

On Thursday July 12, 2012, Bob spoke to students in PVPHS & below are e-mails he received after the talk:

From: happymonkeyfeet@me.com
To: Rgeminder@aol.com
Sent: 7/17/2012 7:32:25 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time
Subj: Holocaust Experience

Dear Mr. Geminder,

It was such a privilege to hear about your Holocaust memories last Thursday July 12, 2012. When you were describing each experience and the struggle to survive through this devastating time, it was difficult to imagine even though it really happened. I thought it was so clever how your mom smuggled you and your brother out of the ghetto, but I feel so bad for the people who weren't so lucky in making it out. I think the thing that shocked me the most was how easy it was for the guards to kill random people whenever they felt like it. Especially the poor babies and crippled elders. When I watched the Pianist in the summer world history class, the scene that I remember the most, because it was as if they had no conscience, was when the German guards went into a ghetto home and threw a grandpa in a wheelchair over the balcony.

Looking through your website and learning about the Holocaust in class, I have gained so much knowledge of this traumatic but fascinating topic.

Thank you again for coming in and talking about your experience.
Michelle May

7/17/2012 1:16:23 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time,
leiatsukuda@gmail.com writes:

hi! I'm one of the students at Peninsula high school that listened to your story! Thank you so much for sparing your time to come over and talk to us about such an amazing story of your luck. I'm so glad that I got to meet you because you will probably be the last holocaust survivor that I'll ever see. It's pretty shocking to hear such things because I can never imagine it. I don't know how you can go for days without food! I can never survive such a thing probably. I also want to thank you for opening up to us and explaining how your family members passed away. It's a hard thing to do. Ever since you came over to tell us your story, I've been addicted to holocaust stories and documentaries. It's just so interesting. I believe that European history is so cool and sometimes I wish that I was born in Europe because American history is so boring and I feel that I can't have too much pride in my country other than the fact that its free. That's probably the only thing I like, "freedom". It was nice to meet you and I may ask for some help on my algebra homework in the future.

From: christian.gillis1@cox.net
To: Rgeminder@aol.com
Sent: 7/16/2012 10:57:52 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time
Subj: Thank you

Dear Mr. Geminder,

Thank you so much for coming to Peninsula and telling us about your amazing story. It must have been so hard to suffer through all that, but the fact that you were able to, and live to tell us about it, is amazing. You are an inspiration to people around the world. In 20 years from now, when my kids are learning about the Holocaust in school, not only am I going to be able to tell them that I knew a man who survive through it, but I also know his incredible story. I am definitely going to look more into the Holocaust, and learn more about it. It is insane to think just one life time ago, people were treated like

they were nothing. I sometimes think I have a hard life, then I take a step back and realize the pain and suffering people like you went through, and I realize how amazing my life really is. Your story makes people appreciate what they have, and cherish things that they would normally forget. I will always remember the day that I met you, and will never forget your story. You are an inspiration to all.
Thank you so much,
Christian Gillis

From: sunnygirl1196@gmail.com
To: Rgeminder@aol.com
Sent: 7/16/2012 6:15:38 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time
Subj: PVPHS student Seungmi Kim

Hello Mr.Geminder I'm Seungmi Kim a student from Peninsula High School. I just want to tell you how I felt when you told us your sad story. It is just amazing how you survived in that horrible war. If I was in that situation I wouldn't be able survive without food and shower! I never seen a Holocaust survivor and never heard how horrible it was from a real survivor. I only saw those scary and bloody movies that showed what had happened during the war. I thought there wouldn't be any people that survived since Hitler was a terrible guy. I think he had nothing in mind except for killing innocent people. it is just not right to kill people because you don't like them! But I am really glad that I met you and heard to your story. It will be interesting to tell my friends and families. My grandparents survive in the Korean War and they told me how they felt. But compare to Korean War I thought surviving from this war was a big thing. I hope this kind of war shouldn't happen again! Someday the whole world will be peaceful!

