

Yom HaShoah: Holocaust Remembrance Day

The survivor essays included in this program were written by the Temple Shalom 6th grade students as part of their collaboration with our local Holocaust survivors.

Unto Every Person

Thank you to Temple Shalom for hosting this year's commemoration.

**This program was brought to you by:
The Jewish Federation of Collier County, The Holocaust Museum & Education Center of Southwest Florida, Temple Shalom, Beth Tikvah, GenShoah, Naples Jewish Congregation, Chabad of Naples, and Jewish Congregation of Marco Island.**



There Is A Name

For more information: contact Reneé Bialek at the Jewish Federation of Collier County at rbialek@jewishnaples.org or call 239-263-4205.

April 23, 2017

27 Nisan 5777

L'Dor V'Dor

L'dor v'dor – from generation to generation. In Judaism we embrace our generations. From Torah portions reciting lineages, recalling the names of our ancestors (Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov; Sarah, Rivkah, Leah, Rachel) in prayers, and commandments to teach our children, generations are significant.

It's a phrase you hear often, but what does it mean in action? For Temple Shalom, it means our youth are intentionally interacting with their elders, bringing generations together for learning. This happens in multiple ways, but this year we are proud to share with you a *new* gathering of generations.

Our community-wide Yom HaShoah commemoration includes a new element – the partnership of our young students with one of our local Holocaust survivors. The intentional pairing of a survivor with students from a younger generation honors both our values of remembering and of *l'dor v'dor* – from generation to generation.

Over several dates in February 2017, the 6th grade Religious School students from Temple Shalom and 6th-12th graders from the broader community met in small groups with five Holocaust survivors. These students conducted interviews and learned the story of our survivors. On March 5th, the students had the honor of visiting our Holocaust Museum *with* the survivors they've been learning from.

Bringing these generations together creates a new link in the legacy of our survivors and giving our students the opportunity to create a new and diverse perspective of the events that have forever shaped our world. They have gotten to experience learning *l'dor v'dor* – from generation to generation – in a powerful way.

We would like to recognize and give special thanks to the survivors – Eva Sands, Marcel Fachler, Rob Nossen, Heinz Wartski, and Lorie Mayer. Thank you also to the students & their families; the teachers – Rabbi Donna Levy and Chad Atkins; and our Yom HaShoah committee – Reneé Bialek, Ida Margolis, Dr. Anna Salomon, and Amy Snyder.

Generations Together...

Memory is critical to Jewish continuity. From Abraham, Moses and the exodus from Egypt to revelation of Torah and our sacred texts, memory is the foundation of the Jewish community. We are constantly reminded to *remember* – our history, our ancestors, loved ones no longer with us. We dedicate our holidays and festivals, prayers, and cultural experiences to remembering.

The Ba'al Shem Tov's words grace the exit of *Yad Vashem* in Jerusalem – *“Forgetfulness leads to exile while remembrance is the secret of redemption.”*

It is fitting, then, that the Holocaust is something we demand our community, and the world, *remember*. The lives lost, the whole communities changed or lost to us forever, the lives saved, all deserve to be part of our collective memory and words.





