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Contact: Josh Grossberg 213-740-6065
josh.grossberg@usc.edu
Rob Kuznia 213-740-0965
rkuznia@usc.edu

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**USC Shoah Foundation releases *Lala*, a VR film about the bond between a family and their dog during the Holocaust**

Los Angeles, Sept. 28, 2017 – USC Shoah Foundation is announcing the release of *Lala*, a virtual reality film and educational resource that tells the true story of a dog that brightened the lives of a family interned by the Nazis in a ghetto in Poland during the Holocaust.

[*Lala*](http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/Sites/360/) is both an immersive film for general audiences and an educational tool for students as young as grade five. The film is accessible in [IWitness](http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/), the award-winning educational website from USC Shoah Foundation that uses testimonies – personal stories – from survivors and witnesses of genocide to teach students worldwide the importance of compassion and in bringing about positive societal change.

Developed by USC Shoah Foundation in partnership with Discovery Communications and Discovery Education, the film is packaged with activities, testimony clips and other resources for teachers in grades five through seven.

Offering a 360-degree experience, the six-minute film is a product of USC Shoah Foundation’s [Stronger Than Hate](http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/News/Default.aspx?nid=13774ae5-9999-436e-8ee8-2193c92e5e69#sthash.z5XNcfyj.dpbs) initiative to support educators by providing them with tools and training that will help educators, student leaders and policy makers engage audiences responsibly and confidently in discussions around hate and intolerance.

Narrated by 88-year-old Holocaust survivor Roman Kent, a lifetime member of USC Shoah Foundation’s Board of Councilors, *Lala* is based on the children’s book he penned, “My Dog Lala.”

In the film, Kent appears as he is in the present, and alternately as the animated version of himself as a child during flashback sequences.

Kent shares the story of his family’s dog Lala, who did something extraordinary during the Holocaust. When he, his siblings and parents were forced to move into the Lodz ghetto in Poland, they left Lala and her new puppies behind since dogs were not allowed. But each night she appeared at their apartment in the ghetto, having managed to track them down from miles away, and stayed with them until morning, when she would return home to her puppies.

Every night for weeks Lala followed this routine, until the family was forced to hand her over to the Nazis since it was against the law for Jews to own dogs.

The film can also be viewed on a smartphone with a VR viewer, on a smartphone or mobile device on its own, or on a computer screen through YouTube, which enables viewers to click on a scene with a cursor and view the film in 360 degrees.

“*Lala* is a remarkable work of art that takes viewers on a emotional journey, no matter their age,” said Stephen Smith, the Finci-Viterbi Endowed Executive Director at USC Shoah Foundation. “But it also offers a solution to a problem confronted by many educators: how does one introduce students to the horrors of the Holocaust, genocide and unchecked hatred in a way that is age-appropriate?”

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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 about 55,000 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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