Thank you for allowing your time to us.
Seungmi Kim-

From: sbbulldog22@gmail.com
To: Rgeminder@aol.com
Sent: 7/16/2012 4:26:20 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time
Subj: Re: Thank You

Sherry Black <sbbulldog22@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mr Geminder,

Thank you so much for taking your time to come speak to the world history classes. It really helped me understand that period in history. I do have one question that I forgot to ask the day you came in. How is it determined if you go to a camp or a ghetto?(Take your time in responding I know you are very busy)

I also checked out your website and found it to be very helpful. The different videos really interested me. The escapes some of the people accomplished were fascinating to read about. I am glad to hear that some people made it out of that horrible time in history.

Thank you again for taking your time to talk about your past. Have fun teaching. I can tell math is your calling!

Thanks Sherry

From: gotlance97@gmail.com
To: Rgeminder@aol.com, plonski@plonski.biz, gotlance97@gmail.com
Sent: 7/16/2012 9:49:36 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time
Subj: Thank you note for visit to Peninsula HS

I attached a thank you note for coming to my class and telling your story, it was greatly appreciated by everyone.

Thank you for coming to my school and talking to our class.

Dear Mr. Deminder,

It was very cool and interesting to hear about your experiences during the Holocaust. I was so interested in your story that for once I actually paid attention and listened to every word said. I was surprised with almost everything you said. I didn't really know much about the Holocaust before you came in and spoke to our US History classes, but now after listening to you I would say that I have way more knowledge on this topic.

I always thought that the only people that were punished in the Holocaust were Jews, and people who got caught helping the Jews; but now I know that is not true. I love how you go around to places/schools telling your story, because I know that most kids would rather listen to someone who was in the event, than just listening to someone talking about it, when they were not in it. I also really like how you and other Holocaust survivors got together and all told your stories in one book. Now I am going to go tells my friends your story, brag to them that I met a Holocaust survivor and other things like that. I could listen to your story over and over again, just because it is so interesting, and scary, because if just one thing should have gone wrong out of all the risks you took, you would be dead. I would love for you to keep telling your story, spread the news/history of what actually happened back then, and keep being a primary source of the Holocaust. It sure felt amazing to me, seeing you, and hearing your story. I loved every second of your story and would definitely encourage you to keep telling ore people your story. One of my uncle's great grandmother was in a Polish concentration camp. Her daughter would go dress up nice every day and deliver food to the guards. She basically bribed the guards over time, to let her mother go. After she was allowed to escape, she and her family fled to Venezuela to ensure they wouldn't be caught/captured again. That's the first type of escaping story from the concentration that I have heard; I would think that the guards wouldn't let her go, because they like the food they got every morning. Many of my grandparents live in Poland, but left around the 1920's, so they were lucky to never be put in camps. People like you, who tell their stories and or experiences, are who help prevent things like the Holocaust to never happen again.

Thank you,
Lance Plonski (Mr. Mac's student)

From: diana.ro411@gmail.com
To: Rgeminder@aol.com
Sent: 7/16/2012 2:15:13 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time
Subj: Holocaust Lecture at Peninsula High

Dear Mr. Geminder,

I'm Diana Ro from Mr. Mac's World History Class. Your lecture really touched me and it was so touching and shocking that I will never forget this visit in my life. I've been to a holocaust museum in LA on a field trip with my class before, and I've watched a couple of videos on the horrors of the holocaust, but it really is different hearing a survivor's story. Mr. Mac showed us the movie called "The Pianist" and I can see the similarities between your situation and the main character of that movie. Even though you both didn't even go to internment camps, it was still really sad to hear about and both the movie and your story made me cry. Since I watched the movie, it was much easier to visualize your situation as a kid when you were starving in the attic and the terrible environment of the ghettos. Not eating for just one day is painful

enough, but I can't imagine not eating for two weeks and eating food straight from the ground and garbage (no offense). When you talked about when your mother went back for you, you said were covered in lice and so skinny that it was possible to count all of the bones in your body that was one of the most terrible scenario or event I could ever imagine. What's even worse is that it was real. Something like the holocaust, with no doubt, should ever happen again. I am very strongly opinionated about wars and taking a person's life. It's so stupid how people have discriminated against Jews throughout history and blame Jews for the death of Christ. I don't have a religion myself, but I believe that religion is supposed to give people strength and unify them, but it is ridiculous how religion has caused so much war and suffering. I had a few questions I didn't get to ask while you were there and one question I had was, did you ever resent your religion and God? You are Jewish and because of your religion you had to be mistreated or killed, and God didn't interfere with Hitler's plans. Did you ever come to hate the world or religion because of this? Did it change what kind of person you were after it ended? Did you find it difficult to smile again or was it easy because you were so relieved that the war ended? When I think of all of the hardships that the people went through at the time, I am really thankful that it is over and that I grew up in such a loving environment. I have many family issues and they are painful, but it is nothing compared to this, so I begin to feel like I am selfish and ungrateful when I become depressed about my issues. This helped me come to appreciate life more and my loving family and the people around me. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope that I can go to one of your lectures sometime because I really enjoyed listening to your presentation. It was a very unforgettable experience.

