

HOLocaust

## Students hear story of survival

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WASHINGTON — High school students from across Canada participating in the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program came to Washington this week where they listened to a Holocaust survivor describe how she spent the first three years of her life hiding from the Nazis, not even knowing her own name.

Louise Lawrence-Israels, born in Haarlem, the Netherlands, in 1942, told about 160 students Monday that in January 1943 she and her family went into hiding to escape deportation to extermination camps set up by the Nazis in Auschwitz and Sobibor, Poland.

Louise said her father obtained false papers and rented an apartment in the attic of an Amsterdam row house where the family hid until Canadian troops liberated the city on May 5, 1945.

"When you go into hiding you don't exist anymore," she said. The family took on Christian names.

"I didn't know my name until I was three years old," she said. "I thought my name was Maria."

She said before the liberation she had no conception of life outside the confines of the tiny apartment. The idea of playing in the sun was unknown to her.

Several days after Amsterdam's liberation, her father took her and her brother outside for the first time and told them to play in a grassy field. But they didn't know what to do.

She said after the war her parents taught her to hate Germans and it was only at the age of 30 that she realized this was wrong.

"I am not very proud of this," she told the students. "Hatred begets hatred and the Holocaust began with hatred."

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