

# CRESTWOOD

## HELPING TO SHAPE OUR FUTURE

BY: MR SCOTT MASTERS  
 On Tuesday, November 20, 2012, Crestwood held a daylong Human Rights and Tolerance Symposium. Two hundred students from eight different schools attended, and they had the opportunity to hear twenty different speakers share their personal testimonies and experiences in this diverse topic area.

So, why human rights? Well, I am a social studies teacher, and what these speakers had to say definitely connects to the courses I and my fellow social studies teachers put out there everyday whether it's history, law, politics, or world religions. Those courses all feature the development of human rights as a central topic. The Ministry of Education even stipulates that we must teach it. It's part of your ongoing development as good citizen!

Many people complain that the study of human rights seems to be much more about "human wrongs."

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While there is a lot of that, understanding where our rights come from inevitably means turning back the clock to a time when we didn't have them – and it wasn't that long ago, both around the world and also in Canada.

Can the topic be depressing? Definitely. It can be paralyzingly depressing if you allow it to be. Bill Glied could have taken it that way, and his decision to be a human rights activist is rooted in the dark years of Nazism. He lost his family in the Holocaust, including his father, who died only days before liberation. Bill made it through that time, and he has made it a lifelong mission to bring his story to anyone who will listen. It's not an easy topic for him or any of the other survivors to dis-

cuss, but they do it, and they're all inspirational in my mind. The Holocaust is not an abstract topic for historical discussion; it happened, and just a few generations ago in a civilized nation. And it began with words and judgments, something to think about just a few days after we wore pink and purple.

*Continued on page 5*



SHAUN BOOTH WITH FANS

# EVERYTHING CHANGED IN A MOMENT

BY: KAILY WISE

Judy Cohen shared her touching story about her experience during the Holocaust and March 19, 1944 is a day she will never forget.

It was on this day that Mrs. Cohen stood at her window and watched as the Nazi troops entered her city on motorcycles. After this day, her whole life was turned around. She was soon deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she was separated from her mother and father, without getting the chance to say goodbye. She still had her three sisters with her.

Although they were devastated and terrified, they had each other and Mrs. Cohen felt some comfort in being with her sisters. However, the day she was most afraid of eventually became a reality when she was separated from her sisters.

Mrs. Cohen was an extremely brave woman and because of her bravery, she was able to survive the Holocaust. I have heard many Holocaust survivors' stories in

the past, but there is something that stands out about Judy Cohen's experience. After all the hardships she faced throughout her life, she has still managed to find love and happiness.



BILL GLIED AND JUDY COHEN SHARED THEIR EMOTIONAL AND HEARTFELT STORIES

## SINGLED OUT

BY: MICHELLE GOLDSAND

The Human Rights Symposium gave me the opportunity to introduce Bill Glied prior to the telling of his story. Mr. Glied is a strong man who was forced to endure many horrific situations.

When Mr. Glied was 14-years old, he was a soccer goalie who loved school and had many friends. Everything changed for him when, one day, his teacher singled him and three other students out for being Jewish, telling them to go sit at the back of the room. Mr. Glied explained this by saying, "My life would never be the same again." From this moment on, he found himself being bullied and ostracized by his community and friends, and it was only going to get worse.

In April 1944, Mr. Glied — along with his parents and younger sister — were deported from Serbia. They were put on a cattle car in terrible conditions and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Here he was separated from his mother and sister, never to see them again. Mr. Glied was sensitive in his delivery, but poignant. He revealed that his father did not see the end of the war, as he passed away just *nine days* before liberation.

Bill now has a large family, including eight grandchildren, and is living a happy life. This story affected me in so many ways, but Bill was pushing one major lesson that I definitely took to heart: "Do the right thing." If his teacher had done the right thing, he would not have been singled out in class. If anyone had stood up and done the right thing, this could have been prevented and millions of lives could have been saved. By simply following this advice, the world could be a much better place.

Bill Glied's inspiring speech brought tears to my eyes many times, as I saw his compassion and enthusiasm toward the students, and listened to the sorrows that he endured in the past.

## THE SUN SHINES, EVEN IN A WARDROBE

BY: JENNIFER FREEDMAN

Experiences are what makes a person who they are. In Anita Ekstein's case, her experiences with the Holocaust during World War II have given her a story to tell that allows her to educate young people on the evils of anti-semitism and the Holocaust.

