

HOLOCAUST LEARNING UK



NEWSLETTER
June 2021

‘So what do we do now?’ was the question left hanging in the air at Holocaust Learning UK’s first ever zoom Committee Meeting back in March 2020 when we realised we were not going to be able to hold in person Events for 2021.

Since our inception in 2001, Northwood Holocaust Memorial Day Events (as we were called before we became registered charity Holocaust Learning UK) had hosted Events at nine participating synagogues. By 2020, over 35,000 students from local schools had attended these Events. Students had had the opportunity to hear the testimony of a Holocaust Survivor (or close family member), meet a rabbi, take part in bespoke workshops run by our trained facilitators, enjoy refreshments provided by a gallant band of volunteers and participate in a quiet candle lighting ceremony at the close of the session. They learned about the Holocaust and subsequent genocides and were urged to play their part in the fight against discrimination, intolerance and bullying so we can, together, build a better, safer future for us all.

For some schools, this visit had become an important fixture in their calendar. For others new to the Events, it was an eye-opening experience they wished to return to. We knew we had to do something or we’d be letting everyone down – including ourselves.

‘We could make a film,’
came a suggestion.

And so we did.



The Who was relatively easy. Tapestry Pictures quickly emerged as the perfect choice of Production Company with their extensive experience of filming both students and those telling their life stories. Frustrated by the schools and colleges closing and losing the opportunities to tell students her story, Holocaust Survivor Janine Webber was ready, willing and able to take part. All we needed to do now was find a suitable group of student actors. After a careful audition process, casting was completed.

The Where seemed straightforward – at first. The Ark Synagogue very kindly offered their premises to film, and Rabbi Aaron Goldstein generously agreed to ‘host’ the Docufilm, but it soon became apparent that we needed to film in a studio to ensure everyone’s safety. Broadley Studios in Marylebone was the perfect place and they generously accommodated us.

The When was a whole other challenge as lockdowns came and went. We changed the dates many times before things fell into place. Janine’s testimony and most of the student testimony was completed and all that remained was to film Rabbi Aaron. The Ark very kindly opened their doors to us when they felt it was safe.

The What was complicated. With so many films about the Holocaust ‘out there’, so many Survivor testimonies easily available to view, how were we going to produce something unique and powerful which reflected the aims of our charity and the essence of our Events which would be engaging for students and work for teachers? Tapestry Pictures’ empathetic understanding of us, our Events and our aims ensured we were well on track. Northwood United Synagogue provided encouragement and support and we were extremely fortunate that the Holocaust Educational Trust and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, always huge supporters of the Events, very kindly provided historical and educational support throughout. Archive material was secured from various museums and libraries around the world. Music was selected. Editing started. Now all we needed was a narrator to pull it all together. Serendipity afforded us an introduction to Jason Isaacs and he very kindly recorded the narration at his home studio during a short window between engagements.

The How was an interesting challenge. Graphical Design created an elegant and modern website for us while Speak Digital devised a user-friendly system for school registrations and screenings. Armed with snazzy fliers and brilliant visuals, the Holocaust Learning UK Schools Bookings Team swung into action...

And so the completely original and newly commissioned Docufilm **Out of the Darkness** was launched to schools in October 2020 for screening from 1st February to 31st May 2021. We even held an online Film Premiere and a screening for friends, family, colleagues, supporters and the wider communities with the help of Shock Audio Visual.



But would anyone want to see it?

YES is the emphatic answer! At the close of the Screening Window, **275 schools signed up for just shy of 61,000 students** from all over the United Kingdom to view **Out of the Darkness**. We've even had screenings in the United States, Australia, South Korea, Singapore and South Africa.

Feedback from Holocaust Educators, teachers, students, and even documentary film makers has been extraordinary. Click [here](#) for the link to our Testimonials Page.

What next?

Out of the Darkness will be launched again to schools and colleges from 4th October 2021 for screening from 17th January to 31st May 2022. We also have a new and exciting offering to schools which will be announced in October.

Huge thanks are owed to our friends and Supporters and everyone involved in bringing Out of the Darkness out from the darkness of the pandemic and into classrooms all over the United Kingdom, and beyond:

The Association of Jewish Refugees, Broadley Studios, Clintons Solicitors, Graphical Agency, The Holocaust Educational Trust, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, The Jane Goodman Charitable Trust, Jason Isaacs, The Mutley Foundation, The National Holocaust Centre and Museum, Rosemary Goldsmith in memory of Suzanne Haffner, Shock Audio Visual, Speak Digital, Tapestry Pictures, The Whicker's World Foundation and Wisteria Accountants.

Finally, a special thank you to all of you who volunteered year on year and enabled our live Events to happen before the pandemic. We hope it won't be too long before we are welcoming you back as volunteers with us again.

Holocaust Learning UK is UK registered charity and relies entirely on donations.

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