Success Community School, Porterville |
| 10:45 a.m. | La Sierra High School, Porterville |
| 2:00 p.m. | Lindsay High School, Lindsay |

- more -

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Page 2

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

9:45 a.m. Woodlake High School, Woodlake
12:00 p.m. Visalia Kiwanis Event, The Club House, 699 W. Center, Visalia
1:45 p.m. Mid-County Community School, Visalia

Wednesday, May 21, 2008

TBD Sequoia Middle School, Porterville

Thursday, May 22, 2008

10:00 a.m. Farmersville High School, Farmersville
1:30 p.m. J. J. Cairns Continuation High School, Lindsay

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.

- more -

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Page 3

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 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 May 19 at The Club House. 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, Instructional Consultant for History/Social Science at (559) 651-0680.

-TCOE-

Rel: 42/08