

MANLY

Learning from the past

WORLD WAR II SURVIVOR TAKES STAND

Charis Chang

HEARING the story of Tom Fleming's experiences in a Nazi concentration camp is still shocking, even 68 years after World War II ended.

But Mr Fleming said his intention in telling the story was not about revisiting what happened to the Jews, but as a warning about the dangers of bullying.

Mr Fleming's story is part of the Courage to Care exhibition, which is being held at Manly Art Gallery and Museum.

The 75-year-old, who now lives in Paddington, talks about his experiences with groups of school children and other visitors.

The exhibition features artefacts about the holocaust but the emphasis is on showing how people can take a positive stand when confronted by discrimination, racism, prejudice and bullying.

"Hitler was the ultimate



Holocaust survivor Tom Fleming with St Mary's students, Stevie O'Connell, 11, Siena Montgomery, 12 and Aislinn Paul, 11. Picture:ANNIKA ENDERBORG

bully, and what we are really doing is lecturing children on bullying at school," Mr Fleming said.

Mr Fleming's family was of Jewish background and was originally sent to the notorious Auschwitz camp in 1944, where his father

was killed.

Mr Fleming and his mother, who was pregnant at the time, were redirected to the camp in the town of Terezin, where his mother almost died of starvation.

Of the 350 babies born in the camp, only 25 were al-

lowed to survive. Mr Fleming's baby brother was one of the lucky ones, simply because he was born with blonde hair and blue eyes.

"About 16,000 children went through that camp, and only 123 were left," Mr Fleming said.

COURAGE TO CARE

WHAT: Touring program aimed at promoting racial tolerance, harmony, and ethical values.

WHERE: Manly Art Gallery and Museum until April 21.