

Quotes from students, parents, administrators, chaperones and supporters on the impact of The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program

Program students have remarked:

1. It was one of the most unbelievable educational experiences of my life.
2. I think this program made me a more aware person who wants to make a difference. It may have inspired what I choose as a career.
3. I have become a lot closer to my grandfather because of this program. I also now understand things I would have never understood before.
4. This program was the little scare I needed to show me what respect is all about.
5. The program changed my not-so-good relationship with my mother.
6. My eyes have been opened to how important life, hope and courage can be.
7. The experience really changed my outlook on life.
8. I have learned lessons that never in my life will I ever forget.
9. I have learned to stand up for what I believe in and make the effort to increase equality instead of remaining passive.
10. I've learned more to communicate with people.
11. By visiting the Holocaust Museum, I realized the magnitude of the Holocaust.
12. This program helped us to bear witness.
13. It was a bonding experience.
14. The monuments (in Washington, D.C.) were more impressive because of our visit to the Holocaust Museum.
15. The Holocaust Museum gave us some great insight into one of the darkest periods in human history and provided inspiration for the protection of human rights. I plan to relay this message to anyone I can... to fight for human rights in the future so this doesn't happen to anyone, anywhere,
16. After seeing what I saw and learning about all that I did, I don't know how people can say the Holocaust didn't happen.
17. It is one thing to read and see films, but the Holocaust Museum exhibits really brought it home.
18. Being at the Holocaust Museum and going on the trip has given me a greater sense of knowledge and sense of responsibility to learn more and eventually teach others about the Holocaust. It has given me more understanding about the importance of freedom and tolerance.
19. I find myself thinking a little more about others before I act.
20. The program was one of the most influential things in my life.
21. As I speak to people now, I realize the true meaning and importance of bearing witness.

22. I will remember the trip for my whole life. It gave me a different view of the world.
23. I must admit that I did break down at the Holocaust Museum.
24. The classes helped me understand, for the first time, how Hitler managed to rise to power.
25. The classes really made me aware of everything going on around me. It definitely changed me for the better.
26. Because of the program, I am more fearless about speaking out on issues like homophobia.
27. I feel stronger now. It it's racism or bigotry, now I will speak out.
28. We have to speak out against the horrors and atrocities against mankind.
29. If something is wrong, I'll speak out. I'll name it for what it is.
30. The Holocaust Museum is pretty powerful. It portrays something beyond words.
31. By being educated about these tragic events in history, people will be more motivated to stop what is happening now.
32. You have no idea how much this experience meant to us all.
33. I think overall this experience made me a stronger person.
34. This was an experience that I hold close to my heart.
35. I learned so much and felt things I've never felt before.
36. I think this program should be made compulsory for all students, because quite often parents pass on racist views to their children and that's where hatred begins.
37. I loved the trip and if I could do it again, I would in a heart beat.
38. The trip had a very large impact on me, emotionally and spiritually..... I was very curious to learn about our past and now I am more intrigued than ever. I hope that many other people will learn and experience this trip. Thanks to the Asper Foundation for supporting it and passing on the knowledge.
39. I think this program is very valuable and it certainly opened my eyes to numerous human rights abuses around the world today.
40. It's been a life-changing experience...many people are being killed in the world today and we aren't acting enough on it. How many people have to die before we decide to change the way our society thinks? Whether it's one person or six million people, we need to fix it. When the Canadian Museum for Human Rights opens (in Winnipeg), I'll be the first in line. Let me know if there's anything I can do to help.
41. I thought that the 16-hour educational component was one of the best part of the trip.
42. The chaperones and facilitators were great on (the) trip. They were very responsible and they never seemed stressed out and they never seemed to be too frustrated. They did a great job in managing us children and I think their leadership was effective and powerful.
43. I think that this (program) was a great life-lasting experience. I am joyful that I took advantage of this rare opportunity and now I have some life-lasting memories. The

whole trip was fulfilling and I learned so much about human rights and when we should stand up for each other.

44. My involvement in this program has sparked a keen interest in the global community. Recently, I chose to speak about the importance of remembering the Holocaust at a public speaking competition, in which students were required to give their delivery in French. I am pleased to say that my speech, though simplistic as a result of having to present my topic in my second language (core French level) won second place! I certainly felt a sense of achievement to be able to remind the public of the senseless and shameful atrocities committed towards the Jews, homosexuals, and Gypsies during World War II. This, in fact, was more satisfying than the actual win.

"Why study the Holocaust?" one may ask. Holocaust education is based on morality and ethics and teaches us really important lessons. If we silence our opinions and allow the suffering of others because of our indifference, we create a cold, dark world. By studying the Holocaust, we honor those who really wanted to have a future and who died with dignity in a world of hatred. This tragedy occurred because individuals, organizations and governments made choices that promoted discrimination and hatred. Decisions such as these ultimately led to the mass murder of Jews, Gypsies and homosexuals.

Why must we remember the Holocaust? We must remember the many families who died in terror. We must remember a time of sadness and no hope. If we do not teach youth our history, we will repeat it. The Holocaust explores the dangers of indifference, and helps students to become multi cultural, and tolerant. We all have responsibility in the global community. If we can learn to accept our differences, maybe one day we will live in peace.

