



## L'Dough V'Dough and the Knead for Tolerance

by Sean Conrad

On a cloudy Thursday afternoon, Holocaust Survivors and Pepperdine students come together to bake challah bread and share their stories.

**F**urrowed in concentration she kneads the dough adeptly, her hands pulling and punching the thick yeast with rhythmic precision; it is clear that she has made challah bread before. Eight or so students surround and watch her in reverent awe, hanging on to every word and movement, cognizant of the wisdom that she can offer. This seventy-six year-old woman is not here only to bake, but also to share her story; to tell us what it means to have lived through the Holocaust.

Her name is Amelie, and she was born in 1939, in the Netherlands, after her family was forced out of Poland. She never knew her parents. She unfolds the vivid details of her life, one after another, to a group of Pepperdine students who were strangers only minutes prior. She is comfortable, dutiful, in the way that she unravels the narrative of her life. Having worked with the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust for the past two years, she is experienced, and she tells and retells her story to all who will listen,

understanding that her existence and our understanding of it is of dire importance. As she speaks, we become immersed, and the sticky dough we've been kneading for the past twenty minutes loses traction as her words pick up. I rest my doughy hands in my lap. I watch her eyes.

Held in the Fireside Room on a cloudy Thursday afternoon, this event, called L'Dough V'Dough, which according to the program's website is derived from the Hebrew saying "L'Dor V'Dor," meaning "from generation to generation", is hosted by the Diane and Guilford Glazer Institute for Jewish Studies. Which, for many faculty and students alike, is a program that remains unsung. Founded in 2008 by Diane and Guilford Glazer, the Glazer Institute was "designed to increase a majority-Christian academic community's exposure to, discussion of, and awareness of Judaism, Jewish Studies, and Jewish culture," according to the website's mission statement. Although young, the program is ambitious; on a consistent basis the Institute hosts



thought-provoking events led by distinguished lecturers for the entire campus community to experience, often-times for Convocation credit.

For the past two years, the program has worked with the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust to host L'Dough V'Dough—an event that brings together Holocaust survivors and Pepperdine students to bake challah bread, a distinctive braided bread that is consumed on Sabbath and Jewish holidays. As a student who had the privilege to attend the event this year, I cannot think of a more purposeful way to engage students in a meaningful dialogue that sheds light on Jewish culture and customs. For the Glazer Institute to foster these dialogues is extraordinary, and speaks to the nature of the organization. Program director Ed Larson writes that, “reconciling the children of Abraham requires understanding, dialogue, and engagement. It means preparing the minds and hearts of the next generation to appreciate and respect diversity in religious beliefs.” It is one thing for students to read about the Holocaust, but it is another thing entirely for them to sit face to

face and talk about its implications with individuals who actually went through it. For many of the students who were able to attend the event this year, the experience was invaluable, and hopefully word of mouth will bring more students to attend Glazer-sponsored events in the future.

The hour is coming to its end. The warm challah bread rests on the table, cooling off, waiting to be eaten. It smells of cinnamon and chocolate, and it has more significance than we can imagine. Amelie waits patiently. Her hands in her lap, she sports a gentle smile. As she breaks the first chunk of challah bread, she smiles. “We are never defeated,” she says, letting her words hang delicately in the air. She passes the challah around, and we all take a piece. And the challah is good.

Photos from [ldoughvdough.com](http://ldoughvdough.com)