Eva Sands



Heinz Wartski



Rob Nossen



Marcel Fachler



Lorie Mayer

Order of Service

- * **Invocation & Welcome**
Rabbi Adam Miller of Temple Shalom
- * **First Survivor Candle Lighting & Video**
Eva Sands with Amelia Byerly, David Dorn, Robert Hunter, Caroline Rubin, & Charles Rubin
- * **Passing the Legacy Reading**
Representatives from generations
- * **Second Survivor Candle Lighting & Video**
Rob Nossen with Noah Balsam, Jaxson Karen, Zane Press & Michael Ryzenman
- * **Ani Ma'anim**
Jane Galler of Naples Jewish Congregation and Temple Shalom
- * **Third Survivor Candle Lighting & Video**
Lorie Mayer with Reid Schwartz, Samuel Sissman, & Aidan Solomon
- * **Memorial Reading**
Rabbi Sylvin Wolf of Naples Jewish Congregation
- * **Fourth Survivor Candle Lighting & Video**
Heinz Wartski with Loren Freedman, Hailey Hinchliffe, & Rett Kelley,
- * **Eil Maleh Rachamim**
Cantor Donna Azu of Temple Shalom
- * **Fifth Survivor Candle Lighting & Video**
Marcel Fachler with Maxwell Goldberg, Joshuwa Knafo, Jacob Samuel & Nathan Samuel
- * **Partizaner Song**
Hari Jacobsen, Cantorial Soloist of Jewish Congregation of Marco Island
- * **Kaddish for the Camps**
Rabbi Ammos Chorny of Beth Tikvah
- * **Sixth Candle Lighting**
Reneé Bialek, Ida Margolis, Dr. Anna Salomon & Amy Snyder
- * **Benediction**
Rabbi Miller, Rabbi Chorny, Rabbi Wolf

Passing the Legacy

Holocaust Survivors: please rise, if able, recite & remain standing through the completion of all four Generations

WE, the living survivors, entrust the legacy of the Shoah to you, our children, grandchildren and all those who have come after the fire.

WE WANT you to vow that the sacred memory of our suffering and our martyrdom shall never be scorned or erased.

WE WANT you to recall the heroism of Jewish resistance; remember the shining examples of sacrifice and kindness from the righteous Gentiles.

REMEMBER the racial prejudice and discrimination that led to the Holocaust.

BY NOT FORGETTING, you will pay tribute to those who were destroyed. By not forgetting, you will ensure for those who live, and those who are yet to be born, that we intend never to allow such inhumanity to happen again.

THIS IS THE HERITAGE, we the survivors, entrust to your custody for safekeeping for all generations to come.

Congregation: WE ACCEPT the obligation of this legacy.

Second Generation

Second Generation: please rise, recite and remain standing

WE ARE the first generation born after the darkness. Through our parents' memories, words, and silence, we are linked to that annihilated Jewish existence whose echoes permeate our consciousness.

Opera Ballet Company. He said his mother came to see him perform but his father never would. Marcel told us that only later did he find out that during the War his father used his Turkish citizenship (Turkey was an ally of Germany) to save 80 Jewish families from deportation to camps.

Marcel was eventually sent to Australia, because his mother wanted to get him away from a non-Jewish girl he was dating. In Australia Marcel continued to move away from Judaism. He married a non-Jewish woman and had a daughter named Kate. Marcel traveled 9 months a year buying and selling gems. Eventually, things became hard for Marcel and his wife. Later on, Marcel changed his name to Lawrence Allen McColm and moved to the US in 1987. He told us he wanted to leave behind all things Jewish. He opened up a jewelry & pawn shop in Cleveland. But he didn't really succeed in leaving his Judaism behind. In 1994 he worked to have Madeleine Sorel recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations. The Righteous Among the Nation Program was begun in 1963 to identify and recognize the Righteous Among the Nations who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

Also while he was in Cleveland, Marcel met and fell in love with a Jewish woman. In 2014 Marcel and his new wife moved to Naples to escape the cold. In Naples, Marcel became involved with the Holocaust Museum. Through that experience, he told us he became more comfortable with being Jewish. He changed his name back to Marcel Fachler, and became involved in speaking to people about his experiences. As he said, he came out of the closet as far as being a Jew.

Names are important in Judaism and so is travel. For instance, Jacob became Israel when he returned to the Jewish people from living for many years with his uncle Laban in Haran. Marcel's story seemed to us to be in some ways like Jacob's. Marcel's story is about his surviving during the Holocaust, then traveling all over the world and moving away from being Jewish, and then coming to Naples, where he changed his name back, embraced being Jewish and became a teacher – including to us. We think he is very brave to be so honest in talking to us about his life.

Marcel Fachler

Marcel's story was not what we first expected. Marcel was born in Antwerp, Belgium in 1939. His father had emigrated from Palestine and was a Turkish citizen. Marcel's mother was from Berlin.