45. The Asper Human Rights and Holocaust Studies is an exceptional program and I am honoured to have been a participant. It is opportunities such as these that impact youth, making them globally aware. From partaking in the program, I myself know that in the future I will strive to abolish prejudice and hatred and become more active within the human rights community. This program was absolutely phenomenal, and will be among my fondest memories.

46.

In my personal studies, I have been researching the genocides and atrocities that have occurred in our world over the last century. In considering the Holocaust, it is arguably the greatest human tragedy in our time. I was apprehensive in speaking to the politics at our own National Youth Summit. I consider myself a citizen of the world and, also as a

Métis youth, I recognize that our world histories are interwoven just as the Métis sash. We are bound together through our cultures, our love, our security and our plights. Today I cried for the Jewish people and the victims of the Holocaust and our world. This wasn't the first time. But once again, I was struck by profound emotion. When we talk of justice, our peoples and humanity, we need to consider and honour the struggles of other people. And it is so frustrating for people to compare their histories and contrast – who are the most severely wounded. The Holocaust and other injustices threaten justice for us all.

47.

This experience has been one of emotion; an affirmation of past and very vague information. I have heard the stories before. I personally have been told through stories and books (The Diary of Anne Frank) what happened. However, the museum displays have given me a sense of experience.

Thoughts brought about today are that of comparison to aboriginal injustices. Compassion for a race/religion and a people.

We as (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) aboriginal youth need to be reminded that we need to be responsible for our own futures, to ensure that these injustices are never allowed to happen again.

Thank you for the opportunity to reflect, compare and learn and be reminded that voices, strong voices = power. Let's use that to do good things.

48. I am more willing to take action now instead of just talking about what should be done. Even within my own community I am able to apply what I have learned from the program. Within my everyday life I remember the importance of recognizing prejudices within myself, and eliminating them from my life – the importance of personal responsibility. I volunteer within the hospital and at a local community center after school program and realize that even these small acts of compassion contribute to the betterment of humanity.

49. The students involved with this program with the support of the school took part in activities to raise funds and awareness for many local and global issues. This included raising money to aid victims of the tragic Tsunami in South-East Asia.... This year a group of students many who had graduated from the Asper program or were currently involved decided they would raise money to send a girl their own age in Tanzania to school. These projects would start out small but gradually grow to involve the entire school community in one way or another.... I think it is safe to say my final years of high school were life-changing because of the Asper Program and what I learned from it.

50.

We have learned as a result of this program and, in turn, we want to teach others. We have already prepared a kiosk over the noon hour. Further, a presentation at the school level is in the works. We plan on becoming active members of our school's Human Rights Committee and attend as many seminars and such as possible. Also, we plan on incorporating our knowledge into our daily interaction -to speak out against prejudice and racist language, for example. Most importantly, we pledge not to be indifferent. Indifference -or neutrality- however you put it, is quiet consent.

With interaction in this program comes reaction. Our reaction will be one of social responsibility and action. Thank you again.

51.

We would like to inform The Asper Foundation about how grateful this program has made us feel and how grateful we are for this experience. The experience has offered us a different perspective; not just how life was, but how we want our life to be. It has shown us the difference between what is right and what is easy. It has given us the strength to choose because before it was simpler to just take shortcuts.

52. The education on human rights is important now more than ever for people's human rights in third world countries like Tibet, Sudan, and many others have been and still are being violated. Racism and anti-Semitism is still a problem in Canada. Subdued by the human rights acts, it is subtler but still a major problem that needs to be addressed and often is overlooked.

53. It is our duty to continue to educate, because enlightenment is the result of education and rightful, responsible actions are results of enlightenment. We must speak for those who no longer have voices and lead the world to a peaceful place. The Asper Foundation has certainly educated and enlightened me and now it is my turn to educate and enlighten others. I promise that I will always act responsibly and courageously in the wake of danger and evil, I owe it to the perished souls and all that endured the Holocaust.

54. It is up to us and our generation to pass our knowledge to future generations.

55. The Asper Foundation allows teenagers from across Canada to learn about human rights and the Holocaust, something they might not have had the chance to do otherwise. I feel that this is a very important subject for teenagers to be learning about, as they are the next generation that will be in power to make decisions for the world, and hopefully will be able to stop future genocides from happening..... The lessons each person learns from this program and trip are remarkable.

56. I hope everyone is aware that this has really changed me for the rest of my life.

57. Without your great generosity, none of this would have been possible. It has changed me as a person.

58. I will always hold this experience close to my heart, and I will never forget those who suffered.

59. This trip truly changed me, and will always be in my memories.

60. This trip is an experience I will remember for the rest of my life. I hope that everyone gets the opportunity to participate in this program.

61. This had been the most positive experience in my entire life. This trip was a highlight in my school career, and my life as a young adult.

62. The most generous gift that the Asper Foundation could give, and has given for the past few years, is the gift of education.

