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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: Austin public

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AUSTIN – One of the last touring survivors of the Holocaust is coming to Austin to speak of her World War II death camp experiences and the consequences of indifference to injustice during three days of events planned for the community, an interfaith group and middle and high school students.

A childhood friend and later step-sister to German-born Jewish diarist Anne Frank, Eva Geiringer Schloss was born in 1929 in Austria and is a survivor of nine months incarceration in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps. More than 1.3 million people were sent to this network of death camps and fewer than 200,000 lived.

Forty years after World War II ended, Schloss began telling her story and wrote three books about her experiences. Since then, despite aging, she has spoken to more than 1,000 audiences worldwide. She tells her life's story of challenge, struggle and survival so people can better understand what can happen when differences are not accepted and injustices consequently occur. Her Austin visit is the final leg of a six-week tour that included California, Arizona, New Mexico, Georgia, Puerto Rico and Jamaica.

Like thousands of Austrians escaping German occupation, in 1938 Schloss' family fled the country for Amsterdam, where she met and befriended Anne Frank in their neighborhood. In May 1940 the Nazis invaded Holland and both the Frank and Schloss families went into hiding. Schloss was 13.

After two years in hiding, she and her mother, father and brother were arrested. They were packed into cattle trucks for a "horrific journey," Schloss said, to the barracks at Birkenau, where they were tattooed with a number and worked long hours separating items once belonging to the prisoners. Her brother and father died in the camp.

While looking for her father and brother after the Russian army liberated the camp, she saw Otto Frank, Anne's father. Years later he showed Schloss and her mother Anne's diary. Eventually, Frank and Schloss' mother married.

A communitywide event is set for 7 p.m., Saturday, March 23, in The Fellowship Church, 3379 Gattis School Road, Round Rock. Her presentation is free to the public but reservations are required. A VIP reception will begin at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$75.00 and include reserved seating, meeting Schloss and receiving an autographed copy of her book, "Eva's Story." To make reservations for the speech and/or the VIP reception, go to <https://evaschloss.eventbrite.com>.

As part of the Interfaith Action of Central Texas, Schloss will participate in table discussions from 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, March 24, at Congregation Agudas Achim, 7300 Hart Lane, Austin. Her appearance is part of the Red Bench, a local program to improve interfaith understanding and civil discourse. The public is invited, and guests should tell security they are attending the Red Bench event.

The next day, Schloss is scheduled to speak to middle and high school students in the Westlake Community Performing Arts Center. Her presentation will be streamed to other schools.

Schloss' visit to Austin is sponsored by a group of local individuals who call themselves "Team Eva Austin." They are led by Holocaust educator Darryle Clott, who over 14 years has brought 17 Holocaust survivors to speak at Viterbo University in La Crosse, WI, where she conducts workshops to train middle and high school teachers how to communicate the lessons and history of the Holocaust.

"Hearing Eva Schloss' story live is so important for everyone as we make our way in an increasingly unsafe world," Clott said. "But it is even more important for middle and high school students as that they can see what bullying does in their own environment. Given the rise of anti-Semitism and racism, hearing Eva's story of survival, grit, loss and ultimate triumph of the human spirit would be of enormous benefit to all.

"To meet Holocaust survivors in person is to touch history," Clott continued. "It is difficult to describe the feeling of awe a person experiences when hearing history from one who lived it. Those lucky enough to hear Eva Schloss in person are certain to leave inspired and more appreciative of their own life."