

LEICHTAG FAMILY FOUNDATION PROPELS STUDENT HOLOCAUST PROJECT



by Jamie Zander

A major grant from the Leichtag Family Foundation enabled award-winning Carlsbad High School Broadcasting (CHSTV) students to dramatically expand the scope of their powerful new documentary film about the last generation of Holocaust survivors.

The student-produced film, *We Must Remember*, focuses on firsthand accounts from Holocaust survivors, American WWII veterans who liberated Dachau, and the high school film-makers' journey of creating the film. *We Must Remember* debuts in the San Diego Jewish Film Festival on Monday, February 9, 2009.

Jewish Community Foundation (JCF) CEO Marjory Kaplan facilitated the partnership between San Diego philanthropists seeking to fund a meaningful project and the creative high school team. When Kaplan stumbled upon the film project she immediately thought of involving Leichtag since two of this Carlsbad-based foundation's charitable interest areas are Holocaust education and North County nonprofits.

Soon afterwards, the JCF, Leichtag and the Carlsbad Education Foundation firmed up the project's goal to distribute and implement the film along with an accompanying Holocaust curriculum in 30 percent of middle schools statewide within five years – a reach of about a half million students.

The film and curriculum represent a unique approach to teaching the Holocaust because they give the traditional curriculum more impact by engaging students through the powerful tool of peer to peer education. When Joyce Axelrod, founder of the San Diego Jewish Film Festival viewed the trailer and met with the students, she accepted the film as part of the Joyce Forum which focuses on emerging filmmakers.

CHSTV students – from varied socio-economic backgrounds, religions and cultures – traveled to Dachau and Auschwitz to film on-site. The students gained access to rare footage from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation and special permission to film in the former concentration camps thanks to the investment and connections provided by Leichtag and JCF.

"It's really remarkable that a new generation is giving a voice to the last survivors of the Holocaust. Their work is groundbreaking and will surely revolutionize Holocaust education as we know it," said James Farley, CEO of Leichtag.

Doug Green, a former Carlsbad Teacher of the Year who is the teacher and advisor for CHSTV, explained the project's evolution. "We are so grateful that Marjory Kaplan noticed our project in a *San Diego Union-Tribune* article. She immediately

saw a match with the funding objectives of some very generous donors. From there our project just took off." Green's interest in this project came as a result of teaching about Anne Frank to an 8th grade language arts class in the 90s. He subsequently won a state award for his creative teaching.

Said Lisa Posard, president of the board of Carlsbad Education Foundation and executive producer of the film: "I was completely struck by the bond the students formed with the Holocaust survivors. These kids really understood the urgency of their stories, particularly when one of the local survivors, Michael Zaks, passed away before they were able to interview him. They were deeply saddened and felt even more energized to tell these stories."



CHSTV student Haley Quartarone interviewed Holocaust survivor Lucia Muller for the film.

Other generous donors include the Viterbi Family Foundation, Chortek Family Foundation and other donor advised funds, all held at the Jewish Community Foundation. In addition, the Carlsbad Education Foundation and its donors contributed significantly to the project.



From right to left, Leichtag Family Foundation CEO James Farley and Jewish Community Foundation CEO Marjory Kaplan joined CHSTV teacher and advisor Doug Green and student filmmakers at a recent meeting at Carlsbad High School.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- The film debuts Monday, February 9 at the AMC La Jolla at 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$7.50.
- Bonnie and Ellis Diamond and Candice and Bob Fagan of the Congregation Beth Am Holocaust committee have endorsed and supported *We Must Remember*. Please join them at Congregation Beth Am on Sunday, February 22 at 3:00 p.m. for a special event. To RSVP, call 858-481-8454.
- CHSTV students will appear at the United Jewish Federation of San Diego County's 2009 Yom Hashoah community Holocaust commemoration on Sunday, April 19 at 1:30 p.m. at the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center JACOBS FAMILY CAMPUS.