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Holocaust survivor Irene Butter to speak in Farmington Hills

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By Anne Runkle



Holocaust survivor Irene Butters will speak at the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills. *Photo courtesy of Holocaust Memorial Center*

keeps its common humanity in the most inhumane and turbulent of times. A book signing will follow her speech.

Irene Hasenberg Butter is a well-known peace activist, Holocaust survivor, and professor emerita of public health at the University of Michigan. She is a frequent and favored inspirational speaker, talking about her experience during World War II and stressing the importance of “never a bystander” and that one person can make a difference.

Holocaust survivor Irene Butter, who was a neighbor to Anne Frank in Amsterdam, will be speaking at the Holocaust Memorial Center in Farmington Hills at 3:15 p.m. Sunday, June 3.

As Irene Butter’s father fought to save his family during the Holocaust, her childhood was lost. Play was restricted. Family and friends disappeared. Finally, with the Dutch police at their door came the reality that her father had not moved his family far enough from Hitler’s Germany.

By January 1945, the family is struggling to survive a death camp. Irene tends her ailing parents, cares for starving kids and even helps bring clothes to her Amsterdam neighbor Anne Frank, before her family is offered a singular chance for freedom, providing the Nazi doctor says they are healthy enough. After two weeks of heart-lifting miracles and heart-breaking tragedies, Irene arrives in the Algerian desert to journey into redemption and womanhood, without her parents or brother.

Irene Butter’s recently published memoir, “Shores Beyond Shores,” is an account of how the heart

She is a co-founder of Zeitouna, an organization of Jewish and Arab women working for peace, and a founder of the Raoul Wallenberg Project at the University of Michigan.

Butter's talk is included in museum admission. It is free for members. For more information, go to holocaustcenter.org.

The Holocaust center is at 28123 Orchard Lake Road.