

9-19-13

Mr. Spungen,

I know you're not much of a reader, and I know I'm not much of a letter writer, but I decided to give this a go to thank you for bringing your exhibit to Carmel yet again.

I have seen your collection twice before, and every time, I find myself drawn to a different aspect of it. Today, for whatever reason, it was the money. Perhaps it was the normalcy of it—I mean, everyone uses money; it's what makes the world go round, right? And as I was holding one of those bills, I felt this peculiar connection to the past, as if it were a time machine. It was pretty cool, I must admit. Sobering—because I found myself wondering whose hands this money had passed through, what their stories had been, and what unimaginable horror they had experienced—but cool nonetheless.

What I really want to thank you for, however, is the tribute you made to Helen Rappaport at the beginning of your presentation. I heard Helen's story almost two years ago, way back when I was a sophomore; she had a profound impact on me, one I struggle to put into words.

However, considering I wasn't personally connected to Helen, this summer I was in the dark regarding her health. So one of the first things I did when school started up was ask Mr. Schuster how she was doing. He made sure to keep me updated, but regardless, on Wednesday, September 4 when I got the news she had passed away, I was shocked and upset. Unfortunate coincidence required me to go to the South Conference Center for a meeting that morning (only an hour

after I was informed). Needless to say, my head was reeling over the fact that not too long ago, Helen had been sitting there, telling us her story.

But hearing you talk about her today brought me some closure about the whole situation. After all, you were one of the people who knew Helen best.

Truthfully, the past few weeks, I have been feeling crummy thinking about the fact that soon, there won't be any Shoah survivors left. But you are keeping Helen's story alive, and that is a beautiful thing.

I cannot thank you enough for sharing Helen's feelings about Carmel. Knowing that she loved Carmel students as much as we loved her makes this at least a little bit easier to swallow. She really was — and continues to be — an inspiration to everyone who knew her.

Helen Rappaport was born January 18, 1921 in Czechoslovakia, minutes apart from her identical twin sister (Pearl). At 23 years old in 1944 (Passover holiday) along with family members, Helen was transported to the Auschwitz Concentration/Death Camp. Helen (Auschwitz tattoo# A-5080) and Pearl were immediately separated from the rest of their family and became part of the infamous Nazi Dr. Josef Mengele "experimental twins" research.

5079-A	Herskowitz Gizela	20
5080-A	Herskowitz Helena	22
		12

A-5079 Herskovic, (Pearle Pufeles)

A-5080 Herskovic, (Helen Rappaport)