



VIRTUAL COMMUNITY HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION OF YOM HASHOAH

BRIDGING GENERATIONS: PRESERVING OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY

SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021 | 2pm

CALL FOR ENTRIES

15th Annual Israel Arbeiter Holocaust Essay Contest

YOM HASHOAH: SUNDAY, APRIL 11, 2021

This Essay Contest is a tribute to Israel “Izzy” Arbeiter, who survived the Holocaust against all odds and lost most of his family who were murdered by the Nazis. He is a past president of the American Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors of Greater Boston. Students in grades 6-12 are invited to write a 400-800 word essay on the following topic. Essays will be judged on originality, knowledge, style, and depth. Each year, JCRC receives hundreds of essays from schools across Greater Boston.

Bridging Generations: Preserving Our Collective Memory

By the end of World War II, 6 million Jews as well as many other marginalized groups were murdered during the Holocaust. To remember the victims of the Holocaust and ensure that subsequent generations would never forget, a group of Holocaust survivors living in the Boston area created the New England Holocaust Memorial. The Memorial was dedicated 25 years ago to honor *“the memory of the Shoah (Holocaust) as the legacy and responsibility of all humanity(and) to witness history and reaffirm the basic rights of all people.”*

A memorial is a way of remembering the past. Some tell of acts of courage, while others recall great tragedies. Each aims to preserve the collective memory of the generation that built the monument and shape the memories of generations to come. Memorials can encourage visitors to empathize with victims as human beings. They can also serve as a reminder for us all to consider our lives today, our rights and our responsibilities.

“To listen to a witness is to become a witness.”

— ELIE WIESEL, Holocaust Survivor, teacher, author, and Nobel Peace Prize winner

- Why is empathy important in the struggle against bigotry and hatred? What can you do to promote empathy in your community?
- How does the New England Holocaust Memorial pay tribute to those who perished in the Holocaust as well as those who fought to liberate the survivors?
- How can the Memorial be a warning to us about the importance of democracy and that it takes all of our participation to preserve it?

To help you process your thoughts, please see the back of flyer for video resources and articles.

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: MARCH 5, 2021

Essay contest winners will be recognized at the Great Boston’s Jewish Community Virtual Commemoration of Yom HaShoah on April 11. Winners are also invited to attend a trip to the Holocaust Memorial in Washington DC (*pending COVID restrictions and recommendations*).

Please submit essay in word document (no Google Docs) along with name, address, phone number, email, birthday, teacher, grade and school to Ellen Kaye, Event Consultant at ekaye@jrcrboston.org. Essay finalists will be notified by March 23.

In partnership with the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Facing History and Ourselves, the American Association of Jewish Holocaust Survivors of Greater Boston, and many generous donors.

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RESOURCES

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WHY REMEMBER?

Empathy begins by listening

Nobel Peace Prize winner, Holocaust survivor and author of *Night*, Elie Wiesel (z"l) explains, "Ask any survivor and he will tell you, and his children will tell you. He or she who did not live through the event will never know it. And he or she who did live through the event will never reveal it. Not entirely. Not really. Between our memory and its reflection there stands a wall that cannot be pierced."

Still, even though it is impossible to truly understand the victims' experiences, and even though nothing can prepare us to encounter the horror of this crime, it is still important to take stock of the scope of this genocide—to appreciate how humanity was stripped from millions of people. To begin to empathize, you must first listen .

Elie Wiesel speaks about his time with his father in Auschwitz and why bearing witness and listening to the stories of survivors is so important.

<https://www.npr.org/2008/04/07/89357808/a-god-who-remembers>

Local survivors Samuel Bak, Rena Finder and Sonia Weitz (z"l) share their reflections on their lives during the Holocaust and coming to the United States.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/danger-forgetting-eyewitnesses-holocaust-sonia-weitz>

Local survivor and founder of the Israel Arbeiter Holocaust Essay Contest, Israel (Izzy) Arbeiter, revisits Auschwitz and imparts the lessons of never forgetting to students.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8_g7sDJw6E&t=11s

What is a Memorial ?

Anna Ornstein, a Brookline resident, survived Auschwitz with her mother. She is a child psychiatrist, scholar and educator. Anna Ornstein speaks on the significance of Memorials.

<https://bcove.video/39owvl1>

Voices of Survivors/Liberators

Stephan Ross (z"l), founder of the New England Holocaust Memorial searches to find and thank his liberator.

https://unsolvedmysteries.fandom.com/wiki/The_Friend_of_Stephan_Ross

Al Rosen and Chan Rogers recount the Dachau liberation.

<https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/collections/oral-histories/excerpts/woh-ex-0001035/1945-liberating-boxcar-full-jews>

https://www.witnesstovar.org/combat_stories/WWII/7912

Leon Bass (z"l), an African American soldier who served in a segregated unit of the US Army shares his experience entering the Buchenwald concentration camp in April, 1945.

<https://fortunoff.library.yale.edu/podcast/leon-bass/>

