

# Teaching Tolerance and Justice at Charles Wright

Charles Wright Academy is a diverse and inclusive learning community using the power of academic rigor, endless inspiration and high expectations to help students reach their intellectual, artistic and athletic best. Mind and spirit are our raw materials; knowledge, respect, humor, passion and a deep and true bond between teacher and student are our tools; lives led with integrity, joy, self-reliance, resilience, fulfillment and compassion for humanity and the natural world are our end results.

Charles Wright's unique Holocaust education program is one of the ways we prepare students with the integrity, compassion and historical perspective required to make difficult ethical and moral decisions throughout their lives. We fully expect our students to contribute to making the world a more just and tolerant place.

The Holocaust education program is integrated into our school's history curriculum. In the Middle School, students read *The Diary of Anne Frank*. During their freshman year, students take 20th century world history which covers genocides in Armenia, Russia, Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur, as well as the Holocaust. These tragedies provide a powerful framework to teach about justice, tolerance, character and ethics. We are always careful not to overwhelm students with the horror of these events, but to keep them emotionally engaged in what they are learning and conscience of the reality that atrocities can occur in any culture and at any time in history.

All of our Upper School students have the opportunity to learn directly from those who have personally witnessed

human tragedies. Each year, we welcome to our campus as speakers survivors of the Holocaust and Japanese internment, as well as World War II veterans who liberated concentration camps. In April 2008, we will welcome for the first time an aid worker who rescued thousands of people during the Rwandan genocide. Students at Charles Wright have also traveled to Los Angeles to visit the Museum of Tolerance.



Students from Charles Wright and from Swidnik, Poland visiting Lublin, Poland.

Our students are the only Americans to participate in the annual Holocaust Remembrance Week in Poland. Each spring, 12 students are selected to spend two weeks living with families in Poland. The following fall, those same students welcome the children of their families to the United States for two weeks and participate in a series of special events at Charles Wright.

Our teachers are also developing a new Holocaust oral history project. Students will interview survivors and record their testimonies for the school library. We are planning to publish these interviews with a teacher's guide so other schools can incorporate the stories of survivors into their curriculums.

Charles Wright's Holocaust education program is spearheaded by history teacher Nick Coddington, the 2007 recipient of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous' Robert I. Goldman award for the national Holocaust educator of the year.



Charles Wright students and students from Swidnik, Poland formed an exchange program to expand their cultural and historical awareness. Together, they toured the barracks at Birkenau death camp. They also visited Majdanek and Auschwitz.



Charles Wright Academy

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