

Handout

Letter to California Parents and Guardians

Dear parents and guardians:

It is my pleasure to welcome you as your child embarks on a Facing History and Ourselves unit of study. Facing History is an international educational and professional development organization with over 40 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 moral choices they face as adolescents. We know that students are grappling with key 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 when individuals made decisions about their own lives and the lives of their neighbors.

One such period of history, the rise of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust, is the primary focus of this unit. 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 understand how their decisions influence others and strengthens their ability to take multiple perspectives and consider the ethical implications of their choices.

In the creation of this material, you can be assured that great care has been taken to consider the age appropriateness of the content and the pedagogical tools teachers will need to ensure that adequate time is given for discussion and reflection. Facing History provides ongoing support for educators who are implementing the curriculum. We hope that your child's participation in this unit invites many meaningful conversations between you and him or her. A parent of a past Facing History student sums it up best:

In no other course was [my daughter] exposed to real dilemmas as complex and challenging [as in the Facing History class]. In no other course has she been inspired to use the whole of her spiritual, moral, and intellectual resources to solve a problem. In no other course has she been so sure that the materials mattered so seriously for her development as a responsible person.

Sincerely,

Roger Brooks

President and Chief Executive Officer

Facing History and Ourselves