63. I felt like I grew as a person because I saw the pain in other human being's eyes. I also grew because it opened my eyes to see a whole other city with other people and diversity. The trip helped me appreciate the people I got to school with and live with everyday.
64. This experience has inspired me. I will stand strong for what I believe in and will take on the responsibility to educate other people in the future.
65. The entire Washington trip has provided me with an experience that I can call nothing less than life changing. I decided that I wanted to be a part of this particular trip because I believed that it would teach me something more than what is taught inside the walls of the classrooms. But I have come away with so much more; I have learned invaluable life lessons that I take with me now, and will continue to take with me into the future. I came back from Washington a new person, I felt as if I had been filled with a new spirit, filled with the breath of life, and filled with an inspiration that will last me all my years.
66. I am confident that I walked away from this trip with enough knowledge to aid in teaching others about the horrors of the Holocaust to ensure that it will never happen again.
67. This experience inspired me. I will stand strong for what I believe in and will take on the responsibility to educate other people in the future.
68. This is an experience that has opened our eyes and mind about world issues and historic events. Since stories of our trip will be passed on to classmates, friends, and families, this trip and the whole experience itself was history in the making.
69. The whole trip was absolutely amazing and it was time well spent. I still look back and think of everything that I did in Washington D.C., and it still shocks me that I even went there. This trip was an unforgettable experience! The quote by Margaret Mead means a lot to me and it inspires me to stand up for Human Rights: "*Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*"
70. As president of my student council, I believe I speak for all my classmates when saying it was a life changing experience.

2007

Newfoundland

71. Dear Prime Minister Harper,

As an Alumni of the Asper Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program I would like to express my gratitude for your dedication to promoting human rights by providing funding for the Canadian Human Rights Museum. Your commitment to this worthy cause will forever impact generations of young Canadians. I personally have profoundly benefited from this program. From visiting Holocaust museums and numerous human rights related conferences I have become an active global citizen. These facilities hold a wealth of knowledge for youth to explore and will undoubtedly stir them to become more globally aware and sensitive individuals. There is a saying that goes "We protect only what we love, we love only what we know, we know only what we are taught". Because of you, Mr. Harper, millions of people will be taught to think globally, love and promote peace. There could be no greater contribution to humanity than precisely that.

Newfoundland 2007

72. Dear Prime Minister Harper,

....I was a participant in the Asper Foundation's Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program, which was implemented in my school in St. John's NL in 2005, and has continued thereafter. I would like to thank you for your generous support in helping with the operating costs of The Canadian Museum for Human Rights, as I firmly believe it to be a very worthwhile creation.

73. My experience with the Asper program has vastly broadened my knowledge of the effects of racism, discrimination, and indifference, and has made me a more self-aware individual. Our trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum greatly emphasized all that we learned, and will be a lifelong yet sobering memory. Moreover, I was privileged to play a leading role in a Holocaust-themed drama we conducted, which is based on a true story. The drama in itself was enough to bring people to tears, and made this experience all the more real.

74. Being a Christian, this experience has further enhanced my feeling of responsibility and role in our little world, and I am very glad I was given the chance to realize that. I highly recommend the Asper Foundation's Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program to anyone, especially young people. Thank you again so very much.

Newfoundland 2007

75. Participating in the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies program has been a central part of my year. Much of my time has been occupied with some aspect of the program....I must say that I am very grateful that I had the chance to participate in the program. I have learned a great deal about human rights issues in our world, both past and present, local and global, from my participation in the program. I will definitely be recommending it to other students. Every student should have the chance, and perhaps even be required, to participate in this educational course. I'm certain that I'll never forget the many lessons learned, and the amazing experiences provided by this program.

Newfoundland 2005

76. It was all in front of me. The names, the children, all the words that the teachers taught us came to life. That's the reason we came. I said the two things I saw that really touched me in a tearful way, I wondered off by myself, and I walked through the shoes, I saw a girl, maybe 20-21 years old, crying, crying. All these shoes were worn! I really like the saying can't quite remember but, that the shoes are the only witness, and that is so true. But seeing the girl crying, a girl that I have never seen in my life, crying really hit home. Then the last thing I told them was, the two pictures of the little girl and little boy, naked, they were killed because they were "retarded", I did not tell them, my peers, but, even I cried, that just, it broke my heart, to see someone that young, that challenged because they were to no use to them. Anyway, this trip meant the world to me and I encourage anyone who has the chance, to take it, it is worth the work, even if it was short, there was tons to see. Really

worth the classes and the fundraising. One voice, can changed a lot of minds, if Hitler could do it for the bad, we can do it for the good.

Charlottetown, PEI
2008

77.

My thinking has been drastically changed since participating in The Asper Foundation Program. I realize that it is up to everyone individually to do what they can to promote human rights and it is only in such a way that change can happen and the atrocities that we learned about in the program can be prevented in the future.
New Brunswick – 2008

78. The program I took part in gave me a new perspective and appreciation for our country, our values, and the responsibility, we have to uphold human rights and ensure events like the Holocaust never happen again.

Woodstock, New Brunswick
2008

79. This program has had such a powerful effect on me and everyone else who attended the program.... This program made me realize how important it is to uphold human rights and this is a responsibility we should all share. It is not just about what happened in the past, it is showing us that we must defend our rights. Defending our rights is about taking action and taking personal responsibility and that is what I am now doing. My life has been changed in so many ways after this program and I want others in our province to have the same opportunity I had.

New Brunswick
2008

80. I can personally speak to the powerful effect this program has had on me and my fellow classmates. I know the vision to create this museum was inspired and motivated by the extremely big impact the program had on people all over the country and that there are plans for the museum to have a National Student Education Program modeled on this effective program.

