



Madeira Board of Education, 7465 Loannes Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45243  
Kenji Matsudo, Superintendent  
Emily Hauser, Treasurer/CFO  
Dave Bergan, Assistant Superintendent,  
Diane Nichols, Public Relations

**October 10, 2024**

### **Madeira Students Hear Stories of Survival**

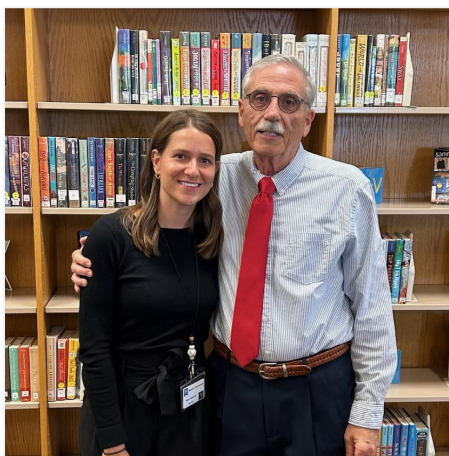
Madeira Middle School eighth graders recently had the opportunity to hear from the son of a Holocaust survivor in conjunction with their study of the book *Night* - a candid, horrific, and deeply poignant autobiographical account of author Elie Wiesel's survival in the Nazi death camps as a teenager.

Speaker Steve Coppel is the son of Holocaust survivors Werner and Trudy Coppel. Werner had spoken to Madeira's eighth graders in 2010, and Steve has continued to share his parents' stories about the atrocities of the Holocaust since his father's passing in 2016. "Of continuing his father's dedication to using his voice and speaking his truth about the Holocaust, Steve Coppel said, "My dad realized if he didn't speak up, he'd be a bystander and he couldn't do that. He had to stand up. He had to be an upstander."

Werner Coppel was born in 1925 in Moers, Germany. As a teenager, he was a member of the Hachshara, a Zionist youth movement in Berlin. When the war began, his parents, Karl and Gudula, and brother Gunther were deported. In 1943, Werner and his Hachshara were also deported - to Buna-Monowitz - the same Auschwitz sub-camp as *Night*, by author Elie Wiesel.

After months of forced labor, Werner and other prisoners were forced on a death march in 1945. He escaped and hid in the woods until Soviet Troops liberated him before meeting his future wife Trudy, who nursed him back to health. The couple had the first Jewish wedding in Berlin after the war. After arriving in Cincinnati by train at Union Terminal in 1949, Werner was the first Holocaust Survivor in Cincinnati to speak publicly about his experiences. Today his son Steve speaks about their experiences as a museum docent at Cincinnati's Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center, where the Coppel Speakers Bureau is named in memory of Werner and Trudy.

The eighth graders will soon head to Washington, DC for a class trip. In addition to many historical monuments and museums, the students will visit the National Holocaust Museum.



*Pictured above: 8th grade Language Arts teacher & Madeira graduate Mary James with speaker Steve Coppel. Right: Steve Coppel speaking to 8<sup>th</sup> graders*

