

Teachers' Guide to the Sonoma County Survivor Project Exhibit

Introduction

The California Social Studies Framework has provided these objectives for the study of Human Rights and Genocide:

We want our students to know their rights and responsibilities as American citizens and to understand the meaning of the Constitution as a social contract defining our democratic government and guaranteeing our individual rights... We want them to develop a keen sense of ethics and citizenship. We want them to care deeply about the quality of life in their community. Their nation, and their world... We want them to gain a deep understanding of individual and social ethics... We expect our students to reflect on the various ways that people have struggled throughout time with ethical issues and will consider what the consequences are for us today.

... and Elie Wiesel has offered us this insight:

Whoever lives through a trial or takes part in an event that weighs on man's destiny, or frees him, is duty-bound to report on what he has seen, felt or feared.

It is in the hope of fulfilling both of these important goals, and with the help of some truly courageous individuals among us, that the Sonoma County Survivor Project investigates and shares the stories and images of members of our community who have survived loss of their human and civil rights. The exhibit is composed of approximately 30 panels of photographs (present-day, informal portraits, as well as reproductions of precious family documents) and text (excerpts from oral history interviews). The exhibit's aim is to document our neighbors' history and celebrate the resiliency of their spirit, in the hopes that an intimate acquaintance with these individuals will help us prevent similar episodes in the future.

The community members represented in this group are Cambodians who survived the reign of the Khmer Rouge, European Jews who escaped from the Nazi Holocaust, and Japanese Americans who were interned in the United States during World War II. This packet provides materials for teachers to use, relating the Exhibit to the goals of the California Social Studies Framework. It includes the following sections:

Study questions on the exhibit themes pertinent to the curriculum unit, with suggestions for their use;

A compilation of the exhibit text excerpts for the teacher to refer to in the classroom, including a short biography of each Survivor represented in the exhibit; and

Background materials and a bibliography of available resources for each of the three cultures presented in the exhibit.

In addition, small-scale reproductions of the photographs and the complete interview tapes and transcripts, with corrections and additions by each interviewee or interviewee family, will be available in a special collection at the Ruben Salazar Library at Sonoma State University. Contact Archivist/Librarian Sandy Walton for details.