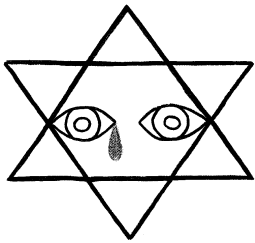




• THE SURVIVOR PROJECT •

Spring/Summer 2001

Vol I Issue #2



Simone Wilson, student at Healdsburg Middle School, responded to a visit from Vera Korkus, Shoah survivor and Board Member, through this painting and the following letter:

Dear Vera Korkus,

The memories and thoughts that you shared with us last week touched and deeply moved me. To hear about the Holocaust from 1st person is an experience that I shall remember forever. Your story was an especially interesting and unique one, and I could have listened to you for the rest of the day!

When you and your friends ran away, I was shocked at your courage and will always admire you. I have an older friend that was in the Holocaust, but is too sad to talk about it. I think it's wonderful that you're able to share these horrible memories with young people.

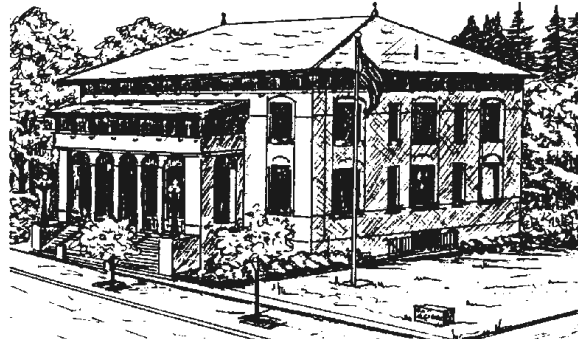
I felt honored to give you my art work, and I hope you like it. Thank you so much for showing me that no matter how hard life gets, I should never feel sorry for myself. You had to go through too much and you have stood courageous throughout it all. I greatly admire you.

Sincerely,
Simone Wilson

Comments left on a phone machine by teacher Pat Sabo:

...."What an absolutely incredible day we had here at the junior high school when Vera came last Thursday to speak with our students! She was able to speak to every one of our 8th grade classes in a small, intimate setting. These students' lives have been changed. I just wanted to be able to share this with you and The Project and let you know how deeply moved, not only our students, but our staff and faculty. We also had community members come and sit in. She was an incredible speaker and obviously is an incredible human being.

SONOMA COUNTY MUSEUM INVITES PROJECT BACK FOR A 10 YEAR REUNION



It's been a decade since our original Sonoma County Survivor Project was first exhibited at the Sonoma County Museum in downtown Santa Rosa. Director Marlene Ballaine has invited us back for a ten year anniversary show. **Join us May 25th, for a celebratory Opening from 5:00-7:00 at the Museum.**

Now a freestanding traveling show with curriculum material, the original Project will be joined for the first time by work from classes participating in its most recent program, The Essence of Acceptance. Students from ninth grade English and Humanities classes at Maria Carillo High School have been doing their own powerful work with various communities such as Native American, African American, Chinese American, and five other communities.

The students: studied The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; learned how to conduct oral histories; invited people in from communities they believed had suffered some loss of human rights; conducted oral history interviews and videotaped and photographed interviewees. Like the original Sonoma County Survivor Project, they are sharing their work with the community. Principal Steven Shepard and teachers Ken Emery, John Rugebregt, Claudine Gans Rugebregt, Dorothy Patch-Kennedy

and Ellen Anderson are much appreciated for working in creative, challenging ways with their students.

Oral historian Lisa Slater and photographer Phyllis Rosenfield created the original work in which they interviewed and photographed people who lived in Sonoma County and were survivors of various human rights losses. Interviewees included Shoah survivors; Japanese Americans interned during World War II; and Cambodians who survived the Pol Pot regime. Originally a show at the Sonoma County Museum, traveling panels were later designed and built to enable the work to move to various public locales, especially school libraries, throughout the year. The work has become a model for the new Essence of Acceptance project.

APPRECIATION

The Survivor Project cannot function without the efforts of our volunteers.

We would like to extend special acknowledgement to:

Hillary Costin for helping write a NEH grant and working with teachers; **Kate Sater** for helping write a California Department of Education grant; **Susan Curry** for computer layout of newsletter; **Patrick Grattan, Ben Benson** and **Ed Buckley** for editing multiple documents; **Vera Korkus** for numerous presentations to middle and high schools; **Cathy Mihalik** for working with a school and setting up the traveling Project; **Loy Bise** for use of his pickup truck and helping transport Project; **Todd Taggart** for helping scan photographs & teaching Phyllis; **Greg Sarris, Rev. James Coffee, Gaye LeBaron, Patricia Robles Mitten, Francisco Vasquez, Ben Benson** and **Jadyne Buchholz** for all the help in finding interviewees for student oral histories.

