

### **Graduation Trip Opens Student Eyes to the Atrocities of Genocide**

Schools in the Toronto area often take their Grade 8 students to Ottawa for their end of year graduation. For a school in Ottawa, however, the tables were turned.

On June 19<sup>th</sup>, close to 50 students from Sawmill Creek Elementary School (Ottawa-Carleton District School Board) descended on Toronto for their Grade 8 graduation. Not just a sightseeing visit, this graduation trip provided a highly educational learning experience that will leave lasting memories and inspire many to take a stand against racism, antisemitism, terrorism and genocide.

After a morning adventure at the CN Tower, students from Sawmill Creek watched the critically acclaimed movie, “I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life and Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal”. This screening was followed by a dynamic workshop and presentation at the Tom and Anna Koffler Tolerance Training Centre at the Toronto headquarters of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies (FSWC).

FSWC education consultant, Michael Etedgui led the workshop, providing students with insight into genocide and the atrocities that are happening in the world today. The students also learned about the Holocaust – the most extreme genocide in history.

The workshop was followed by a presentation by Dr. Acol Dor, a survivor of the genocide in South Sudan. She spoke about the terrors she and her family encountered in Sudan, ensuring the students understood the severity of the genocide and the brutalities that innocent people are currently facing in Darfur. Students learned that the atrocities of genocide are not just a part of history, but something that continues to affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of people today. Dr. Dor impressed on the students that we still have a long way to go in achieving a society of equality without any discrimination.

This incredible journey of learning ended with expressions of deep gratitude and appreciation from both the teachers and students in attendance. Inspired by the ideas of justice, tolerance and human rights, the students departed for Ottawa, but not before asking what they could do to make a difference; and how they could ensure “never again” was a reality.

*To book a workshop at FSWC, please contact Tracey Steyn at 416-864-9735 ext. 21 or [tsteyn@fswc.ca](mailto:tsteyn@fswc.ca).*

*To learn more about FSWC, go to [www.fswc.ca](http://www.fswc.ca).*