

Letter to Parents and Guardians

Dear parents and guardians:

It is my pleasure to welcome you as your child embarks on the Facing History and Ourselves *Holocaust and Human Behavior Elective Course*. Facing History is an international educational and professional development organization with nearly 50 years of experience. For more information, please visit our website, www.facinghistory.org.

Facing History is committed to helping students make the essential connections between history and the choices they face as adolescents. We know that students are grappling with questions such as: Who am I? How do I fit into my community and the larger world? How can I make a difference? All of these questions will be explored by looking deeply at historical moments during the rise of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, when individuals, groups, societies, governments, and other countries, made decisions about their own lives that impacted the lives of neighbors and citizens. Students will also learn about the Armenian Genocide, which occurred three decades prior to the Holocaust within the Ottoman Empire.

Years of research have shown that Facing History's approach to studying these histories helps students develop essential academic and life skills, which include critical thinking and writing, thoughtful communication, self-discipline, perspective-taking, and informed decision making. Adolescents with these foundational skills develop the self-confidence to consider multiple perspectives, understand the implications of their choices, and strengthen their capacity to reflect on how their decisions impact others.

In the creation of this material, we have conducted extensive research and great care has been taken to consider the age appropriateness of the content and the pedagogical tools teachers will need to foster reflective and respectful classroom communities, while ensuring that adequate time is given for discussion and reflection. Throughout this course, students will examine primary source documents, engage in nonpartisan instruction on the historical oppression of particular groups of people based on race, ethnicity, class, nationality, religion, and/or geographic region and be invited to participate in nonpartisan discussions on different aspects of history and how those concepts have impacted historical events and students' own lives. Facing History provides ongoing support and professional development for educators who are implementing this curriculum.

We hope that your child's participation in this unit invites many meaningful conversations between you and your child.

Sincerely,

Abby R. Weiss

Smith Family Senior Vice President and Chief Program Officer

Facing History and Ourselves