Beginning in 1941 (when he was 18 months old) until 1944 (when he was 5) Marcel was hidden in a children's home with other Jewish and non-Jewish children. He slept in a room with 8 other children. The children's home was run by a woman named Madelaine Sorel. She was an unmarried Christian woman. When German soldiers would come to the children's home looking for Jews, Madame Sorel would tell them that all the children were Christian. Because of his darker coloring from his father, Marcel had to be hidden when the German's came. He was hidden in an oil drum in the attic that had a false top on it. Marcel would have to hide in the drum every month or so.

Marcel told us he was an unruly child who had great difficulty with following rules. During his time at the children's home his mother, who was in hiding, was able to visit him twice a year. Marcel does not remember his father visiting him. As Marcel got older, both because of his behavior and his darker complexion, Madame Sorel believed his presence put the other children at risk. In 1944 his father, who he did not know, took him to a farm to live. Marcel stayed on the farm until the end of the war. He told us he also behaved badly on the farm, and once tried to run away. Sometimes he was punished for things he did not do and he felt that he was treated badly by the farmer and his family. Marcel told us that he became very untrusting of people.

It was amazing how honest Marcel was with us about his story. He didn't try to make himself out to be special or a hero. He told us that after the War, he began to face anti-Semitism, which was very bad at that time. He told us that he wanted to stop being Jewish. He also told us he was very angry with his father because he thought his father only cared about himself. Marcel told us that after the war he trained to become a baker, but he had a hard time at it because he was bored. During that time his sister was taking ballet lessons. Marcel began to take lessons also, even though his father disapproved of his son dancing. Eventually Marcel became a dancer in the Royal Antwerp

WE DEDICATE this pledge to you our parents, who suffered and survived; to our grandparents, who perished in the flames; to our vanished brothers and sisters, more than one million Jewish children, so brutally murdered; to all six million whose unyielding spiritual and physical resistance, even in the camps and ghettos, exemplifies our people's commitment to life.

Congregation: WE PLEDGE to remember.

Third Generation

Third Generation; please rise, recite and remain standing

WE SHALL TEACH our children to preserve forever that uprooted Jewish spirit which could not be destroyed.

WE SHALL TELL the world of the depths to which humanity can sink, and the heights which were attained, even in hell itself.

WE SHALL FIGHT anti-semitism and all forms of racial hatred by our dedication to freedom throughout the world.

Fourth Generation

Fourth Generation: please rise, recite and remain standing

WE AFFIRM our commitment to the State of Israel and to furtherance of Jewish life in our homeland.

Congregation: WE PLEDGE ourselves to the oneness of the Jewish people. WE ARE YOUR CHILDREN! WE ARE HERE!

(Please be seated)

Ani Ma'a-min

BE-E-MU-NA SH'LEI MA I BELIEVE WITH PERFECT FAITH
B'VI-AT HA-MA-SHI-ACH IN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH
V'AF AL PI SHE-YIT-MA-MEI-A AND ALTHOUGH HE MAY TARRY
IM KOL ZE ANI MA-A-MIN. I WILL WAIT FOR HIS COMING.

Eil Maleh Rachamim

Exalted, compassionate God, grant perfect peace in your sheltering presence, among the holy and the pure, to the souls of all our brethren, men, women, and children of the house of Israel, who perished.

May their memory endure, inspiring truth and loyalty in our lives.
May their souls thus be bound up in the bond of life.
May they rest in peace.

And let us say: AMEN.

Partizaner Song

ZOG NIT KEYN MOL AZ DU GEYST DEM LETSTN VEG,
Never say you are going on your final road,
KHOTSH HIMLEN BLAYENE FARSHTELN BLOY TEG
Although leaden skies block out blue days,
KUMEN VET NOKH UNDZER OYSGEBENKTE SHO-
Our longed-for hour will yet come,
S'VET A POYK TON UNDZER TROT- MIR ZAYNEN DO!
Our step will beat out – we are here!

