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TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2009 • WWW.NEWSSUNONLINE.COM

Woodland students revisit Holocaust

Kildeer author
survived Nazi
concentration camp

By Beth Kramer

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GURNEE — The Holocaust and genocide were brought to life for Woodland Middle School eighth-graders Monday. They handled artifacts from a traveling Holocaust exhibit and heard the harrowing account of one survivor.

"This is an important part of history. I didn't want it to go unnoticed," said student Julia Freeman, 14, who was unofficially responsible for the general presentation.

Her principal speaker was Dede Harris, wife of Sam Harris, author of "Sammy: Child Survivor of the Holocaust."

Nazis invaded Sam's village in Poland when he was 4. One of his early memories is seeing his father after soldiers beat him to a bloody pulp.

Rather than stand in line with his parents and neighbors



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Dede Harris, wife of Holocaust survivor Sam Harris, gives a presentation about her husband's life surviving a Nazi concentration camp to Woodland Middle School students.

to board a train to a concentration camp, Sam and two of his sisters hid.

To survive, they later snuck into another concentration camp, where they managed to stay alive until the war ended.

He immigrated to the United States when he was 12 and was adopted by a Northbrook family.

"I don't want anyone to feel sorry for the things I went through," Sam said in a taped interview played at the Woodland assembly.

Sam could not attend, but Dede said she has heard her husband's story so much, it's almost like she lived it.

"I enjoy telling it. I think it's a very important piece of his-

IF YOU GO

What: Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center

Where: 9603 Woods Drive, Skokie

When: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays; 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursdays; 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

Details: (847) 967-4800 or visit www.ilholocaustmuseum.org

highlighting information about the correspondence. He also mentioned other genocides around the world, past and present.

"At the end of the day, it's not about tolerance. It's about acceptance," Spungen said.

He takes the exhibit to schools across the country and around the world. It's owned by the Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation and is available for viewing at the foundation's Web site, www.spungenfoundation.org.

tory people need to know," Harris said.

Freeman's exhibit presenter was Danny Spungen, a stamp collector and family friend. She said she was inspired to suggest the presentation after Spungen gave her an autographed copy of Harris' book. Students got to handle stamps, postcards, letters, bank note forgeries and manuscripts from concentration camps and Jewish ghettos in the Nazi Scourge exhibit.

Spungen presented a brief history of items in the exhibit,

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Nazis invaded Sam's village in Poland when he was 4. One of his early memories is seeing his father after soldiers beat him to a bloody pulp. Rather than stand in line with his parents and neighbors to board a train to a concentration camp, Sam and two of his sisters hid. To survive, they later snuck into another concentration camp, where they managed to stay alive until the war ended.

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"We try to have Holocaust speakers in every year, but they're hard to arrange," said Freeman's teacher, Adrienne Barkhurst.

Her students have spent three weeks on a genocide and Holocaust unit. She said the goal of Monday's event was to provide a "more personal view on the Holocaust and genocide."

Freeman said she liked the exhibit and loved how much she was learning. "It really hits home because I'm Jewish, too," Freeman said.



Dede Harris, wife of Holocaust survivor Sam Harris, gives a presentation about her husband's life surviving a Nazi concentration camp to Woodland Middle School students. *(Thomas Delany Jr./News-Sun)*



Woodland Middle School students Lisiann Rodriguez (left), 13, and Julia Freeman, 14, view a letter from the "Voyage of the Damned" as part of the Holocaust collection of Danny Spungen of Long Grove.

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References:

1. www.newssunonline.com

2. http://www.suburbanchicagonews.com/newssun/news/1546674,5_1_WA28_HOLOCAUST_S1.article