

ALEX ROBERTS EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT

The Holocaust Survivors Project

While Some Teens Tweet, Another Teen Honors Survivors of Nazi Holocaust

Eagle Scout Project Honors Shoa Survivors

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Although a congressman, state legislator, and former ambassador were among those who helped mark his elevation to Eagle Scout, Alex Roberts of Ocean Township said the true stars in the room were Holocaust survivors and their offspring. Inspired by these individuals, Alex, 14, created “The Holocaust Survivors Project” to recall their experiences under the Nazi regime.

After conceiving the idea, Alex decided to bring it to life as his Eagle Project; Eagle Scout status is the highest rank in scouting. He approached the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey with the idea of housing the exhibit at Federation between its travels to local institutions. Federation recognized its value to Holocaust education in the community, according to Federation CEO Keith Krivitzky, and cosponsor of the project.

Elements of the project include a website (theholocaustsurvivorsproject.org), a 30-minute video, a 5' x 7' display board, and a 16-page companion book.

“I wanted something that would teach people young and old about the Holocaust and combat any Holocaust denial,” said Alex. “I also wanted something permanent to honor the survivors and their families.”

On Feb. 1, just five days after the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, more than 100 people attended each of two events marking the project and his elevation.

“My goal is for the memorial to travel to schools, synagogues, religious institutions, libraries, and museums, to hopefully spread the word to never forget,” said Alex.

The project highlights the stories of survivors Claire Boren, Israel Ira Lulinski, Ruth Millman, and Ruth Rosenfeld, as well as those of second-generation family members Anita Raboi, Carl Gross, and Pastor Jackie Burgess.

Lulinski was particularly instrumental in sparking the Holocaust project. “We both belong to the same synagogue, Chabad of the Shore, and I have known him for about five years,” said Alex. “Hearing about his horrific encounter with the Nazis as a young boy in Poland, I became convinced that a Holocaust memorial would be beneficial for our community.”

In the video, Lulinski recounted how, in June 1942, when he was six, the ghetto in his town of Miory was attacked by Nazis, and 1,000 Jewish residents attempted to hide or flee. “Only 25 survived that day,” he said. “I saw my mother and brothers executed before my eyes. My father and I made a break for the woods. The forest was a very cold place; there was a layer of permafrost even in summer. With no clothing, food, or shelter, survival was very difficult.” Many did not make it. Lulinski and his father slept in an igloo they constructed. Later, they joined a group of Russian partisans and helped wage guerrilla war against the Nazis. At the dedication ceremony, Lulinski offered the invocation.



Other featured speakers included Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-Dist. 6); former U.S. Ambassador to Germany Philip Murphy; Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini (R-Dist. 11); and Stanley Shapiro, Monmouth and Ocean County Council commander for Jewish War Veterans, Jersey Shore Post #125. Also attending were Stu Abraham and Joe Hollander, former presidents of what was the Jewish Federation of Monmouth County. Hollander and Chabad of the Shore's Rabbi Laibel Schapiro also spoke.

"I have known Alex since he was a little kid," said Pallone, a longtime friend of the Roberts family. "He has always been mature beyond his years. I'm proud of him for creating this wonderful project, and for keeping us aware of the dangers of man's inhumanity to man."

"It's admirable that a person so young has taken on a matter of such gravity," said Murphy. "We live, sadly, in very troubled times. Alex's project is important not just as a history lesson but as an ongoing reminder of anti-Semitism and the injustices it leads to."

As ambassador to Germany from 2009 to 2013, Murphy said "I give the German government high marks for trying to combat anti-Semitism, but I am very concerned about what is going on at street level, not only in Germany but in other European nations as well."

Carl Gross of Monmouth Beach told of losing his grandmother, aunt, and uncle in the Holocaust. He said Alex has the makings of a future leader. Angelini said her son was an Eagle Scout who achieved the rank just before he turned 18. "It's particularly impressive that Alex did it at the age of 14," she said.

For his Eagle Scout service project, Alex Roberts created a video and exhibit honoring Holocaust survivors now living in the local area. The exhibit's permanent home will be the headquarters of Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey. Alex receives a congratulatory bear hug from Israel Ira Lulinski, a survivor who went through the war years hiding in the woods. His father fought the Nazis alongside a group of Russian partisans. Lulinski, who attends Chabad of the Shore with the Roberts family, was Alex's main inspiration for the Holocaust project.

- A 5 ft. x 7 ft. traveling memorial was created with information about 25 Concentration Camps along with 7 1ft. x 1ft. memorials detailing the 7 Survivor stories.
- Alex Roberts interviewed and videotaped 5 Holocaust Survivors and 2 family members of Holocaust survivors.
- A website which details all the information about the concentration camps and the survivors stories www.theholocaustsurvivorsproject.org featuring a 30 minute video that incorporates the Survivors stories was created.
- Project had a cost of \$5,689.39, which was raised from cash sponsorships and donations, donated supplies from local merchants, and a car wash fundraiser. An additional \$1,720.46 was raised for future expansion of the project for total of \$7,409.85 raised by Alex Roberts along with volunteers for the Project.
- Alex Roberts supervised 45 volunteers on the project, including 9 boy scouts, 8 other youths, 6 adult scout leaders, and 22 other adults.
- The project took a total 322.75 hours to create. This included 58.75 hours spent by Alex Roberts.
- The project has been displayed at the Ranney School and traveled to Blair Academy, with discussion led by Alex Roberts. The Jewish Heritage Museum of Monmouth County, Freehold Jewish Center, Chabad of the Shore, and Congregation Sons of Israel have also expressed interest in having the display exhibited.
- Press coverage for the project has been obtained in the *New Jersey Jewish News*, *Jersey Shore Insider*, *NJ.com* (*Newark Star Ledger* web site), and a Tweet from Congressman Frank Pallone.
- Awards were presented to Alex Roberts from Ocean Township Mayor Chris Siciliano, Senator Robert Menendez, Congressman Frank Pallone, Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini, Jewish War Veterans, Disabled American Veterans, Marine Corps. League, and N.J. State Police.