



**To:** HRRC

**Agenda Item #:** VI. B.

**From:** MJ Lamon Staff Liaison

**Action**

**Date:** May 27, 2014

**Discussion**

**Subject:** Days of Remembrance - Summary (Seidman)

**Information**

**Action Requested:**

None.

**Information / Background:**

Chair Seidman will provide a report of the 2014 Days of Remembrance activities.

**Attachment:**

**Days of Remembrance 2014 Report**

## Days of Remembrance and Genocide Awareness 2014

**City of Edina - April 8, 10 and 13.** To mark National Days of Remembrance and Genocide Awareness month, the Edina Human Rights and Relations Commission in partnership with World Without Genocide hosted a series of human rights events in April to remember the victims and honor the survivors and liberators of the Holocaust during WWII and other genocides around the world.

### Why the City of Edina and Edina Human Rights and Relations hosts these events:

- In 2007, Edina became the third City in the country to pass anti-genocide legislation.
- In 2012, Edina supported a resolution against using “conflict minerals” from the Congo.
- In 2012, the City of Edina approved a proclamation indicating the City of Edina would annually acknowledge National Days of Remembrance (to coincide within the month of the National Holocaust Museum’s observation). We encourage our community members to continue to reflect on the need for respect for all people.
- In 2013, Governor Dayton signed into law a bill that designated every April to be Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month. The bill encourages organizations to sponsor events in April to educate the public and to remember those whose lives and cultures have changed forever.

### EHRRC April Human Rights Events

The first part of the series on April 8, included two interactive play: 1) *“Upstanders: Ten who Dared”*. This play describes individuals from around the world who stood up to genocide: including rescuer Oskar Schindler during the Holocaust, Betty Bigombe from Uganda and, General Romeo Dallaire, commander of the United Nations troops in Rwanda during the genocide; 2) *“the Line”* - the story of Sophie Scholl, a young German who was influential in White Rose, a youth resistance movement during WWII. Also included in the evening was resistance music from the holocaust and a candle that was lit to honor victims of genocide around the world.

The second part of the human rights events on Thursday, April 8 featured Dr. Ellen Kennedy. Twenty years ago, more than 800,000 people were killed in a genocide that lasted only a hundred days. Ellen discussed the Rwandan genocide on its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and spoke about current situations in Congo. The event also included a guest appearance from a native of Congo who presented a poem about her experiences both in Congo and here in Minnesota.

The third part of the series on Sunday, April 13 featured guest speaker Fred Amram, retired emeritus professor from University of Minnesota and holocaust survivor. Fred spoke about the atrocities of the Holocaust during WWII and other genocides around the world: Darfur, Congo, Rwanda, North Korea. He brought to life the stories of the Holocaust and genocide victims, heroes and liberators and the impact of the Holocaust on his family. During his presentation, Fred also explained the difference of Upstander vs. Bystanders and the effects of bystanders throughout history.

### Attendance and Marketing:

- Over 100 people attended the Days of Remembrance and Genocide Awareness events. In the audience were both survivors and liberators of genocide events.
- Edina Human Rights and Relations Commission partnered with World Without Genocide.
- Starbuck’s at Edina Galleria donated coffee urns, cups and accessories for all three events.
- Jerry’s In Edina donated cookies for all events.
- Mayor Hovland spoke at two of the events, opening and closing our human rights April series.
- With Annie and MJ’s support, we worked with Jennifer Bennerotte and her staff, Krystal Caron, Scott Denfeld and Dietrich Nissen to market the events using several types of media:

1. Posters were designed and posted throughout Edina, e.g. coffee shops and libraries.
2. Teachers in Edina High School and Valley View Middle school were approached and offered to put posters up in their classrooms and offer extra credit for showing up at our events.
3. Programs and agendas were designed by our communications department and provided during the day of the events.
4. A PSA announcement describing the Days of Remembrance and Genocide Awareness events was videotaped, with Commissioners Seidman and Winnick – which showed throughout the month of April
5. A WWII veteran and liberator, Gene Sylvestre was videotaped and shown on Channel 16
6. Five Holocaust survivor videos are showing on Channel 16 throughout the month of April
7. On our April 13 event, several Holocaust survivors were interviewed. Our goal is to put together a video of their stories for posterity. The most recent event has already appeared on Channel 16.
8. Marketing of our events were posted on: Edina’s Facebook; written up in “Edina” magazine and “About Town” as well as in the Sun Current.