

Broadcast news students Dakota Adan (left) and Meagan Hurst discussed their morning telecast at Carlsbad High School. Dakota is one of 16 student filmmakers who created "We Must Remember," a Holocaust documentary. *John Gastaldo / Union-Tribune*

CARLSBAD

From Holocaust to hunger



Krista Mortland prepared her video camera to shoot footage at the site of the Birkenau concentration camp in Poland. "We Must Remember," a documentary about the Holocaust by Carlsbad High students, is being praised in Hollywood and on the national film festival circuit. *Doug Green*

Carlsbad High students who crafted a highly regarded documentary examine an issue closer to home

By **Bruce Lieberman**
STAFF WRITER

Dakota Adan has seen firsthand how a student film can make an impression not only on his peers but in the broader world outside his Carlsbad High School campus.

Dakota is one of 16 student filmmakers who created a documentary on the Holocaust, "We Must Remember," which is being praised in Hollywood and on the national film festival circuit.

The attention is inspiring students in Dakota's broadcast journalism class to tackle a more immediate and local subject over the next year: hunger in San Diego County.

The economic downturn has thrown many families into financial crises, and the Carlsbad teenagers say they have seen the seeds of their next project in lines snaking around food banks and homeless shelters.

"I love the fact that when you do films and tell a story, you can influence change," said junior Dakota, 17. "The really cool thing about this hunger film, I think, is going to be that this is local and, hopefully, if we draw attention to this we can get some of these people help."

Carlsbad High School has an award-winning broadcast news course taught

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Students polish their long-form storytelling skills

by Doug Green. Students broadcast a daily news show in the mornings, and teens are challenged to master every job associated with the TV news business — from reporting and editing to video production and anchoring the news live.

Green, a former English teacher, built the class into one of the most highly regarded high school broadcast journalism programs in the country. Green also teaches broadcast journalism at Valley Middle School.

The broadcast program's foray into filmmaking debuted with "We Must Remember," which students researched and filmed last year. The film is intended as a teaching tool for middle school teachers but has received praise far beyond educators.

The documentary follows the efforts of 16 Carlsbad High teenagers who made a film about the Holocaust. Punctuated by interviews with survivors, World War II veterans who liberated the camps, scholars and German students during two visits to Germany last spring, the film is a powerful historical record. It's also a chronicle of the teenagers' own discovery of one of the darkest chapters in human history.

The film project was supported by donations from the Leichtag Family Foundation, the Carlsbad Educational Foundation and numerous other organizations and individuals. The money, more than \$200,000, helped pay for high-quality video cameras and production equipment as well as trips to Washington, D.C., Germany and Poland.

The students researched archival footage and photographs

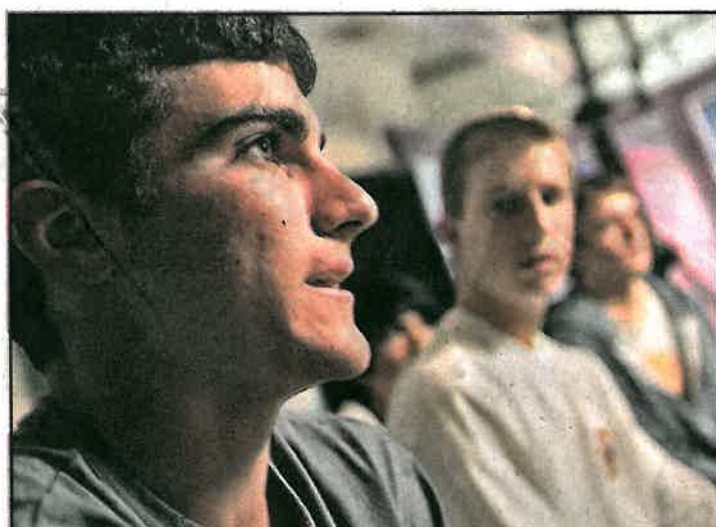


Carlsbad High student John Tipton filmed at Auschwitz in Poland. "These kids are trained to do news, 90-second news stories for morning broadcasts. This was a great opportunity to take those same storytelling skills and tell a longer-form story," broadcast news instructor Doug Green said. *Krista Mortland*

during a trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. They filmed visits to the Dachau concentration camp memorial site in Germany and the Auschwitz and Birkenau concentration camp sites in Poland.

A highlight of one trip was a visit to a German high school, where the Carlsbad youths met German teenagers, some of whom expressed frustration at being required to learn about the Holocaust every year throughout their schooling.

The Carlsbad teenagers approached the Holocaust project with an emotional maturity they hope to carry over into other efforts. "We went into it knowing we're filmmakers," said senior Max Miller, 18. "We have to be mentally prepared. We have to be getting the shots, and we have to keep our composure through it all."



Darren Scottt (left) discussed his experience filming "We Must Remember," a documentary about the Holocaust. Carlsbad High students interviewed survivors, World War II veterans who liberated the concentration camps, scholars and German students during two visits last spring. John Gastaldo / U-T

For Green, the project was a tremendous learning tool.

"These kids are trained to do news, 90-second news stories for morning broadcasts," he said. "This was a great opportunity to take those same storytelling skills and tell a longer-form story. ... It's reaffirmed my belief that it's a real powerful way to immerse students in a topic."

Of the 16 students originally involved in the production of "We Must Remember," six are now in college, and all of them have plans to study broadcast journalism or filmmaking, Green said.

Many of the students who remain have said they too want to pursue careers in the news or film business.

Branko Lustig, a producer for the 1993 film "Schindler's

List" and a Holocaust survivor, was so impressed by "We Must Remember" at a screening in Hollywood on March 30 that he invited the Carlsbad High students to show the documentary at a film festival in Zagreb, Croatia, in May.

"The movie is made perfectly," Lustig said. "They are very good, and I hope they will be good filmmakers — but especially journalists."

The film is particularly powerful because it's a story about young people discovering history, and its intended audience is other young people, Lustig said.

The film on the Holocaust has inspired younger students at Carlsbad High to dive into documentaries. The project examining hunger in San Diego County is motivating a lot of students, said Jessica Hampton, a 16-year-old junior in Green's broadcast journalism class.

"A lot of students weren't sure what it was going to be about," Jessica said of "We Must Remember." "But now that they've seen the finished product, a lot of people are really excited about it and want to be a part of what's going on."

The Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego has partnered with the Leichtag Family Foundation to study the issue of hunger in San Diego County. It plans to support the students' film project to raise awareness about how the economic downturn is changing the face of hunger in the region, said Marjory Kaplan, the Jewish Community Foundation's chief executive.

"We're just in beginning stages of discussing it ... but we know there are many more first-time users than ever before — more families, middle-class families, who have never had to ask for help."

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