

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Tours Kittatinny Regional High School Holocaust and Genocide Research Center

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Press Pool Coverage

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HAMPTON - At 6" 4" Gov. Phil Murphy had no problem signing the top of the wall of visitors as he helped dedicate the Kittatinny Regional High School's new Holocaust and Genocide Research Center on Monday.

The brainchild of 2024 Sussex County Teacher of the Year Mary Houghtaling and Holocaust survivor Maud Dahme, who hosted the governor's visit on Monday, the project enlisted students at the school to design and help stock the center which takes up part of the school's library complex.

Featured in the center is a 2,000-volume collection of books of the late Oscar Pinkus, some dating back to when he was a child in Germany.

"My husband and I stacked them in the back of his pick-up and brought them to the school," said Houghtaling, as she talked about the beginnings of the center. Also included - and available by appointment - is a cabinet full of Pinkus' bound notes about what is in those books.

She said the idea of a Holocaust memorial came out of a class trip to the Jewish Museum NYC with some students. Work on the museum picked up steam as she worked on her second Masters degree.

Houghtaling is also the current Sussex County Teacher of the Year.

The center is the only one of its kind in the nation and, in addition to the books for research, also contains portraiture by Holocaust survivors or their descendants.

Among artwork are renditions of Kristallnacht, which occurred Nov. 9-10, 1938, when Germans attacked Jewish persons and property across the country. The word means 'broken glass' and refers to the streets littered with broken windows, pottery and even glassware stolen from Jewish homes.

Another piece is representation of Anne Frank, a teenaged girl who kept a diary as she and her family hid from the Nazis from June 1942 to August 1944. The diary and collection of letters was found in her hiding place in 1947.

The center doesn't focus on the Holocaust (the Nazi attempt to exterminate the Jewish people before and during World War II), but on other and more recent genocides around the world.

One wall has a timeline of when genocides have occurred, and a big map which shows where in the world they have occurred.

The ceiling is decorated with paper butterflies, each done by current people in memory of ancestors who died in the Holocaust.

After signing the wall, Gov. Murphy called the displays "really impressive," then noted that he was the U.S. ambassador to Germany from 2009 to 2013 under President Barack Obama. He said he will be visiting Poland to participate in the International March of the Living.

Kittatinny Regional Superintendent Craig Hutcheson said the school is working on a schedule for the public to view the center and museum and for researchers to also avail themselves of its resources.

VIDEO

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/2vwc3xfopq4kkm0itf4e9/AIVj4vbtTSi8l_cNiUDTR2g?rlkey=vpn0v0h84dcuamv4b0nf428qp&st=9oeh0j7b&dl=0
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