



Michael Bornstein & Debbie Holinstat

Topics

Activism and Social Justice, Culture and Society, Education, Inspirational Speakers, Jewish Interest

Travels From

New Jersey, New York

Bio

About Michael Bornstein

Michael Bornstein is one of the youngest survivors of the Auschwitz death camp. At the age of four, he managed to stay hidden and evade murder in the most notorious death camp in world history. Photos of Michael being liberated by Soviet soldiers at the camp have been spotted on museum walls, book covers, and film clips around the world, but he waited more than seventy years to step forward and share his story. He wrote *Survivors Club* alongside his third of four children, Debbie, who is a broadcast news journalist and a writer. Along the way, he and his family were stunned to uncover shocking new details about his survival that included a bribery scheme, untold acts of kindness by a German leader, and one perfectly-timed brush with illness. Michael Bornstein is now retired after working for more than four decades as a scientist and researcher in a career that took him from Dow Chemical and Eli Lilly & Co. in Indianapolis to Biotech divisions of Johnson & Johnson in New Jersey. He rose to the rank of director of technical operations and focused the majority of his work on helping to develop life-saving antibiotics, growth hormone and cancer treatments. In addition to occasional consulting work, Michael now spends much of his time shuttling between New York and New Jersey alongside his wife as they visit grandkids' science fairs, dance recitals and soccer games. He also speaks regularly at schools, synagogues and business institutions, sharing his experiences as a survivor of the Holocaust.

Michael Bornstein is a graduate of Fordham University in New York and holds a Ph.D. in Pharmaceutics and Analytical Chemistry from the University of Iowa.

About Debbie Bornstein Holinstat

Debbie Holinstat has spent her career writing for some of the biggest names in broadcast news, including Lester Holt of NBC Nightly News, CNN's Ashleigh Banfield and the Today Show's Natalie Morales. She is also a freelance corporate media coach. But her greatest professional reward has come from writing alongside her own father, Michael Bornstein, as they collaborated on *Survivors Club*. When her dad gave her the go-ahead to share his history publicly, neither of them knew how many surprises remained to be learned about his survival. Hired at MSNBC to cover the 2000 presidential election, Debbie spent her early years field-producing with Lester Holt and Suzanne Malveaux. When the election ended in a virtual tie, she raced to West Palm Beach to witness an historic “hanging chads” recount. She also covered 9/11 and the terror attacks and the military deployment that followed. Field producing with Natalie Morales and other top NBC talent, she produced news packages that would air on NBC Nightly news, The Today Show and MSNBC rolling coverage. Debbie currently lives in New Jersey and is a media coach. She also freelances part-time at Rockefeller Plaza, helping produce political news shows and juggling her unofficial role as “operations manager” for her children. Once an education major at Washington University in St. Louis, Debbie now spends time in schools again, speaking regularly with her father about the Holocaust. They remind listeners to always look forward, but *never* forget.

SPEECHES

Survivors Club: The True Story of a Very Young Prisoner of Auschwitz Through a series of photos, recently discovered documents, and memories shared, Michael and Debbie will relate the unforgettable true story of how a father’s courageous wit, a mother’s fierce love, and one perfectly timed illness saved Michael’s life during the Holocaust. This talk is shocking and heartbreaking but also unexpectedly uplifting as Michael relates his message of optimism in the face of tragedy. Appropriate for ages 10+.

Empathy, Inclusion, Tolerance... and the Holocaust Michael’s family recognized the signs of bigotry all around them in 1930’s Europe – yet no one imagined where that rising discrimination could lead. In this timely and relevant talk, Michael and Debbie share his astonishing survival story and remind listeners of the pressing need to stand up against bigotry, support inclusion, and always respect diversity. This is an ideal talk for corporate functions and diversity training seminars.

Lessons From the Holocaust: Justice Silenced In the years that led to the most devastating acts of genocide in world history, there was a deliberate and coordinated effort to silence attorneys and advocates. The absence of those voices contributed to a Holocaust in which six million innocent Jewish prisoners were killed, including Michael Bornstein’s father and brother. Michael and Debbie share the details of his tragic loss and inspiring survival, and can be joined by Michael’s son Scott Bornstein, Co-Chair of the Global Intellectual Property Practice for Greenberg Traurig, LLP. Ideal for CLE seminars and legal conferences.

"This Too Shall Pass": See a Better Future, Live a Better Life Michael was born in a ghetto, moved to a labor camp, survived the most notorious death camp on the planet, lost his brother and his father, and endured starvation and poverty. He stayed optimistic through it all by believing the words his mother promised him, "This too shall pass." Today, Michael holds a PhD in Pharmaceuticals and Analytical Chemistry. He and his wife of fifty years have four children, and he shuttles between a home in New Jersey and an apartment in NYC where he can see all *twelve* of his grandchildren weekly. Michael and Debbie share his inspiring story and a universal message of optimism. We dare you not to cry, laugh, and walk away inspired from this unforgettable talk. A motivational talk, ideal for corporate functions.

BOOKS



Hardcover

[Survivors Club](#) The True Story of a Very Young Prisoner of Auschwitz

Farrar, Straus and Giroux - Books for Young Readers

In 1945, in a now-famous piece of World War II archival footage, four-year-old Michael Bornstein was filmed by Soviet soldiers as he was carried out of Auschwitz in his grandmother's arms. *Survivors*

Club tells the unforgettable story of how a father's courageous wit, a mother's fierce love, and one perfectly timed illness saved his life, and how others in his family from Zarki, Poland, dodged death at the hands of the Nazis time and again with incredible deftness. Working from his own recollections as well as extensive interviews with relatives and survivors who knew the family, Michael relates his inspirational Holocaust survival story with the help of his daughter, Debbie Bornstein Holinstat. Shocking, heartbreaking, and ultimately uplifting, this narrative nonfiction offers an indelible depiction of what happened to one Polish village in the wake of the German invasion in 1939.

REVIEWS: "Engaging with Michael Bornstein and his daughter Debbie as they share his story of survival is life changing. Within the first minutes of their speech, young adults and adults experience a deep connection to themselves and today's world. By reading, *Survivor's Club: The True Story of a Very Young Prisoner of Auschwitz* or hearing their powerful presentation, each of us is given the gift to reflect on our collective past, to move forward to find solutions, and to learn how not to make these mistakes in the future."

- Thaler Holocaust Memorial Fund

"The Holocaust is a tough subject to present, and yet Michael and Debbie are such professional and moving speakers. They made everyone in the audience feel important."

- Lawrence Glaser, Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education

"We cannot say enough wonderful things about Debbie and Michael and their presentations to our community and our 8th graders. Their talks were embedded with Michael's tragic history and Debbie's modern elements that brought their story to life with such tenderness. Michael's delivery is honest and straight-forward with facts, yet is filled with mystery and awe. Debbie is the researcher, writer and storyteller who makes the story relatable and answers the questions that escalate Michael's story with endearing revelations. We are grateful that we had the opportunity to learn about this incredible family and their sad, but powerful legacy that they are sharing with the world. The result for our community and students was an understanding of a Holocaust survivor's firsthand experience of the horrors and the coping mechanisms as well as how a modern family finds closure (as much as one can) with such tragedies. Their story had a tremendous impact on our students and community and will no doubt stay with them for years to come."

- Rachel Miller, Minnetonka Middle School West 8th grade Language Arts Teacher

