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Lawrence Alan Spiegel Remembrance Scholarship

March 31, 2012

*“Why is it important that the remembrance, history, and lessons of the Holocaust be passed to the new generation?”*

I once heard a quote: “I wondered why somebody didn't do something. Then I realized, I was somebody.” This quote can apply to many different situations that human beings come across on a daily basis. As a student, I can not help but question whether or not the material I am learning is relevant and how it is going to affect me in real life. We study history not because we are going to be quizzed forty years from now about the dates of the American Revolution, but rather, we study history to explain how we got to where we are today and to learn from others' mistakes so we can make our modern day world the best it can be. We don't just learn *about* the past, we learn *from* it. It is crucial that the remembrance, history, and lessons of the Holocaust be passed to the new generation not only to ensure that we do not make the same mistakes again, but also to allow us to learn from the tragedy, to be inspired by the lessons it taught us and to not just be bystanders when we come across our modern day “Holocausts”.

I was lucky enough to have an extensive unit over the Holocaust when I was in Jr. High School. Looking at books, poems, songs, and pictures was all it took to hit home. I don't think I fully understood it then, and I probably will never fully grasp just how detrimental the Holocaust was, but I did realize a few things. I stepped back; I looked at my own life. Reading the stories of all the courageous souls that went through something I could not begin to image, made me realize just how lucky I am. My eyes were truly opened when Julia Skalina, a Holocaust survivor, came to our school and told us about her journey. She made all the facts, statistics, and stories I had read about the

Holocaust seem even more real. Hearing the emotion behind her words and being a witness as she re-lived the things she had gone through was one of the most uplifting experiences I have had in my life. I don't think it is fair to deprive the new generation of opportunities like that. Although not everyone can be so lucky to hear a survivor speak, everyone should be able to study the Holocaust; read books, go to museums, and they should have the opportunity to learn the lessons that the Holocaust can teach us.

We don't have time machines. Unfortunately we can't go back and change the past, but we can learn from it and do our best not to make the same mistakes again. The lessons that the Holocaust taught us are still extremely relevant today. There are obvious issues like the genocides that occurred and are still occurring in Sudan and Darfur, but some people would just say "that doesn't affect us". Those people are so incredibly misinformed. The Holocaust had so much more significance than just teaching that genocides are bad. It taught us to not be bystanders; that even if it is just one person, we have the power to make a difference. Our generation is faced with its own types of "Holocausts" and has to deal with its own version of "Nazis." Whether it is seeing a person being bullied in school or hearing someone being discriminated against, we have the power to do something about it.

When I was a little girl and someone asked me what I wanted to do when I grew up I would tell them, "I want to change the world." As I have gotten older, my dream has not changed, it has just become more plausible. This fall I will be heading off to college in hopes of becoming a teacher. I think that through working with the world's new generation I can do my best to make a positive difference in peoples lives. No matter what grade or subject I end up teaching, I can guarantee I will be educating my students on the lessons of Holocaust because it is my hope that they will be able to take away all the connections and relevant meanings that it has to offer.

Ann Frank said it best: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." I feel very fortunate to have studied the Holocaust because I truly feel that it has provided me with lessons that I will take with me for the rest of my life. I feel it is only fair that the new generation gets that chance as well. Even though the situations that the new generation

experience on a daily basis are no where near the extremes of the Holocaust and the two can not be compared, still, they are significant tools we can use to influence how we live our lives today. The remembrance, history, and lessons that the Holocaust provides us are definitely important and extremely worthwhile to teach to the new generation to make our modern day world the best it can be.