

**The Guardian
Charlottetown, PEI**

Taking the journey

P.E.I. students involved in fundraising activities to support their upcoming trip to the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington

Thursday January 14, 2010

BY SALLY COLE

Tim McAleer is hoping to deepen his understanding of one of the darkest chapters of the world's history.

After studying about the six million Jews who were persecuted and killed by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945, he's hoping to add to what he has learned by visiting the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

"I'm looking forward to seeing all the exhibits and increasing my knowledge about the Holocaust so I can realize why it happened and why people were treated in such a way. It's important to become educated (about it), so it will never happen again," says the 14-year-old Johnstons River resident.

Sarah Quinn of Fort Augustus is also excited about the educational trip.

"I'm looking forward to meeting new people, learning about the Holocaust and spending some time in Washington," says the Grade 9 student.

They are two of the eight students in the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies program at Donagh Regional School who, after 18 hours of class study and 16 hours of community service, are embarking on the next leg of their journey. They are fundraising for the trip, which will take them to Washington, April 25-28.

A student from Stonepark Intermediate School in Charlottetown will also be going.

After successfully raising \$6,800 the students now need \$5,500 to reach their goal.

"We've experienced a great success selling pies, potatoes and lottery tickets as well as bagging groceries," says parent Kory McAleer.

"Now after the holiday break we're back to bagging groceries again," he says, adding the students will be volunteering at the Co-op Queen Street in Charlottetown on Sunday afternoons on Jan. 24, Feb. 21 and March 7, at the Co-op Walker Drive on Sunday, Feb. 7, and at the Charlottetown Atlantic SuperStore on Saturday, Feb. 27.

McAleer is pleased with the work ethic and the leadership qualities the students have developed.

"The group has been quite close, so to see them do these fundraisers together has been great. They've worked very hard in taking on this responsibility together," he says.

Besides teaching co-operation, the goal of the program is to promote tolerance and acceptance and to help students understand how racism and discrimination exist in society. The hope is that by learning about the horrors of the Holocaust they will realize that every person, regardless of religion or race, has the same basic human rights, says their teacher Jo-Anne White.

"Learning about the Holocaust is overwhelming, and it's hard for anybody to understand. So we break it down story by story. If you look at the number, six million it's incomprehensible. But if you look at it story by story, you realize they were ordinary people who were just living their lives. They were happy and they got along with their neighbours. But suddenly they were targeted by the Nazis, simply because, they were Jewish, for no other reason.

"In a previous trip to the Holocaust Museum one of the things that stands out for the students is the hall covered with photographs that reaches up three stories on either side. There were ordinary photographs of weddings, birthdays, graduations and babies. When the students look at them, they realize that they have the same pictures at their house," says White.

Clancy Beagan, who is also going on the trip, hopes the experience will provide students with another insight.

"Learning about the Holocaust shows that Hitler was the biggest bully in the world's history.

"So hopefully if people go on this trip, they'll tell others and it will stop the bullying. And the more people know about it, the better the chances that history won't repeat itself," says the Grade 9 student.

For more information, contact Sherren Murphy at 676-2637, Dan and Joanne Murnaghan at 569-1940 or Lori and Kory McAleer at 367-1502.

Anyone wishing to make a donation to help with the school trip may send it to Donagh Regional School, Charlottetown, RR 5, C1A 7J8. Be sure to indicate that it's for the program.

Website: www.ushmm.org/museum