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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **USC Shoah Foundation Unveils IWitness 2018 in Preparation for New School Year**

LOS ANGELES - June 26, 2017 – While students across America enjoy their summer vacation, the education department at USC Shoah Foundation is busily making major new features to its award-winning IWitness educational website for educators and their students that will be ready by the time school resumes in the fall.

Coming on the heels of a successful initiative, 100 Days to Inspire Respect, these new offerings will further support educators around the world by building new and innovative ways to inspire respect and empower students to take positive action in the world.

The first new addition is IWitness360, a new space in IWitness for virtual reality films and supporting educational resources that made its debut today at the International Society for Technology in Education conference in San Antonio.

The first VR film available, titled *Lala*, tells the true story of a dog that brightened the lives of a family interned by the Nazis in the Lodz Ghetto during the Holocaust.

Narrated by 88-year-old Roman Kent, the 360-degree VR film traces the movements of his Jewish family – and their dog – when Kent was a boy, starting with their idyllic life at a home in the Polish countryside, and concluding at the Lodz Ghetto, where they were sent upon discovery.

Developed in partnership with Discovery Communications, Discovery Education and Global Nomads Group, *Lala* is packaged with activities, testimony clips, and other resources that explore topics such as stereotypes, bystanders, oppression and resistance.

IWitness360 is just one of several upgrades USC Shoah Foundation is bringing to IWitness this summer before school resumes in the fall.

Others upgrades include:

- A new interactive feature called IWalks, which enables students to take virtual or on-location walking tours through neighborhoods in certain cities around the world while viewing testimonies from the Visual History Archive on their mobile devices – intercut with historical images, maps and other historical artifacts – telling the first-person accounts of what happened in those same neighborhoods decades earlier.
- New language-specific portals, which bring together robust content for teachers and students in several languages including Hungarian, Spanish, Czech, Polish and Ukrainian.

“This is a challenging time to be a young person, but we know that IWitness can have a lasting positive effect,” said USC Shoah Foundation Director of Education Dr. Claudia Wiedeman. “These new activities build on the 100 Days to Inspire Respect initiative to help students become better people and to do their part to build a better world.”

Read details about these and other new addition to IWitness each Friday at [sfi.usc.edu](http://sfi.usc.edu).

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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.