81. This program I completed made me appreciate that upholding human rights is a responsibility we must all share. It's not all about just learning about the past and the present. It teaches about being vigilant and protecting our own rights along with the rights of others. The trip to Washington also made me realize that defending human rights is about taking action, taking personal responsibility. To create change and that is what I am trying to do now. Personally, my life has been changed through this amazing trip and I would like to see others from our province be able to experience this in the years to come.

New Brunswick
2008

82. The program I took part in gave me a new appreciation for the responsibility that we as Canadians have to uphold human rights. It's not all about what happened in the past and what's happening in the present, it's about protecting our rights and the rights of others for the future. This program made me realize that defending human rights is about taking control and changing what is wrong and making sure what's right doesn't change.

New Brunswick

2008

83. The program I took part in gave me a new perspective and appreciation for our country, our values, and the responsibility, we have to uphold human rights and ensure events like the Holocaust never happen again.

Woodstock, New Brunswick

June 2008

84.

Following reflection is by 2011 program participant Hailey Slaviero McCarthy - Bishop Tonnos Catholic Secondary School - Ancaster, Ontario

American anthropologist Margret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." After completing my journey with the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program, that particular quote resonates very strongly with me. Advocacy and volunteerism have always been an integral part of my life; however, I am just one person in a sea of billions, so while I knew that my actions made a difference to members of my community I often wondered if my actions were truly making a quantifiable difference to the world at large. I sometimes felt as if I were simply "spinning my wheels", so to speak – continually investing myself in humanitarian efforts without really altering the grand scheme of things. There is an endless line of people whose needs are still not being met.

My experience with the Asper Foundation and Hamilton Jewish Federation did not make that line of suffering people disappear, but it did make the line seem a bit less infinite and it certainly assured me that the actions of individuals and small groups have a huge influence on positive world change. One particularly poignant example arises from the list of names of the Righteous Among the Nations that was on display at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The people on that list did not think of themselves as heroes, nor did they set out with the intention to change the entire world. They simply looked into the face of another human being and saw a person just like them, a child in need of care and protection, a man seeking shelter, a woman desperate for food and water.

These Righteous individuals and families extended an arm of compassion and friendship to Europe's Jewish population when they needed aid most. These individuals acted out of human goodness to save one life and as a result saved the hundreds of lives that will blossom from it in future generations. Witnessing this made me realize that we each leave a legacy of our actions, whose implications will far outlive us – thus, if we orient ourselves toward the good it will create a "snow ball effect" allowing those good deeds to grow into something much larger. As the Talmud says "Whoever saves one life saves the world entire."

During my time with the Asper Program, I found myself personally impacted by the actions of many individuals. I was deeply touched by the dedication of the various teachers, volunteers

and members of the community who invested so much time and effort into creating an environment and experience where over 80 teenagers could come together to learn, grow as people and gain inspiration for our future endeavors. I was deeply moved by a tour guide at the Museum of the American Indian, who stood before a wall of foreign words and explained with an emotional catch in his voice, that the wall was a tribute to the hundreds of aboriginal languages that have ceased to exist due to modernization of North America.

I became very emotional myself when he described his vow to maintain his aboriginal language and then proceeded to demonstrate speech in his native tongue. I was inspired by a Holocaust survivor named Walter, who lost his entire family to the Nazis and spent years in hiding – starving, thirsty, scared for his life and in agony due to a severely broken and wounded leg. I was awed that he would relive that horrific pain and freely show his tears and emotion, so that we could all realize the vital need to protect human life, liberty and dignity. I found it so inspiring that he was able to move on with life after coming face to face with indescribable evil; and that he did not simply “move on” with life, but thrived and moved to Canada to become one of the country’s most prominent engineers.

Changing the world for the better is a challenging and gradual process, however it is possible and change can be made by one individual – my experiences as an Asper Program student have confirmed this for me. While I have become a witness to many global atrocities, the Asper Program has not left me dwelling in the past or feeling discouraged. Instead I am filled with the utmost hope, because I have seen how a light can shine in even the darkest depths and I have met so many incredible people who have become my comrades in the quest to protect human rights and prevent another event such as the Holocaust.

So I am hopeful; hopeful for a world where the shoes of murdered innocents do not fill up rooms and rooms of museums worldwide, hopeful for a world where lists of vanished villages do not fill up numerous panes of glass windows, hopeful for a world where books are not burnt in the streets, where towns are not raided, plundered and set in flames, where people are not passed off as vermin, a world where valuable lives are not ended before they have begun, where diversity and richness in culture is welcomed, where there is no hatred based on religion or lack thereof, race, gender, hair colour or eye colour or the complexion of your skin, sexual orientation, physical and mental capacities, beliefs, values or lifestyles, because in the end we are all just people. People who share the same earth and the same air. People who are all deserving of basic human rights and conditions that promote life and liberty. People who are all equal. I have hope that someday, we will all realize that. Until then, I am going to go forth into the world and take action, for in the words of author Robert Fulghum, “Peace is not something you wish for; it's something you make, something you do, something you are, and something you give away”.

Following are remarks from 2010 Winnipeg program participants:

Describe your program experience and how it's impacted you as a whole.

How will your attitudes and actions change as a result of this program?

