

## Holocaust survivor recounts Nazi-perpetrated horrors

Polish-born Jew lost family and endured agonies as a youth

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SOUTH JORDAN — A baby survived its mother's murder in the Nazi showers. David Faber, a teenager imprisoned at the concentration camp, found it, still suckling, as he pried open its gassed mother's cold embrace.

The Jewish boy was carrying out Nazi orders to collect gold teeth and any other valuables from the dead. As he unlaced the woman's fingers, her baby cried out.

Faber and another man wanted to save the infant. They tried to secret it to the women in the camp.

They got caught.

The Nazis led Faber and the infant to the ovens.

They threw the baby into the flames.

They bound and beat Faber until he lost his voice counting the lashes.

The man with him was murdered.

"There were many tortures, every day," the impassioned Faber recalled Tuesday for South Jordan Middle School students, who sat silent and teary-eyed at the detail.

"But I survived," he told them. "I survived."

The nearly 80-year-old Polish-born American travels the country speaking to students about his experiences before and after the Nazis took over his homeland when he was 12 years old.

His videotaped testimony is preserved at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and at the Museum of Tolerance and the Steven Spielberg Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, both in Los Angeles.

His book, "Because of Romek: A Holocaust Survivor's Memoir," is required reading in some middle and high schools and a class at University of California, San Diego. Eighth- and ninth-grade South Jordan students also read excerpts of it in preparation for his arrival, said principal Diana Kline, who met Faber at a Florida education conference and spearheaded his speaking tour here, which lasts through the end of the month.

Faber tells of childhood anti-Semitism that left his father's face scarred but his faith unscathed. Of the Nazis overpowering Polish troops, and of residents cheering their arrival.

He tells of his family being stripped of possessions and means, and cordoned in ghettos with countless other Jews. Of hiding under floorboards and between walls. Of escape attempts. Of witnessing murder after murder.

He remembers discovering his father's body outside their hiding place.

He recalls details of the torture and murder of his older brother, the namesake of his book.

He tells of the shooting deaths of his mother and five sisters by machine gun-toting Nazis in a surprise home invasion. He remembers the Nazis cheered what they had done as he hid behind a couch.

He recalls slumping over his mother's corpse, crying and apologizing to her; the horrors of the eight concentration camps where he was imprisoned; and the 11-day death march he endured in January 1945, months before his camp was liberated.

"This is why I'm pouring my heart out to you — to make this a better world, not the kind of world I loved in. Not with hate," said Faber, who promised his mother he would try to make a difference if he lived. "All I want from you is to bring up your own children (without) hate. I beg of you. That is all I want."

Students moved by the speech said they will do as he asked.

"That people were capable of being so inhumane is unbelievable to me," one teary-eyed ninth-grader said. "I don't know if we'll ever be able to understand."

Faber is scheduled to speak at about a dozen Jordan middle and high schools this week and next. He'll be at Murray High at a 10 a.m. public forum Saturday, Sept. 24. He's also scheduled for book signings at Barnes & Noble: in Sandy on Friday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. and Saturday, Sept. 24 at the Murray store from 1 to 3 p.m.

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