

New Milford Education Foundation Recognizes

Colleen Tambuscio

as its Distinguished Leader in Education 2017

Colleen Tambuscio is a special and general education teacher, a 32 year veteran who has been involved in Holocaust and genocide education for over a decade. She graduated cum laude from The College of NJ with a Bachelor's Degree in Education of the Hearing Impaired. Later, she earned a Master of Arts Degree in Jewish-Christian Studies from Seton Hall University. Mrs. Tambuscio currently teaches at New Milford High School, serves as the Interdepartmental Liaison for the Special Education Department, and advisor to the Peer Leadership program. During her tenure in New Milford, she has taught English, Social Studies and Math, and developed two very popular elective courses, *The Holocaust, Genocide and Human Behavior* and *Contemporary Genocide: A Call to Action*.

Colleen's professional associations are well-recognized for enriching the lives of students and teachers across the State of New Jersey, the nation and the globe. Walt Pevny, a proud colleague and friend of more than 17 years, highlights her, "dedication and professionalism." She is the Founder and President of *The Council of Holocaust Educators*, a national professional development organization for educators interested in teaching the Holocaust and genocide. She is also a member of Alpha Zeta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International Society, a NJ State organization advancing the professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education. Colleen has facilitated workshops in New Orleans, Louisiana and Washington, DC for The National Council of Social Studies. A proud Board Member at the Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, she has also served as an advisor for teacher training programs. Her memberships notably include the Museum Teacher Fellowship Program and Regional Education Corps of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

As a Distinguished Leader in Education, she models life-long learning and leadership. Her resume highlights many professional development and leadership activities. Colleen serves as Consultant and Participant in the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education's *educational seminar to Europe and Israel*. She is a Mandel Fellow to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and U.S. Holocaust Memorial Regional Museum Educator. Very few teachers can include Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education on their resumes. Yet, Colleen Tambuscio was identified as a "Master Teacher" for *Teaching with Testimony* and an "Advanced teacher" in Spielberg's cadre program at the University of Southern California. She is a Pedagogical consultant to the Allen and Joan Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University, and Fellow at the Gilder Lehrman Teaching Fellowship on 9/11 an American Memory. In 2006, Tambuscio was awarded New Milford Public Schools Teacher of the Year and Bergen County's Teacher of the Year. In 2011, she traveled to Nahariya, Israel through the UJA Federation's Partnership 2000 Program to develop a dialogue between Israel and her public high school students. New Milford School Superintendent, Michael Polizzi identifies her as, "An inspiration to educators, influential, accomplished and tenacious."

With academia and students at the center of her work, Colleen Tambuscio has written and published multiple academic and educational articles: for *Perspectives in Deaf Education*, for *Sh'ma: Jewish Life and Philanthropy*, for *PastForward* from The USC Shoah Foundation, for *PRISM: an Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators* at Yeshiva University, and for *Essentials in Holocaust Education: Fundamentals Issues and Approaches*. Also, Colleen has authored teaching resources for *Salvaged Pages; Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*. She has memorialized her travels with the students in Multiple Holocaust Study Tour Documentaries, Annual Study Tour publications and travel blogs.

None of these achievements, publications or accolades compare to her daily contributions within the classrooms of New Milford High School, and her annual commitment to the Eastern European Holocaust Study Tour, which began in 1998. The Study Tour, which runs for two weeks each year, takes students through Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. The students are immersed in the history of the Holocaust, and afforded opportunities to explore primary source documents and artifacts, tour some of the most powerful museums and landmarks in history, and meet with historians and survivors of the Holocaust. Affectionately called "Mrs. T." by her students, to whom she refers as "my cherubs", she demonstrates aptitude, passion and love in all she does and for those she serves. Her connection with teens develops emotional and social intelligences as well as deep compassion for others. It's the experiential learning opportunities she creates, and re-creates that could never be achieved within the four walls of any classroom. Her colleague, Dana Aufiero acknowledges the "countless hours" required to create these experiences for her students, "She pushes me to be a better teacher. Her leadership is something I value and strive to emulate in my own work." The principal of NMHS, Louis Manuppelli acknowledged, "Mrs. Tambuscio represents what is best about education. She is a driven and passionate advocate for students who creates life altering opportunities. Her impact will be felt for generations."

Since 1998, Colleen Tambuscio has raised almost a million dollars to support the 266 students with whom she has travelled. From their 2016 tour, in their commemorative book, *Visions of Change*, Tambuscio and her colleague Bonnie Sussman wrote: "As Mother Theresa said, 'I, alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create as many ripples.' Each year it is the hope that our students continue to cast their stones and to create their many ripples." An avid reader, accomplished cook and fierce advocate for human rights, Mrs. Tambuscio resides in Morris County, NJ with her husband, Robert and her three children, Kaitlin, Matthew and Kimberly, and her Cockapoo, Kirby.