

The Alumni Podium

Often hearing from graduates of the Holocaust/Genocide Project, we posted a letter and a short questionnaire to our discussion forum so that we could find out some specific information about where life has led former HGP members, what they're doing now, and how and if the HGP affected their life choices. The results, so far, are very interesting. Here is a sample of the questions and answers we received. Our goal is to keep everyone "in the link" through telecommunications. If you are a grad, and would like to reply, write to us!

Questions for Alumni: Please use these questions as a "guideline" to formulate your reply in a paragraph or two. Again, thanks for your help.

1. Name
2. Country
3. What are you doing now?
4. When did you participate in the HGP and what was your role in it? Did your participation in the HGP have an impact on your school experience?
5. Why did you join the HGP; was it what you thought it was going to be? (Explain briefly).
6. Did you take part in An End to Intolerance (magazine), the Spielberg Shoah interviews, or the Study Missions? How was that experience?
7. Have you taken part in workshops to explain the HGP? How were these experiences for you ? for others?
8. Since the tragedy of 9/11, what new challenges are we facing that would be appropriate for the HGP to focus on?
9. One of the stated goals of the HGP is to educate ourselves and others in order to take an active role to make a more peaceful world. Did the HGP meet this goal for you? How?
10. Did the HGP have an impact on who you are today? Explain, please.
11. As an "Alumni", have you stayed "connected to the HGP in any way? How?
12. Are there any other related matters, stories or experiences that you would like to share with us on the HGP?
13. Are you aware of the situation in Sudan/Darfur, and have you been active to alleviate the problems there?

My name is **Deanna Wallach** and I was born and raised in the United States. I am currently finishing my junior year at Drew University in New Jersey. Last semester I was studying abroad in London, England. I started participating in the HGP when I was in my first year of high school, I think 9th grade. I joined it because I wanted to see if something I could do in my school could have a unique lasting effect on the rest of the world and to make friends from unusual places.

I was a contributor to the actual magazine, *An End to Intolerance*, in Cold Spring Harbor High School, and I also kept in touch with several different kids in the program in other parts of the world. I had one friend in particular from Sri Lanka that I've kept in touch with even though neither of us still work with HGP. It had a great impact on my high school experience by helping to give me broader perspective on what sorts of social, racial, and economic problems were happening in different parts of the world that I wouldn't normally get to hear about or be exposed to.

Since 9/11 I think that some of the focus of HGP has shifted, and should shift to issues based more on understanding others' points of view and that there should be special emphasis on accepting and appreciating different religions and their opinions, without stereotyping. HGP definitely helped educate me about issues around the world that I would never have learned from the nightly news or any other popular media source. Even today its impact over the way I view controversial issues about race, religion, and poverty (just to name a few) is huge. I am still

thankful that I joined HGP, and I hope other kids like me can get a lot out of the experience to help themselves and others in the future.

As a sophomore at Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, I, **Sevan Ani Angacian**, have the distinct honor of applying my learned skills acquired from the Holocaust Genocide Project in my daily life, both academic and otherwise. I am majoring in international politics with a concentration in trans-state actors in world politics and can honestly say most of my closest friends at college are international students. Though I was born in the United States, I am the daughter of Armenian immigrants and have always felt a strong connection to the world outside of my own town in which I was raised. Today, I live in Washington DC, one of the most diverse cities in the US that can truly be called international on many levels, as can Georgetown University. Furthermore, I am a member of the Delta Phi Epsilon Professional Foreign Service Sorority, whose main focus is professional development through speaker events and workshops for young women who are interested in careers in international affairs. I am also a member of STAND, the acronym for Students Taking Action Now: Darfur, an organization begun at Georgetown that is now associated with another 200 colleges and high schools throughout the US and Canada. Through this

group I have learned a great deal about how to provide a voice to those who cannot do so for themselves, such as the Darfurian population. The Sudanese people have directly benefited from the work of STAND and I am proud to say that HGP is one of the strongest influences for my having joined the STAND cause.