BOARD MEMBER: GREG SARRIS

Author, UCLA professor, screenwriter and Chair of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Greg Sarris somehow finds time to be a supportive Board Member



of The Survivor Project. Though attending all meetings is a virtual impossibility, Greg is a dependable source of wise counsel for the myriad of challenges that arise within a human rights organization.

Speaking in a voice for Native Americans who have historically not been heard, Greg has published over a half dozen books, both nonfiction and fiction including *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream*, *Watermelon Nights* and *Grand Avenue*. He has also written numerous plays, screenplays, short stories and articles.

Serving a fifth term as Chair of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (formerly The Federated Coast Miwoks) Greg spent enormous amounts of time and energy co-authoring and following a bill that led his tribe to very recent Federal restoration. The bill was signed into law on December 27th, 2000 by President Bill Clinton.

Greg had a successful experience writing a television screenplay for his book *Grand Avenue*. With the ability to reach a much larger audience in mind, he is presently working on two other television projects. *Land of the Dreams*, a three and a half hour mini-series about a Native American family in Los Angeles, is about to go into production. It will be directed by Alfonso Arau. Watch for it on the Showtime station.

He is also in the middle of writing and is the executive producer for *Paradise City*. Set in a fictional Northern California city in the wine country, a small Indian tribe builds a casino. The series follows a European American family and a Native American family as they meet head on with issues of money, shifts of power, identity, hierarchy and anger. *Paradise City* will be a twenty-two one hour series that will air on the Showtime station.

BOARD MEMBERS

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Patrick Grattan
Cynthia Hayashi
Vera Korkus
Kate Sater
Greg Sarris
Priscilla Stewart
Deborah Walton
Phyllis Rosenfield
Executive Director

If you speak with Greg for any length of time, he willingly shares his stories with you. Mabel McKay's name almost invariably comes up. "She was like water....she benefited everything she touched."

Greg, too, has become a source of refreshing water. His touch, whether through books, film or personal contact, benefits all whom he flows around.

Each newsletter, a different Board Member will be featured in this column.

ESSENCE OF ACCEPTANCE TAKES HOLD WITH STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND COMMUNITIES

Five teachers at Maria Carillo High School in Santa Rosa, four teachers at Sequoia High School in Redwood City, and three direct service personnel at Jewish Family and Children Services in San Francisco are all engaged with The Survivor Project's Essence of Acceptance program. Each of these adults works with many youth who in turn bring many people from a wide range of cultures to their site for respectful oral histories and photographs/videos.

Last fall Maria Carillo teachers Ken Emery, Claudine Gans-Rugebregt, Dorothy Patch-Kennedy, Ellen Anderson and John Rugebregt began working with The Essence of Acceptance. The Essence staff helped them move through these six steps: 1) the original traveling Sonoma County Survivor Project was brought to their school library with curriculum materials to encourage student involvement; 2) students did an in depth study of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; 3) students learned how to take oral histories; 4) students selected groups in their own community who they believed had lost human rights in some way; 5) students invited people to their class and conducted oral history interviews and took photographs and videos; and 6) these Maria Carillo students are ready to share their work with the public at the Sonoma County Museum beginning May 25th through June 22nd.

Sequoia High School teachers Terri Ignaitis, Laura Walters, Roberto Abele, and Kate Sheehan have begun a special condensed version of The Essence with their accelerated students. They hope to learn from the experience so they can make better plans to implement a full year program for the 2001-02 school year. Roberto Abele's video students are creating a film of the entire process which will serve as

SAVE THE DATE! JOIN US ON JULY 8TH AT MICHEL-SCHLUMBERGER WINERY

Jacques and Barbara Schlumberger are generously welcoming us to their winery in Dry Creek Valley outside Healdsburg on Sunday, July 8th from 4:00-7:00 P.M.

Mark your calendar now to enjoy a late afternoon of wine, food, and a special string quartet. Tickets are available at \$50 per person (\$45 tax deductible). Call the office now to have some mailed to you.

(707) 578-4374

a teaching tool for other students who participate in the program.

Jewish Family and Children Services is making plans for using The Essence of Acceptance program with their summer student interns. Direct service staff personnel Lauren Pearl, Sarah Cross, and Shira Luft have participated with The Survivor Project in a training workshop to learn, and then tailor, the program for the special needs and circumstances of summer interns. Many of the interns are children from Russia or Russian families. The hope is that this would be just a beginning and that there will be enough excitement and interest to continue the program into the fall and winter.

It is a creative challenge to have The Essence meet the needs of each group that decides to become involved. Just as we respect the interviewees, The Survivor Project staff respects the needs of each school or community culture that participates in order that they may discover the very best way to format the program to fit their particular situation.

We are creating new contracts with several schools and organizations. If you know a group that might be interested please contact our office.

A Special Thank You to All Our Friends and Supporters Who Have Given So Generously Since December 2000:

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Karen Thompson & Dan Nuebel



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