**International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

**Remembrance in our own eyes – from generation to generation**



“Remembrance in our own eyes – from generation to generation” is the name of the commemoration event that was held on Tuesday, 24th of January 2017, marking the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Program for the event was created by teachers from primary school “Vozd Karadjordje”, Nikola Mitic, Violeta Zivkovic, Milica Pokrajac and Maja Doric and teacher from secondary school “Zeleznicka Tehnicka skola”, Nada Banjanin Duričić with the help of NGO Haver Srbija.

Focus of the event was directed towards the children during the Holocaust and program was based on the memories and testimonies of the Holocaust survivors, members of Jewish community of Belgrade. In the framework of different projects, some of the survivors that were present during the commemoration, were guests in different schools in Serbia where they shared their Holocaust memories. This event was one of the ways for students to show their gratitude, respect, empathy and appreciation towards the survivors. As part of the program, half an hour before the event, survivors and students that participated and read from the testimonies, had a chance to meet and have private conversations. Added value of this event was the meeting between students and last generation of survivors. This was very emotional for students who were learning about the life stories of the survivors they just met for the past two months. Life stories and the presence of the survivors: Aleksandar Ajzinberg, Breda Kalef, Drita Tutunović, Ela Izrael-Delovska, Eva Čavčić, Jozef Baruhović, Lucija Rajner, Rea Živković, Sonja Demajo Lunginović i Vera Karaoglanović Krotić made this event special.

Commemoration event was opened by Danijel Bogunovic, who represented Jewish community of Belgrade, continued with Kadish by Stefan Zekić, conductor of Jewish-Serbian choir “Braca Baruh”. Six candles, symbolizing six million Jews who perished during the Holocaust were lightened by children from Jewish community (Sara Barac, Magdalena Tanasijević, Ognjena Ratković, Matija Bogunović, Bogdana Ratković i Adam Savić ) in memory of their families. Followed by the movie “Remembrance” made by the students of “Zeleznicka Tehnicka Skola” and their teacher Nada Banjanin Djuricic. Choir from primary school “Vozd Karadjordje” followed the readings of the testimonies with songs in Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino and Serbian: “Kad ja podjoh na Bembasu”(“Mi kerido mi amado”), “Cveta tresnja”, “Dona, Dona”, “Ruse Kose”, “Eli Eli”, “Samo da rata ne bude” and “Adio Kerida”.

This event, which was also initiated last year by students and their teachers together with NGO Haver Srbija has multiple aims; beside of nurturing the culture of remembrance it has pedagogical and educational aims too. All the students went through numerous workshops that had the aim to introduce Judaism and Jewish culture, Jewish community prior to the Holocaust, the Holocaust and its educational aims and contemporary Jewish community.

Commemoration event took place in Cultural Center REX. The place was chosen on purpose because, prior to the Holocaust, it was the cultural and religious center of Sephardic Jewish community of Belgrade. It belonged to Oneg Shabbat and Gemilut Hasidim organizations and part of the building was Jewish old age home. The first victims of gas van “Dushekupka” were the residents of the Old age home. We thought that by being in the place which once represented vibrant Jewish life together with the students and their teachers will help us not to forget - but to remember.

Event had numerous media coverage prior, during and after the commemoration. There were 54 students that participated in the event, more than twenty survivors and 150 visitors. Next to the survivors from Jewish community, survivors from Jasenovac: Slavko Milanović, Brigita Knežević, Milutko Kondić i Jovan Pejić were also present. Messages of the commemoration and of those who gave voice to the victims of the Holocaust were that life is above everything, that life and human dignity are the highest values and that we stand together when we say “never again”.

