

Meet the Award Winners: Sydney Taylor Honor for Older Readers
Jennifer Roy, *Yellow Star*

Jennifer Roy has had over 30 books published for children and young adults. A former gifted-and-talented teacher and special education teacher, Roy holds an MA in elementary education and a BS in psychology.

In 1939, the Germans invaded the town of Lodz, Poland, and moved all of the Jewish people into a small part of the city called a ghetto. Two hundred and seventy thousand people entered the Lodz Ghetto. At liberation in

1945, only about eight hundred walked out. Of those who survived, only twelve were children.

My aunt Sylvia was one of the twelve.

For over fifty years, no one knew this. Aunt Sylvia didn't talk about her childhood at all. She finally told me everything she remembered, and in April 2006 my book *Yellow Star* was published (Marshall Cavendish). It has received numerous honors including the Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor Award for Excellence in Children's Literature, ALA Notable Book, School Library Journal Best Book, and New York Public Library's Books for the Teen Age. And, of course, this Sydney Taylor Honor!

I gave my PowerPoint presentation that I perform for middle and high school students as a visiting author. I spoke about how I learned Aunt Sylvia's story, how I researched the Lodz Ghetto and World War II, and the process of writing the book. I included ELA (English Language Arts) literary elements such as symbolism, metaphors and free verse. I discussed how I changed the point-of-view and writing style as the book took shape. I discussed my emotions as I learned more details of my aunt's incredible story. I also showed actual photos from the Lodz Ghetto.

Finally, on a lighter note, I shared how exciting it is to BE an author and to have an identical twin sister, Julia DeVillers, who is also an author! Her last novel became a Disney Channel movie!

I encouraged the audience to ask their family questions, because you never know what you'll uncover. I also said how heartened I've been by the interest and passion shown by those who read *Yellow Star*—preteens (boys and girls!), adult book groups, senior groups and others in the "literary" world. Some worried *Yellow Star* would be considered "just another Holocaust book." But there is no such thing. And when my aunt is gone ... when I am gone ... readers will know that the Holocaust really happened, to a real person, and hopefully it will translate into compassion and strengthen the words "Never Again!"

For more information, contact Jennifer Foy at www.Jenniferroy.com . Free, downloadable curriculum materials are available there, too!