



## **My Mark On The World**

**By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director**

“Please take this piece of paper and write how you will help people to feel safe. “ These were the instructions given to me and the other people visiting the “Through the Eyes of Youth: Life and Death in the Bedzin Ghetto.”

This exhibit is currently displayed at the Chandler Center for the Arts and will move to Chandler High School (I believe) at the end of this week. Created by college students working with Bjorn Krondorfer through the Martin-Springer Institute at Northern Arizona University, this display tells the history of the town of Bedzin, Poland and the ghetto that was built there, a location about 20 miles or so from Auschwitz-Birkenau; specifically during the time of the Holocaust.

Extensive research was conducted by these NAU students under the supervision of Bjorn Krondorfer, cataloging hand-drawn pictures, writings, and photographs of 17 teenagers who lived in this town and were moved first to the Ghetto and then taken to the death camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau. The exhibit focuses on seven of these teens, following their lives before, during and after the Holocaust.

The exhibit has volunteer docents from Chandler High School who offer their perspective of what they learned, what they noticed, what they connected with as they experienced and researched the exhibit.

As I read the panels, agonizing over the sadness that is inherent in any Holocaust display, I was struck by one of the comments from a docent. “I was reading these panels. It is their resilience that carries me through.” How profound.



And that is just it. These seven teens, along with their families, experienced horrors, unimaginable horrors just as the hostages have and continue to suffer in Gaza. But during this period in time, several of these Bedzin teens fell in love, even married. They joined secret Zionist groups. Some taught classes in secret for the young children so that the connection to Judaism wasn't lost. My hope and prayers are that the hostages are able to have some of this goodness in their lives as well.

I can't undo the damage and suffering that anyone experiences. But I can focus on my small place and pledge to make those I come in contact with feel heard, feel appreciated, feel valued, feel safe, feel loved.

This is my pledge to make a positive mark in the world.

Shabbat Shalom.