

Scott takes AHS students on Holocaust field trip

5/23/2008 3:13:00 PM

By Sara Nelson

In early May, the US History classes of South and North campus went on an interesting field trip. They stepped into the Holocaust for 3 hours with Mr. Tim Scott.

Mr. Scott is known for his presentation; "Put out the Flame" which he presents to nearly sixty schools and groups a year.

"The presentation uses the Holocaust history to challenge listeners to examine and extinguish the 'flames' of bias, prejudice, and hatred in their own hearts."

It's given in two different parts. Part one required your imagination as he took you on your own "journey" through the Holocaust. It gave you a better understanding as to what the holocaust actually was and gave you some insight of what victims and their families might have experienced. Part two was more of a self reflection. Questions such as why as American's we should care about something that happened fifty some years ago, why it is relevant to us, and why it hasn't been put to rest already, were discussed and answered. The listeners were asked if they felt that the spirit of the holocaust was still alive today.

Scott immediately set the mood in the theater with his serious face and meaningful gestures. He asked us to put ourselves in the story he was going to take us on. He started you at the age of ten, a Jewish child in a small town in Ukraine. You had two little brothers, an older sister, two parents, and two grandparents. This was going to be your family throughout the story, if you paid attention, believe it or not, you would become attached to them. In the first phase of the story, you over hear your mother talking about the invasion of Germany and the beginning stages of Jewish prosecution. Being ten, you don't really know what she's talking about, but you never forget what she says. He then flashes forward to being a senior in high school with dreams of becoming a doctor. He describes your everyday life in your town in great detail. As time passes, surrounding countries are invaded by German forces and Jews are being sent away. Eventually, the German forces come to your town and as time passes, you and your family are sent away. The most powerful part of the story, in my opinion, came next; the cattle car transporting you and your family to the Concentration Camp where Scott went into incredible detail. The stench, the heat, the cold, the lack of water and food, death, and human waste were all described. I felt as if I was literally suffering. Finally, you and your family arrive at the camp and are immediately separated. You and your father are pushed into one line, your mother and two little siblings into another. Your older sister is taken away to a separate line, and your grandfather is taken away after close inspection of his arm that was injured during the war. He goes on to describe the "cleaning" process, where the people were stripped of their clothes, jewelry and hair. Then they were put into freezing cold showers where most believed their life was going to come to an end. Your grandfather was killed; his skeleton taken to a museum in Germany to portray his mutilated arm. Your sister was taken to a different building where she was repeatedly raped nightly, eventually meeting her death. The story was filled with

descriptive words and real life events. Mr. Scott wasn't timid with his portrayal of the camps and the brutal violence that occurred behind their walls.

Once the story was brought to an end, silence filled the theater. No one really knew how to react after hearing such a mortifying tale. Scott went right into part two where he asked us to relate what we just heard to our lives today. He told us all to "look into the mirror" and examine ourselves. Were we guilty of such hatred and persecution? "Is the spirit of the Holocaust alive and well today?" he asked us. I didn't believe it did, and I know that many of my classmates agreed. How could the holocaust be alive today? There weren't gas chambers and mass killings happening in the United States. Mr. Scott managed to prove us all very wrong. He showed us different articles that polluted the newspapers and magazines almost daily with different hate crimes that were happening all over the country. Not only that, but he explained to us that racial jokes to simple discriminations at school all helped continue the spirit of the holocaust. This made a very big impact on some, and went in one ear out the other for others. He then went on to light a candle that signified the holocaust. He explained to us that we were the only ones that had the power to start another holocaust as well as prevent another one from happening. It was all up to us.

Mr. Scott puts his heart and soul into his presentation, and it definitely showed. When time was about up, he read a few response letters that he had received from previous students. Some agreed with Scott, giving many examples of how they viewed the holocaust to be alive today. Others were just the opposite. Many were filled with vile language and hurtful slurs towards Mr. Scott and his beliefs. The US History classes were asked to write him response letters as well, some were even taken for a grade. He received both positive and negative ones from Arrowhead, all giving him their honest opinion. The following are excerpts from some letters written by Arrowhead Students.

"In my mind, the Holocaust cannot be compared to the discrimination or racism at Arrowhead High School, in fact at any high school. What happened in Germany is not being replayed here at Arrowhead. People are not being starved to death or murdered because of their race."

"In the end of your presentation you asked us a question, "Is the spirit of the Holocaust still alive today and well at Arrowhead?" When you asked this I immediately said no. Then I thought about it and what you were asking was not just about the Jewish but racism, discrimination, victimization, and tragedy against any race, religion, or anyone different than yourself."

"I think that the spirit of the Holocaust is alive at Arrowhead. Different types of people sit at different tables. Asians at one, gangsters at one, skaters at one, and popular kids at another. Why can't we just all be friends? I always hear racist comments in the halls or even in class. There really is no way to stop discrimination in schools, but you could help by not laughing at the jokes/comments that people make."

"The life of the holocaust still does, and in a way, will always live and reign in the hearts within us. Like our fathers, and their forefathers, we were born with the idea of a lesser quality, and that flame will burn until extinguished, not by time, hope, or love, but by someone stepping up and showing them that another holocaust will bring nothing but hate and restlessness to another stricken country and to stop it before it starts."

These are just a few ideas from hundreds of letters headed to Mr. Scott. I believe that he really did make an impact on quite a few people that day. When looking back on that tragic time, so much more can really be taken out of it. Maybe take a look at yourself and see what kind of person you are. Hate is, without a doubt, easier to give than love. Mr. Scott isn't trying to say you should love and be kind to everyone, but you

definitely don't need to go out of your way to make someone feel bad or discriminate against them. Do you yourself see the spirit still alive today? And if you do, what can you do to make it better?

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