

# Holocaust survivor Interview with Giselle Cycowicz

[Be kind to everyone you meet.](#)

On February 11, 2021, over 100 PVHS AVID students and staff attended a virtual presentation to listen to Mrs. Giselle "Gita" Cycowicz share her survival story of growing up in Hungary and surviving the Auschwitz-Birkenau Concentration Camp as a teenager. She spoke for an hour and a half from her home in Israel and began her presentation by telling the students of her normal, happy childhood in Chust, Hungary. Gita was the youngest of three daughters raised by loving parents and a wonderful community. Her father was a business owner and before the Nazi invasion, was very successful in the community. By the end of the war, he had been killed in the gas chambers and her mother was missing. Gita spoke of her time at Auschwitz, having her head shaved and being given only one piece of bread a day to eat. She recalled being awakened at 4:30 in the morning every day and forced to stand in the cold, or rain, or snow, for three hours waiting to be counted, with only a thin dress to wear. She had no underclothes, no blankets, and nothing for warmth. After she was counted and received her single slice of bread, she was marched off to a factory, where she worked for 12 hours with no breaks. After her work was done for the day, she and the other prisoners were marched back to the barracks, only to begin the process all over again the next day. After the camp was liberated, Gita walked over 300 miles home to Hungary, wearing the same thin dress and without protection from the elements. Back in Chust, she was reunited with her mother, who survived the gas chamber by escaping and hiding behind a cabinet before returning to the barracks. Gita's story was incredibly powerful. Her final message to the students was to "Be kind to everyone you meet."

The PVHS AVID program is extraordinarily grateful to Ms. Gita for taking the time to speak with us. We are also grateful to the PVHS Administrators for allowing the staff and students flexibility in scheduling this presentation. We are also indebted to Mrs. Susan Quintana, retired PVHS teacher, for helping us organize and share this event with the students of PVHS.

[Click Here to watch the full interview.](#)