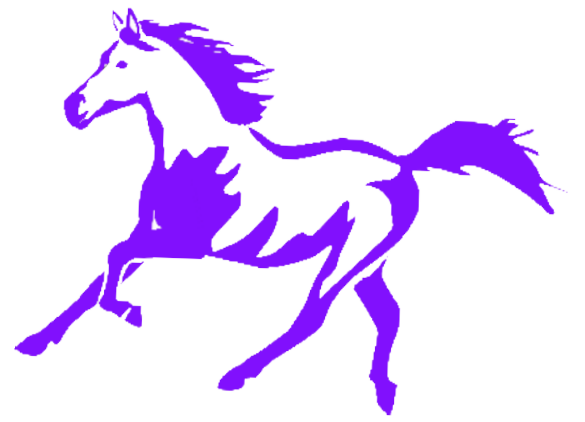


# rolling meadows pacer



Rolling Meadows High School

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## Tamer season

WildStang Robotics continues vision in spite of loss at World Championship.

page 3



## Golden dreams

2007 alumnus Danny Robertson works to qualify for 2016 Olympic Games.

page 10



## HypYES

The Pacer's Abby Cullen reviews this year's Hypno show, "Now or Never."

page 12

# Surviving through it all

## Holocaust survivor shares his story with students

Anna Czulno  
Copy Editor

Most people recognize that the Holocaust happened. They know about the many lives that were cut short because of World War II and the basic information and order of events that led to such a mass destruction of innocent lives. But as students sit in their classrooms and take notes on slide after slide of material on what occurred during that time, it sometimes seems like the Holocaust was just a distant event that many people want to remove from their memories. They neglect the true facts of what millions of civilians were forced to endure only a short time ago for fear of learning all the violent details that go along with it. However, with the help of people like Steen Metz, a Holocaust survivor himself, the story of the Holocaust and the millions of people that were affected by it are not being forgotten.

At only eight years old, Metz and his family were taken from their home and deported to the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp in what is now the Czech Republic. They were packed into a "cattle car" and sent off on an 84-hour journey without having any knowledge of where they were going or what their destiny would be once they got there.

"We never knew whether we would survive due to serious illnesses, starvation or deportation to extermination camps," Metz said.

While at the camp, Metz had to work to keep busy. Even though the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp was not an extermination camp, people still lived and worked under extremely harsh conditions for long hours of the day. After only eight months of being at the camp, Metz's father died of starvation due to only having water and potato skins to eat for each meal of the day. Metz and his mom spent a total of 18 months in the camp before it was liberated on April 15, 1945.

Just before Metz and his mom were rescued, plans for gas chambers were enacted and the process for building them was underway. Out of the almost 15,000 children that passed through the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp, Metz was one of only 1,500 to survive.



AN UNKNOWN FATE: Family prepares to board a train to a concentration camp after being forced out of their home.

"I was frightened. I was only 8 years old and did not quite understand what was going on," Metz said.

After returning to Denmark and then going on to finish his high school and college education in Copenhagen, Metz's job took him across the world to the U.S. For a while, Metz was hesitant to speak to other people about what he went through. But, in 2011, he finally got the courage to speak to just a single group of students, and it all took off from there. Now retired from his job, Metz's main goal is to speak to as many people as possible about his journey during the Holocaust, so no one ever forgets what happened.

Metz is coming to Rolling Meadows today to speak to our students about his experiences in the Holocaust and hopes that they will spread the message that he is working so hard to share.

"I hope students will learn from the past and transform the future," Metz said. "Treat other people the way they want to be treated. Show understanding and respect; be an upstander and not a bystander. We had too many bystanders and not enough upstanders during the Holocaust. Last but not least, carry the message forward and never forget... the Holocaust."

Metz has written a memoir about his time during the Holocaust and has spoken to many students and organizations about his journey. In addition, Metz was also invited to speak to a panel at Brown University.

"As I got older, [I became] more reflective and wrote my memoirs," Metz said. "I thought it was important that I shared my experiences with as many people, especially students, as possible. I never want the world to forget."

One of the most frequent questions Metz has been asked after his presentations was whether or not he felt guilty for being alive.

"Maybe I should feel guilty, but I do not. I feel very lucky," Metz said.

*\*photo courtesy of Steen Metz*

## Conspiracy vs. reality

**Almost 55 percent of the world's population is unaware that the Holocaust ever occurred.**

According to a survey done by the Anti-Defamation League

**At its busiest point, the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp held over 60,000 prisoners.**

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

**Of that other 45 percent that know it happened, a third of the people believe it was not accurately recorded in historical accounts.**

According to a survey done by the Anti-Defamation League

**A total of 11 million people died in the Holocaust. Of that number, approximately 1.1 million of those people were children and 6 million were Jewish.**

According to dosomething.org

*Steen Metz takes great pride in his Danish heritage symbolized with this Danish flag.*

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