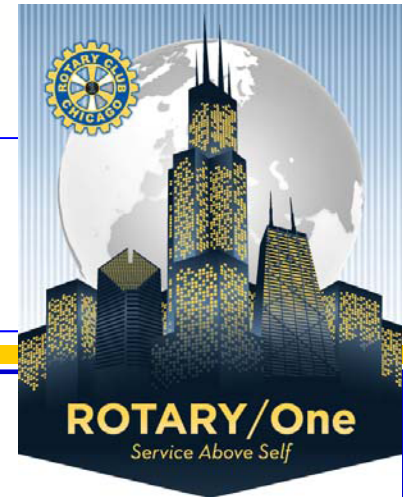


Rotary Club of Chicago

Making Business Leaders Community Leaders Since 1905



May 18 Program: Danny Spungen, Illinois Holocaust Museum

Danny Spungen is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation. This family foundation was established in 2006 by Florence and Laurence Spungen. The Foundation reflects the individual and collective philanthropy



of the founders, their children and their grandchildren. The Spungen Foundation focuses its grantmaking on health-related issues, especially cancer research, care and treatment, and Jewish causes.

In 2007, Danny Spungen, a collector and philatelist, on behalf of the foundation, acquired arguably one of the best known collections of Holocaust materials related to stamps, covers, post-cards, letters, bank note forgeries, and manuscripts from concentration camps & Jewish ghettos. Formally known as "The NAZI Scourge: Postal Evidence of the Holocaust and the Devastation of Europe," the Spungen Holocaust Postal Collection is being made available to the public on the Foundation's web site.

Spungen now allocates 25% of his time as a "student" of the Holocaust and exhibits the constantly growing collection to students and the general public all over the world.

Spungen first became involved with Rotary in 2001 when his family hosted their first foreign exchange student. The family is now hosting their 11th student, a boy from Peru. For the 2010-2011 school year they will host two students, including one boy from Thailand. Through Rotary the family has previously hosted his older sister and older brother....a unique story in that they will have hosted three siblings from Yala Thailand since 2002-2003.

And Special Guest Sam Harris, a child survivor of the Holocaust.

Sam was born Szlamek Rzeznik in May 1935 in Deblin, Poland. Sam was only four years old when World War II broke out in 1939. Upon Nazi occupation a portion of Deblin was turned into a ghetto where Sammy and his family lived. Soon overcrowding, lack of food and medication caused men, women and children to die on the streets of Deblin from typhus, dysentery and starvation.

In 1942, Sammy and his family were rounded up for deportation. During the chaos of the round up Sammy's father pushed him out line and told him to run and hide. Sammy watched his parents and four sisters and brothers march towards the railcars. That was the last time Sammy saw his family. Sammy was able to escape death, his survival was nothing short of a miracle.

As the round ups decreased the Deblin ghetto was converted into a concentration camp where Sammy survived. Since he was too young to work he hid from the guards, hiding in the darkness of the barracks.

In 1944, as the war approached Deblin the Nazis moved the Jewish workers from the Deblin camp to Czestochowa concentration camp. Upon arrival in the main camp Sammy was lifted up, kissed and hugged, and passed overhead from hand to hand by each prisoner. The prisoners, many of whom had lost their own children, were overjoyed at seeing a child.

On January 16, 1945, Sammy was liberated by the Russian army. As a young child, he survived four years in the Deblin and Czestochowa concentration camps. After living in an orphanage in Lublin, Poland and then Vienna, Austria, Sammy made his way to the United States and lived in a foster home in Chicago. On April 10, 1948, through the Jewish Children's Bureau Sammy was adopted by Dr. Ellis and Harriett Harris in Northbrook, Illinois.

Today, Sam is an active member of the community, serving as President of the Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois and leading the efforts to build the new Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. He continues to speak extensively on the local and state level about the lessons of the Holocaust and his experiences, which can be found in his memoir *Sammy: A Child Survivor of the Holocaust*.

