



HISTORY: Roger Beran facilitates a Courage to Care Exhibition School Workshop.

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NEWS

Exhibition urges young people to have the courage to care

by Alison Houston

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FOR the first time in its 20-year history, the unique *Courage to Care* exhibition has come to the Gold Coast until June 28.

What makes this free exhibition exceptional is the involvement of Holocaust survivors sharing their stories and those of the non-Jews who put their lives at risk to rescue them.

In some cases they were the only person in their family to survive.

Ernie Friedlander OAM, who was involved in the establishment of *Courage to Care*, tells of the "humanity of a German soldier, who looked the other way" while he and his mother escaped while being transported to a concentration camp.

"This contributed in a major way to form my belief not to be prejudiced or generalise about people - but consider each one on their merit, regardless of colour, race or religion," he said.

Arriving in Australia at 15, he went on to have his own family, including three children and four grandchildren.

The exhibit's strong message, particularly to today's youth, is the need to be "upstanders", people who take action, not "bystanders" in the face of discrimination, prejudice and bullying, according to program co-ordinator Hezie Lazarov.

There are over 60 historical artefacts on display, and 1.5-hour guided tours also include a short film and a first hand account of two Holocaust survivors' stories.

Already 1000 Gold Coast students will take part.

Adults can look around the exhibit from 3pm weekdays, and full after-hour guided sessions can also be booked for groups of 10 or more, with clubs and groups encouraged to take part.

"This is a very important exhibition because we only have a certain amount of time to be able to meet these survivors and hear their stories first-hand because, although they were all children or teens at the time, they are getting older," Hezie said.

For the survivors it is a chance to give the younger generation a new perspective, and to share their stories with adults interested in history or fellow seniors with their own stories to tell.

While it is emotionally difficult for the survivors, Hezie said they felt an obligation to tell people what had occurred and hopefully help improve the lives of others by passing on the incredible kindness shown to them.

In survivor Esther Buncel's words: "I feel I must speak for those who cannot".

The exhibition does not dwell on the undeniable horrors of the Holocaust, but rather shines a light on the exceptional response of otherwise everyday people.

"For me it shows that every action by every person can make a difference, and that we should all try to have a positive impact," Hezie said.

"All of us have had something nice said to us or done for us which has inspired us, and equally something negative that we carry around with us that still affects us.

"These are stories about people who knew what was right and wrong and had the courage to stand up and do it, often risking everything to do so."

Survivor Lilly Wolf was one of tens of thousands of Jews whom Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg (1912-1947) saved by issuing protective documents, and securing their release from deportation trains, death march convoys and labour brigades.

Other unheralded stories include that of Australian Aboriginal activist William Cooper, who organised a 1938 protest condemning the "cruel persecution of the Jewish people by the Nazi government of Germany" in Kristallnacht, despite his own rights not being recognised in Australia at that time.

"I believe anyone who sees this exhibition will be inspired to appreciate their own lives, and also the importance of standing up and taking action when we see things that are wrong," Hezie said.

To find out more go to couragetocare.com.au. For bookings phone (02)93216301

or email hezie@couragetocare.com.au.

com.au.

The exhibition is at the Katranski Communal Hall, 35 Markwell Ave,

Surfers Paradise

until June 28.

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