- I used to be a pretty violent person. After I started going to sessions and hearing about the physically violent things that happened during WWII, even though I've not become a pacifist, I now try to avoid violence if I can. It's also impacted the way I

speak and feel as well. My school is very racially diverse, so I've got friends from many different backgrounds. They're in a very good situation, very confident in themselves and their cultures so they sometimes make racial and ethnic jokes. I always thought that was okay and there were a lot of racial ethnic jokes going on in our school because everyone was okay with it. But when I was in the program and someone made a racial joke in my school, I immediately realized it was not fine. I've stopped doing that altogether as well as being much less violent.

- It impacted me by showing what people are capable of doing, because even though I knew the numbers and the facts, I didn't really think that normal people you knew could stand by or support those kinds of actions against others; to support exterminating a group of people and use them as a scapegoat. Because of the program, I won't take things full-front. I don't want to be one of those people who support the Nazis and their acts and followed them like sheep.
- This program has impacted me in many ways. What really stuck with me is realizing what people are capable of doing to others. It's unbelievable what people can do when they're so bound by hatred. I thought that was really great for me. I think I'll be more aware of human rights around me, because even though they're such a big part of our life, they're so easily stepped on. It's really hard to be able to protect them even though it's so big for us.
- This program impacted me in many different ways and one of the most important things is that how hatred could lead to so many problems. Like in the Holocaust when the leader disliked a certain people and he committed genocide. It made me a lot more aware that hatred could lead into a much more serious problem. As a result of this program, I will start trying to think more positive and if my friends are having problems I'll tell them to see a guidance councillor.
- I've changed in a lot of ways. I never learned about the Holocaust before, and coming here made me understand how much they went through, how much the world is messed up, and how we need to be aware of all this so we can make a change. I'm not going to judge anyone and I'm going to help people. The program helped me be a better person and helped me respect people, be there for people and be aware.
- It impacted me in many different ways. To see what happened to the Jewish people, and see how many families were hurt, and destroyed. I'll try being more positive and not judge people by their race, age, or colour.
- It's definitely impacted me a lot. I think that human rights is something that everyone should know and have the right to know. That is very important. It's was very overwhelming being here, and going to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, and I think that everyone should go because it's something that you don't get to do every day. The program changes the way you view things. I'm going to try to become more involved in my school. I'm already pretty involved, but doing more stuff in our human rights group, and focusing on more human rights committees and youth in philanthropy, and spreading the word is always a good thing to do.
- It's definitely impacted me in many ways. I've felt emotions that I've never felt before so I never really expected what I felt. I felt overwhelmed and very excited to be here. I've been homesick, yes, but it was definitely worth it. I've learned so much that most people would not be able to learn, so I'm definitely glad I took this opportunity.

- My eyes have definitely been opened by this program; it showed me that there are many ways to help in your community, even in your school. You have to start with yourself first. It all takes one big step and it leads to something bigger.
- It's taught me a lot of things about the way people can be, and the things we can do, to both help and destroy. I will try to think more about what I do, and that small things can always lead to something bigger, just like they did in the '30s and '40s. It's amazing how some people started to hate other people and then everyone eventually did. Then they started killing them.
- It's made me realize what a small thing can do to influence other people; in a good way or a bad way. In many cases, one person can do a good action and it keeps following others.
- It has taught me to not be a robot. Don't listen to everything other people say, don't give into peer pressure and don't inflict racism on anyone as they don't deserve it. I will be able to look and see people who are experiencing racism and be able to stop it.
- It's taught me a lot about how one person can have an effect on so many people and so many races of people. I think I'll definitely be a lot more polite towards people who have been in wars and through the Holocaust, really take the time to talk to more survivors and try learning more about what really happened.
- It impacted me emotionally and made me realize how desperate people can be in tough situations and how horrible it is to listen to one person's negative thoughts and go with him. It's going to change me a lot; visiting the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington affected me, seeing all the displays, it was hard.
- It's given me more information about things I didn't know about; not just the information, they give you a basis for it. Sure you might know about the Holocaust but then you get to see how it happened, and how it worked together; and how Hitler changed ordinary townspeople into mass murderers. It brings you to the personal level. In sessions not only do you learn about it, but you get to feel it. That's more than I can ask for. Getting to know all these amazing kids, and share my experiences and their experiences, and getting to know one another and what we've been through, even at our age. How it made us feel, it was amazing to see how we've all changed.
- It impacted me in many ways, but mostly emotionally. I just thought, how can humans do this to other humans? My actions will change by really paying attention to what I say even to my friends. It could hurt and I'm going to stand up to bullying and be stronger.
- This program has impacted me emotionally. Learning about the Holocaust and human rights and even knowing some things before hand, we've been studying for four months, and seeing images in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and videos about what really happened has impacted me a lot. Some of my family members who were in Germany were against the Holocaust. It's difficult to learn that one person had murdered innocent people and that genocide still continues right now in the world in Sudan. I will now know what not to do and not to say, seeing that one person has impacted one whole people in World War II and the Holocaust, and seeing that what he has done has impacted everyone.

