

Dr. Martin Karp, Board Member

**SUBJECT: COMMEMORATION OF APRIL 19 THROUGH APRIL 26, 2009
 AS DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE OF THE VICTIMS OF THE
 HOLOCAUST TO BE OBSERVED IN ALL OF MIAMI-DADE
 COUNTY'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

REVISED

**COMMITTEE: INSTRUCTIONAL EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY
 ENGAGEMENT**

LINK TO DISTRICT

**STRATEGIC PLAN: INCREASE STUDENT EXPOSURE AND UNDERSTANDING OF
 GLOBAL ISSUES AND ECONOMY**

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 19 through April 26, 2009. This year's theme for the 2009 observance is Never Again: What You Do Matters.

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 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 March, training was conducted for over 70 teachers in partnership with the Israel Yad Vashem Museum and Anti-Defamation League and the University of Miami. Recently, a Holocaust Remembrance program with M-DCPS was held at the Holocaust Memorial on Miami Beach. On May 18, 2009 in the School Board Auditorium, a multimedia interactive program, Living Voices—Anne Frank will be presented for District staff. From June 15-19, 2009 the Summer Holocaust Teacher Institute for M-DCPS teachers sponsored by The University of Miami School of Education will be held under the direction of Dr. Miriam Klein Kassenoff, M-DCPS Holocaust Education Specialist and Founding Director and teacher of the Institute.

In addition, schools throughout the county receive an updated curriculum packet from the Division of Social Sciences and Life Skills and Holocaust survivors visit schools on request throughout April and May.

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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 KARP:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, commemorates April 19-26, 2009 as Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust to be observed in all of Miami-Dade County's public schools.

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