Kaddish for the Camps

This morning, we remember many of those places where our brothers and sisters perished because of man's inhumanity to man. We are grief stricken recalling our brothers and sisters who no longer walk this Earth, cut down, whether in youth or in old age, by the vicious hand of evil. We look at God and to each other to find comfort with the hope that we will be sustained through our sorrow.

because she feared she would be arrested if they found out she was Jewish. After finding out where Heinz's father was located, his mother went and brought him clothing and food – both were needed and scarce. Once Heinz's father was released from the labor camp in May 1939, he was a changed man. He said they needed to move out of Germany. In September 1939, they began trying to get forged papers to immigrate to Italy. In November 1939, Heinz and his father went first because Jewish males had a greater risk of arrest. The rest of the family then came and joined Heinz in January 1940.

In Italy, Heinz had been able to get a job at a factory in Milan, due to a labor shortage. In summer 1941, Jewish immigrants in Italy were warned of deportations and told to hide. Heinz and his family had to split up in hiding. After a time, Heinz and his family were reunited and taken in by a group of Partisans. Heinz became a message runner for the Partisans, bringing messages to sympathizers and organizing supply drops. During military engagement with the Germans, Heinz delivered critical messages. When the British liberated the Partisans, Heinz felt he didn't have to run or hide for the first time in his life. His mission in life to stay alive was completed and he could think about the future.

Heinz came to America in November 1948. Penniless and overwhelmed by New York, he eventually moved to Boston at the advice of the Jewish Agency. He got a job working in a factory in downtown Boston. He went to college for an engineering degree. He had two children with his wife Hella (a survivor of Auschwitz), Evelyn and David born in 1959 and 1964.

Hearing the story of Heinz and his family, it is all about the heroic steps that they took to save themselves. Realizing that they had to leave Germany, the family began taking relentless and creative steps to ensure their survival – beginning with getting to Italy. Once in Italy, they didn't just hide and helped the Partisans. As a young boy, our age, Heinz wasn't able to fight but that didn't stop him. He found a way to contribute and help, and became a messenger. This reminded us of the important Jewish lesson of not giving up and finding a way to survive. Like Esther and other ordinary Jewish people that encounter extreme situations, Heinz and his family took actions as 'everyday' people in desperate times, which make them seem like heroes in our perspective.

Heinz Wartski

Heinz was born in 1929 in Danzig. When he was our age, about 12 years old, his family used false papers to flee Nazi Germany to Italy. Already, by that time in his life, he had experienced things we can barely fathom.

He was born in The Free City State of Danzig, now part of Poland and called Gdansk. When Heinz was growing up the language and culture of Danzig was German. His father was Polish and came out of the Hasidic Orthodox tradition. He had a shoe and leather business. Heinz's mother was from Germany and wasn't as religious as his father. Heinz told us that his mother viewed Germany as (before the rise of Nazis) being welcoming to Jews who were fleeing anti-Semitism in Russia and other Eastern European countries. His grandfather (his mother's father) fought for the German army in WWI and was decorated for valor. When Nazis first took over, Heinz's parents thought it would only be a temporary problem and things would soon return to normal.

Heinz told us that starting in the 1930s, things got worse for Jews in Danzig and he and his family had begun to experience anti-Semitism. In 1933 Jewish stores were boycotted and many gentile (non-Jewish) store owners put up signs in their windows that said "Entry prohibited to Jews and dogs." Heinz and his father were the only ones in the family who looked like gentiles. As a result, his father was usually able to find work and Heinz ran errands outside the house and did as much of the shopping as possible for the family.

In 1938, Jews were evicted from their homes and moved into ghettos. (Jewish neighborhoods that were eventually walled in and sealed to isolate Jews into a small section of the city.) Heinz's family was evicted from their apartment. The landlord didn't really want to do it but he was pressured by the government to comply. As bad as it was to be evicted, Heinz was grateful to know that the landlord did not want to throw them out and found no joy in what had to be done.