- It's impacted me emotionally, I've known about the Holocaust since I was young. It's hard to take in and acknowledge, people don't believe it actually happened, people deny it, it made everything so much more real. To walk in front of real artifacts and hospital doors. I want to become more of a leader in my school, and teach everyone about genocide, as there's a genocide going on in Darfur right now, and it's really important to let people know that this is still happening and we can do something about it.
- It has impacted me because of what Hitler did, and how he murdered six million Jews, it's just terrible what he did. My attitudes have changed a lot because you don't get anywhere being an idiot, so I'm going to try being a lot nicer to people.
- I come from a Jewish family and half of my family came from Poland and migrated from Poland to Canada. I already knew a lot about the Holocaust, and going on this trip made me realize what the Jewish people went through, but also anyone else that was hurt by Nazis in any way. When you go through the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, you learn about everything that happened there. You learn that what they did to the Romani (Gypsy) people was different to what they did to children to what they did to the mentally disabled. You learn the details and see the facts. You see it face to face. It's a shocking thing. The shocking thing that makes you realize this is so much bigger than you thought it was. You can learn about it, but when you see it in the museum, and see real artifacts, for example the shoes of the people who did not survive the Holocaust... There are so many... So many... I just had to stand there and take it in for a minute. Just imagine so many people murdered and hurt so badly because of their personal opinions, or their religion, or because they were different than what was considered okay. It's awful, it really is. It impacted me so much.

I think that because of this program, I see things differently in the way that it's not okay to do something just because no one's looking. It's not okay to do something just because everyone else is doing it. If you're not being caught it doesn't mean that there shouldn't be consequences. When you think like that, you're not only hurting things around you but you're also hurting yourself. It affects your whole state of being. You have to realize how you're an individual and you have to stick up for yourself and for others. At the end of the day, it's your own choice and it makes a difference whether you realize it or not.

How do you intend to influence others as a result of this program?

- I think the most important thing is that you shouldn't take actions without knowing what the boundaries are. You shouldn't say false stuff about people, propaganda, as it has the potential to be very ripple-like. Before I just let them do it because I was worried how they would treat me, but I don't think that really matters anymore, because if my friends are people who are going to make fun of other people and put other people down and treat me differently because I'm not okay with that, then they're not the kind of people I want to be friends with anyway.
- To stand up when you see wrong being done, because it's a wonder what you can do when you say, no, I won't allow that to happen. You could save so much and you could save so many.
- I would tell them how strong hatred can be and how important it is for us to manage

our emotions so it doesn't lead to huge issues like the Holocaust, or wars, or conflicts. I would tell them to release that hatred in other ways so that it doesn't lead to other problems.

- I'm going to make sure to tell people to not bully anybody, just be there and help people, and tell everybody about it. People should all care for each other, we are all equal.
- I'll tell them how much fun I had and the stuff that I learned.
- I think in general for the whole program, going to all the sessions has been difficult but rewarding. Especially listening to Holocaust survivors through their eyes and what they've been through. Also, in the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the cattle car was the hardest part for me, because you know that other people have been in there and you don't know how they felt. I can't imagine not knowing where your next meal is going to come from, where you're going, what's going to happen when you get there. I'm definitely going to try and let everyone know, and to look more into it because it's definitely more than it seems on the outside.
- I'd probably tell them to take the opportunity to be in the program if they ever get the chance to. It's something that you really can't pass up. It's taught me new things in life and changed the paradigm that I've looked at regarding the Holocaust and human rights.
- To think for yourselves and just because some people are doing one thing doesn't mean you have to do it.
- Not to follow peer pressure and follow their own ways. If they think they can make a change, go for it, and not be afraid.
- Don't be racist towards people.
- I'll probably take away that you can make decisions, but make decisions you think are the best and don't follow people who you think will end up doing something bad in the end.
- Try to be a better role model and leader in my school and try to stop racism and bullying and other peer pressure. I'll share with my friends what humans are capable of doing to other humans.
- I would tell them to step up and that you may think that you seem insignificant, but you'd be surprised at what you can do. I could tell my friend one thing and she could go tell three other people, and those three other people could tell ten other people, and it goes on and on and on. You just need to be brave enough to get the message out. Once the message is out, you don't know who's going to get it. That one message, that one little "hey, that's racist" or stepping up for that one person, you could impact tons more than you ever thought possible.
- Don't follow other people; if you think something is wrong, just do what you want to do and stand up for what you believe in.

- I would tell my family and friends and everyone to be yourself and stand up for yourself.
- I would tell them to not hate. It gets you nowhere.
- I'm going to tell them that it's important to stick up for yourself and do what you believe in. I'm going to tell them to learn about something before you judge it. I might have judged the Holocaust and saw it one way, as something that happened. I didn't see the impact it had and what it really was. When you take a closer look at something it's so much more and you realize that all people are just the same way. We need to treat things better and treat people better.

Congressman Tom Lantos (1928-2008) privately addressed students in three program years in Washington, D.C. He is the only Holocaust survivor ever elected to the U.S. Congress. Of the program, Congressman Lantos commented:

“Both my wife and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the thoughtful young people who participate in the program. It is always wonderful to see the youth take a real interest in foreign affairs, the Holocaust, human rights and other major political issues. I congratulate and commend you on this outstanding program. (It) helps to bring up a new generation of people committed to creating a better world.”

“The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program is unique in its breadth and depth. The program is to be commended for its far-reaching ability to reach out to students across Canada and teach them the historical significance of the Holocaust and the importance of tolerance and preservation of human rights for all peoples.”

