

September 22, 2014

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As part of the Multicultural Literature Curriculum, my students (your children) study aspects of the Holocaust and related topics. In addition to our regular studies, this year my 6-9th Period Language Arts class has been selected to participate in the International Shared Reading Project.

The International Shared Reading Project has had a successful history since its inception in 1996. A diversity of high schools and middle schools participate in the Book Sharing Project. These include public, Jewish, and Catholic schools on the middle school and high school level located in communities across the U.S.

The International Shared Reading Project is an experience in international cooperative learning about the Holocaust and its meaning for American and Israeli students today. Students from the Amakim Tavor Regional School in Mizra, Israel and my students will simultaneously read Uri Orlev's **The Island on Bird Street**, a book that documents the life of a youth in a Polish ghetto during the Holocaust. Students in both classes will then engage in an online dialogue to share opinions and thoughts about the book generated through class discussion. Students will examine the life of the young boy in this work, study the book's historical context, as well as make connections to related incidents of bigotry, intolerance, discrimination, and genocide in the past and in our lives today.

The educators of the International Book Sharing Project believe that:

The study of the fate of its [the Holocaust] youth can be a meeting point for adolescents from different countries with different languages, cultures, beliefs, and learning styles. Through the Book Sharing Project, we hope to move forward from the experience of ruin and hatred and the memories of destruction to the formation of a better world in which young people talk and listen to each other and create a healthy and secure future together.

The International Shared Reading Project consists of six elements:

- The formation of cooperative learning groups in the U.S. with groups of Israeli students
- The exchange of letters between our students and their Israeli partners via the Project's website, www.korczakschool.org
- Ongoing lessons about the Holocaust
- The reading of Uri Orlev's **The Island on Bird Street** and the completion of discussion questions via Internet dialogue between and among the partners
- The use of literary response journals
- A culminating project

I am thrilled that our class will be participating in this program.

Sincerely,

Ira Pataki

8th Grade Language Arts Instructor

Please sign below and have your child return this form to me by October 15, 2014.

I have received and read the letter explaining the International Shared Reading Project, and I give my permission for my child _____ to participate in the on-line communication.

Parent/Guardian signature _____

Date _____