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An End to Intolerance

June, 2005



60 Years After Liberation: How Far Have We Come?

The other major reason for my interest in international human rights is because of my own ancestry. My family was victim to the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in which 1.5 million Armenians were slaughtered by the Young Turks in eastern Anatolia. The HGP provided the precise venue for me to express myself and the historical truths that I have always felt the need to write about. I am currently the treasurer of the Armenian Student's Association at Georgetown University and continue to use what I learned in HGP during my interactions with other members of the Association and those outside of the group as well.

I first met Mrs. Honey Kern, HGP's Project Coordinator, when I was her student in her tenth grade English class. I have since formed an invaluable friendship with her, one of the most compassionate and altruistic people I have ever met. In tenth grade I contributed to the magazine, as I have continued to do every year even though I am not a student in the high school any longer. In eleventh grade, I took the position of the senior editor of the human rights section and by my senior year I became the Executive Editor of the magazine, a position that I cherished greatly and find myself talking about to others constantly. What I learned and advanced through my work in the HGP led directly to my decision to go to a university that values global mindedness

and diversity. Though I can no longer attend the weekly meetings for HGP, I am fortunate enough to remain close friends with Mrs. Kern and with the organization as a whole.

The Holocaust Genocide Project is an enormously rewarding endeavor that I would immediately, and without caution, recommend to all those who are interested in educating themselves and others in order to take an active role to make a more peaceful world through tolerance and learning. It is essential that we learn to take a broader and more comprehensive view of events that have occurred in the past, and learn from them to make a brighter future. I had the honor of choosing the cover to the magazine for the 2004 issue and entitled it "Contemplate the Past to Change the Future." I think that is the most important lesson to be learned from participating in the Project. One must not deny or forget one's past if the future is to be saved from intolerance and injustice.

My name is **Christopher Lackert** from Cold Spring Harbor, New York USA. I am currently attending law school in Omaha, Nebraska after finishing my bachelor and master degrees at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

I participated in the HGP from 10th-12th grade where I helped edit articles for *An End to Intolerance*, wrote articles, engaged in the "Adopt A Survivor" program, and went on the

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JUNE, 2003

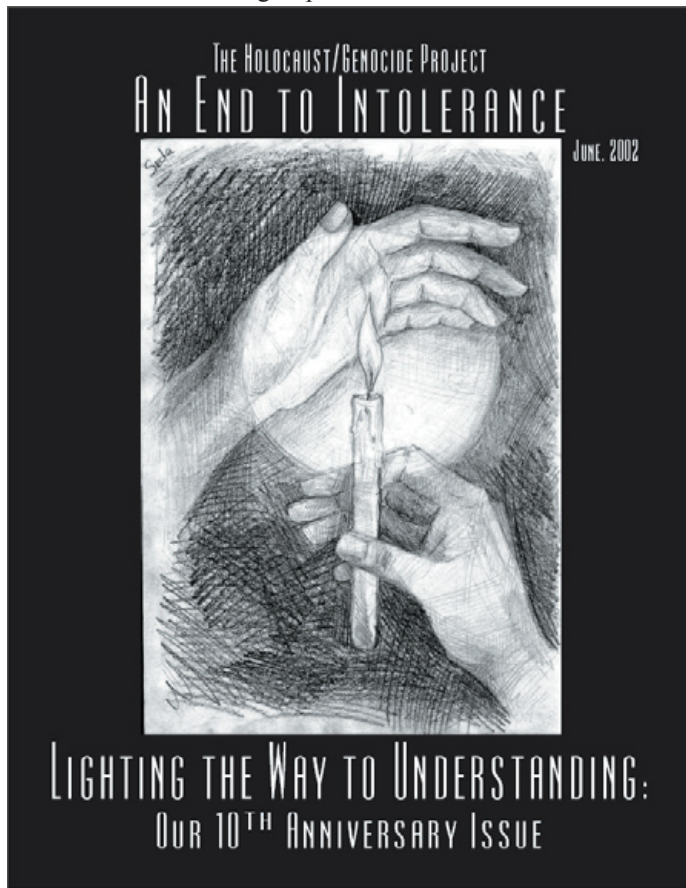


REACHING OUT TO ONE ANOTHER

Eastern Europe Study Mission with Mrs. Kern and my fellow classmates in April, 1999. My participation in HGP made me think about the importance of understanding other cultures, engaging in discussion of complex issues among different people, traveling, and understanding how history still shapes our world today.