From: annemariealdrete@cox.net
To: Rgeminder@aol.com
CC: annemariealdrete@cox.net, emery@pvpusd.k12.ca.us
Sent: 7/16/2012 7:38:35 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time

Subj: Hello and thank you from Annemarie
Hello Mr. Geminder,

Thank you so much for coming to the Palos Verdes School District to tell us high schoolers of your life! Ever since I have started to learn about the holocaust I've been very interested in it. You came to my school last week and talked to us of the many struggles you faced during that time. Your story really touched my heart and really makes me appreciate everything my life has given me. My teacher had us write you a thank you note but even if she didn't I would've anyways! I can only imagine how difficult it must be to talk about such an extreme topic. I have had the pleasure of learning some in debt details about other survivors like yourself due to the school I went to for middle school. We got to experience a couple different holocaust survivors' stories. We entered in a writing contest for chapman and I was asked to go to the award ceremony where I got to meet many other survivors. Your story was much more in debt than anyone's I've heard. When you were talking about when you basically saved your entire train car from arriving at Auschwitz made me think of you as even more of a hero than you are. Of course you, being your most humble self would probably deny being a hero, but in my eyes you most definitely are! I could go on and on about how thankful I am to have been able to hear your story but that would take ages! so I would love to hear back from you but I understand if you have many other different emails to get back to. thank you for an amazing experience!

Thanks again,
Annemarie Aldrete

From: Siri Karlsen <ilovemyducks27@gmail.com>
To: Rgeminder <Rgeminder@aol.com>
Sent: Mon, Jul 16, 2012 11:00 am

Dear Mr. Geminder,

Hi! My name is Siri Karlsen. On Thursday July 12th you came to talk to my history class about the Holocaust and how you survived. I really enjoyed and appreciated all of your stories. It must have been awful to go through what you had to go through and I really hope something as terrible as the holocaust never happens again. As you were telling your stories I was thinking about how brave you were and how strong and mature you had to be to go through all of those different situations, especially at such a young age. Sometimes I wonder how I would act if that same thing happened to me, but it's hard to even wrap my mind about everything that went on during that time period... so I guess you could say it's pretty hard to even imagine! Everyone really enjoyed you coming to speak to us and it especially meant a lot to me to meet someone who survived. I will always remember you and your stories and I just wanted to thank you again for opening up to our class. Thank You!

Siri Karlsen

From: Alexandra Prince <4aprincess11@gmail.com>
To: rgeminder <rgeminder@aol.com>
Sent: Mon, Jul 16, 2012 4:01 am
Subject: Peninsula High School Visit

Dear Mr. Geminder,

I would like to thank you for coming to speak to my World History class last week. Your openness, courage and bravery to talk about what happened to you and your family during the Holocaust was very interesting and gave me a lot to think about. Although I've read many stories in school about children and the Holocaust hearing your story was special. You lived through a very frightful time in history and again I want to thank you for sharing it with me and my class.

Thank you,
Alexandra Prince

From: Alyssa Blinder <alyssablinder@gmail.com>
To: Rgeminder <Rgeminder@aol.com>
Sent: Mon, Jul 16, 2012 3:23 am
Subject: thanks for sharing your story

Hello-

Hi my name is Alyssa Blinder and I thought your holocaust story was very interesting. It caught my attention in many ways and it's one that I will never forget. I am Jewish and growing up I have gone to Hebrew school and we have learned about the holocaust many times but it was very eye opening to hear the story from a primary source. It gave me a better visual and understanding on how this affected every single person and not just 6 million Jews as a whole. I have read many tragic holocaust stories, and yours is truly amazing. It caught my attention when you talked about how you escaped from the train to Auschwitz and how lucky you and your family were for this to happen. You are a true role model in never giving up and how you never thought about giving up is truly remarkable.

