



Special Program Teaches Holocaust Lessons

By Marissa Brooks

During the three-week Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Summer Program trip to Washington, D.C. and Europe, Talli Dippold carried 10 ceramic butterflies with her. The Levine JCC Butterfly Project butterflies were hand-painted by children in Charlotte to memorialize children that perished in the Holocaust. Dippold left a butterfly at each of the nine concentration camps she visited. One extra butterfly went the whole trip with her and will eventually be on display in Shalom Park as a symbol of Zikaron V'Tikvah, Remembrance and Hope.

It was Talli Dippold's lifetime mission to go on a trip to learn more about the Holocaust and visit the concentration camps.

"I am the granddaughter of Holocaust survivors from Poland," said Dippold, 38. "This is part of my legacy," she continued. "I am a third-generation Holocaust survivor."

Last summer, out of hundreds of applicants, Dippold was one of 24 people across the United States chosen to join the Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Teachers' Program.

The program, founded in 1984 by the late Vladka Meed, member of the Warsaw Ghetto resistance and life-long Holocaust educator,



Talli leaves a butterfly at one of the former concentration camps.

was a three-week learning and living experience that took Dippold and other educators to Washington, D.C., Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic and Prague and included visiting nine concentration camps.

The program was designed for secondary school teachers who educate students about the Holocaust. The goals were to advance Holocaust and Jewish resistance education in US secondary schools, to deepen teachers' knowledge, to educate new generations, and to use lessons of history as "warnings for the present and the future," according to the website.

Dippold, who lives in Stone Creek Ranch with her husband and three children, is not a sec-

ondary school teacher. However, as a public speaker and the executive director of the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library in Shalom Park, she is in a unique position to educate everyone.

"The Levine-Sklut Judaic Library has the largest Holocaust collection of books in the Carolinas," said Dippold.

The library owns an authentic replica of one of Anne Frank's letters to her pen pal and a model of the Secret Annex, where Anne and her family hid. The library also collaborates with the Levine Jewish Community Center's (LJCC) Butterfly Project as a resource for Holocaust education. (See page 16 for more information on The Butterfly Project.)

When Dippold learned about

the program from the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, she knew this was an opportunity to learn how the European Jewish people lived and thrived before being decimated in the Holocaust.

The three-week summer 2013 Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Teachers' Program began in Washington, D.C. on June 30 where the participants met Holocaust survivors and went to the Holocaust museum. From D.C., they traveled to Frankfurt then to Hadamar, where 15,000 sick and handicapped people were murdered between 1941-1945.

Next they traveled to Bergen-Belsen, the concentration camp site where Anne Frank died from typhus. After liberation, Bergen-Belsen had to be burned to the ground by the Soviets because of the typhus outbreak.

"Every single one (of the concentration camps) is different depending upon its original function, who liberated it, and the condition of the camp upon liberation," said Dippold.

They visited Berlin, Prague, Krakow, Terezin, Auschwitz I, Birkenau, Belzec, Majdanek, Warsaw, and Treblinka.

"There were numerous memorials in every city," said Dippold. "How common was the loss of Jewish people. They built monuments, buildings to honor people

who died."

Dippold visited many old Jewish synagogues. "For the majority of them, now you go to look, not to pray," said Dippold.

"A huge part of our trip was talking about resistance, especially spiritual resistance," said Dippold. "Prisoners would light Shabbat candles, and just living was an act of resistance, getting up day after day. People had such a fire and passion to continue living under those circumstances."

Dippold carried 10 LJCC Butterfly Project butterflies with her. "Every place I went, I placed a butterfly," said Dippold.

In each of the nine concentration camps they visited, there was a memorial service and Dippold left a butterfly.

One extra butterfly went the whole trip with her and will eventually be on display in Shalom Park as a symbol of Zikaron V'Tikvah, Remembrance and Hope.

Talli's educational trip was sponsored by The Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, the Blumenthal Foundations, Mr. Stanley Greenspon, Marty Birnbaum and Roslyn Greenspon. ☆

Marissa Brooks is a freelance writer for South Charlotte News. Reprinted with permission of South Charlotte News, a Charlotte Observer publication, 2013.

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