

FORWARD

פונדאציע פאר
FOUNDED APRIL 27, 1957

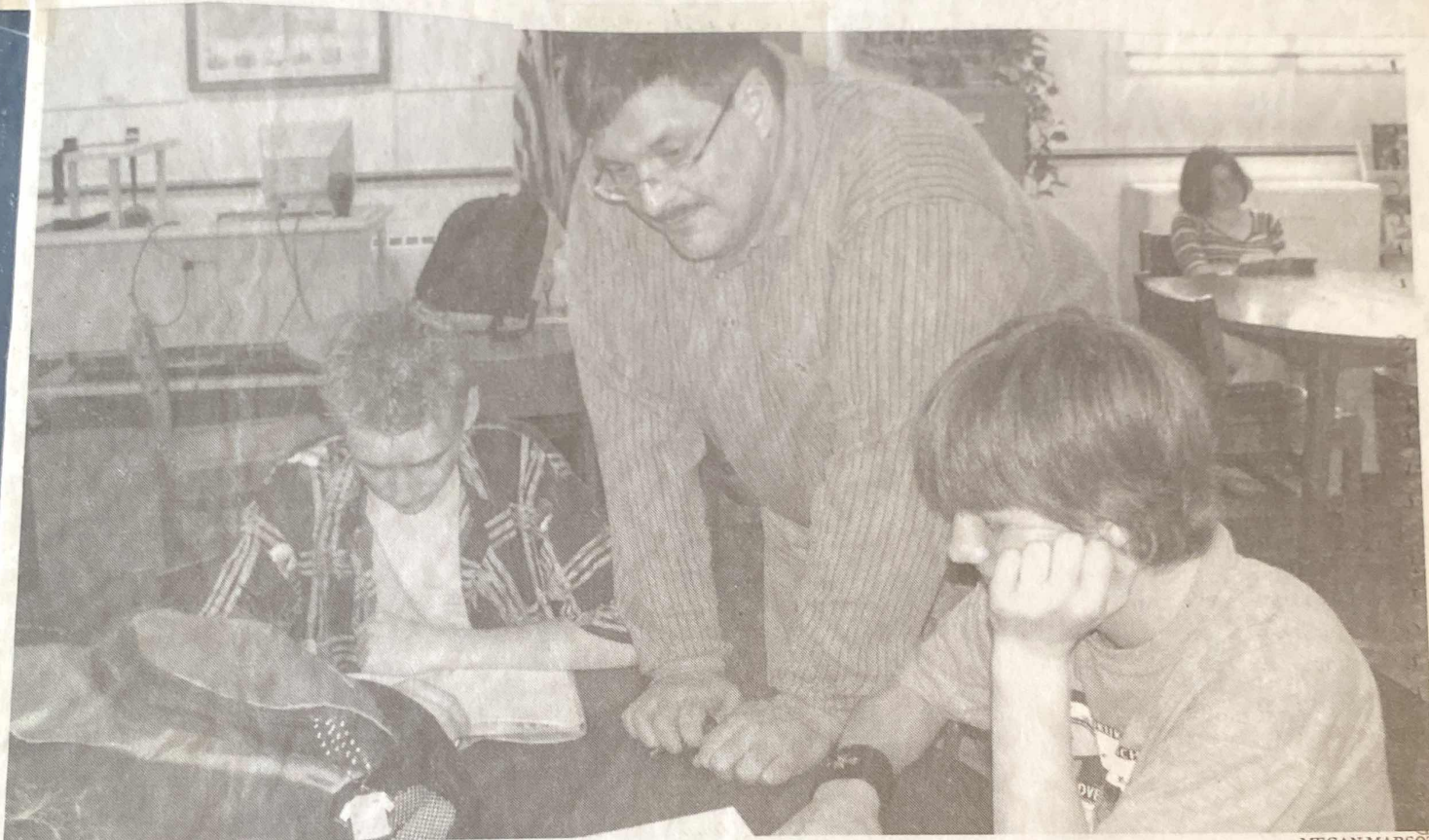
\$1.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 1-800-849-1825

VOLUME CVII, NO. 31,493

APRIL 16, 2004

©2004, FORWARD ASSOCIATION, INC.



MEGAN MARSÓT

LESSONS FROM HISTORY: David Wendt with ninth-graders Tommy Nichols (right) and Brendan Richmond at Keokuk H.S. in rural Iowa.

Receptive Ears Hear About the Shoah in Poverty-Stricken Iowa

David Wendt teaches ninth-grade English at Keokuk High School, a public high school in Iowa where the 700 students are almost all of German descent. The town has 30 churches for a population that barely exceeds 10,000. Most of the students have never left the town — or met a Jew. Wendt, who is known for the picture of Jerusalem that hangs in his classroom, is a link to a wider world for his

students.

Like Barbara Pordy (please see accompanying article), Wendt has found that his students' adversity often makes them more receptive to his Holocaust education curriculum.

Some 58% of Wendt's students come from families living below the poverty line. When they read about the starvation in the concentration camps, Wendt said, they can iden-

tify firsthand with hunger.

So many of the students live in poverty that they are not shocked by the living conditions experienced in the ghettos of Eastern Europe. It is not uncommon to have several generations living together in tight accommodations. One student explained to Wendt that she lives in a one-bedroom apartment with her parents, grandparents and sister, as well as her sister's boyfriend and baby.

Wendt says he is thankful that the community and the parents of his students are so receptive and supportive.

— ADAM SACKS