



**Annie Friedlander**  
Volunteer  
Workshop Leader

My name is Annie Friedlander. My mother is an Auschwitz survivor originally from Romania. My father, a Czech Jew, spent the war in a labour camp. They met after the war and lived in France for 5 years as refugees before they were able to get their permits to come to Australia with me in 1952. I was only two years old.

As an adult, I was constantly aware of the dark cloud of the Holocaust and the fact that, as a result, I did not have grandparents or much extended family. I developed a love of literature and so became a high school English teacher working in a range of schools for around 35 years.

In the 90s I was given the opportunity to participate in the *Spielberg Shoah Project* whose aim was to video interview as many Holocaust survivors world-wide as possible. Since survivors were rapidly ageing, the completion of the project became urgent as did the need for eye witness accounts to be documented.

In the process of completing 13 interviews, I was overwhelmed by the courage and resilience of these people. I think that by listening to their stories and trying to understand this dark chapter of our history, we can gain insights into the worst aspects of human weakness, but we can also learn that we are all capable of great generosity, empathy, courage and love.