Good evening.

My name is Alyssa Novick and I teach history at Ashbury College where Mr. Shentow came often to speak with our students. We met him and Mrs. Shentow close to twenty years ago, when we were lucky enough to be given his name when looking for a Holocaust survivor to speak with our students. I was born and raised in Montreal. I don’t ever remember not knowing about the Holocaust; it was always a part of my culture and my history. But when I came to Ashbury, where I was the only Jewish teacher, I was struck by how few people knew about it. They knew the word, and they had a general sense of what it meant, but few people had a deep and true understanding of all the horror that the word conveyed. And, as with other teachers, many here tonight, we felt that the only way to really educate our students, for them to truly comprehend, and have more than just a passing knowledge of the Holocaust, that we needed to invite a survivor who would be able to communicate honestly and meaningfully with teen agers. Mr. Shentow was just that person.

I have been teaching for a very long time, and I can honestly say that I have never heard students so quiet, seen students so enraptured or felt them so engaged as when Mr. Shentow spoke about those unfathomable years he spent in captivity. He spoke about hell, but he spoke quietly, intently and sincerely. The students could not relate to his story, but they certainly could relate to his humanity. Whenever he finished speaking, students flocked to meet him personally. Every few years we invited him back so that everybody could share in this harsh, but critical experience of living history.

And then Mr. Shentow could no longer come to schools. But, at Ashbury we continue to speak about him and those horrific events he actually lived. He was living testimony that although we may never be able to truly understand the Holocaust, we must always remember it, actively teach it and ensure that no one ever forgets it. Taking this message, Mr. Shentow’s message forward, will be our tribute to his memory.

Thank you.