Thank you so much for spending your time sharing your story with us, I appreciate it along with many others. It's great that now that my classmates have now heard this story with their own ears and they continue to tell this story to others so nobody will have their doubt that the holocaust never happened.

Thank you!
Alyssa Blinder

From: Gabby Strong <gabbykins521@yahoo.com>
To: Rgeminder <Rgeminder@aol.com>
Sent: Sun, Jul 15, 2012 10:26 pm

Dear Mr. Geminder,

I wanted to thank you for talking to our world history class the other day. The stories you told us were outstanding and the fact that you had the bravery to retell them is fantastic. I think it's amazing how you saved everyone in train car when your dad pushed out of the top and you opened the door for everyone else. The fact that 11 million people died in the world at that time and you didn't is truly an amazing story and I'm so glad you're here to tell it, especially how you almost didn't make it a few times. Thank you again for sharing your stories with our class, we learned so much from them and it's so cool that we get to learn from a firsthand source.

Sincerely,
Gabby Strong

From: eaglestar2@adelphia.net
To: rgeminder@aol.com
CC: eaglestar2@adelphia.net, jasperholcomb@gmail.com, jasperholcomb@yahoo.com, Vscone16@gmail.com
Sent: 7/15/2012 9:39:39 A.M. Pacific Daylight Time
Subj: Fwd: Robert Geminder

Bob,

A photo of us with my grandson. Thank you so much for your visit and talk at our school last Thursday. Afterwards, our class had a quality, in-depth, discussion about the Holocaust. It was obvious that you touched their lives.

Sincerely,
Jim

From: Jeanne Maechling <eaglestar2@roadrunner.com>
Date: July 15, 2012 9:03:11 AM PDT
To: Jim Maechling <eaglestar2@roadrunner.com>
Cc: Jeanne Maechling <eaglestar2@roadrunner.com>
Subject: Robert Geminder



From: inceptionfan@aol.com
To: Rgeminder@aol.com
Sent: 7/13/2012 8:09:30 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time
Subj: THANK YOU FOR YOUR SPECIAL VISIT

July 12, 2012
Dear Mr. Geminder,

Thank you for sharing your Holocaust experiences. You really touched my heart when you talked about how far you had to travel, the thousands of deaths that you saw, the bravery displayed each day, and how you and your family escaped from the open train cart. Your mother was very smart to wait for an open train cart. Your family was also clever to hide you and your brother in the closet behind firewood and find people to hide you. Your grandmother was a blessing and a strong woman who would not give up either. It is amazing how you, your brother, your stepfather, and your mother made it through these terrible events. It was a matter of life and death daily.

I learned so much about the hardships of the Jewish people during the Holocaust. We have it so easy, and I cannot imagine going through any of your war experiences. You are really brave and courageous to continue to share the story of your family and the stories of many who did not survive this terrible time in history. I am so sorry that you had to go through this.

It was such an honor to listen to you tell your extraordinary story.

Sincerely,
Michelle Shundo
World History Student
Mr. Maechling's Class

Dear Mr. Geminder,
Thank you so much for speaking to us about the holocaust. Your story really touched me and made me think about how hard of a time that was. Your mother sounds like the bravest woman I've ever heard of with all the times she risked her life to save you and your brother. I really appreciated your talk and I know all my friends did too.
A Peninsula Student,
Colton Michel

Dear Mr. Geminder,
Thank you so much for coming in and telling us your childhood story of the holocaust, today at Peninsula. Your story really touched my heart. You inspire me because of how you never gave up and how you are so strong. The parts of your story that impacted me the most was when you said how you had to hide in an attic for 10 weeks without anything, and how you had to witness thousands of deaths of innocent people. I cannot imagine how hard that must have been for a 6 year old. I have always wanted to hear a story from a holocaust survivor because the holocaust is one of my favorite topics to learn about. I am so sorry for what happened in your past, but I am happy you had the chance to live and tell the story to others about your experience. Thank you for taking your time to tell us what it was really like and how terrifying it must have been. I will always remember your story.

Thank You,
Brienne Insley
