

Subj: Holocaust Speaking at Palos Verdes Summer School
July 22, 2013

Dear Mr. Geminder

I felt really privileged that I was able to listen to you and hear the first person story of what happened to you in the Holocaust. You are the first person I have ever met who has ever been so close to going to a concentration camp or getting killed in a Jewish ghetto. I knew you survived because you were right there in front of us, but I still couldn't help getting kind of freaked out by how close you came to Auschwitz before the train stopped and then how lucky it was that the Nazi's didn't bring dogs when you were hiding. You have had a ton of luck in your life.

My Grandma was born in Holland in 1939 and remembers the first time that she tasted chocolate, when the American soldiers drove past her house when they won the war and threw handfuls out to the all children. She also knows that her Dad and two friends secretly killed a sheep so their families would have food for the winter. They would have been shot if they had been found out. Her sister's best friend who was not Jewish was sent to a concentration camp and survived, but her legs grew odd-shaped so now she always wears long skirts to hide them. She told my Grandma they used to boil maggots to feed to the sick because they were high in fat, and they would eat them because they were so hungry. I never met her myself.

My Grandma says there were lots of people who resented the Jews because if they had not been so shrewd in their businesses, the Nazis would not have hated them so. And once, we watched the Academy Awards and she pointed out everyone who was Jewish and how to recognize them, and joked that maybe her own family was Jewish way back because they all owned so many businesses. Sometimes I think she sounds racist. She had a boyfriend who was also from Poland. He was very artistic and sensitive and was going to direct movies in Hollywood, but her family told her not to marry him because he was Jewish. I want to tell her about everything you said.

The effect your speech had on me was much more powerful than the stories we read about from secondary references. Watching so many people die when you were only six years old and hiding in a closet all day with nothing to do but worry about being found and your stomach, I don't know if I could have done that. And the story of how you jumped off a train and saved your family from Auschwitz really stuck with me. I don't think I will ever forget that.

I told my little brother about what happened to you.

I hope you keep telling your story so he will be lucky too, to hear you talk to his class in a few years.

Thank You,
Nigel Lipps

Dear Mr. Geminder,

Thank you so much for coming to our school to tell us about your incredible story! It was really cool to have someone who actually experienced the Holocaust talk to us about it in person. I thought it was amazing how you went through that and survived at such a young age. I hope you keep on coming to share your story at our school for future years because i think everyone you tell will find your story as amazing as I did!

Thank you,
Briana Morgan

Hello Mr. Geminder,

I am just sending you an e-mail to thank you for speaking to my summer school world history class today. Hearing about your story of how you survived the Holocaust was much worse than I ever imagined. Your story of survival seemed almost unbelievable. Hopefully when I get some time I will be able to read about the other 52 people whose stories I haven't read about in that book. Thank you for taking your time to tell us your personal story and I hope that you are able to tell it to many other students so that they too can learn about the Holocaust.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Zimberoff

Dear Mr. Geminder,

I would like to thank you for coming to speak to the World History Classes at PVHS today. I have been looking forward to hearing you speak and am glad I finally could. The story you told of your experience during the holocaust really spoke to me. I don't think I truly understood how difficult it was for people who were going through that until I heard your personal story. Once I heard it from you I really realized how terrible it was. My favorite part of the story was when you had to jump into the open train. I thought it was amazing how someone could be so young and so brave. Once again thank you for coming to speak to us today.

Thank you,
Shannon Boushehri

Dear Mr. Geminder,

It was a privilege to listen to you talk about your life and the holocaust today. Listening to your stories and all that you went through makes me really thankful for the life I'm living now. Hearing about the life or death situations you were in as well as all the times you were left stranded and on your own must have been really hard. It's great to know that even when it all ended, you still continued your life at seventh grade and became a math teacher. It's an honor to listen to a survivor talk about it from experience. It's so nice of you for putting in the time to speak to us. I found it all very interesting and I can't wait to share it with my friends and family.

Thank you, Randi

I just wanted to thank you personally for coming out to talk to us about your life. I have some Jewish heritage in me and I will never forget what the Jewish people went through and again thank you very much for speaking to us!

Sincerely, George Matsuo

Thank you for Visiting PVHS today.

Dear Mr. Geminder,

Thank you so much coming to my history class at Palos Verdes High School and sharing your experience. It must have been a hard time to have family and friends go into concentration camps. When you described the grave scene where more than 20,000 people were shot I could not believe it. It must have been hard to live on your own for 3 months in hiding. I am glad that you, your brother and your mother were able to escape, and that you are here to tell your story so that other people can learn about it. I will remember your visit forever.

Thank you, Andy Schuler
PVHS July 22, 2013

Historical visit

Dear Mr. Geminder

Thank you so much for taking time out of your schedule to come and speak to me and my classmates. I was intrigued when I heard your devastating struggles during the Holocaust. I was especially interested by your abilities to survive during your experience. I don't know how I would keep quiet as a five year old in a closet for an entire day. The only thing that kept you quiet and would keep anyone quiet is the fear of death. I get the chills just thinking of seeing my neighbors being shot for no reason. It must have terrified you, since you were so young at the time and didn't understand. I appreciate you taking the time to share your experiences of the Holocaust. I will never forget the stories you shared and how you brought history to life.

Thanks again,
Nicole Beaupre, Mr. Maechlings class

Holocaust presentation

Dear Mr. Geminder,

It was such an amazing experience getting to hear your story today at Palos Verdes High School about surviving the Holocaust. You are so lucky to have had the grandmother that you did by being such a strong woman because I know my grandmother wouldn't have had the guts to do some of the things that yours did. I like how you answered a question of how you couldn't speak for a long period of time because you were either in the closet or in the basement and it was because you had the fear of dying. That really spoke to me and I feel as if I won't forget that because that must have been a tough situation to be in and you would've done anything so that you wouldn't die. I'm so glad you are sharing your story with a lot of schools so we can be your secondary source! Thank you so much for coming today!

Sincerely,
Britnee Archambault

Dear Mr. Geminder,

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciated you coming to speak to my class. One particular incident that affected me is when you hopped over the barrier of the train to unlock it for the rest of your family. I could not even imagine myself doing such a selfless task at such a young age. I also cannot fathom how frightened you were and how it affected you throughout your life, good and bad. Again- I am really thankful for the words you spoke yesterday and I will never forget them.

Brandon DeLeon

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Hi Mr. Geminar,

My name is Gabi Yoo and I'm currently attending Mr. Maechling world history class. When you came and spoke with us today I was shocked at how true all these horrifying stories of the Holocaust were. My favorite part about the whole story was of course how you survived through all these, but besides that I enjoyed listening to the part where your step-dad had to get you over the train with the open top, and you had to open the door to save them even though you were hurt and couldn't get up. If I were in this situation I wouldn't know what to do I defiantly wouldn't be as brave as you were.

Thank you for spending your time to come and tell us your story!

Sincerely,
Gabi Yoo
