

Jewish Journal

Forest Trace Holocaust survivors recognized



Six Holocaust survivors from Forest Trace Resort Retirement Community in Lauderhill joined six graduating seniors from the Weinbaum Yeshiva High School in Boca Raton to each light one candle to represent a million Jews murdered in the Holocaust. From left, Samantha Dahan, Rachel Rybak, Revital Dahan, Ernest Elias, Ari Clements, Shlomo Laufer and Esther Katz. (Submitted photo / May 5, 2014)

By Randall P. Lieberman, Staff Writer
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While Holocaust movies, memorials and books are all powerful delivery systems to bring forth the message of remembering the [Shoah](#), there is nothing like one-on-one, face-to-face interaction with Holocaust survivors to make the experience more powerful and moving.

On Monday, April 28, twenty Holocaust survivors from Forest Trace Resort Retirement Community in [Lauderhill](#) participated in a [Holocaust Remembrance Day](#) at Weinbaum Yeshiva High School in [Boca Raton](#).

Said Lysee Stein, Weinbaum Yeshiva Judaic Studies teacher and director of Holocaust Remembrance Day: "Our students have all seen the movies, visited the memorials and read books about the Holocaust. But, there is nothing like a face-to-face, small group conversation with a survivor to make the books, movies and memorials a reality."

Added Sandy Warren, entertainment director at Forest Trace: "As our residents shared their unbelievable stories of the Holocaust, the high school students were hanging on to their every word. It was a time in their lives that none of our residents wanted to remember, but, at the same time, they didn't want anybody to forget the atrocities they went through."

As the 250 Weinbaum students walked into the sanctuary of the adjacent [Boca Raton](#) Synagogue, they each lit a candle, and then six of the survivors (escorted by six of the graduating Weinbaum seniors) each publicly lit a tall candle in memory of one million Jews killed during the Holocaust.

The Weinbaum senior class then sat in small groups with the survivors and listened to the survivors share their stories over lunch.

Said Shira Clements, 18, of Hollywood, a Weinbaum senior: "This was a very important meeting. We're the last generation who will get to hear from these survivors directly. They joked with us that we should each have 10 kids to be sure to re-populate the Jewish community."

The Forest Trace survivors very much appreciated the opportunity to share their stories.

"I want to make sure that these children never experience what I went through," Ruth Graifman said. "They need to go through life with their eyes wide open and carry on the Jewish traditions."

Added Shlomo Laufer: "We are the last of the survivors. We are not characters from a history book, but real people who lost everything. Yet we survived and made a life for ourselves."

Said Philip Rybak: "Lighting a candle in memory of those that we lost was painful. But being with the children was a beautiful, exciting experience. As someone who has lived in Israel and fought in three wars, I was incredibly moved by the students' commitment to Israel and their ability to speak Hebrew. They are the last generation to personally meet survivors and I am proud they will carry on our legacy."

Added Rachel Rybak, Philip's wife: "I loved being with such a large group of students and loved speaking to them in Hebrew. The lit candles reminded me of all I had lost; but being with them reassured me that the Holocaust will never happen again."