

OUR TOWNS

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G-V Students Take Flight With Holocaust Project

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GAYVILLE — An estimated 1.5 million children died in the Holocaust during World War II, and some students from Gayville-Volin School are taking part in a project to help remember them.

Houston Holocaust Museum is collecting 1.5 million hand-made butterflies for an exhibition scheduled for the spring of 2012, some of which will be provided by the Gayville-Volin eighth-graders, who are now completing a unit on the Holocaust.

The project will help the students to personalize what they have learned. Gayville-Volin instructor Jennifer Goertz said.

"I think they can take away something besides the facts, the gory details, of the Holocaust, and can tap into the emotions involved and relate that to their own lives," she said. "(It's not) just looking at people in the past that they have no connection to. There's a way to help them make that connection to the ideas and the feelings that these kids felt."

Goertz first learned of The Butterfly Project last summer at the Dakota Writing Project's Holocaust Institute, which was held at the University of South Dakota.

"This was just handed out to us as an idea to take back to our classrooms," she said. "So considering I'm teaching several junior high-level students and we're looking at about the same age ranges of the students who wrote and created the art that is



TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D
This is an example of one of the butterflies created by Gayville-Volin eighth graders for the Houston Holocaust Museum.

flies as they wished. For example, Rachel Pokorney made a paper butterfly, on which she wrote a poem. Keisha Henson constructed hers — a butterfly perched on a flower — out of wood.

"(I liked) that we could make our own design," Pokorney said. "It was nice to come up with something different," Henson added. Kourtney Christopherson said, "I started over on mine eight times because I kept messing up."

The Butterfly Project was incorporated into the Holocaust unit that is taught at Gayville-Volin each year.

"It was almost nine weeks that we spent (on the unit)," Goertz said. "We first read the play 'The Diary of Anne Frank,' and then we read 'The Devil's Arithmetic,' and then we finished off with making the butterflies."

The butterflies must arrive in Houston by June 2011, so Goertz said next year's students will also make them.

"It's something I can do next year, but may or may not be able to have an avenue for our butterflies besides just our own purposes after that," she said. The project may be expanded, Goertz said.

"Right now, just eighth-graders are involved," she said. "Currently, I'm teaching a Holocaust unit to my freshman English class, and this is a project that I anticipate doing with them, as well."

Goertz said she may have gotten as much from teaching the unit as the students have in taking it.

"I think I've experienced

some of the same emotions and the same connections, and it's been an experience where I could finally turn on that light bulb for my students," she said.

The Butterfly Project wasn't the only area of expansion in Gayville-Volin School's Holocaust education.

"Last summer, one of the assignments for the Holocaust Institute was to create a unit to teach and bring the Holocaust to the students," Goertz said. "The eighth-grade unit hasn't

changed for the most part, but the unit I'm working on with the freshmen (is brand-new). I'm focusing not only on the Holocaust, but also genocide in general, and taking a look at genocide in the past, today, and

where do we go in the future." As of 2008, Houston Holocaust Museum has collected an estimated 400,000 butterflies.

For more information about the museum and the project, visit <http://www.hmh.org/>.

TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D
Gayville-Volin eighth-graders Kourtney Christopherson, Rachel Pokorney and Keisha Henson organize butterflies that were made as part of The Butterfly Project, which teaches students about the Holocaust. As a result of the project, Holocaust Museum Houston hopes to receive 1.5 million hand-made butterflies in time for a spring 2012 exhibition.



TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D
Gayville-Volin eighth-graders Kourtney Christopherson, Rachel Pokorney and Keisha Henson organize butterflies that were made as part of The Butterfly Project, which teaches students about the Holocaust. As a result of the project, Holocaust Museum Houston hopes to receive 1.5 million hand-made butterflies in time for a spring 2012 exhibition.

CHURCH

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ends," including some carpet, tile and sidewalk work.

But getting to this point has been a long process, he said.

"It began with forming a building committee that came up with three different propositions: Either rebuilding it as it was, remodeling within the framework that it was, or what the congregation eventually voted on, which was to remodel and expand," Weisplennig said.

As that expansion took place, the church had to work to accommodate its members, as well as continue to offer the same programs it always had.

