

Make the Institute for Holocaust Education Part of Your Legacy

Case Statement

The Holocaust is the most well-documented example in modern history of what can happen when intolerance goes unchecked. While genocide and other forms of mass killing have existed since the earliest days of human history and, unfortunately, continue to exist in our day – the events of the Holocaust occurred in a society that was considered to be one of the most educated and cultured of its time. This serves as a warning that no country is immune from committing atrocities under certain circumstances and under certain types of leadership.

The IHE works throughout Nebraska to meet teachers and students where they are (both geographically and academically) and to provide experiences that will resonate with them for a lifetime. Our programs directly impact thousands of students, teachers and community members every year.

We encourage young people and adults alike to learn about the choices and actions taken by others – for good and for evil – so that they can understand the impact one person’s actions can have, and so that they will be better equipped to make their own decisions.

Each teacher the Institute for Holocaust Education trains will go on to impact many thousands of students over the course of his or her career. Our efforts reach both public and private schools, in grades 6-12, among all strata of Nebraska's diverse population.

The Institute for Holocaust Education has spent over a decade inspiring teachers, students, and community members with real-life stories of loss, tragedy, hope, perseverance, unimaginable cruelty and unparalleled heroism. Despite the fact that nearly 70 years have gone by since the end of World War II and the fact that we have already reached 120,000 students with lessons about this dark time in modern history -- our task is not complete. Individuals continue to treat their fellow human beings with indifference, apathy, and as only an "other" can be treated.

The programs of the IHE are of utmost importance to the entire Omaha community, including the Omaha Jewish community. In order to participate as sensitive, thoughtful, and informed members of society, our young people must be acquainted with the full history of WWII and the Holocaust. Teaching about the Holocaust demonstrates to young people how and why they must be “up standers”, rather than bystanders, to the negative elements of our society.

The Omaha Jewish community is a small minority within the city, and Holocaust education creates an entry point for all students to learn something about Jewish history and Jews in general. It also encourages dialogue about religious differences and all forms of diversity in Nebraska communities, many of which are extremely homogenous.

A legacy gift to the IHE will allow us to continue this essential work and to fulfill the two-pronged aspirations that underlie the vow to “never forget” – to honor the memory of those murdered by the Nazis and also to remain ever vigilant to curtail the prejudices and discrimination that are the stepping stones to further genocide.

Future generations of Omahans will reap the benefits of a more just and equitable society, as we continue to Inspire, to Honor, and to Educate.