Mrs. Ekstein was only seven years old when the Nazis invaded her hometown in Poland. Her whole family was taken to a ghetto in a new town where her parents went to different work sites daily. During the fall of 1942, her sister was picked up on the street in the ghetto. Out of desperation, her father approached a Catholic-Polish man and asked him to save his child.

She had many difficult experiences, including spending seven weeks hidden in a wardrobe. Mrs. Ekstein said that she developed claustrophobia because of the effects that the small hiding space had on her.

In 1948, she arrived in Canada at the age of fourteen. Although Mrs. Ekstein has been through so much, it did not stop her from casting a big smile when she happily showed us pictures of her growing family who she loves so much. It was truly inspiring to hear her use her story to educate students on how courage can get you through even the toughest of times.



ANITA EKSTEIN WITH GRADE 12 STUDENT  
JACLYN HERSHENHORN

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## IN SPITE OF LOSS



HEDY BOHM WITH BILL GLIED, BOTH POWERFUL SPEAKERS AT THIS YEAR'S SYMPOSIUM

BY: LISETTE WEINSTEIN

Hedy Bohm provided a touching and sentimental story about her experience during the Holocaust. She started by explaining what her life was like prior to the war. She mentioned how her favorite activity was to put on a pretty dress and walk down the main road while watching all the handsome boys. She described a teary-eyed moment in which she was separated from her mom and never had the chance to say goodbye.

Her experience during the Holocaust was heart-wrenching. Mrs. Bohm captivated the audience with her insightful views and wise advice. I have heard Holocaust survivors speak before through the Oral History Project; however, Mrs. Bohm's story made me imagine how difficult it must be to lose your parents. Through our sheltered young lives, the concept of losing a mother or father is seemingly incomprehensible. I am in awe of Mrs. Bohm and her ability to move past her loss, something that I don't think I would be capable of.

## AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN GROUP

BY: GABI SANDLER

When most people think of the Holocaust, the first thing that comes to mind is the nearly six million Jews that lost their lives and the tragedy that rocked the Jewish nation. While it is not wrong to do so, one must not forget the nearly five million other people who perished. This group included homosexuals, mentally and physically disabled, and the Roma people.

The Female Peer Leadership Program was visited by Gina Csanyi of the Roma Community Centre for their last seminar of the day during the Symposium. Ms. Csanyi began her seminar by asking what the girls knew about the Roma people. The responses were not as numerous as they should have been.

She went into detail about the origins of the Roma people in South Asia and the diaspora around the world. She discussed the various times in history when genocide against the Roma people has occurred, shedding light on the most dramatic and obvious genocide during World War Two when they, too, were marked for extermination.

Ms. Csanyi's presentation was especially touching with her own personal anecdotes and her sharing of her experiences of life growing up as a Hungarian Roma immigrant in Canada. She shared that while she used to be ashamed of her heritage and tried to hide it, she has now embraced her culture. Through her speeches, she works at spreading knowledge of the Roma people to prevent ignorance and discrimination.

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## SINGING THROUGH THE LENS — AND SINGING FOR THE UNSUNG HEROES

BY: JESSICA SEGER

Danielle Da Silva is a former graduate of Crestwood Preparatory College. She is the founder and executive director of Photographers Without Borders.

Ms. Da Silva believes that the power of photography can not only change the world but can help people understand varying aspects of different cultures. The mission of Photographers Without Borders is to connect photographers to grassroots organizations in promoting social and environmental justice locally and internationally.



"THE LITTLE TREE THAT COULD," BY D. DA SILVA

Ms. Da Silva visited Dalit, India where she interacted with locals to learn more about their culture. While she was there she decided to take photos to bring back home to help her spread awareness of life in Dalit.

She suggested that negative pictures of "helpless kids with flies all over their faces" was not the best way to help any situation; however, she believes that it is actually the positive pictures of kids smiling that impact us more. Through her photographs, Ms. Da Silva has been able to raise enough money to build eleven schools in India.

After her Dalit experience, Ms. Da Silva travelled to Tanzania where she mainly focused on female portraits to create a photojournalism project to benefit The Olive Branch for Children. Danielle has decided to publish a book, which has Tanzania's most inspirational woman within the text; the book will be coming out next year.

*"Beautifully photographed in Tanzania, this book will be one of the first to use pictorial expression not only to help African women and children see their own strength, but to shape a more productive narrative of empowerment, hope, and community that has long been absent from international conversation."*

Ms. Da Silva is an extremely inspiring person, as she puts her passion for photography into improving the lives of others.

