

USC Shoah Foundation

The Institute for Visual History and Education

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USC Shoah Foundation Announces '100 Days to Inspire Respect'

Los Angeles, Dec. 14, 2016 – Borrowing from a tradition set by President Franklin D. Roosevelt when he assumed office in 1933 and announced an aggressive agenda for his first 100 days, USC Shoah Foundation will offer *100 Days to Inspire Respect* starting Jan. 20, 2017, when America swears in its 45th president.

100 Days to Inspire Respect is aimed at junior and senior high school teachers and their students and will run through April 29. For those 100 days, the Education Department at USC Shoah Foundation will release a new IWitness activity, academic resource or professional-development opportunity based on testimony from the Institute's Visual History Archive. There are no better standard-bearers to inspire respect and combat hatred and intolerance than Holocaust and genocide survivors. As the six testimony collections in the Visual History Archive lay bare, fear, hatred, intolerance and individual acts of prejudice can escalate to widespread discrimination, before intensifying into biased-based violence.

IWitness is a free educational website that provides testimony-based learning experiences for students that inspire compassion and critical thinking, leading them to become more thoughtful and active citizens.

Teaching with testimony provides students with firsthand accounts of some of the darkest moments of history. Survivors sharing their harrowing stories and students observing the emotion on the survivors' faces are powerful ways to teach about the human cost of intolerance, hatred and indifference from a deeply personal perspective.

When used appropriately in the classroom, testimony can:

- Provide a human face to the past
- Engage students to critically think about universal themes of tolerance, diversity and justice from an individual perspective
- Sensitize students to the importance of story as a valuable source of knowledge

Monitoring and evaluation of IWitness has shown that it is effecting attitudinal change in both students and teachers. Students also demonstrate gains in critical thinking, empathy and willingness to act.

Following one of the most divisive political campaigns on record, teachers have been reporting an increase in hateful intimidation and harassment across the country. The Southern Poverty Law Center reports there have been over 900 reports of harassment and intimidation on the streets, in homes, at offices and in classrooms.

“After a long, contentious campaign season that saw tempers flare on all sides, *100 Days to Inspire Respect* will offer a chance for students to reflect on what it means to be a decent and civil member of an ever-changing and complex society filled with different points of view,” said USC Shoah Foundation Director of Education Kori Street.

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About USC Shoah Foundation

USC Shoah Foundation — The Institute for Visual History and Education is dedicated to making audio-visual interviews with survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides, a compelling voice for education and action. The Institute’s current collection of more than 54,000 eyewitness testimonies contained within its Visual History Archive[®] preserves history as told by the people who lived it, and lived through it. Housed at the University of Southern California, within the Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the Institute works with partners around the world to advance scholarship and research, to provide resources and online tools for educators, and to disseminate the testimonies for educational purposes.

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