Program parents, chaperones and administrators have remarked:

1. The trip was provided (to our son) at an extremely formative time in his life. Thank you for making a difference.
2. The program has changed our daughter's outlook on life.
3. It is the best thing The Asper Foundation has come up with.
4. It was a magnificent experience.
5. The program was an amazing experience.
6. The kids were exhilarated and stimulated.
7. The experience is an enormously effective one. The program is life-altering and very empowering.
8. The students' reactions to the program made it clear that they grasped the significance of what they were learning.

9. The importance of the experience lay in the strong human rights theme incorporated throughout the trip.
10. Everything we saw at the Holocaust Museum made an impact. Everyone had a moment they had to share. Some had many moments.
11. Our students now feel a responsibility to bear witness. They buy into the responsibility of and duty as citizens that never again shall the Holocaust happen again.
12. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn that the rights of all human beings are to be respected and for being the role model for making a difference.
13. The program is a phenomenal opportunity for the students.
14. In this program, students are learning universal lessons of equality and tolerance. It's not just about being Jewish.
15. To be exposed, discuss human rights issues and the Holocaust and take back some of the lessons to their families, schools and communities is important. And then to use it in their lives.
16. The program is wonderful. I encourage all parents to consider this valuable experience for their children.
17. As a chaperone I felt that this was a memorable experience for our students, as future active members and potential leaders of our community who will now have a better understanding and perspective of the history of the Holocaust and how we can move forward to better promote tolerance and understanding while remembering the Holocaust and honouring the people who needlessly died and those who survived the atrocities. My own reaction — it was an awesome trip, so much to comprehend and so important to remember the Holocaust and be able to have the courage to speak out against anti-Semitism and racism.
18. I would be really excited if, as a result of this trip, some of them became engaged in Human Rights and Holocaust-related issues. But even if some students don't become involved in that way, the trip still definitely had an impact. Even if it inspires some of them to read the newspaper, that's a big thing.
19. There are not enough superlative adjectives to describe the experience of taking the students to Washington for The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program this week. There were so many amazing, unplanned moments that the students were able to participate in (along with the planned ones of course).
20. My daughter participated in the Asper Foundation's Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program when she was in 9th grade, and it greatly deepened her understanding of the consequences of racism and of turning a blind eye to human hatred.

21. May , 2007

As a parent I wanted to express my sincerest appreciation to you, your family and the tremendous staff that make it possible for our children to become educated on the Holocaust and issues of human rights in such a professional, provocative and life altering manner. I know that Benjamin's life has been enriched in so many ways as a result of the opportunity you have afforded him.

My sincerest thanks to your family for the wisdom and foresight in developing and funding the program, the staff who coordinate the program, and the inspiring and knowledgeable teachers who transferred so much knowledge to the students who were lucky enough to participate.

22.

2007

As a chaperone for 29 students who participated in the Asper Foundation Human Rights Program this year I felt privileged to be one of the chaperones of this group who visited The Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

This program was a life-changing experience for many students. As a teacher of students with special needs, the impact of this program was substantial. Many of the students I teach do not have the opportunity to participate in programs such as this one, and greatly appreciated the chance to become involved. During the course of the year, I witnessed the positive influence this program had on these students. The students increased their ability to promote social justice and are beginning to become instrumental in the fight against racism and discrimination. This program also supports the role that many Canadian schools are playing in preventing and reducing bullying.

Newfoundland

23.

June 11, 2007

I have been teaching the Asper Foundation's Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program for the past three years and in my thirty years as a teacher I have never seen any program which has had such a powerful effect on youth, their parents and teachers.

June 30, 2009

While B'nai Brith's Holocaust and Hope Educators' Tour was the inspiration for our vision, it is the Asper Foundation's Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program that sustains us on "the Front Lines". The curriculum model of intensive study, a travel component and voluntary community service has a deeper impact on youth than any other, for no other program in any public school inextricably connects intelligence, creativity and morality. At the national and international level, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights could have the same effect on society at large.

Keith Samuelson

Newfoundland

2003-4 Recipient of The Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence

2006 Finalist and 2007 Nominee for the Governor General's Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Canadian History

24.

2007

My daughter had the very good fortune to be a part of the Asper Foundation's Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program in 2005, which provided her with a broader and deeper understanding of the issues of racism and tolerance and sensitized her to the consequences of racism. She has since been very vocal in her classes, and outside, on the issues of racism and intolerance.

Newfoundland

25.

2007

As a teacher, I am proud to have been part of this year's Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program. A comprehensive eight week education component, combined with community service and journal requirements culminated in a visit to the Holocaust and Human Rights Museum in Washington this past May. I observed young people transform in front of me from children with unfocussed vision to informed young adults who have been sensitized to a Human Rights awareness level unparalleled by any other endeavour initiated in my sixteen year professional career.

Newfoundland

26.

2007

This year, my stepson participated in the Asper Foundation program. He spent many Sundays learning about human rights and the Holocaust, and a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington followed. This experience will stay with him forever. The students who participated have learned not only about the horrors of the past but now have tools to understand and combat prejudice and will be soldiers in the fight against racism, now and in the future. They will be great role models for their peers and their families.

Our children's education in Human Rights will undoubtedly help avoid prejudice and racism, and give them the opportunity to intervene when they see it or are exposed to it. Something which seems so small or unimportant to some, could have such an impact on others. Their attitude towards prejudice will affect others positively and who knows, such leadership and education may save the world.

