

28 YEARS

**Sala and Aron Samueli
Holocaust Art & Writing Contest**

Presented by Chapman University and
The 1939 Society, a division of Holocaust Museum LA

Entry postmark date
February 1, 2027

Digital submission due date
February 3, 2027

the
COURAGE
to **BEGIN**
AGAIN

Awards Ceremony
Friday, March 19, 2027



CHAPMAN
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Rodgers Center for
Holocaust Education

During the Holocaust, the struggle to survive demanded extraordinary courage. Each day brought unimaginable brutality, suffering, and uncertainty. Simply giving up would have been more than understandable. Yet countless individuals somehow found the inner strength and resilience to rise each morning and face another day. They chose, again and again, to begin anew in the hope of surviving. Tragically, in spite of their courage, many millions, mostly Jews, were murdered.

Often the Nazis and their collaborators deceived their victims about where they were going and what awaited them. As a result, preparation became impossible. No matter the circumstances, whether one was in a ghetto or camp; in hiding or fighting with the partisans; or separated from one's parents by a rescue operation, each new day demanded the courage to continue living. In the killing center of Sobibor, 16-year-old Thomas "Toivi" Blatt courageously fought to live each day after witnessing the murder of his parents and younger brother. Every day meant beginning again.

For ten-year-old Vera Gissing, beginning again meant building a life far from home. Sent with her sister Eva from her home in Prague (Czechoslovakia) to safety in England on the Kindertransport in June 1939, Vera endured sadness and loneliness, especially after she was separated from her sister. Each day, she wrote in the diary her father had given her, hoping that one day she could share it with him. Each night, she honored her mother's request to look at the sky and think of the stars as messengers of her parents' love. Her diary, memories, and hope became sources of strength as she found the courage to begin life again in a new country.

Liberation and the Allied victory did not end the need to begin again. For survivors, freedom marked the beginning of an entirely new set of uncertainties. Where could they go? Would they be reunited with their loved ones or mourn their loss? Could they make up for lost years of education and, gain the skills to find work? While life after liberation held great promise, it was also fraught with the ongoing trauma of loss and required immense courage to face an unknown future.

Most survivors refused to put their lives on hold while they waited to learn which country might accept them. Instead, they chose to embrace life despite profound loss. And over the next decades, many married, started families, established careers, and found the courage to bear witness, sharing their stories so those who had been murdered would be honored and remembered and future generations would learn from their experiences.

In the decades that followed, survivors watched with heartbreak as new genocides unfolded and as others were compelled to find the courage to try to survive and begin again. In 2014, a 19-year-old Iraqi-born Yazidi woman named Nadia Murad was abducted from her family, most of whom were murdered, and taken into sexual slavery by Islamic State fighters. Each day required her to demonstrate the courage to begin again. Eventually, Nadia escaped. Rather than hiding in silence, she found the courage to speak out about her experiences. In 2018, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize: for defying "the codes of shame... and daring to speak up on the abuses perpetrated against herself and thousands of Yazidi women and children.... she has broken a stigma that has afflicted millions of women victims of wartime sexual violence."

For those targeted during the Holocaust and for people like Nadia Murad who have endured subsequent genocides, the courage to begin again did not end with survival or liberation. Beginning again is not a single moment but a lifelong act of resilience. It requires both the courage to bear witness to what they experienced and to make the decision, day after day, to begin again.

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We hope that these words will inspire you and
your school to participate in the

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Participating schools may submit a total of three entries
(one entry per student) in any combination of the following
categories: art, film, poetry, or prose.

Students will be eligible to win a first prize award of \$400
in each category. Educators and schools will also be
eligible to win a first prize of \$200 each.

Students awarded second prize in each category will
receive \$200 and their sponsoring educator and school
will receive \$100 each.

PROMPT

1. Select and view one full-length survivor testimony from any of the following:
 - Samueli Holocaust Art & Writing Contest website, featuring video testimonies from the collection of the USC Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education at chapman.edu/contest-testimonies
 - South Carolina Council on the Holocaust website at scholocaustcouncil.org/survivor.php
 - The 1939 Society website at the1939society.org
 - USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education's YouTube channel at youtube.com/uscshoahfoundation ("Full-Length Testimonies" playlists)
 - USC Shoah Foundation's iWitness site at iwitness.usc.edu

** Lists of testimonies that are one to two hours in length are available in the resource guide.

2. As you listen to the survivor's testimony, identify a specific experience in which the survivor had to begin again.
3. Note a word, phrase, or sentence focusing on the courage it takes to begin again. This may reflect an act of survival, a decision to persevere, a source of hope, or a choice to rebuild in the face of loss and uncertainty.

