



**National Days of Remembrance
"Choosing to Act: Stories of Rescue"**

15 - 22 April 2012

Less than 70 years ago, witnesses to the atrocities of Nazi-occupied Europe were faced with the choice of stopping the persecution of their neighbors and fellow countrymen or standing by in acquiescent silence. Unfortunately, fearing for their own lives, many people opted for the latter. However, some remarkable individuals chose action over fear, courageously standing up to tyranny and hatred. This week we remember not only the millions of victims and survivors of the Holocaust, but also the heroes whose actions saved incalculable lives.

We remember heroes such as the villagers of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France, who hid 5,000 Jews and guided many of them across the Swiss border to safety. We remember the Danish resistance fighters who ferried almost all of Denmark's Jews out of harm's way and into Sweden. We remember the American Soldiers who liberated the Nazi concentration camps, and bore witness to horrors that many would try to deny. Many stories of rescue belong to individuals whose names were never recorded by history – the government official who forged identity papers; the families who hid Jewish friends in their attics and basements; the nuns who offered a safe haven to Jewish children.

Today, we can honor the courage of those individuals who chose to take a stand against persecution by rejecting all forms of prejudice and bigotry. During these National Days of Remembrance, let us pay tribute to both those who perished and those who quietly triumphed over oppression by ensuring our actions illustrate tolerance and respect for all people.

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