I joined HGP because I thought it would be interesting to learn about what the group had to teach and it turned out very

the Netherlands, Italy, Finland, Austria) knowing only English, French, and German. I plan on expanding my knowledge even further on other parts of the world through my studies and future travels. I am aware of the situation in Sudan, but have not been active to help with the problems there. As an Alumni, I have not stayed extremely active with the HGP due to my current studies, but would like to remain informed about current events. Best of luck in the future!



well for me. It brought me to Eastern Europe and allowed me to communicate with students in other parts of the world about the important issues HGP deals with. I took part in *An End to Intolerance* by writing and editing articles for the journal along with engaging in the "Adopt A Survivor" program. Both endeavors were excellent for me since they helped enhance my writing ability and allowed me to speak one-on-one with a Holocaust survivor, which I have not been able to do again to this day.

Since 9/11, the most important thing to focus on is still helping students understand other people who are different from them, be it from religion, culture, nationality, sexual orientation, race, political/economic status, etc. and helping students see that people from other parts of the globe are not really different from them. Also, since 9/11, we need to understand different world views about how different people perceive how the world functions on a day to day basis. HGP helped me expand my desire to travel and explore other cultures. Since my travels to Eastern Europe (which included seeing Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic) with HGP, I have lived and worked in Germany (for a German law firm) and Switzerland (for the International Labor Organization) in addition to seeing most of Europe (France, England, Belgium,

My name is **Katelyn Pulling**, and I am currently a student at the College of Charleston, South Carolina, USA. I joined HGP in 10th grade and submitted an article on a novel that we had read in school. In the years that followed, I continued to submit work as well as being a Section editor of the global magazine, *An End to Intolerance*.

In my senior year, my friend and I were in charge of this part of the magazine. Being part of this magazine was a unique experience because I was able to be part of something in high school that many people never get the chance to do in their lives.

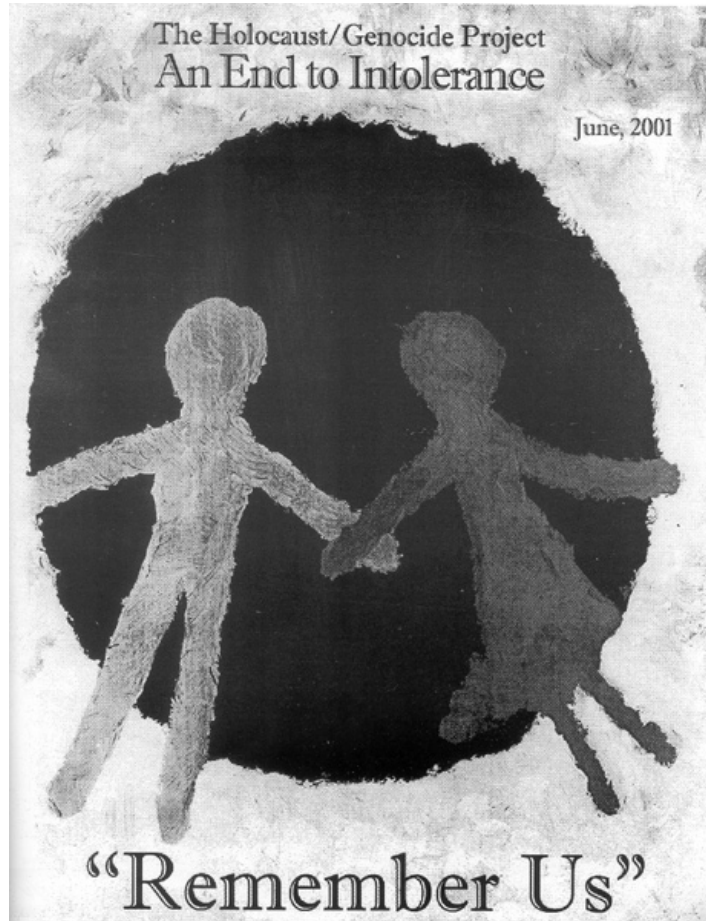
I joined HGP because of one of my friends. She kept telling me about the magazine and what HGP was all about and it struck my interest. When I first joined, I had no idea about how extensive the network is that HGP is involved with. We are not only in the USA; we participate with students all over the world. We are educating other students and learning from their experiences and countries even countries who don't believe the Holocaust ever existed. I learned so much! Not only about the Holocaust, but about life in other countries. I became more aware of the world around me and what is happening in it. So, yes, HGP did meet the goal.

