

## Who We Are

The Janusz Korczak Association of the USA founded by Mariola Strahlberg of Shining Mountain, is a member of the International Korczak Association (IKA), whose roots date back to the Polish Korczak Committee, founded in 1947. Dr. Korczak, a pediatrician, children's author, educator and humanitarian, was well-known in Poland and Europe for his innovative work at his Orphans' Home and Our Home in Warsaw. Dr. Korczak, his assistant Stefania Wilczynska, and approximately 196 children and nine staff members were taken to the Treblinka death camp on August 5-6, 1942, and disappeared into its bowels, never to be seen again. After WWII, Korczak's legacy as an educator and hero grew in Poland as well as abroad. In April 2013, here in the United States we officially formed Janusz Korczak Association of the USA. We currently have 48 members. Thank you all for your support last year and **please renew your membership dues** to help us continue our work. For more information about us please visit us at [www.facebook.com/korczakUSA](http://www.facebook.com/korczakUSA) or at [www.shiningmtnforkids.com](http://www.shiningmtnforkids.com)

## Ongoing Events

**Reach One Teach One Program, Finkelstein Library, Spring Valley, NY** - January 2015-June 2015. The Five Star Program© is currently being used during the Homework Help mentoring program for grades 1-6. See page 2 for more information.

**Viola Elementary School Five Star Program© Pilot, Ramapo, NY** -

Three elementary classes are continuing to use the Five Star Program© in 2015.

## Upcoming Events

**International Korczak Association**

This year, the meeting will take place in Munich, Germany in the Fall.

**Holocaust Remembrance Day** -

We have a beautiful program for children and adults and we are looking for a place to present it this April. Help us make it a reality.

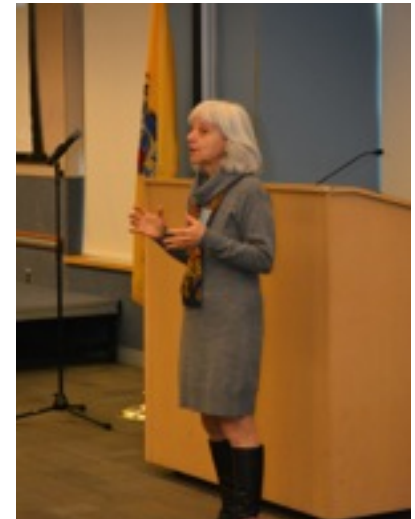
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## Educational Philosophy and the Legacy of Janusz Korczak in Teaching about the Holocaust - Gumpert Teacher's Workshop - Ramapo College, NJ by Mariola Strahlberg

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, for the first time on the east coast, Ramapo College of NJ, New Jersey State Commission on Holocaust Education and Shining Mountain hosted a one day conference entitled **Educational Philosophy and the Legacy of Janusz Korczak in Teaching about the Holocaust**. Over 70 people, many of them NJ educators, attended the conference despite the frigid temperature and wind. Seven people from the Janusz Korczak Association of USA were also present.

On one side of the large conference room we displayed the 14 posters from the **Janusz Korczak - Educational Moments** exhibit. This exhibit was very well received. We also had two tables, one with some of the books about Korczak as well as books written by him and a separate table for the Shining Mountain's Five Star Program©.

Everybody received a handout with the list of books published in English related to Korczak, ideas for Korczak lesson plans and a description of the Five Star Program©. The Holocaust Commission provided handouts about holocaust education in the classroom



and specific handouts for lesson plans about Korczak.

The conference began with an introduction by Dr. Michael A. Riff, the Director of the Gross Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies at the college. Dr. Paul Winkler, Executive Director N.J. State Commission on Holocaust Education did a presentation titled "Holocaust and Genocide Education in Confronting Bigotry." Dr. Alex Urbiel, Professor of History and Teacher Education at Ramapo College, gave an overview of the history of the American Educational philosophy. Kurt Bomze, member of the Korczak Association of the USA, presented a biography of Korczak. Following his talk, David Levy, Senior Program Associate for the New York Organization Facing History and Ourselves, discussed how the story and philosophy of Korczak can be brought into the classroom.

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## Help for Ukraine

Maybe you read the letter from Ukraine or maybe you didn't. We were asked to send money to help children in the war zone and we did. With the generous donations from Marcia Talmage Schneider, Debra DeEntremont, Mary Schuhman, Mariola Strahlberg, Kurt Bomze and Janusz Korczak Association of the USA, we were able to send \$491 to Holland to be passed to Ukraine. We also heard from Tatyana Tsyrlina - Spady and Anna Kozlenko who contributed money directly to the effort. Thank you all for your help. The situation is dire and it is not getting any better.