"As far as ministry goes, we've had to readjust and rethink how we've done some of our programs in the past — how to do worship and Sunday

school and all those things," Weisplennig said. "We had to completely redesign our Confirmation program for this year, and now we're getting to the point where we have to re-think again, 'How did we do it before, and what do we want to change from that?'"

A large part of this process was finding locations where these programs could be held.

"With Sunday services, we started off over at Marian Auditorium, and we were there all summer long," Weisplennig said. "Then before school started, we moved over to the Old Library and we've been there since — with the exception of the Christmas season, when we moved back into the Marian Auditorium."

"One of the comical things we talk about is the red box," Gunderson said. "We have one of those red Rubbermaid containers, big tubs. And we haul all the bulletins and the computer and the projector over to (the loca-

tion of the service). Steve always brings it in the morning to church, and then I load it up and take it back here after church. We are just going to be really happy when we don't have to do this anymore."

This movement has required the church's congregation to step forward and become more involved — an expectation it has more than exceeded, Weisplennig said.

"I think we've seen more people in our congregation be more willing to take on different roles and do ministry for themselves, rather than relying on either the pastors or the staff. That's been wonderful to see," he said.

Gunderson and Weisplennig both expressed their thanks to the various community members and groups that helped the church through its ordeal.

"We keep repeating this, but we're very grateful to God for the community that we're in," Gunderson said. "(We appreciate) the demonstrations of love

and compassion from the community, from individuals to organizations....

"From day one, right from the fire, we were offered a lot of places for worship or whatever we needed, and those offers just stayed on the table all the time," he said.

Weisplennig mentioned Mount Marty College and its former president Dr. Tim Barry in particular.

"They've been extremely gracious in allowing us to use their facility and make it our own place while we've been over there," he said.

As Easter draws closer, the feeling among the majority of the congregation is one of excitement.

"When we make announcements following our services, talking about getting ready to move back over here, you can just see people's faces light up," Weisplennig said. "You even see fist-pumps every now and then."

BOARD

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of school board experience qualify me for the position. I desire to continue to serve on the board because I believe my experience, common sense and willingness to work with others for the good of the students and employees of the district qualifies me for the position.

3. The single largest issue facing the Yankton School

EGGS

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Company will host a hunt with more than 9,000 candy filled eggs. Like in years past, the eggs will be split over four fields separated by age group. Age groups are 6 months-2 (one parent allowed on the field with each child); 3-4 (one parent allow within the gates, not on the field); 5-6 (no parents on the field); and 7-9 (no parents on the field).

The Easter Bunny will be there, too, and in a few lucky eggs there will be cards for prizes other than candy.

"It was fun," said YCTC director Allison Spak. "We put out the call for help and we had more than 40 parents and kids show up to help fill the eggs, not to mention all of the people who will volunteer and help on Saturday. It is a very fun event."

So, kids, you now have something to do this weekend. Grab your parents, get out there and have fun.

operational decisions. Funding will always be an issue in public education, but I know that our board will continue to work with staff, faculty and administration to offer a quality education with an affordable price tag.

4. Other than the budgetary issues faced by the Yankton School District, what other priorities do you have?

The quality of the educational and extracurricular activities offered to students should always be the highest priority. I would like to see the district continue to enhance the vocational opportunities for students

and continue developing support for students who struggle with academic, developmental and social growth.

5. Do you have any final comments?

Yankton schools offer outstanding academic and activity opportunities through talented and highly qualified employees. I have enjoyed my years of involvement as a student, parent and board member and I would appreciate the opportunity to continue serving on the board. I would appreciate your vote on April 13.

Opsahl-Kostel Memorial Chapel Ribbon Cutting On April 6

TYNDALL — Kevin Opsahl and Tami Keller will host the community ribbon cutting for the new Opsahl-Kostel Memorial Chapel-Tyndall at 1 p.m. Tuesday, April 6. Members of the Tyndall Chamber of Commerce will be present to cut the ribbon at the new location at 1615 Main Street. The community is invited to attend the ribbon cutting and a short program about the new location.

Opsahl-Kostel Memorial Chapel is also planning community open houses at the Tyndall location on the weekends of April 10-11 and April 17-18. Staff will be on hand to lead visitors on a tour of both the memorial chapel and the memorial resource center as well as to answer any questions community members might have. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call 605-589-9979.

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