
Pentucket Regional Middle School
20 Main Street
West Newbury, MA 01985
Telephone (978) 363-2957
Fax (978) 363-2720

Dr. Debra J. Lay, Ed.D.
Principal
Email: dlay@prsd.org

Kenneth J. Kelley, M.Ed.
Assistant Principal
Email: kenkelley@prsd.org

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Dear Ms. Smulowitz,

On behalf of the Pentucket Regional Middle School, I would like to thank you and the stage performers of *Terezin, Children of the Holocaust*, for a powerful production. We felt so very fortunate to have you join our school and share this play's enduring message with us. Our students have been studying the tragic events of the Holocaust yet this play brings to life the uneasiness and discomfort of the devastating atrocities that cannot be discovered in books. The post-play discussion was well articulated and elicited from our 8th grade students a connection to the social and emotional challenges they face as pre-adolescents. Whether bystanders or upstanders, we all learned about the shattering effect of standing by without speaking up. Thank you for a magnificent production and a memorable glimpse into what it means to be human.

Comments from the PRMS faculty:

What a powerful experience.

Anna gave students permission to feel human (anger and wanting revenge) but challenged them to find better alternatives. Students were actually discussing the play as they left the auditorium. One even initiated a conversation with me. I would say it was a very thought provoking experience for 8th graders. – Kathy Ellis

“What an amazing and powerful performance! This really put a human face on an unspeakable time in our history. I plan on continuing the conversation about the bullying connection with my class. Thank you for your time and dedication to this worthy cause.” – Carolyn Peterson

I was very impressed with the performance. In all honesty, I have never delved into the reality of what was (and still is) the Holocaust. It's a part of human history that I'd like to wish never happened. Watching the performance from the viewpoint of the characters gave a unique and impressionable angle to what was going on during that time.

The connections to our curriculum and students' social/emotional seemed relevant, especially with regard to the latest bullying theme. Highlighting bullying behavior (Corinne's character), and how it is copied by the younger characters, was a good example of how easy it is for that behavior to "rub off" on others. Unfortunately, the behavior escalated towards violence, which is also a severe consequence of the behavior today. And now we have the internet and Facebook to add fuel to the personal fires already burning within many teens (and adults).

I thought the story was well done, and left me thinking of what I would do if I was in that horrible situation with my family. How was this only 70 years ago?
- Shawn MacDonald

I thought the play was great, but the discussion following it was SO important in order for kids to make the connection of how it relates to hate and prejudice in our current world. Anna did a great job leading the discussion in the right direction.

I thought it was a great that they brought up how when we allow certain behaviors to happen (not say anything to stop bullying), it is just as damaging as being the one to bully. In my opinion, more education about the bystander/egger role is needed. Kids need to know that it is OK to stand up to bullying and we need to find a way to make that "cool."
- Caroline Maloney

I'm not sure I can come up with anything deep at the moment for you to quote. However, I just want to let you know that I've read about the play over the years, and I believe my own children have seen it, but this is the first opportunity I've had to do so. It was absolutely amazing and deeply moving. I'm so glad I was able to experience it. Thank you.
- Jo Burritt

I thought the play was extremely well done. The story of Terezin itself was well portrayed, but afterwards when Anna spoke to the audience she made it much more powerful by relating the story of a violent and abusive period of history and connecting it to the choices and behavior of modern society. I am sure some of the students will continue to reflect on it in the future.
- Nancy Wile

Terezin was a powerful experience.

I like the shifting in the characters and the fact that the story does not adhere to simple notions of good and bad or victim and perpetrator but is a more accurate depiction of humanity and the ever present "grey areas." These shifts happen all of the time in middle school. It was painful listening to the students clap as they all beat up Karina, but realistic. Compassion can be overruled by fear, Terezin beautifully reminds us of this and makes us realize that our job is not to judge, but to understand and to embrace the experiences that we share and handle them with compassion and the knowledge that they are not ours and ours alone and that ultimately, we are not just responsible for ourselves, but for each other.

Sharing this experience with my students and watching former students live this experience made it more profound. How haunting and powerful to see the Holocaust through the eyes of children.

I will remember this. I will not forget.

Thank you

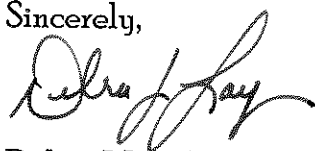
- Aris Moore

I found the presentation highly moving and engaging. The tension created among the prisoners and the edge-of-your-seat feeling, while waiting for the worst to come at any moment, was made palpable for the students. I loved the way the new arrivals and the old interacted, and watching the slow realization of Peter Solis's character that he

wasn't going to be seeing his father again anytime soon, very powerful. Also, the girl who played Miriam was excellent. You could feel the emotion behind the words of her speech about her best friend casting her out to the Nazis. It was all so well done. Thank you so much for letting our kids FEEL through your performance what they had learned about the Holocaust from our reading of Anne Frank.

– Annie Young

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debra J. Lay". The signature is fluid and connected, with a large initial "D" and "L".

Debra J. Lay, Ed.D.