## IN THE PURSUIT OF IDENTITY

BY: MICHAEL LAWEE

Walter Lindstone is a First Nations Ojibwa who was born in The Batchewana Bay Reserve, near Sault St. Marie. His story, like many First Nation individuals, is one that consists of a struggle to find one's personal identity.

Although Mr. Lindstone was born on a Native reserve, he spent his early life growing up in Scarborough, Ontario. "Living on a reserve in not easy; it's an hour drive from my reserve to the nearest grocery store." Living in the city with public transit, and all the other amenities that society has developed to make our lives easier, was simply more viable for his family when he was growing up. Caught between worlds, he said that he "Did some things that [he's] not proud of."

Walter Lindstone now specializes in cultural training, mental health and works as the Cultural Coordinator of the Native Canadian Center of Toronto. He also studied as an aboriginal healer's apprentice for over twenty years. He found his identity where his roots lay, as an Ojibway.

Mr. Lindstone spoke of the unjust and discriminatory oppression that his people were forced to endure for 500 years: "We never had time to recover." Year after year, decade after decade, the Canadian Government disregarded the rights of the Aboriginal peoples. In fact, Mr. Lindstone stated that the Canadian Government and its citizens wanted the natives to "Just become Canadians; like everybody else." Forget about the treaties, and the accords and the promise; 'just become like us.'

To me, this is outrageous. Telling an entire group of people, who are indigenous to this continent and have been living here for hundreds of years, that they should give up their beliefs, culture and way of life, shows a lack of respect for human rights!



He also made a point in saying that "Walt Disney stole our stories", which had been "passed down through generation through the oral tradition." The story of Peter Pan for example, originated long before Walt Disney was born or even before the Europeans knew that 'The New World' even existed. The stories were twisted and their meanings changed. If one was to do research into the origin of the "Walt Disney Classics" or just watch some of the videos involving aboriginals, they would walk away with an obscured and discriminatory view of the Native culture. Media can easily do more bad than good, spreading falsehoods and embedding them into the minds of young children.

Perhaps, from listening to Walter Lindstone during the Symposium, we all will have walked away with a better understanding of the Aboriginals' struggle to stay "Aboriginal." But, we should also walk away with a better understanding of the Aboriginal culture and the oppression that it has faced over hundreds of years. As Sir Francis Bacon once said "Knowledge is power." Now that we have the knowledge, we have the power to change the treatment of The First Nations people.

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## HELPING TO SHAPE OUR FUTURE, CONTINUED

History is full of compelling stories, so many connected to the fight for human rights. Any student who has taken American history remembers Rosa Parks, and any CHC2D veteran (hopefully) remembers Emily Murphy and Elijah Harper. They have the power to inspire, and their courageous acts did make our corner of the world a better place, though Native Canadian Walter Lindstone and Roma Canadian Gina Csanyi reminded us on Tuesday that we do still have some work to do.

It might seem counter-intuitive, but for me human rights is about possibilities and optimism, and a belief that we can perhaps do something to minimize the dystopia around us. The speakers on Tuesday all spoke about some of the practical things we can do there (i.e. send a postcard, don't buy a certain product, think about what a certain word might mean to someone else) but wherever you choose to put your focus and energy, it all begins with awareness and optimism.

# OPEN UP YOUR EYES

BY: NOAH LEVIN AND BENJI BAKER

We were extremely lucky to have Bernie Farber come to our school. Mr. Farber is the former CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress, a group who championed human rights for all provincial citizens. Here, he took his passion for community and social work to a broader stage, becoming an advocate for social justice.

It is remarkable to think how one person can make students feel such a strong connection to a topic. Mr. Farber emphasized the prevalence of hate throughout the world targeted at Jews and other minority groups. In showing nearly 22 slides of different examples of hate crimes, propaganda, and mainstream media advocating racist beliefs, he helped to open many students' eyes to the prevalence of this issue. Mr. Farber helped students realize that when you have such a strong passion, nothing will prevent you from reaching your goals. This was particularly poignant when he showed us a hate blog that specifically targeted Mr. Farber for helping Romani people; a blog which currently has a following of over 30,000 people. Although the claims



GRADE 11 STUDENT NICHOLAS MENNELL WITH BERNIE FARBER

on the site are rather outrageous, it did not, and will not deter Mr. Farber from helping others. This is an admirable characteristic in which everyone should strive to possess.

