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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Twenty-Five Teachers Chosen to Participate in ‘Auschwitz: The Past is Present’ Professional Development Program**

***Offered by USC Shoah Foundation and Discovery Education in support of the official 70th anniversary commemoration of the liberation of the former German Nazi concentration and death camp.***

LOS ANGELES, Nov. 06, 2014 – Twenty-five teachers from around the world have been chosen by USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education and Discovery Education to participate in a unique professional development program in Poland as part of *Auschwitz: The Past is Present*, a global communications and education program that will support the official observance of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on Jan. 27, 2015. This unique educator professional development opportunity is just one component of the education initiative between Shoah Foundation and Discovery Education. The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the International Auschwitz Council are the organizers of the official commemoration event.

The educators from 11 different countries representing four continents will attend a four-day workshop designed to deepen their understanding of the historical landscape of Poland before, during and after the Holocaust and increase participant knowledge of authentic sites including Auschwitz-Birkenau.

During the program teachers will work with IWitness, USC Shoah Foundation’s educational website that brings testimonies from survivors and witnesses of genocide, including the Holocaust, from the Institute’s Visual History Archive to secondary schools via multimedia-learning activities. Sixteen activities based on testimony from survivors and witnesses of Auschwitz will be available in IWitness by the official commemoration. Four new activities have been released to date. Teachers will also have the unprecedented opportunity to meet with a large number of Holocaust survivors prior to attending the commemoration ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

“Survivors shared their stories because they understood how vital it was that future generations never forget what happened at places like Auschwitz,” Said Dr. Kori Street, USC Shoah Foundation Director of Education. “By bringing teachers to a place where so many atrocities occurred is a way to show survivors that we take seriously our responsibility of keeping their voices strong forever.”

United States educators are:

* Karen Wells, Midland High School, Midland School District, Pleasant Plains, Ark.
* Laurie Schaefer, Mount Tabor High School, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Winston Salem, N.C.
* Soljane Quiles, Highlander Charter Middle/High School, Warren, R.I.
* Laura Pritchard, Nansemond Suffolk Academy, Suffolk, Va.
* Barbara Fowler, Turning Point Learning Center, Emporia, Kan.
* Steven Howell, James A. Garfield High School, James A. Garfield Local School District, Garrettsville, Ohio
* Jeannie Woods, Fort Payne Middle School, Fort Payne School District, Fort Payne, Ala.
* Sabina Kobinski, Archbishop Molloy High School, Jamaica, N.Y.
* Christa Calkins, Campbell-Savona Junior/Senior High School, Campbell-Savona Central School District, Campbell, N.Y.
* Merinda Davis, Lakeridge Junior High School, Alpine School District, Orem, Utah.
* Keith Stringfellow, Charlotte Islamic Academy, Charlotte, N.C.
* Matthew Vincent, Bath County High School, Bath County School District, Owingsville, Ky.
* Bobbie Downs, Burlington County Alternative High School, Burlington County Special Services School District, Pemberton, N.J.
* Emily Bengels, Readington Middle School, Readington Township Public Schools, Whitehouse Station, N.J.
* Tracy Sockalosky, Wilson Middle School, Natick Public Schools, Natick, Mass.

International educators are:

* Ingrid Alexovics, Hungry Pecsi Radnoti Miklos Economic Secondary School, Pecs, Hungary.
* Anna Krisztina Berecz, Liceul Teoretic, Odorheiu Seculesc, Romania.
* Christine Cole, Shepparton High School, Shepparton, Australia.
* Miljenko Hajdarvoć, Cakovec High School, Cakovec, Croatia.
* Larry Mikulcik, William Derby School, Strasbourg, Saskatchewan, Canada.
* Adam Musial, Zespol Szkol Ogolnoksztalcacych Spolecznego Toiwarzystwa Oswiatowego, Krakow, Poland.
* Steven Richardson, The Ripley Academy, Ripley, Derbyshire, United Kingdom.
* Johanna Soderholm, Åbo Akademi University, Vaasa, Finland.
* Daniela Vitaskova, Obchodní akademie a hotelová škola Třebíč, Trebic, Czech Republic
* Davis Wamonhi, Kagarama Secondary School, Kigali, Rwanda.

Select content from IWitness will soon be available to Discovery Education Streaming and Discovery Education Social Studies Techbook™ subscribers.

“Discovery Education is honored to partner with an amazing organization like USC Shoah Foundation to provide this powerful, life-changing professional development opportunity to educators across the world,” said Bill Goodwyn, President and CEO of Discovery Education. “This experience will build educators’ digital-media literacy skills and give them the tools to provide engaging, primary-source resources to their students to strengthen the understanding and importance of remembering the Holocaust.”

The *Auschwitz: The Past is Present* ITeach Professional Development program will begin in Warsaw on Jan. 23, 2015 at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews and conclude at the official ceremonies at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum on Jan. 27, 2015.

By working together on this important project, USC Shoah Foundation and Discovery Education are filling an ever-present need to keep history alive for generations to come. Interacting with testimony as a primary source in IWitness shows young people how the past informs our present and what this means to students today.

USC Shoah Foundation and Discovery Education are also creating an exclusive Virtual Field Trip to bring the 70th anniversary commemoration directly into classrooms to provide students everywhere with a deeper understanding of the continued importance of the Holocaust.

Available to schools across the United States and globally in the spring of 2015, the Virtual Field Trip will provide students with firsthand accounts from survivors returning to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and motivate them to engage in a meaningful dialogue about history and its relevance today.

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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 nearly 53,000 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. To learn more, visit [sfi.usc.edu](http://sfi.usc.edu).

**About Discovery Education**

Discovery Education is the global leader in standards-based digital content and professional development for K-12, transforming teaching and learning with award-winning digital textbooks, multimedia content that supports the implementation of Common Core, professional development, assessment tools, and the largest professional learning community of its kind. Available in over half of all U.S. schools and primary schools in England, community colleges and in 50 countries around the world, Discovery Education partners with districts, states and like-minded organizations to captivate students, empower teachers, and transform classrooms with customized solutions that accelerate academic achievement. Discovery Education is powered by Discovery Communications (NASDAQ: DISCA, DISCB, DISCK), the number one nonfiction media company in the world. Explore the future of education at [www.discoveryeducation.com](http://www.discoveryeducation.com).