



Don't miss  
Gerda Weissmann Klein  
at Newman University  
March 25, 2008  
at 7 p.m.

A partnership with the Southern Poverty Law Center allowed them to address anti-Semitism and intolerance in its larger context. So far, this program has been used in more than 98,000 schools, reaching nearly 10 million students. "No child should suffer hunger, loss or death due to prejudice," says Klein.

After the 1999 Columbine shootings in Colorado, the Kleins were asked to speak at the memorial dedication. "We embraced the surviving kids," says Gerda. "There was so much hatred going on that children were being killed. It doesn't need to be. With the communications and bounty we have now, the young people need to have hope that this can change in the future."

## Gerda Weissmann Klein

Author, Historian, Survivor and Inspiration

“Ise, a childhood friend of mine, once found a raspberry in the concentration camp and carried it in her pocket all day to present to me that night on a leaf.

Imagine a world in which your entire possession is one raspberry and you give it to your friend.”

~Gerda Weissmann Klein

Gerda Weissmann Klein has dedicated her life to easing human suffering. She shares her story of the Holocaust and the horrors of being forced into slave labor at the age of 15 and sent to a succession of WWII concentration camps, culminating in the 350-mile death march where a childhood friend died in her arms. The agony of exposure, starvation, and arbitrary execution reduced the numbers from 2,000 women to 120. Despite the atrocities she suffered, Gerda found the strength to live.

"I'm not unique," she says. "I was blessed with freedom. Survival is a privilege and a deep obligation." For more than 60 years, Klein has shared a message of hope, love and humanity through books, film documentaries, speaking engagements, and the Klein Foundation which she and her husband Kurt created.

Gerda finds comfort through her writing. She has published eight books for adults and children. Her autobiography, *All But My Life*, was the foundation for the Oscar- and Emmy-winning documentary *One Survivor Remembers*. *The Hours After* follows up with her liberation and love affair with Kurt, a United States Army intelligence officer. The reader is given an intimate glimpse of the couple through the letters they exchanged while she struggled to escape the post-war bureaucracy in Europe.

On May 7, 1945, Gerda and the other survivors were released from a locked bicycle warehouse, the doors rigged to explode. She weighed only 68 pounds, had white hair, and was one day from her 21st birthday. She was dressed in rags and wore a pair of boots that her father had wisely advised her to put on before he and her mother were taken. "I couldn't have survived the march without those boots," says Gerda.

It was Kurt Klein who opened the door to their prison. "We are Jewish, you know," Gerda said to him. "So am I," he answered. It was one of the greatest moments of Gerda's life. The two were married in Paris in 1946.

"Coming to America was like coming to heaven," she says. "I didn't know the word trauma. I was so happy to be here and to be free and with my beloved husband." She didn't feel isolated, even

Through a partnership with Time Classroom, the Klein Foundation created *Stand Up, Speak Out, Lend a Hand*, a multimedia educational program that shares the Kleins' experiences with high school students across the United States teaching the importance of respect, responsibility and acceptance of differences.



though she didn't speak any English. "I steeped myself in the English language. Creatively, I work in English." When she tells her story, she tells it in English because it's easier: "It didn't happen in English; it happened in German."

The Kleins lived in Buffalo, NY for the majority of their 56 years together and had three children - two daughters and a son. They have nine grandchildren and a new great-grandchild. Kurt passed away in 2002, and Gerda misses him every moment of every day. "I'm so proud that my husband married me. We had a wonderful life together and it is very tough without him," Gerda says. "My husband always said that pain should not be wasted; it can be used to heal, even yourself."

The story of Kurt and Gerda's meeting and life together has been featured on *Oprah*, *60 Minutes*, and *CBS Sunday Morning*. Their story was also portrayed in the film *Testimony*, which is permanently on exhibit at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

"I have no education to speak of," she says. "Teachers are my heroes." Yet, this woman has taught millions with her message of hope and freedom. Because of her amazing contributions to her adopted country of America, she has been honored by the United Nations and received the Lion of Judah award, seven Doctorates of Humane Letters, and countless other awards. She has worked tirelessly to fight hunger, violence and prejudice and encourages young people to get involved in community service and social action.

Last year, Gerda founded a nonprofit organization called Citizenship Counts that provides a civics education curriculum to middle school students. The children ultimately plan and host a naturalization ceremony in their school. Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor will officiate at the March 23, 2009 nationalization ceremony for the pilot program of 100 Phoenix and Scottsdale students. ☺

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