Please note the timestamp from the video testimony where the specific word, phrase, or sentence occurs

4. As the person now entrusted with the individual's story, through your creativity in art, poetry, prose, or film, explore this word, phrase, or sentence as central to the survivor's experience. Highlight how they found the courage to endure and to begin again, whether during the Holocaust or following liberation.
5. In your response, include a personal reflection about how the survivor's story of courage and resilience inspires you. How does their example deepen your understanding of what it means to begin again, and how might it influence the way you face your own challenges and opportunities?

We encourage teachers to consult chapman.edu/holocaust-arts-contest for rubrics and other information.

The 1939 Society, now a division of Holocaust Museum LA, is an organization of Holocaust survivors, descendants, and friends. It takes its name from the year that Germany invaded Poland, changing forever the lives of those who would join together in Los Angeles in 1952 to form the Society.

The 1939 Society, has available on its website nearly 100 full-length oral testimonies. Some of these oral histories were recorded in the early 1980s at the University of California, Los Angeles; others were recorded in the mid-1990s in Orange County by the Anti-Defamation League.

South Carolina Council on the Holocaust hosts 37 testimonies of Holocaust survivors on its website, which were recorded in the 1990s together with SCE-TV. The website also includes a brief summary of each testimony and a written transcript.

USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education has an archive of more than 55,000 videotaped testimonies from Holocaust survivors and other witnesses. The USC Shoah Foundation is part of the Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences at the University of Southern California.

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CRITERIA

Please see the resource guide or visit chapman.edu/holocaust-arts-contest for specific criteria, including word limits (prose) and line limits (poetry), rubrics for the various categories, and other supporting information.

General Criteria - All Categories

Regardless of delivery method (digital or hard copy), **all entrants must complete the online submission form** (available at chapman.edu/holocaust-arts-contest).

Entries must reflect genuine engagement with the survivor's testimony in its historical context and constitute a thoughtful and creative response.

Entries must be based on a survivor's testimony available from one of the following sources:

- Samueli Holocaust Art & Writing Contest website, featuring video testimonies from the collection of the USC Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education at chapman.edu/contest-testimonies
- South Carolina Council on the Holocaust website at scholocaustcouncil.org/survivor.php
- The 1939 Society website at the1939society.org
- USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education's YouTube channel at youtube.com/uscshoahfoundation ("Full-Length Testimonies" playlists)
- USC Shoah Foundation's iWitness site at iwatchess.usc.edu



Entries that do not follow the criteria will be disqualified.

Will to Survive, Raina Kim, 2024



Survivor's Symphony, Elizabeth Elder, 2013

SUBMISSIONS

Your school's three entries may be submitted beginning December 1, 2026 and must be postmarked by February 1, 2027 or digitally submitted by February 3, 2027. Entries may be submitted electronically using the online submission form on the contest website. Art may also be submitted via postal mail to:

Ms. Jessica MyLymuk
Rodgers Center for Holocaust Education
Chapman University
One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866

All entries become the property of the Sala and Aron Samueli Holocaust Memorial Library at Chapman University. Artists are encouraged to retain a color copy of their work since the original may not be returned. The Sala and Aron Samueli Holocaust Memorial Library shall own all the rights to the entries, including copyrights, and may display and publish the entries, in whole, or in part.

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chapman.edu/holocaust-arts-contest for rubrics and other information.

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Love Survives, Esther Oh, 2025

SCHOOL PARTICIPATION AND PRIZES

Prizes will be distributed at the awards ceremony. Students must be in attendance (either in person or virtually) to be eligible for first and second place prizes. Exceptions must be approved in advance.

**Friday, March 19, 2027, 11 a.m. in Chapman Auditorium, Memorial Hall,
Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866**

The highlights of the event will include:

- The announcement of the winning art, film, poetry, and prose entries (one middle school and one high school);
- The presentation of the first-place art, film, poetry, and prose entries;
- A reception to honor our guests;
- The opportunity to meet and talk with Holocaust survivors, many of whose video testimonies are posted on The 1939 Society and USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education’s websites.

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Holocaust Museum LA
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South Carolina Council on the Holocaust

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