

# Holodomor Education Conference Held In Toronto

Educators, community activists and students gathered May 10-12 in Toronto for the Holodomor Education Conference, the first conference in North America devoted to the teaching of the Holodomor.

Approximately 50 participants, from Toronto, Edmonton, Chicago, New York, Montreal, Saskatchewan,



Winnipeg, and Michigan, discussed new methodologies and resources as well as ways to ensure the inclusion of the Holodomor in curricula. The conference was organized by the Holodomor Research and Education Consortium (HREC) of the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, together with the National Holodomor Education Committee (NHEC), Ukrainian Canadian Congress; Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre (UCRDC); and St. Vladimir Institute, with generous support from the BCU Foundation and the Ukrainian Credit Union.

A line-up of experts shared their knowledge and experience on the following topics: Promoting Inclusion of the Holodomor in Curricula; Teaching Methodologies and Approaches; Commemorating Holodomor Memorial Day; New Resources and Introduction to the Holodomor Workbook and Teaching Kit; and The Holodomor and Emerging Technologies. The conference was designed to encourage the active exchange of ideas, with numerous small group discussions that allowed participants to build on what speakers had presented at each session.

On day one, in the session on promoting inclusion of the Holodomor in curricula moderated by Andrew Melnyk, Oksana Kulynych, Chair of the US Holodomor Education Committee, described the ongoing process of increasing awareness in the US; Lana Babij, a librarian with many years of service at the University of Connecticut, provided a comprehensive analysis of the various Holodomor curricula that have been developed; Valentina Kuryliw, Director of Education at HREC and Chair of the National Holodomor Education Committee of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, provided an assessment of the state of Holodomor education in Canada; and Valentina Noseworthy,

Middle Years Consultant at the Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch of Manitoba Education, described how the Holodomor is incorporated in Manitoba curricula. Later in the day, the presentation by award-winning teacher Mark Melnyk explored strategies for including the Holodomor in a course on genocide and featured presentations by three of his students, whose knowledge and passion for human rights greatly impressed participants. In a session dedicated to approaches for the elementary grades, teachers Natalia Onyschuk and Halia Sawycka-Dmytryshyn shared methods in conveying this difficult subject to elementary students, particularly through the arts.



In a session on the second day, Valentina Kuryliw explained how teachers can use the Holodomor Workbook and Teaching Kit she has developed as well as other key resources; and Dr. Orest Cap, Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning at the Faculty of Education,

University of Manitoba, made a presentation, co-authored with Dr. Denis Hlynka, on teaching the Holodomor using emerging technologies. Dr. Oksana Kuryliw facilitated the final session of the conference, devoted to next steps in promoting Holodomor education.

A conference highlight was the keynote address Saturday evening of Dr. Roman Serbyn, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Quebec at Montreal, on “The Genocide We Now Call the Holodomor,” in which he outlined the case for the Holodomor as genocide, according to the criteria developed by the father of the term, Raphael Lemkin. The evening began with the lighting of candles by two Holodomor survivors, Mykola Latyshko and Stefan Horlatsch.

Assessing the conference, participants emphasized its importance as a networking forum and stressed the invaluable support they felt in meeting others dedicated to this work. They also praised the materials they received. One said, “The workshops provided great take-home, ‘hands on’ activities and ideas, something every busy teacher appreciates.” Another participant said, “I learned that many inroads have been made to boards of education and ministries. Learning about how school boards work was also an eye opener for me.” Another said, “The Holodomor Education conference was truly inspirational. It was wonderful to see such a varied group of people (from students to retired) who are working to further the cause of raising awareness.”

In her concluding remarks, Valentina Kuryliw, Director of Education for the Holodomor Research and Education Consortium, thanked the volunteers and facilitators who helped make the conference a success and said: “It is gratifying to see participants from across North America making connections and exchanging ideas as it has long been my dream to bring together those active in Holodomor education to share successes and plan coordinated actions for the future.”

For more information about HREC, contact Marta Baziuk at [hrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:hrec@ualberta.ca) 416 923-4732.

## **PHOTOS**

*1 - Survivor Mykola Latyshko speaks with participants Natalia Onyschuk (Left) and Oksana Kulynych*

*2 - L. to R.: Lana Babij, Marta Baziuk, Valentina Kuryliw, Oksana Kulynych*