

Honorable Mention Junior Essay
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Gone But Not Forgotten

The Holocaust is widely known as an unfair, tragic event that has shaped the way the world leaders make decisions and handle issues. However, this important event in our world's history might not be recognized for much longer. As the number of Holocaust survivors continues to diminish, the number of people that have been properly educated on the tragedies and horrors of the Holocaust also decreases. According to a 2014 article, entitled "Half of the People Surveyed by the ADL Don't Know What the Holocaust Is," Danielle Wiener-Bronner explains that, when the Anti-Defamation League conducted a worldwide poll, they found that only 54% of the people interviewed have ever heard of the Holocaust. One of the most overlooked issues of the modern day is how to keep not only World War II but, also, the Holocaust in their curriculums to prevent the steady departure of this incredibly important event from everyone's minds. If everyone forgets about the Holocaust, then a valuable piece of history that could potentially be helpful now or in the future will be lost. World leaders can use this event to guide their decision making. The Holocaust could have been avoided if everyone understood the tragedies that were occurring at the time. In the future, if something like this happens, then leaders might be able to recognize the warning signs and efforts to stop the unfairness could be implemented sooner.

Along with teaching students the basic facts of World War II and the Holocaust, kids need to experience, for themselves, the firsthand accounts of people that lived through the war and prayed for their lives every day. There is something amazing about reading war stories and seeing precious artifacts that textbooks simply cannot provide. The Holocaust is an unbelievable thing for kids to learn about, so the event has a hard time registering in their minds. Kids need to grow up knowing what happened so that they can work on making sure that it does not happen in the future. Everything suddenly becomes

more real when you watch a video from the “What We Carry” series and see the pain in a particular person’s eyes as they describe to you the worst thing that has ever happened to them. In one of the videos, Dame Mary Barraco beautifully states, “without freedom, you have absolutely nothing.” During the war, she lost all of her freedom while she was being punished for being in the Resistance. We often take for granted the freedom that we are given every day, and it is important to remember that freedom does not come easy for everyone. After she was finally let out of the prison walls, she decided to do the exact thing that got her in trouble in the first place; she rejoined the Resistance. She believed in the cause so strongly that she was willing to go through her horrific experiences over again in the effort to save lives.

Like Dame Mary Barraco, students need to learn that it is okay to question the world around them. If kids grow up learning how people like her risked their lives just to make the right decision, then it could give them the courage that they need to do similar things in their daily lives. Whether it is standing up to a bully at school or simply not following a certain clothing trend, the Holocaust can teach us all so many lessons on how it is important to make the morally right choice; even if it could mean undesirable consequences. Just like kids are encouraged to ask questions during school, they need to be pushed to wonder about the morals of what is going on around them. One of the reasons that the Holocaust was so widely supported by Germans was that everyone was afraid to question the beliefs of Hitler, so they decided to save themselves the trouble and just go with the flow. There was a small group of Up-standers, like Barraco, who truly made a difference and saved so many valuable lives. If kids learn from a young age that it is important to be independent and disagree with something if they think it is wrong, then the next generation of world leaders will be better equipped to handle unfair situations concerning basic human rights and equality.

In conclusion, it is vital to keep the Holocaust relevant in today’s busy world so that something similar never occurs again. One of the best ways to learn about the Holocaust is to hear the stories of

people who have survived it because this provides students with a better understanding of what actually happened. Firsthand accounts of those in the Resistance show kids the importance of making their own decisions and defending what is right. If schools make an effort to keep the Holocaust relevant, then the next generation of adults will be able to not only identify an unfair situation but also do their best to correct it. This, ultimately, leads to the prevention of another world war fueled by prejudice and made worse by the lack of people who were willing to risk it all for what is right.

Works Cited

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