



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHILD HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR RECALLS PAINFUL MEMORIES AT THE GREENE SCHOOL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN STUDENTS' LIVES

WEST PALM BEACH, FL – March 10, 2020 – Holocaust survivors in the Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service (Alpert JFS) Holocaust Survivors Assistance Program have been sharing their stories of survival with children in the Greater Palm Beaches. On Friday, March 6, 2020, an 83-year-old survivor spoke before a group of 50 students and teachers at The Greene School, at 2001 S. Dixie Highway, in West Palm Beach, FL.

Accompanied by a slide show of personal photographs, Marie told the story of her family's journey from Brussels, Belgium to France, recounting her time in a concentration camp, an escape with members of the French Underground, being hidden in a nunnery and farmhouse, and emigrating to the United States. The students were extremely interested in the photos, which Marie said bring her "good memories," as well as the differences in her life before, during, and after World War II.

"During the war, I wasn't able to have toys, or play outside very often," said Marie. "I was hidden, and so were the things of regular, normal life."

First-hand accounts provide survivors with validation of their experiences, and socialization opportunities, as students get a history lesson with the chance to ask questions. While the story details of each survivor differ, they have a common thread of painful loss: of name, individuality, family, and life as they knew it. Marie told the group that her experience during the Holocaust changed her definition of family, saying that she considers her Alpert JFS case manager, the organization's staff members, and the people she meets who are interested in her story her "family."

"The importance of Holocaust education is clear," said Alpert JFS CEO Marc Hopin. "A recent research study from the Pew Research Center found that half of America's adults were unaware of basic facts about the Holocaust; the number of Jews who perished, or how Hitler and the Nazis came to power. The impact of our survivors sharing testimonies has an impact on students, whose empathy helps to promote healing among the trauma victims."

While living with the pain of the past, the Holocaust survivors get pleasure from speaking to student groups. Alpert JFS case managers and teachers help prepare both survivors and students for the interactions.

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Holocaust Survivor at The Greene School

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Alpert JFS' Holocaust Survivors Assistance Program is dedicated to identifying and addressing the distinct social welfare, health care, and emotional needs of Holocaust survivors with the utmost sensitivity. Seven full-time employees work to preserve the dignity of our honored clients, with more than 220,000 hours of in-home care provided through funding we receive from The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference). The staff also assists Holocaust survivors with navigating the Reparations Benefit Process, case management and care coordination, counseling and support groups, companionship and transportation. For more information, visit <https://www.alpertjfs.org/for-seniors-holocaust-survivors-assistance/>.

The Greene School embraces lifelong learning, preparing students to analyze situations, make decisions, solve problems and communicate effectively. Students are encouraged to be joyful, curious, and confident learners, capable of navigating an ever-evolving world. The school's state-of-the-art campus is comprised of learning spaces conducive to exploration and discovery. Learn more at <https://greene.school/>.

Established in 1974, Ferd & Gladys Alpert Jewish Family Service is a nationally accredited service provider for children, adults, seniors, and Holocaust survivors. The non-profit, non-sectarian organization is a trusted leader, with a team of more than 175 highly skilled professionals delivering high-quality care to community members. Alpert JFS works to ensure the well-being of children and families, independence of older adults and quality-of-life for individuals with disabilities. For more information, visit www.AlpertJFS.org or phone 561-684-1991.

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