

PRESS RELEASE



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STUDENTS REMEMBER HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

Staff and students at Yeovil College have marked Holocaust Memorial Day with a dedicated event entitled 'the Legacy of Hope'.

The event aimed to emphasise the experiences of individuals, past and present, both as victims of genocide and as those able to stop prejudice and racial hatred. To emphasise this, all staff and students were asked to hand over their possessions and College ID badges as they arrived and given a number, illustrating how easily individuals can be stripped of their identity by authorities.

A Level Student Fiona Wyatt (17) of Yeovil collected badges and issued numbers as people arrived. She said "We are doing this to symbolise what it feels like to have your identity taken away from you, like during the Holocaust when victims were numbers instead of names. It's an important part of history and everyone needs to understand what happened and make sure it doesn't happen again."

The event, attended by students studying subjects across the College curriculum, began with a moving presentation by Head of History Mike Paddick. Drawing from his experiences during a visit to notorious death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, he spoke of how the events of 1939 to '44 were not just history and encouraged the students to think of the individuals affected by the industrialised genocide inflicted by the Nazi regime.

He said "I visited Aushwitz-Birkenau two years ago as part of a programme run by the Holocaust Memorial Trust. I met survivors and feel it's very important to emphasise that this is not just history. I felt the experience was a real privilege – not to go to see the camp, but to be allowed to come out again. There were two million men, women and children who didn't."

Following a DVD featuring testimonies by survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, Faith Advisor and event organiser Jarrett Wilson brought the subject up-to-date with a presentation entitled 'The Legacy of Hope'. He explained how state-sponsored genocide continues into the 21st century, with atrocities occurring right now in Darfur, part of Sudan. He ended by highlighting that by challenge exclusionary behaviours in daily life, everyone can prevent the repetition of the past.

Poems were also read out during the event, including 'Pigtails' by Tadeusz Rozewicz, read by student Vicki Runagall (17) of Yeovil. The event ended with a performance of Christy Moore's 'Yellow Triangle' by a group of first year music students.

Jarrett Wilson said "Each year, I meet students who have never heard of the Holocaust. We have a responsibility to help every generation understand the atrocities committed during the Nazi era and how any one of us could have been a supporter of the Third Reich. Doing the right thing isn't always obvious at the time, but through education we can teach ourselves and each other how to avoid the same atrocities and backward thinking. That is the goal of Holocaust Memorial Day. Even though it is a difficult presentation to sit through, we hope it will have lasting effects on the decisions the audience will make in the future and help us make a better world."

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Notes to Editors

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