

## GUIDELINES FOR ARRANGING A ‘HOME FRONT’ SPEAKER

Eye-witnesses to the events covered in *Americans and the Holocaust (1945)* may have compelling stories that can be presented in a program. Americans who made sacrifices on the ‘home front’ during the war could be invited to make a presentation. Home front is the informal term for the civilian populace of the United States during World War II which was actively engaging to support the war effort. A “Home front” speaker might have worked in the armaments industry, in military or civil defense units, with efforts in rationing, recycling,

## CONSIDERATIONS WHEN HOSTING A “HOME FRONT” GUEST SPEAKER:

### 1) Showing Sensitivity in Dealing with a Difficult Topic

Please remember that the guest speaker may be sharing private and often traumatic memories in a public setting; many find they are able to share their history only once a day--or not even that often. Your sensitivity to this is critical to planning a successful program. Even second generation family members may find these difficult topics to recollect for a public audience

### 2) Planning for the Visit

Please arrange for the guest speaker to stay overnight if the trip involves air travel or a car ride of more than two hours each way. Identify a local “point person” someone affiliated with your organization who will address the needs of the speaker during his or her stay. Please arrange for all transportation throughout the trip, including travel to and from the program, to meals, and for other occasions that may arise. Be aware of the speaker’s dietary needs if food is offered.

### 3) Preparing the Venue

Please have a glass of water accessible to the speaker during his or her presentation. Ensure that lighting is not directly in the speaker’s eyes. Keep house lights on if the program takes place in a theater or auditorium; speaker’s often like to make eye contact with the audience. Provide a chair for the speaker, even if he or she intends to stand at times while speaking. Use microphones in larger venues; please discuss this with the speaker in advance so he or she is comfortable with the equipment. 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inappropriate discussion of political or other topics that may make the speaker uncomfortable. After a member of the audience asks a question, your moderator should repeat the question to ensure that both the speaker and the audience have heard it. You may also wish to have the audience write questions on notecards for the moderator to collect and review. This often minimizes the number of “speeches questions” or questions that may have been too painful or uncomfortable for the speaker.

#### 7) Following up on the Program

Thank the speaker for coming by sending a formal letter of appreciation. Speakers appreciate receiving notes from members of the audience. Do not give out the speaker’s contact information to the audience, but offer to pass on messages sent to the library. You may want to present him or her with a small gift to commemorate the experience.

#### SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

The speaker may or may not have seen the exhibit *Americans and the Holocaust* but it is highly recommended that you refer to the exhibit prior to the program. For more information, contact the program staff at (301) 491-1000 or visit the exhibit online at <http://www.ushmm.org/exhibitions/american-and-the-holocaust>.