UNLV
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

January 24, 2009

Ms. Deborah A. Batiste
Project Director, *Echoes and Reflections*

Dear Deborah:

We are writing to express our deepest gratitude for having been offered the opportunity to participate in the Winter Seminar for *Echoes and Reflections* Scholars at Yad Vashem, January 4 – 10, 2009. It was a life-changing experience that provided a much-needed complement to our previous Holocaust studies in Poland.

The Yad Vashem staff—Ephraim, Richelle, Shulamit, and others--were not only learned but passionate about Holocaust education and caring about us as learners. Both Jesus and I learned a great deal from the thought-provoking and moving lectures delivered by the scholars and experts. We appreciated the opportunity to learn not only about the Holocaust but also about contemporary and Biblical Israel. It is truly a gift when professors are able to be students again and we gained insights and ideas that we plan to share with our students and the larger community. As teachers ourselves, we appreciated the careful planning that went into structuring the curriculum with a balance of lecture, activity, leisure, and opportunity for reflection and we attribute much of that planning leadership to you.

In addition to the formal curriculum of the program, we appreciated the informal aspects of the seminar: the opportunity to interact with Holocaust educators from around the country, the comfortable accommodations, the great food, Ed Alster's good-natured leadership, the excellent tours and guides, the invitation to participate in Shabbat services. In addition, your thorough pre-trip guidance and responsive communications assured us that we were in good hands. Your attention to every detail of the trip was noted and appreciated.

Most importantly, we are grateful to have experienced all of this in the setting of Yad Vashem. Each day when we stepped off the bus and onto the grounds of this solemn and beautiful place we were reminded of our responsibility to pass on our knowledge. Hearing Ruth Brand's story with a view of modern Jerusalem in the background is just one example of how critical the setting was to the impact of the seminar. The museums, the memorials, the grounds, and the spaces for learning and reflection all contributed to an unforgettable immersion experience.

Thank you, Deborah, Ed, and all the ADL and Yad Vashem staff who made this remarkable experience possible. Jesus and I are excited to implement ideas we have been discussing and are especially appreciative that we were both able to participate so that we can work together on future projects.

Sincerely,

Liz Spalding
Associate Professor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

Jesus Garcia
Professor
Department of Curriculum and Instruction