In November 1938, Heinz's father was arrested for doing business with Aryans. He was sent to a labor camp for 6 months as a punishment and endured hard labor conditions. Heinz's mother had to bribe someone else to go and find out where Heinz's father was sent,

In testimony to the unbroken faith that has linked generation to generation, please rise as we recite the Mourner's Kaddish.

YITGADAL
V'YIT'KADASH
SH'MEI RABAH.
B'ALMA DIV'RA CHIRUTEI,
V'YAM'LICH MAL'CHUTEI
B'CHAYEI CHON UV'YOMEICHON
UV'CHAYEI D'CHOL BEIT YISRAEL,
BA'AGALAH UVIZ'MAN KARIV,
V-'IM'RU: AMEN.

Y'HEI SH'MEIH RABAH M'VORACH
L'ALAM U'LAL'MEI AL'MAYA.

YIT'BARACH V'YISH'TABACH
V'YIT'PA'AR V'YIT'ROMAM
V'YIT'NASEI V'YIT'HADAR
V'YIT'ALEH V'YIT'HALAL
SH'MEIH D'KUD'SHA, B'RICH HU,
L'EILA
MIN KOL BIR'CHATA V'SHIRATA
TUSH'B'CHATA V'NECHEMATA
DA'AMIRAN B'ALMA
-V'IMRUA: AMEN.

Y'HEIA SH'LAMA RABA MIN SH'MAYA V'CHAYIM
ALEINU V'AL KOL YISRAEL- V'IM'RU: AMEN.

OSEH SHALOM BIM'ROMAV, HU YA'ASEH SHALOM
ALEINU V'AL KOL YISRAEL- V'IM'RU: AMEN.

LODZ
GURS
WARSAW
BOGDANOVKA
RAVENSBRUCK
VILNA
TREBLINKA
CHELMNO

BELZEC
BUCHENWALD
SOBIBOR
MAIDANEK
MAUTHAUSEN
BABI'YAR
BERGEN-BELSEN
DACHAU
AUSCHWITZ

Eva Sands

Eva told us that she was not the hero of her story, rather that she was a baby and a hidden child saved through the heroism of others.

Eva was born in Poland in 1940, the year following the invasion of Poland by the Nazis. After the invasion, many ghettos were set up in cities and towns where Jews lived as a means of isolating, concentrating and confining the Jews. Many of these ghettos were enclosed by barbed-wire fences or walls, with entrances guarded by police or German SS guards. Conditions in the ghetto were very hard. When Eva was 1 month old, she and her family were sent to a Jewish ghetto. Food was limited, space was crowded, and sanitary conditions were poor. When Eva was 7 months old her mother died of pneumonia brought on by the terrible conditions.

Eva's mother had a sister, named Esther. Esther was able to pass as a gentile (non-Jew), and so did not get confined in the ghetto. Eva said she learned later that Esther was a very brave woman who smuggled food to Eva's family in the ghetto. When Eva was 2 (1942), conditions were getting worse and Eva's father gave her to Esther in an attempt to save her life. Esther could not keep Eva, and at first paid a Polish woman to keep her. When the woman became afraid and would no longer keep Eva, Esther tried to take Eva to an orphanage. It was very snowy and Esther could not find the orphanage. With no other options, Esther left Eva on a gentile stranger's door step. The family found Eva and took her in. The family was the Ciders. The family took Eva in as their daughter, even though they knew she was a Jewish child. For the rest of the war Eva was raised as the Cider's daughter and a hidden child. Eva told us that she was loved by the Ciders and that Maria was the first mother she remembered — her Polish mother. The people in the town also knew that Eva was Jewish. Eva found out later that when she was baptized her baptismal record was kept hidden in the church, along with the records of other hidden Jewish children. This was because the SS would come and search church records looking to find Jewish children.

Eva grew up thinking she was a Catholic child. At this time she did not know her own story. One time she remembers another child calling her a dirty Jew. Eva remembers going home in tears and asking her mother (Maria Cider) what a Jew was. Eva also remembers around

of coffee, a cup of soup, and a slice of bread. It's hard to imagine that being served as a meal, but especially as the only 'meal' of an entire day, and while working hard for many hours in extreme conditions.

