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Holocaust survivor Louise Lawrence-Israels speaks to students in the Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program as they visit Washington's Holocaust Museum.

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## Canadian students learn about Holocaust

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**WASHINGTON** — After months spent studying the genocide of Jews during the Second World War, 14-year-old Eliza Kraus had grown familiar with all the painful details of the Holocaust. She learned about the brutality of the Nazis, the squalour of the Jewish ghettos, and Adolf Hitler's "final solution."

But when she finally visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum yesterday, and stepped inside a cattle car used to transport European Jews to Nazi concentration camps, the Calgary teenager was left speechless with emotion.

"Walking through the boxcar, I didn't even know what to say because I knew hundreds of people were crammed into that little space with no food, no water, and they were in there for days," said Kraus, a Grade 9 student at the Calgary French and International School.

"It helps you understand more what they felt, and it means more to me because of that."

Kraus is among 250 teenagers in Washington this week completing a human-rights program that helps educate Canadian students about the history of the Holocaust and the dangers of racial intolerance and hatred.

The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program has brought more than 7,000 students from 110 Canadian cities to the U.S. capital in recent years, and it's a visit that can leave its participants both drained and motivated to speak out against modern-day human-rights abuses.

This year alone, more than 1,100 students have taken part in the program and, on several of the stops at the Holocaust museum, Louise Lawrence-Israels has been there to tell her harrowing tale of survival.

For an hour yesterday in the museum's Meyerhoff Theatre, Lawrence-Israels held the students riveted with details of more than two years spent hiding in Holland from the Nazis with her parents and older brother.

The Holocaust Studies program was launched in 1997 by the late Israel Asper as a way to use history to teach Canadian students about tolerance.

Asper founded Canwest Global Communications Inc., whose media holdings include Global Television and Canwest newspapers across Canada, including The Gazette.

The program formed the starting point for the \$100-million Canadian Museum of Human Rights, which began construction last month in Winnipeg and is slated to open in 2012.