Support for the Human Rights organizations and for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights will build a better future for all of us. Our children will have the opportunity to be educated and help avoid the horrors we have seen in the past and combat those which still go on today. There is always need for more support and more education.

Newfoundland

27.

2007

The Asper Foundation has put much emphasis on the education of our nation's children. This will help them grow up with a full understanding of how important it is that we appreciate the rich diversity of people, especially in nations like Canada.

As a composer and children's/family entertainer, giving young people the tools to help them make a full and worthwhile contribution to life in their own communities has been a focus of my own performances for over a quarter of a century.

Anything that can enrich the lives of our young people and hence improve life for all of us and for future generations is an endeavour that no monetary value can adequately portray the worthiness thereof.

28.

2007

During this school year, I was privileged to participate in the Asper Foundation Human Rights program. I was one of the chaperones with a group of 29 students who travelled to Washington, D.C. this spring and visited the Holocaust Museum. This experience had a profound and lasting effect on both students and teachers...

As a special services teacher, I was very proud that some of my students experienced this program and will again in the future. This program has a positive influence on all students, but especially those who have less advantages and opportunities available to them. These very students are often the victims of bullying and insensitivity. By participating in the Asper Foundation Human Rights Program, students are taking a giant step towards promoting tolerance and social justice. If our students today can rise above injustice, then maybe there is hope for the future of Canada.

Newfoundland

30.

2007

(I was) a chaperone to 35 students who participated in the Asper Foundation Human Rights Program and visited with them the Holocaust Museum in Washington two years ago. I have seen first hand the positive influence this program has had on my students in their desire to promote social justice and their ability to rise above bigotry and insensitivity.

Newfoundland

31.

Our school has been participating in the Asper Foundation Holocaust program for three years and have now expanded to five Junior High schools in the area with a group of nearly fifty students applying this year.

Students and teachers consider this experience to be "life altering" and I know why! The Holocaust is a disturbing example of what can occur when a society lets its guard down. Most significant is the role of "the bystander".

In our school we connect the lessons learned from the Holocaust with "bullying" and other social justice issues. In fact our school district has as one of its main goals: "a safe and caring school in a socially just environment."

Principal of school in Newfoundland, 2007

32.

Since attending the Asper Program and traveling to the in Washington in 2005, my daughter has developed a greater interest in human rights issues and attempts to seek information about other such valuable educational experiences involving human rights. This summer, for instance, she has decided to travel to Edmonton, Alberta to participate in a UNESCO global

youth conference. She has expressed an interest in reading novels and viewing films which deal with the recent genocide in Rwanda and has shown interest and concern for the violence and suffering in Sudan's Darfur region. When in the company of those who express attitudes that are inhumane, she speaks confidently against such opinions and has become better equipped to defend her beliefs. Exposure to such a fine museum (the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) has broadened and deepened her understanding of the issues of racism and tolerance and sensitized her to the consequences of racism. She has come to realize that hateful words can be quite dangerous and, often, lead to far deeper levels of hatred, resulting in violence and death in many parts of the world and affecting families for generations to come.

Newfoundland 2007

33. Our daughter is a graduate of The Asper Foundation of Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program.....she had a profound experience which she will never forget....Our daughter learned much about the struggle for human rights and the horrific events of the past which must never occur again. It is only through continued education and programs such as this that our youth will continue to support the ongoing struggle to preserve human rights and prevent events such as the Holocaust.

Through this program, she has learned that she shares the responsibility to take action to protect her own rights and those of others.

*Woodstock, New Brunswick
June 2008*

34. The experience was one (my daughter) will never forget. It truly opened her eyes to the consequences of racial prejudice and to the atrocities people have suffered as a result of intolerance .It made her aware of things she couldn't have begun to imagine otherwise, and made her appreciate that it is everyone's responsibility to fight for human rights. It is only by learning of the past and witnessing the present that change can be made to prevent these things in the future.

*Woodstock, New Brunswick
June 2008*

35. This experience was a once in a lifetime chance for (our daughter). She now sees the world in a different view. It is hard for her to believe that something like that happened to all those innocent people. It certainly makes her think about human rights.

*Woodstock, New Brunswick
June 2008*

36. What a wonderful educational opportunity is now being created in our own country with not only a Holocaust focus, but a human rights educational mission. When we engage young learners in this important awareness, we have the opportunity to make the world a better place.

The children that I accompanied to Washington..... are now in my opinion, much better citizens of the world.

*Woodstock, New Brunswick
June 2008*

37. The best moments of my 14 years in education have almost entirely been connected to this program.

38. Tolerance shows subtle growth traits, but I hear the awareness in student commentary in the classroom and out. They have a much broader scope awareness of the global village they live in. Being involved in a multitude of extra-curricular activities over the last 18 years has been an invaluable show of character development. The Asper Program supersedes my priority character goals for students. They live it; they learn it. We're doing something essential and wonderful here.

Newfoundland 2009

39. I believe that the most significant change in the students is a heightened sense of self-reflection and personal responsibility with regards to the moral questions related to past, present and future human rights issues. The students have become messengers of peace and a voice that will speak out against violations of human rights.

Winnipeg 2009