When Lorie was 19 years old, in July of 1946, Henry (a WWII veteran) were married. They had a son and a daughter together. They moved to Florida in 1976.

Lorie gave us an amazing first-hand view of events we've only ever read about. It was chilling to hear how people – their neighbors and people who knew her family, turned against them based on Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. It's hard to imagine kids younger than us seeing their family store destroyed and knowing that their synagogue was burned down. All because they were Jewish – not because they were bad people or had done anything wrong at all. Lorie is also a very brave and strong person because she had to go through all of this and she survived. Another inspiring thing about Lorie is what she has done for Southwest Florida.

Using her experiences growing up, she became involved in the establishment of Holocaust Museum and Education Center in Naples, where she serves as the collection curator and historian. Her message is clear to us. Even though we don't create the work, we have an obligation to continue it and help with it. We have to treat everyone with love and compassion, like we would want to be treated.

Like our matriarch, Sarah, Lorie has worked to create a strong legacy for us all. Growing up in Naples it is special to be able to visit and learn at the museum. Lorie taught us what it means to be a good person, to rise above the hate. She made us think about what it means to be brave. To not only endure all the bad things she has, but to be a good person. Thank you, Lorie.

Lorie Mayer

Lorie Mayer was born on March 13, 1927 in Berlin, Germany. She later moved to the German town of Eberswalde (about 31 miles from Berlin). The Nazi's came to power in 1936 when Lorie was about 9 years old. She noticed changes slowly, like not being able to play with non-Jewish friends anymore. In school the Nazi anthem was sung.

She was just 11 years old when Kristallnacht occurred in Germany on November 9-10, 1938. Kristallnacht was a pogrom instituted by the Nazi party in Germany, which resulted in the killing of many Jews and the destruction of many Jewish businesses and synagogues. Over 7,500 Jewish stores and businesses and 200 synagogues were destroyed. Among them was her family's clothing shop in Eberswalde.

Lorie remembers a crowd outside their family store singing the Nazi national anthem and chanting anti-Semitic slogans like "Jew come out, we want to kill you." Also during Kristallnacht more than 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and taken to concentration camps in Germany. They went out the back into the courtyard to get to the police station. The town's synagogue was also burned down. After this, Lorie's family knew things were dire and they had to leave as quickly as possible.

Lorie had an uncle living in Chicago, who had immigrated from Germany previously. He was able to sponsor a number of family members coming from Germany, including Lorie and her mother who arrived there in 1939. That same year, her father was arrested and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany. He stayed there until his release in 1940 when his immigration number came up. Lorie told us that when he was released, he was given just 48 hours to leave Germany or he would be incarcerated. He was able to leave Germany and joined them in Chicago, but he died a year later due to the effects of malnutrition from his captivity in Sachsenhausen. Lorie was just 14 years old.

She told us that at the camp, prisoners like her father lived on very little food; they were given daily rations consisting of only a single cup

this time her mother telling her not to play alone outside. Eva lived with Maria Cider for 3 years.

One day when Eva was outside after their town had been liberated by the Russians, a beautiful woman came up to her and asked her to take her to her mother. The woman was her Aunt Esther – but Eva did not know her. Her Aunt Esther wanted to take Eva, but Maria Cider did not want to let Eva go because she loved her. Esther went to the authorities and eventually was able to take Eva. She told us she felt kidnapped and at first hated Esther. Esther told Eva who she was and took her to Germany to a Displaced Persons Camp. Eva had an okay life in the camp, Esther wanted to emigrate to America with Eva. It took a long time to be eligible because of American immigration restrictions. While waiting in the Displaced Persons Camp in Germany, Eva got very sick. She spent time in a hospital in Berlin. Over this time she came to accept Esther and become closer to her. In 1952, when Eva was 12, she arrived in New York City with her Aunt Esther.