# USING EDUCATION TO ENRICH LIVES

BY: KATHERINE CHARNESSE

Mary Anne Chambers is an inspiration to all she speaks to. She is a successful business-woman who served in the cabinet of Premier Dalton McGuinty, and she is now a part of many different organizations including CAMH and PACE Canada. Her decision to go into politics was made because she felt that, through politics, she would be able to serve the public good most effectively.

I was most struck by the way Ms. Chambers was able to engage her audience, asking us questions and developing a conversation about her ideas. She started by talking about how we can improve our role in the

school community, and then moved on to how we can get involved on a larger scale. Emphasizing the role of education, she said to "Take pride in the ways in which your education enriches your lives, recognize your good fortunes, and don't take it for granted. Use your education to make a difference for others."

When I asked her how she suggests young people get more involved in the community, she advised us to start by being more curious and learning about what is going on in our surroundings. That way, we can better discover how we can make a difference. She ended by asking people what they hope for in the future, encouraging us not to give up our dreams.





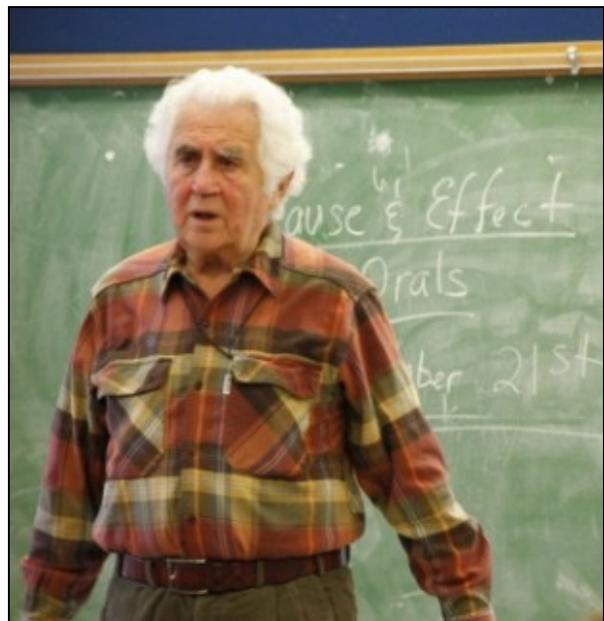
JULIE TOSKAN CASALE SPEAKING TO STUDENTS TO OPEN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND TOLERANCE SYMPOSIUM



GINA CSANYI OF THE ROMA CULTURAL CENTRE SPOKE TO STUDENTS ABOUT DIASPORA AND THE TROUBLES OF LITTLE-KNOWN GROUPS



SHAUN BOOTHE PERFORMING THE *UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF MUHAMMAD ALI*



BILL GLIED SPEAKING TO STUDENTS ABOUT HIS TIME IN AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

# FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHTS



BY: SAM DOWNEY

Pardeep Singh Nagra discussed with us about his experiences being a Canadian citizen of Indian heritage and some of the hardships he has experienced. His heritage made it hard for him to fit in, saying that when he was younger many children approach him and say that he was “the bad guy” and did not belong in Canada.

His love of boxing was put in jeopardy when he was told that he was not allowed to participate because of his beard, which officials told him was a safety hazard. He also explained that he had to fight so he could wear his turban while riding his motorcycle, because the law says that you have to wear a helmet. Mr. Singh Nagra’s work to fight religious discrimination has had a significant impact.

His stories were very inspiring and really made me think of how much Canada has to improve when dealing with their citizens and treating them all the same, no matter what race or religion.

# BETTER UNDERSTANDING OUR WORLD

BY: LISETTE WEINSTEIN

James Pyo and Kaveh Katebian are directors of HanVoice, Canada’s largest North Korean rights advocacy group.

North Korea is an isolated country, which means that information about the country is very scarce. They described the hardships that North Koreans face, which include strict food and mobility laws. Students were shocked and appalled to hear about the death camps that are still in operation to this day.

Mr. Pyo and Mr. Kaveh encouraged students to get involved in HanVoice. Many students were unaware of the issues in North Korea and although I am embarrassed by my ignorance, I am grateful that James Pyo and Kaveh Katebian were able to expand my knowledge.



## Want to write for The Crestword?

Talk to your Editor and send your articles to Ms. Bryant

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