

## **WHEN A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR, RESCUER, OR LIBERATOR VISITS YOUR CLASSROOM**

*Hearing personal testimony provides the greatest impact in Holocaust Education. Reinforce the importance of the students' participation in the chain of remembering and of acting. They will become the storytellers for future generations; they can choose to work for social justice on an individual level in their own lives. This is an important and powerful mission.*

### **PLAN**

Inform the speaker of your class's background: class make-up and previous Holocaust studies. Allow enough time for students' questions at the end of the presentation- approximately 40 minutes for presentation, 15 minutes for questions.

### **PREPARE**

Discuss with your students the historical background of the speaker's experience. Elicit questions the students might want to ask and concerns they may have. Inform students of the importance of showing interest and appreciation by their asking questions and personally thanking the speaker.

### **DEBRIEF**

Review the issues that the speaker raised; discuss those most relevant to your students' lives: need to belong, courage, coping, obedience, independence, etc. Elicit what was learned about the Holocaust from the speaker's experience.

### **THANK**

Provide time in class for thank you notes (either individual or as a class) which reflect appreciation and also indicate something the student(s) personally learned.

### **CHALLENGE**

Emphasize that this is one person's story and perspective. Each one of the millions of people affected by the Nazi era has her/his individual, unique experience. Examine the complex choices and situations of the victim, bystander, perpetrator, collaborator, rescuer, resister. Design projects/activities which sharpen critical thinking skills: investigation of historical accuracy through the use of primary source material, exploration of complexities of historical situations and human behavior, analysis of the relevance to the student's daily moral choices and interactions with others.

*The most crucial aspects of Holocaust studies are being able to identify with the issues of human rights and to grapple with the complexities of the choices people face.*