

YOU ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE
A HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST
FOR
THE SUSY RAFUL PRIZE

The Susy Raful Prize

This prize is awarded annually to a Sonoma County Jewish High School student who writes the most outstanding essay about personal reflections on the Shoah (the Holocaust). Susy Raful's children and grandchildren, on the occasion of her seventy-fifth birthday in July 2000, established this prize to honor this Beth Ami congregant who lives in Santa Rosa. The annual winner will have his or her name inscribed on a permanent plaque at Beth Ami, and the student will receive a \$500 cash prize from the Raful family.

Susy Raful's ability to celebrate birthdays past 1945 is a tribute to her strength and resolve in the face of the most horrific act in the history of mankind. She was born in 1925 in Budapest, Hungary, the daughter of Andor and Netka Taubner. She was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in 1944, and was a prisoner on the Helmsbrecht Death March on the day the war ended in 1945. Although near death and suffering from malnutrition and illness, she was nursed back to health by U.S. Army soldiers and doctors. Susy Taubner immigrated to the United States in 1947 in order to marry Robert Raful, an Army soldier she met soon after the war ended. Since that time, she has had two sons and two daughters-in-law, and five grandchildren, and she has spent a great deal of her life dedicated to serving the Jewish community in America and in Israel.

The Raful family established this prize to promote greater reflection by young people about the Shoah and each teenager's individual life. We hope that the young people who write these essays will live in peace forever, but will never forget what their ancestors endured because of their faith and heritage. May their memory be a blessing for us all.

Requirements for the Essay Contest

The annual essay contest is open to any Jewish high school student who is a resident of Sonoma County. Students who intend to participate in

the contest are asked to write an essay of from 500 - 700 words, typed, double-spaced, on white paper. Pages should be numbered. Footnotes are not necessary and quotations and footnotes from original source material should be kept to a minimum.

A cover page should include the title of the essay, the name of the author, and the last four digits of the author's Social Security Number or telephone number. These same four digits should be placed on the top right-hand corner of each page of the essay. The cover page will be removed so that the judges do not know the identity of each author.

The main purpose of the paper is personal reflection by the participant. The Shoah is now more than sixty years in the past, and in a few years, all the survivors of the atrocities will have died, leaving you and your children and generations to come with only memories, pictures, and stories. Susy Raful, for whom this contest is named, has handed down her personal story of suffering and survival to her children and grandchildren, and likewise, you have heard stories, read books, visited museums, and seen pictures and movies about that terrible period in Jewish history.

What do you think today about the Shoah? What do you think you will tell your children when they ask you about the Shoah? What thoughts and images of the Shoah do you think you will keep with you as you grow into an adult? What do you think you will tell those of other faiths, as you grow older, when they ask you about your views of the Shoah? Do you have enough information in order to make a decision about your feelings? Do you think you will be able to talk about the Shoah, or even reflect on the Shoah, fifty more years from now, when all survivors are gone and World War II is very old history? This essay contest does not seek a recounting of historical events; rather we seek your feelings, your inner thoughts, your concerns, and your reflections about what you have learned about the Shoah and the Jewish people.

Your essay must be submitted to the Beth Ami office by the close of business on April 1, 2009. Late submissions will not be accepted, so you are responsible for making sure that the office is open to receive your essay. Please keep a personal copy for your files.

A group of Jewish residents of Sonoma County will convene in order to judge the essays on originality, clarity, depth of feeling, and

understanding of the nature of the Shoah. The winner will be presented with a check for \$500, and his or her name will be inscribed on a permanent plaque at Beth Ami. The winner will be asked to participate in the local Yom Hashoah celebration, depending on the program each year. All submissions become the property of Beth Ami and will not be returned to participants. For further information and questions, please contact the Beth Ami office.

Conclusion

The family and friends of Susy Raful thank you for your interest in this essay contest and we invite you to participate as a way of honoring her and all those who had their teenage years stolen away from them. We honor the memory of the dead and of those who survived, that their memory might be for a blessing for all of us.

Previous Winners

2001 Logan Guttenberg
2002 Ruben Brosbe
2003 Julie Aronowitz
2004 Rachel Dwight
2005 Robbie Pleasant
2006 James Nagel
2007 Haley Pleasant
2008 Kyla Wegman