

Survival Story

Florence Post, 80, Tells Students Of Being Saved From Nazis



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WEST HARTFORD — Florence Post vividly remembers standing on her porch in a Lithuanian ghetto when the Nazis forced her father into a truck.

“My father looked up, and he was a very proud man, and it was the first time, when he was being shipped away, that I saw my father cry,” the West Hartford resident said. “My mother's parting words to him were, escape, escape, try to

escape.”

Post, a Holocaust survivor, spoke to students at Hall High School Friday detailing how she and many of her immediate family members survived World War II. The freshman class, and 12 students from Solomon Schechter Day School, sat in silence during Post's talk in the school's auditorium.

The event was part of the Mandell Jewish Community Center of Greater Hartford Jewish Film Fest, which started Thursday and continues until April 10 with 22 films from eight countries. Before Post's talk, the students watched “The Last Mentsch,” a film about an aging German Holocaust survivor who tries to come to terms with his past.

Post, 80, said she had a very nice early childhood before the war in a middle class Jewish community with her parents and brother.

Change came in 1941, before the Germans entered her town, when she said her fellow Lithuanians rounded up a group of Jewish men, took them to a lot outside of a garage and massacred them.

Post said she remembers a “horrendous” morning shortly after her father was taken away, when Jews in her community were told to come to an open field in town. It was very cold, and a light snow was falling during the early morning of Oct. 28, 1941, she said.

“The Germans were separating people into left and right. We did not know which would be the good side and which would be the bad side,” Post said. “We were lucky; we were on the left side.”

The 10,000 people on the right side were marched to a nearby fort and were systematically shot, she said.

After her mother heard rumors that children in other ghettos were being taken and murdered, Post said, her mother begged a Christian friend to save her children and her niece. Post said her mother made a hole in the ghetto's fence and

carried her and her cousin out in a sack.

Post said she and her cousin were taken to stay with a local gentile farming couple to hide. The couple did not ask for any money in return, Post said. Her brother was taken to hide with another woman, who asked to be paid in return for hiding him, she said.

“They were unbelievably wonderful people. This couple did not have children of their own,” Post said of the farmers who took her in. “It's really very difficult for me, even having lived through all this, to understand how people stood up and risked their own lives to save the lives of children.”

When the Soviets reoccupied Lithuania in 1944, Post said, her mother came back to retrieve her. She had survived by posing as a migrant worker and working on multiple farms. The family was later reunited with Post's father, who, she said, had escaped the concentration camps and was nursed back to health by a Czechoslovakian woman.

Brianna Brewer, a Hall freshman, said she was amazed that Post had the strength to tell her story to the students.

“I was really stunned because I had never saw someone in real life who survived the Holocaust,” she said.

Harriet J. Dobin, director of the Hartford Jewish Film Festival, said she asked Post to speak because, despite the tragedies in her life, she still has a positive outlook on society. She said Post is also able to relate to teenagers in 2016, and has grandchildren that are Hall graduates.

“This age group of teenagers is the last generation that will be able to hear from survivors,” Dobin said. “Everyone can rent a movie. ... You can't rent a memory.”

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