

March 12th

Tour for Humanity driving home message of tolerance with students



The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies brought the Tour for Humanity to St. Brigid Catholic School on Tuesday (Mar. 10), educating the students about diversity and the consequences of hate and intolerance. In the photo: Danielle Lurion, Education Associate, talks about some modern heroes. From left are students Elizabeth Osei, Ruth Ajayi, Alyssa Derbecker, Jackson Lico, Mikayla Prete and Mark Brazas. (Photo Credit Rob Beintema/Brampton Guardian)

By Roger Belgrave

Brampton Guardian

BRAMPTON – One of Canada’s leading human rights organizations is using a mobile multi-media theatre to drive home messages of tolerance with local students.

The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies launched its Tour for Humanity program in November 2013. It features a customized RV, outfitted with state-of-the-art audio and visual equipment and a 30-seat theatre to create a mobile education centre.

The tour rolled into Brampton March 10 to visit St. Brigid Catholic School. Students at the elementary school are exploring the virtue of kindness this month as part of character education activities.

Daniella Lurion is one of two education associates at the Toronto-based organization travelling to schools to present interactive sessions that combine PowerPoint and video presentations tailored for either primary, intermediate or high school audiences.

The multi-screen production spotlights historical topics that include the holocaust, the American civil rights movement and more current events like the shooting and work of Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani activist for female education.

Onscreen clips and images are used to initiate and give momentum to conversations about issues that include intolerance, discrimination, racism, justice, human rights, freedom, democracy and bullying.

Essential to the exercise is inspiring students to take proactive roles in their school and community to combat hate, explained Lurion.

An examination of people considered heroes is meant to demonstrate to students anyone who chooses to take action can make a positive difference. In a presentation for younger students, it was stressed they need not reach the age of majority before taking action and something as simple as shoveling a neighbours driveway has an impact on someone else's life and the community.

"One small thing is enough to make a difference," Lurion told a group of students in Grades 4 to 6.

The bus has been to more than 100 schools in southern Ontario and had some 50,000 kids onboard.

For more information visit www.tourforhumanity.com.