The power is in your hands to stand up for what's right. Imagine a world as it should be and fight for it,” special guest and HRW Los Angeles Committee Co-Chair Leslie Gilbert-Lurie encouraged students and teachers at the April 30, 2019 Human Rights Watch Student Task Force (STF) Year-End Leadership Workshop.

Leslie and her mother, Rita Lurie, shared Rita’s story of surviving the terror of the Holocaust and their family’s lessons in courage and recovery. They read excerpts from their memoir, *Bending Toward the Sun*, and responded to student questions. They emphasized the importance of speaking out against human rights violations within one's community. “One voice can make a difference,” Leslie said.

Each year, STF honors April’s Genocide Awareness and Prevention Month by hosting guest speakers, screening genocide-related films and classroom presentations. We are grateful to genocide survivors, like Rita, who are willing to visit our campus communities to share their stories and help us bring awareness of what happened.

The Human Rights Watch Student Task Force, launched in 1999, is a youth leadership-training program that brings together high school students and educators and empowers them to advocate for human rights issues, especially the rights of children.

HRW Student Task Force Staff:
Pam Bruns, Volunteer Executive Director
Kristin Ghazarians, Senior Project Liaison
Nancy Nazarian Medina, Volunteer Program Advisor
Patricia Williams, Primary Photographer

Human Rights Watch Student Task Force
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Sid Sheinberg, an immigrant’s son, grew up to achieve legendary accomplishments in the entertainment business, fueled by a deep commitment to social justice.

A longtime supporter of Human Rights Watch, Sid was an essential presence in the HRW family based in Los Angeles, and a champion of the HRW Student Task Force.

Sid believed in the crucial need for STF and its mission of human rights education. He would often quote UN officers and refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, saying “...Remember that Human Rights Education is prerequisite for realizing all human rights. If you don’t know what human rights are, and how to protect them, how can we claim them or enforce them?”

Sid thought and acted globally, but as a founding member of the STF Advisory Committee, he also attended local meetings with students at workshops and receptions, while providing vital financial support and advice.

An alumna of STF speaks on behalf of the thousands of students and teachers who have taken part in the HRW Student Task Force over the past 20 years:

“Thank you Mr. Sheinberg for believing in us and supporting our opportunity to learn and to lead and to become a clear voice for justice in the world.” - Linda Gordon, STF 2010-14
A Year in the Life of STF: “Vote for Human Rights” and “Human Rights on the Southern Border”

SEPTEMBER
At their fall leadership workshop, HRW Student Task Force members trained to call on their classmates, families and communities to vote for human rights in the midterm election in our “Vote for Human Rights” campaign.

STF members registered and preregistered more than 1,200 students and teachers by hosting mock elections, voter education tents and classroom presentations. They emphasized to students their human right to vote and participate in government.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER
To educate about and to honor the 70th anniversary of the UDHR, STF hosted film screenings, art contests and photo challenges, posted visual displays around campus and filmed videos expressing the anniversary’s significance.

MARCH
STF chapters hosted the “Human Rights on the Southern Border” traveling exhibit to raise awareness about the geographic reality of the 2,000 mile southern border, why people cross it, and to expose the human rights violations documented by HRW.

MAY
STFers met with Congresswoman Katie Hill and gave her more than 400 signatures asking her to protect the human rights of migrants along the U.S.-Mexico border. Students also encouraged her to co-sponsor the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act of 2019. Congresswoman Hill pledged her support.

JANUARY
With the help of Grace Meng, HRW US Programs Senior Researcher, STF leaders and teacher advisers launched the Human Rights on the Southern Border campaign at the Winter Workshop.

APRIL
Congressman Ted Lieu’s Field Representative, Daisy Paniagua-Uribe, met with and commended STFers for standing up for human rights in the U.S. immigration system. She spoke of the importance of contacting elected officials to make sure their concerns are heard. The students presented hundreds of signatures on letters to Congressman Lieu asking for his ongoing leadership to protect human rights in the immigration system.
STF Alumni: Where Are They Now?

Linda Gordon
Santa Monica HS ‘14
Barnard College ‘18
I work at a legal nonprofit that provides grants, advocacy and training for impact litigation related to social, racial, economic and environmental justice in the United States and abroad. Much of my path to legal advocacy and education has been shaped by early experiences in the Student Task Force, and I am very excited to stay engaged and give back as the first alumni on the STF Advisory Committee!

Abraham Bran
New Roads ‘11
Tufts Univ. ‘15
J.D. Southwestern Law ‘21
After completing my first year at Southwestern Law School, I will be externing at the Los Angeles Immigration Court drafting opinions for five judges and doing research with a professor on the pro’s and con’s of benefit corporations, which are a new type of corporation that requires board members to strive towards some kind of social mission in addition to maximizing profits for shareholders.

Grace Pan
Harvard-Westlake ‘16
Harvard Univ. ‘20
This summer, I will intern with the Foreign Ministry in Tallinn, Estonia before traveling to Shanghai, China to study how the rise of consumption culture has changed ideas of civic citizenship for urban university-attending Chinese students. I am so grateful to STF for believing in the potential of young people and for teaching me the skills and attitude required to advocate for positive change.

Abdiel Lopez
Palisades Charter HS ‘14
Grinnell College ‘18
In New York City, I work at the International Refugee Assistance Project as a Gardner Fellow. I work on family reunification and assist our attorneys in drafting legal submissions and memos for refugees. I’m hoping to stay in New York for another year before I go to law school.

Nina Benjamin
La Sierra Univ. ‘10
Intern ‘14
M.A. Boston Univ. ‘14
J.D. UC Irvine ‘20
This year I was part of the International Justice Clinic, which focuses on supporting freedom of expression and the influential role technology has in defining this right. I assisted the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom and Expression by conducting research on expression rights abuses in Malaysia and Uganda.

For More STF Alumni Updates: www.hrwstringf.org “Our Alumni”