Since the tragedy of 9/11, there are new challenges such as hate crimes in our own country, as well as those in other countries against certain religious or cultural groups. HGP had a huge impact on the person that I am today. Being on the magazine and doing interviews and reading all of these articles had me step out of my comfort zone. I had the experience to do an interview with a Holocaust survivor, and it was an extremely humbling experience. To hear the first hand experiences that this one woman had really put everything in perspective for me. You can read all the books you want, but to hear it first hand is a whole different story. I am also more educated on the whole subject and am able to talk about it with factual information and hopefully educate others as well.

I am **Susan Coyne** and attend Bowdoin College in the USA. Right now I am studying abroad at the Kyoto Center for Japanese Studies, (a Stanford-based Center for Japanese Language and Culture), for the duration of my junior year. I'm learning a lot about Japanese religion, family life, and society.

I participated in the HGP from tenth to twelfth grade (2001-2003), and I was primarily involved in the Creative Arts section. I contributed charcoal drawings and poems during the course of my time with HGP, and in my senior year oversaw the Creative Arts section.

I would certainly say that HGP had a wonderful impact on my high-school experience, largely because, although general academic education is certainly worthy, it doesn't necessarily tend to encourage us to branch out beyond ourselves in the form of social service. HGP is a perfect outlet in which we can learn that, beyond our community, there is an often-afflicted world, and, even more, that we can do something to help it. Often we unwittingly fall into complacency or ignorance concerning world events, and organizations like HGP help to pull us out of our insular world into a more global, proactive mindset.



Since the tragedy of 9/11, the nature of American international relations has changed dramatically. It is obvious that, at least in Europe and North Africa, the American image and its position as world leader has faltered, as we are criticized abroad for our militaristic tendencies and for putting our own (often economic) interests above the welfare of other nations. It seems to me that it is imperative to funnel more energy, money, and time into looking at the real tragedies going on in the world, including the genocides going on in Darfur, and even the multifarious issue of funding for public schools. America, if she wants to regain her former position as international leader, has to reform from the inside out, advocating better education at home and, ideally, an “international consciousness” in her citizens. This is, admittedly, a rather idealistic view; however, I hope that more people will be affected by a similar eagerness to affect social change, however small, and HGP is the perfect place to start.

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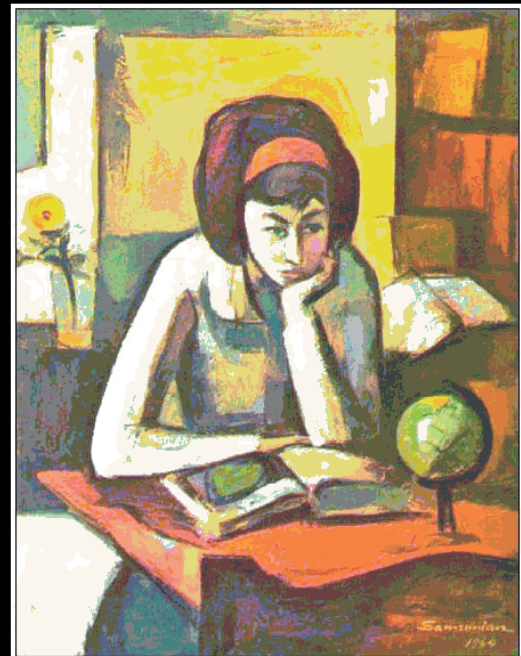
June, 1997



Humanitarians: Making Moral Decisions

The Holocaust/Genocide Project
An End to Intolerance

June, 2004



“Contemplate the Past to Change the Future”