Eva told us she had a Guardian Angel and that there was nothing she did to save herself while other people risked their lives to save her. But the story of Eva's survival as a baby can also be seen as a very old Jewish and human story. At two years old being passed to her Aunt she did not know by her father, she was not so different from Moses, set by his mother in a basket in a river. The Aunt that took and watched over Eva, looking for a safe place for her sister's orphaned child might not have been that different than Miriam guiding her brother to the place where he would be found by Pharaoh's daughter. Maria Cider knew that Eva was Jewish, but she took her in anyways and loved her as her own daughter. Eva told us that she sees herself as Jewish and Catholic, and that she believes God loves all religions.

Eva also told us that she is so grateful, that she wanted to repay all the people who helped her but that you can only pay the obligation forward. In 1972, when Eva was married with two children of her own, she went back to Poland to try to find Maria Cider. Because she was so young when they were separated, she had forgotten her Polish mother's name. Eva ultimately found Maria Cider through the hidden baptism records at the church she attended as a child. She was able to find Maria Cider, spend time and reconnect with her.

Rob Nossen

Rob Nossen has an amazing memory. By the time he was our age he had lived through events that are hard to understand how they actually occurred. After his family had moved around throughout Europe they eventually settled in Holland, where he was born in 1938. More family members moved to Holland to join us from Germany. In 1940, when he was two years old, Holland was invaded by Germany. One year after that, in 1941, restrictions were beginning to be placed on the Jewish people.

After the restrictions, which included Jewish stars being required on clothing and not being allowed to go to public schools or even certain public places, they started shipping Jews off to concentration camps. In 1942, in the fall, Jews started being sent to Westerbork and Auschwitz. In 1943, his family was sent to Westerbork. Being in the Netherlands this was built as a transit camp to hold Jews, including refugees until they were transported on to other camps. Rather than being deported to a concentration camp, in June (just three months after being sent to Westerbork) Mr. Nossen and his family were released because his father's job needed him back.

Mr. Nossen related that in September 1944 there was a final roundup of Jews in Holland. All the Jews, except those that were intermarried, were gathered up and transported. At first, he and his family were returned to Westerbork transport camp. From there, they were further transported to Theresienstadt by train. They traveled thirty-six hours in a boxcar to arrive at the camp.

Theresienstadt was known as "the model ghetto/camp". Jews and other prisoners held there were permitted to have many material things regular citizens had. The camp had a library, stores and a cultural life for Jews that included books and the arts.

At first this sounded reassuring to us, as if there had been some Jews who were treated relatively better. Then we learned that hidden beneath the exterior, Theresienstadt was actually very evil and an example of how the Nazi's pursued their genocidal program.

Theresienstadt was a lie designed to trick the Red Cross and the rest of the world about the true nature of the Holocaust. By having the Red Cross inspect and report on that camp, it allowed the world to ignore and not feel too bad about the treatment and killing of the vast majority of European Jews and the other Holocaust victims. In this way, Theresienstadt was uniquely evil. Its intent was just to hold Jews in the camp until they were sent to their death at Auschwitz, but it was also made to purposefully disguise the truth. Mr. Nossen told us conditions in Theresienstadt were actually very bad. Up to one quarter of the camp's population died there before they were sent away. Most Jews held there were ultimately shipped to Auschwitz, where they perished. Rob and in his family were still in the camp when the Russians liberated them in 1945. With their extended family gone, having perished during the war, Rob and his family immigrated to the United States in 1948.

In addition to learning about the Holocaust from our time talking with Mr. Nossen, we also learned about how he views the world as a result of his experiences. He is very clear on the importance of education and how a primary factor that allowed the Holocaust to occur was ignorance and not caring about people different than ourselves. This still remains a major problem on this planet. Mr. Nossen emphasizes that we cannot become complacent and we must care about the conditions and lives of other people.

This is an extremely important Jewish value and lesson about tikkun olam (caring for the world) that we should carry forward in our lives. We are never *done* with the work, and we all have to take part in it. The world is not "out there", but that it is the people and situations that we pay attention to, or hide from, every day. It is our job to treat everyone equally, to show kindness and compassion. We have to educate ourselves and others, and make sure that people are cared for – both here at home and around the world.