

Calgary teen recalls grandma in Holocaust studies

Asper program tour

SHELDON ALBERTS
CANWEST NEWS SERVICE
WASHINGTON

Growing up in Calgary, Aviva Fialkow, 14, was only vaguely aware of her grandparents' history as Holocaust survivors.

From time to time, she noticed her grandmother Faye would sometimes stuff food in her pocket and always seem to rush to complete her to-do list. They were quirky, but unexplained, mannerisms.

It was only as Fialkow got older that she learned her grandmother's behaviour stemmed from a life lived in fear of not knowing when her next meal would come, or not knowing

if she'd be alive to do the things she wanted.

Fialkow's grandmother, who survived a Nazi concentration camp in Poland, lost five of eight family members in the Holocaust.

"My grandma was a survivor and she wouldn't even talk about it because she was so scared," Fialkow, a Grade 9 student at John Ware Junior High School, said Monday as she

toured the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

Fialkow recalled her grandmother as she and about 200 visiting Canadian teens viewed the exhibits at the Holocaust museum.

The group's trip to the U.S. capital marked the capstone of 18 hours of study in the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program, which is designed to raise

awareness of the Holocaust and why it's vital for individuals to take personal action to combat religious and racial intolerance today.

This year, about 1,200 students from 19 schools across Canada are taking part in the Asper Foundation program, which was launched in 1997 by the late Israel Asper as a way to use history to teach Canadian students about tolerance.