



Area 'not immune' to hatred – Kelusky



By [PJ WILSON](#), The Nugget
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North Bay is not immune from intolerance.

“It’s amazing how quickly society can change,” North Bay police Insp. Kirk Kelusky says.

Kelusky was one of 30 Canadian police officers who attended a Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center-sponsored workshop at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

The workshop was designed to provide police officers with the necessary tools “to identify, confront and deal with the issues of hate and segregation in society in all forms,” Kelusky said Tuesday.

Kelusky was talking to media about the visit of the Tour for Humanity bus, which will be in North Bay until Friday, visiting schools and making presentations designed to inspire and empower students to raise their voices and take action against hate.

“We live in a very comfortable community,” Kelusky said. “We are not facing the problems they are elsewhere in the world.

“But that doesn’t mean we are immune,” he said. “The lessons of history transcend time.

“And one of the lessons I learned at the workshop is the right person at the right time can change the world.”

Students from four local schools - Widdifield Secondary School, Ecole Secondaire Publique Odyssee, St. Joseph-Scollard Hall and West Ferris Intermediate and Secondary School – will play host to the bus this week.

Widdifield was the first stop which will move on to Northwestern Ontario next week.

Elena Kingsbury, of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, said the visits and workshops give students a different look at their world.

Last week, she said, she stopped at one school in southern Ontario where an anti-Semitic incident had taken place.

“We go in, talk generally and explain why we take these issues seriously.”

She stressed the incidents involving students aren’t necessarily evil.

“We see this partially coming from a place of ignorance,” she said.

“Young people are responsible for the majority of hate crimes, and it’s not because they are evil. They are less experienced. They don’t know that what they say or do . . . affects people people.”

And while intolerance is not as big a problem in Canada as it is in many other places of the world, “there is a definite rise in xenophobia, of fear of other people. There is a definite rise in a fear of outsiders.”

Kingsbury said Canada is a good country for being able to talk openly about those fears because it is such a multicultural society.

“We are all coming from somewhere else,” she said. “There was something, somewhere, that made (our ancestors) want to leave those places and come to Canada.

“And it doesn’t matter where you are from. Everybody wants the same fundamental things.”

The presentation included videos about the rise of Nazi Germany and the genocide of the Jews of Europe, as well as things like genocides in Rwanda in the 1990s or in Cambodia in the 1970s under the Khmer Rouge.

The Tour for Humanity bus will be at Odyssee today, SJSJ Thursday and WFSS Friday.