



Tiny symbols of young lives: 1.5 million buttons to remember children killed in Holocaust

By Margaret Burin

Updated Wed 17 Aug 2016, 3:18pm



PHOTO: Grade five student Mia Rom says while she is sad to think about all of the children killed in the Holocaust, she feels happy to know she is helping to make sure they are remembered. (ABC News: Margaret Burin)

Students of a Melbourne Jewish school are calling for help from the Australian public to commemorate the estimated 1.5 million children murdered under the Nazi regime.

MAP: Hawthorn East 3123



Bialik College in Melbourne plans to create a permanent monument made up of buttons, later this year, representing each child killed in the Holocaust.

Students have already gathered more than 1 million buttons, but need help from the wider public to find the rest.

As just a small proportion of this huge button collection is laid out onto the floor, year nine student Ben Aizenstros says it is hard to comprehend that each of them represents a young life.

"Buttons come in different sizes just as children do. Also they hold families together, just as buttons do to shirts," he explained.

"This has really got me thinking about just how large the number of kids we're representing from the Holocaust is.

"It makes me feel pretty emotional — some of these kids were my age."



PHOTO: Bialik College has already collected more than one million buttons, to mark each child killed in the Holocaust. (ABC News: Margaret Burin)

The idea for the Bialik Button Project grew from the Paper Clips Project, where students in Tennessee created paper memorials to the 6 million Jews and 5 million people from other persecuted groups who were killed in the Holocaust.

Program coordinator Dalia Gurfinkel says it is important for a collective memory to be passed on to the new generation.

She says the children have begun to personalise each button.

"You can hear the kids say 'be careful, be careful with the kids'.

"It's not a button in their hands.

"It has been heart-warming to see that we are raising a strong next link."

If you would like to send buttons to the Bialik Button Project, please mail them to 429 Auburn Road, Hawthorn East, Victoria 3123.

Topics: world-war-2, judaism, secondary-schools, primary-schools, hawthorn-east-3123

First posted Wed 17 Aug 2016, 6:12am

Contact Margaret Burin

Love withstands Holocaust horrors



More than 70 years after Sigi and Hanka Siegreich laid eyes on each other in a Nazi slave-labour camp, the couple still make each other weak at the knees.
