

## Coast to Coast

# Students learn to fight bigotry

By PHYLLIS SHRAGGE

*Staff Reporter*

**HAMILTON** — High school students participating in the Asper Foundation Holocaust and human rights studies program have an opportunity to combat anti-Semitism at its roots, says the local chair of the program.

"If you are armed with knowledge, you can fight anti-Semitism," says Dr. Nadia Rosa, a Holocaust survivor who recalls her internment in Theresienstadt concentration camp vividly, even though she was just seven years old when the camp was liberated.

"The question you often get, is how six million Jews could go like lambs to the slaughter. When I hear that, it shows me there is no knowledge of what transpired. It's important to learn how the Holocaust evolved," Rosa said in an interview.

Hamilton students in the Holocaust education program are taught history as it relates to the Holocaust beginning with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and including events leading up to World War II.

The program, which was initiated in Winnipeg in 1997, expanded into a national

program in 2000. This year, 13 cities across Canada are participating.

Its objectives are to promote tolerance and sensitize Canadian high school students to the consequences of racism, as well as gain an understanding of the vital role each person plays in the defence of human rights.

Students participate in a comprehensive three-part learning experience which includes up to 18 hours of classroom instruction on the Holocaust and human rights, a four-day trip to Washington, D.C. focusing on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and a commitment of 16 hours of volunteer work in the community.

The local program, which is jointly funded by the Asper Foundation and UJA Federation of Hamilton, is open to students in grades 9, 10 and 11 at a cost of \$350 per student, and is limited to 15 students who were required to write a 300-word essay about why they wanted to participate.

Tentative dates for the Washington trip are May 18 to 21. Hamilton students will join students from London and Windsor for the trip, which includes a visit to the Smithsonian Institute and other historical sites.