

NC Council on the Holocaust Selects New Director of Teacher Workshops

By Amy Krakovitz

For most of our lives, my sisters and I were convinced that we were the last of our family name, a rare and nearly unpronounceable relic of Eastern Europe. These days, with Google as your friend, we can see that is far from the truth, but even as recently as 1993, we were fairly certain this was the case.

When I arrived in Charlotte in late 1993, within a few days, I found myself investigating

Shalom Park and the agencies herein. As I stood by the front desk (which at the time was in the location of the Jewish Family Services bulletin board in the circle by the rear gym door), I skimmed a list of personnel at the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. One name caught my attention: Audrey Krakovitz.

"That can't be," I thought. But it was. I had found what might have been a long lost cousin. As of yet, we have not been able to

confirm a familial relationship

At the time, Audrey was the Program Associate in Federation and then the Campaign Associate. A few years later, she moved on to Greensboro, where she has since served in many capacities, using her Masters in Jewish Communal Service from Brandeis University. She has worked actively in the Jewish field for the past 20 years, including the Greensboro Jewish Federation and Jewish Family Services, as well as congregations

in Greensboro (Beth David), Chapel Hill (Kehillah Synagogue), and Winston-Salem (Temple Emanuel).

Recently, the NC Council on the Holocaust tapped Audrey as Director of Teacher Workshops where she will coordinate one of the Council's most important missions, to aid NC educators in their teaching of Holocaust Studies throughout the state.

"I've also worked in the classroom as a substitute teacher," Audrey explains, "and I have an understanding of the difficulties teachers have in planning and implementing lesson plans." The Council runs 7 to 9 workshops around the state each year to help teachers navigate the rough road of teaching one of the most unspeakable events in human history, the Shoah. The workshops are available for teachers from 100 NC counties to spend a day learning, so Audrey has her hands full. "Teaching the Holocaust is a required curriculum in North Carolina," Audrey points out. "These workshops enhance the teachers' knowledge, experience, and resources to do the subject justice."

"In general," she continues, "Holocaust education is taught through Social Studies or Language Arts by teachers in middle and high schools. However, all teachers interested in expanding their knowledge, from elementary through university, as well as from other subject areas – media, library, music, art – are welcome."

The NC Council on the Holocaust is a division of the NC Department of Public Instruction and the workshop offers teachers con-



Audrey Krakovitz

tinuing education credits and substitute teacher pay for public school teachers. The morning portion of the workshop includes a scholar who outlines the history and ideology of the period. The afternoon sessions includes instruction on teaching the Holocaust with approved pedagogic methods and a survivor or the



Lee Holder teaches the Holocaust curriculum at North Lenoir High School in Kinston.

child of a survivor speaks to the group. Here in Charlotte, Irving Bienstock, Suly Chenkin, Henry Hirschmann, and Susan Cernyak-Spatz have filled this role for years. "This has the most profound impact on the educators," Audrey says.


"In fact," adds Mike Abramson, Chair of the NC Council on the Holocaust, "Susan Spatz was a founding member of the Council and continues to contribute her gifts to the program."


And teachers have great acclaim for what they have learned at the workshops. "My students have been empowered by ... the knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust," says Lee Holder, a teacher at North Lenoir High School in Kinston. "They tell me they have learned not to be bystanders, not to be perpetrators of hate, and equally importantly, not to be victims."

The newest available resource is called "The Suitcase Educational Exhibit." There are eight teaching suitcases with book, videos, photographs, and artifacts representing a Jewish person sent to a ghetto, available at no charge for classroom use for up to six weeks. "The best part about the suitcase is that a seasoned teacher can utilize the resources and a teacher looking to supplement material will find use for it, as well," says Talli Dippold, who led

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For more information, please contact Tal Stein in the Federation office at 704.944.6751 or tal.stein@jewishcharlotte.org

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