

Press Release



Fermanagh District Council

28 January 2008

“After Today, I Hope You Remember Her Memories”

Eva Clarke, one of the youngest survivors of the Holocaust told her story to over 250 local schoolchildren and adults during her two day visit to Enniskillen. Recounting her family’s story and her own remarkable survival she said: *“I am a Survivor but only just.”*

She explained how her mother a Czechoslovakian Jew, living in Prague met her father, a German Jew who had moved from Germany to escape persecution. After the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939, all Jews in Prague had to abide by a curfew, wear the yellow star and were prohibited from being in certain public spaces or at public events. Shortly after Eva’s parents were married, they were transported to a Jewish ghetto and transit camp at Terezin outside Prague where they stayed for 3 years. During this time, Eva’s mother became pregnant but her child, a boy, died of pneumonia shortly after his birth.

Eva explained to her audience: *“His death meant my life. After his death, my mother became pregnant again with me and shortly afterwards she was transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. If she had arrived there holding a baby, both she and the baby would have been sent directly to the gas chambers. Instead, when she arrived, the Nazis selected her to work at the camp and she survived the selection.”*

Eva went on to explain how her father was shot dead in Auschwitz in January 1945, without ever learning that his wife was pregnant again. Eva's mother stayed at Auschwitz for only 9 days before being transported to an armaments factory at Freiberg outside Dresden. She remained here for 6 months working with other prisoners to build V1 rockets for the German Luftwaffe. In April 1945 she was sent to Mauthausen camp. It was on her arrival at this camp, on 29 April, that Eva was born. Three days later the camp was liberated by the US army.

Eva explained why she travels around the world telling her story. ***"I tell my story to remember all those millions and millions who died in the Holocaust. I tell my family's story to enable us all to remember the story of the Holocaust from an individual's perspective so as to prevent it from happening anywhere else. Finally, I do it to combat racism and to show people where racism ultimately leads."***

As Catherine Scott, Learning & Access Officer, Fermanagh County Museum explained to the children attending Eva's talk:

"In essence all history is memory - be it your history, my history or the history of a nation. For historians or students of history there are many sources that we can consult but without doubt, the best way to make the past relevant to people today is to listen to a 'living memory'. Eva Clarke shares her family's & friends' memories in the hope that after today, you will remember her memories."

Holocaust Memorial Day is commemorated on 27th January each year. This date marks the liberation of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. The day provides us with an opportunity not only to remember the past but to reflect on the continued relevance of the Holocaust in today's world, reminding us of the horrors of Rwanda and Kosovo.

This event was supported by the Community Relations Unit (OFMDFM).

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