

## THE BOROUGH

### GRYMES HILL

# Wagner launches Holocaust program

*College's 3-week educational series and internship begins on Monday*

**By Melinda Gottlieb**

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The Wagner College Chai Society, led by presidents Kim and Victor Avis, is presenting a new Wagner College internship and education program. Local Holocaust survivors will connect with public school students in a series of events over three weeks to mark the anniversary of Kristallnacht — the Night of Broken Glass — Nov. 9, 1938.

So far, four local Holocaust survivors have agreed to participate in the program: Gabi Held, Arthur Spielman, Rachel Gottlieb and Chaim Ben-Aron. More than two dozen Wagner College students applied for the six inaugural Holocaust internships sponsored by the Chai Society.

The students visit the participating schools a week before the talks to prepare the middle and high school students to ask questions by providing background information on the countries and concentration camps. The student interns are Audriana Mekula, Lauren Anne Klein, Leo Schuchert, Ruby Sollitto, Shannon O'Connor and Julia Teichman.

On Monday, Holocaust survivor Gabi Held of Great Kills will speak at Wagner College in observance of Kristallnacht, which is considered the beginning of the Nazis' genocidal campaign against



**Holocaust survivor Gabi Held speaks to a group gathered for a Latte and Learning meeting at Starbucks in New Dorp.** (COURTESY OF SCOTT KALMIKOFF)

the Jews, known as the Shoah. Held, born in Hungary, will detail his family's struggle to survive in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. He and his wife, Marianne, lost countless family members in the Shoah.

The audience will include a group of eighth-graders visiting from Dreyfus Intermediate School in Stapleton and the public is also invited to attend the free event, including a kosher lunch, but reservations are required. The event takes place Monday at 11:20 a.m. in the Wagner College Union's Faculty Dining Room.

For more information, contact Lori R. Weintrob at 646-345-4507.

To make reservations, call 718-390-3253 or email [LRWeintr@wagner.edu](mailto:LRWeintr@wagner.edu).

Held also spoke Wednesday at the John W. Lavelle Prepa-

ratory Charter School.

Spielman will speak on Monday at Port Richmond High School about his perilous youth in the Krakow ghetto, hiding in an orphanage, and escaping from Poland to Slovakia.

Rachel Gottlieb spoke with members of Wagner College's Hillel chapter last weekend about her experiences in Auschwitz and Chaim Ben-Aron will speak on Wednesday at Dreyfus Intermediate School about his experiences at Nazi-run labor camps in Poland.

A week after the survivors' talks, they will return to the schools to facilitate a dialogue reflecting on Holocaust survivors' remarks.

The students will then prepare an exhibit to be shown in Wagner College's Spotlight Gallery next April, which will feature over a dozen local Ho-

locaust survivors.

Future events include the U.S. premiere of the film, "Let's Go" with German director Michael Verhoeven attending. The Wagner College screening is scheduled for Nov. 20 at 6:30 p.m. in Foundation Hall's Manzulli Boardroom. The screening is free, and the public is invited.

Wagner College intends to knit together a network of educators on Staten Island who are interested in engaging their students in considering why it is important to remember the Holocaust as part of a 21st-century education.

Any teachers or Holocaust survivors who wish to participate should contact Wagner history professor Lori Weintrob, who will be leading a trip to Auschwitz in March for Wagner students and alumni, at [LRWeintr@wagner.edu](mailto:LRWeintr@wagner.edu).