

Dr. Martin S. Karp, Board Member

**SUBJECT: COMMEMORATION OF APRIL 11 THROUGH APRIL 18, 2010
 AS DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF THE
 HOLOCAUST TO BE OBSERVED IN ALL OF MIAMI-DADE
 COUNTY'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
 ENGAGEMENT**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK: EDUCATION**

The United States Congress established the Days of Remembrance as our nation's annual commemoration of the Holocaust and created the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum as a permanent living memorial to the victims. This year, Days of Remembrance take place from April 11 through April 18, 2010. In commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps, the Museum has designated Stories of Freedom: What You Do Matters as the theme for the 2010 observance.

The deliberate and systemic extermination of six million Jews and the murder of millions of other people during World War II simply because they were considered "unworthy" to live is one of the most horrifying events in human history. Each year, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington, D.C. declares Holocaust Days of Remembrance. To that end, Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) through the Division of Social Sciences and Life Skills has engaged our students and staff in programs that follow this year's theme.

Each year, this District recognizes the Holocaust in an effort to teach children better understanding of our multicultural community so that such crimes are not repeated against any group. In June the Summer Holocaust Teacher Institute sponsored by The University of Miami School of Education will be held. The 5-day Institute will be attended by M-DCPS social studies, language arts and art teachers with scholars such as Dr. Michael Berenbaum, who is the Founding Project Director of USHMM and a renowned author and scholar on the Holocaust.

Social Sciences and Life Skills, through the leadership of Dr. Miriam Klein Kassenoff, recently offered an Advanced Holocaust Symposium for over 50 M-DCPS teachers where instructional information was provided on Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance) and its commemorations in schools. An instructional resource packet on the Holocaust is being developed by the Social Sciences and Life Skills Department and will be forwarded to all schools this month. Additionally, the Department will work with staff from the Holocaust Memorial on planning a Holocaust Education Week program for the community to be held April 7-13 2010. In addition a community-wide commemoration for Holocaust Remembrance Day will be held on April 11, 2010, at the Holocaust Memorial.

The Holocaust demonstrates one of the greatest lessons about individual responsibility—that each of us has the choice to act or not to act, and that there are consequences to our decisions.

The evidence of these heinous crimes against humanity demonstrates that the Holocaust was not inevitable; it happened because ordinary people became accomplices to the process of targeting groups of people and eventually mass murder. Whether through sheer indifference or motivated by career advancement, peer approval, or anti-Semitic prejudice, in the long span between words of hate and the machinery of death at camps like Auschwitz, many had the opportunity to affect the outcome. Neighbors and friends, doctors and judges, businessman and clergy, educators and policemen and, ultimately even other governments chose not to act. Others including government workers and professionals enabled and assisted in the implementation of policies and practices targeting Jews and others.

Remembrance obligates us not only to memorialize those who were killed, but also to reflect on what could have been done to save them. Those who survived tell us that as many faced their horrific deaths their last words were “Remember us. Tell our story.” Survivors promised that they would and that never again would the world stand silent or look the other way.

The Holocaust and recent events in Rwanda and Darfur remind us of the fragility of democracy and the need for citizens to be both well-informed and vigilant about the preservation of democratic ideals. An engaged citizenry that embraces the power of the individual to make a difference is the frontline defense for strong, just societies.

The events of the Holocaust remind us of the need to take action when genocide threatens today and to respect and honor those who do not share our religion, beliefs or customs. What we do—or choose not to do—matters.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
DR. MARTIN S. KARP:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, commemorates April 11-18, 2010 as Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust to be observed in all of Miami-Dade County's public schools.