

ZDENKO BERGL

Dear Children of the Future:

My name is Zdenko “John” Bergl. I came to the Kansas City area in the year 1949 because my parents moved from New York to work and live. I knew work would be hard with no handouts, but in America anyone can succeed.

My proudest accomplishments since coming to the United States are serving in the Army for my new country in Korea and my house built by my parents. They lived with us until their deaths.

The Midwest Center for Holocaust Education is important for Kansas City because it is the only way to perpetuate memories of the past. People will know exactly what happened. I admire the hard work of our survivors’ offspring who are keeping the memories alive. In 10-15 years, there will be no more living survivors. It is the responsibility of future generation to carry on this work.

From studying the Holocaust, you should learn that complacency will allow the horrors of the past to have a chance to recur. Don’t fool yourself that it can’t happen again. Despite the democracy and freedom of the U.S., bigotry and prejudice still exist. For my wife and me, I hope people will learn how the Italians helped the Jews.

My message for you, our future generation, is peace can be achieved. Considering the Arab-Israeli situation; this can be solved if hatred is not part of their upbringing. This must be learned by kindergarten. A metaphor for this is soccer in America; adults have little interest, but the youth love it since they are brought up playing it. In Kansas City there are now more soccer fields than baseball diamonds. Although this over-simplifies the situation, we can learn that change is possible.

Very truly,

Zdenko John Bergl
Sv’Ivan Zabno (Zagreb), Yugoslavia
August 23, 1929