

When Hilary Miller accepted the Remember Us invitation to honor and remember Lina Gerson, a six year old from the Netherlands who died during the Shoah, as part of becoming a Bat Mitzvah Congregation Beth Israel in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she did not anticipate that her commitment would expand to include authorship of a book, serving as a Holocaust educator, nor recruiting upcoming bnei mitzvah students from other area congregations to participate in Remember Us.

Hilary's extensive involvement was initially motivated by her surprise and sadness at having overheard a conversation filled with both misinformation and obvious lack of knowledge of the Holocaust by some non-Jewish members of her soccer team. When she engaged them in further discussion, it became obvious to her that more needed to be done to educate young people. "I was shocked that they didn't know anything. It was a part of our family's conversation and I learned about it school but I didn't think people my age had no idea. I just wanted to make sure that these girls had information".

Prompted by this event, as well as a suggestion by Congregation Beth Israel educator Samara Sofian that she interview one survivor to get a first-hand perspective, motivated Hilary to undertake on a much bigger project than she ever expected. Independently she undertook the task of interviewing and writing histories of two local survivors and two children of survivors. She compiled them with educational background material provided by the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education and Resource Center (HERC) and research that she did into a book entitled "Survivors of the Holocaust Keeping the Candle Lit". According to Hilary, "If anyone who reads this book, whether they are Jewish or not, takes action to educate themselves or someone else about the Holocaust, think the difference it would make in the world.

According to Hilary "I feel that it is especially important for my generation to interview survivors because the new generation will not be able to hear their stories first hand. It is a responsibility that I feel as a Jew, and especially as a Jew living freely in America, not being forced to wear a yellow star on my jacket...I hope that this book, and the stories of survivors will educate and move its readers to keep the candle burning. We must never forget"

Hilary has now been invited to share her knowledge of the Holocaust with middle school students at two areal schools. She brings her framed Remember Us Memorial Certificate and her book with her to share. She has also accompanied HERC Director and RU partner Bonnie Shafrin to speak to pre bnai mitzvah students at other Milwaukee synagogues about the importance of participating in Remember Us.