## Mariola in the News

Mariola and her Five Star Program has made the news when she was interviewed recently by Danusia Swiatek from the Polish Portal and the interview titled "Love a child, not just your own" appeared on the portal on January 20th. For those of you who can read Polish, check out the blog at: <http://www.dobrapolskaskzola.com/2015/01/20/kochaj-dziecko-nie-tylko-swoje>



Our youngest volunteer, Andrew Murphy practicing math facts with the younger children.

If you live in the area and would like to participate as a volunteer, we will gladly offer you a position in the Reach One Teach One program. If you are moved to help us financially, we always need basic school supplies such as pencils, erasers, etc. so any help will be greatly appreciated.

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The group broke for lunch, at the end of which we showed a 30 minute movie "Korczak of the Children" produced by Ghetto Fighters Museum in Israel. After lunch, I did a presentation on a Korczak Model and how his ideas can be brought to children in various grades.

A few days later, I received a very nice phone call from Paul Winkler thanking us in our role in this conference, as well as Dr. Michael Riff informing us about all the many positive comments he received from the attendees about the conference.

We are pleased that we had the opportunity to share information about Korczak's educational philosophy and wish for more such opportunities. If you know educators or parents who may be interested in Janusz Korczak's progressive ideas for working with children, please let us know.

## Reach One Teach One Program by Mariola Strahlberg

The Finkelstein Library's homework help program has received very positive feedback from both parents and the Library Director. At the end of February, we moved next door to a bigger space to the building that was once the Holocaust Museum.

I have had several meetings with the Director of the Children's Library as well as the Director of the Library. The new space, called from now on the *Enrichment Center*, will in the future house an early childhood education program in the morning, homework help from 4-6pm and ESL for adults from 6-9pm. Besides our 7 volunteers, Ivette Lenard, Dina Grinshpun, Lauren Alleva, Janet Grossman, Andrew Murphy, Delia Tolz and myself, the library will be hiring a paid Homework Help Coordinator to oversee the high school volunteers and library staff and to make sure that the program runs smoothly.

We currently are in need of high school volunteers to help the children with homework. Spanish speaking students are in high demand as many of the K-2 children are just learning the English language and their parents do not speak it at home.



Two of our volunteers, Lauren Alleva and Ivette Lenard working with the children using movements.

## Butterfly Project Korczakowo, Poland 2014

As you may remember, during our Holocaust Remembrance celebration last year, the children who attended created beautiful butterflies out of paper, paint and flowers and leaves. These butterflies along with the others that were created during the library art programs were collected and all 89 were placed in a lovely box and sent off to Korczakowo.

One of the days during the camp was dedicated to creating butterflies and many of them were decorated with words reminding everybody that we need peace and love in the world as well as respect for children's rights. On the Parton's Day, a day dedicated to Korczak, many butterflies decorated Janusz Korczak's and Jerzy Zgodzinski's huge portraits. (*see below*)



Here is what Mlody, the head of instructors in Korczakowo wrote to us: "The whole camp was involved in making the butterflies. Every child and counselor did one. There were many different colors, symbols and shapes. Every tent-group took a photo and the butterflies were judged and shown at the large exhibition. A few days later, on Janusz Korczak's Day, we used them as a decoration. They were flying between Korczak and Jerzy (Chief of the Korczak Camp who died suddenly a week before beginning of 2014 summer camp)." You can see this on the photos.

After the ceremony, some of the butterflies went home with children, many were framed in nice frames and given to individual adults and organizations who support Korczakowo, and some were left to be used during winter gathering in December. US butterflies are stored in the camp archive waiting for Korczakowo 2015 and for the US delegation's visit to the camp.



## Announcing our new Board of Directors

Shining Mountain's Board went through the first reorganization since its inception in 2007. We thank Russ Rudish, Mary Lee Batesko, Raselle and Eddie Fisher and Debra DeEntremont for their love and support over the years. Both Russ and Debra will continue their support via Advisory Board. We thank Joyce Reilly (new president), George Lemery, Paul Speziale for staying on the board and Dr. Efrat Efron for joining us. Our Advisory Board has lost a dear member Sallie VanSant who crossed the threshold on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Her encouragement, productive brainstorming sessions and contacts especially in the Berkshires will be greatly missed.

As always, we welcome your suggestions, financial support and we encourage you to consider participating in our volunteering efforts and other activities we are involved in and we look forward to hearing your ideas.



I am a butterfly  
drunk with life. I  
don't know where to  
soar, but I won't  
allow life to clip my  
colorful wings.

Janusz Korczak  
from Confessions of the Butterfly

## “How I Met the Good Doctor.”

by Marcia Talmage Schneider

An excerpt from her book, “Janusz Korczak: Sculptor of Children's Souls” to be published in 2015.

*“He was a brilliant pedagogue, a magician molding young souls. He understood the true spirit of the child.”*

This was one of the outstanding attributes which spoke to me, especially as I had my own successful teaching career of 40 years. It was Korczak's powerful love for children that has especially spoken to me. I admit I love to see the spark of happiness in children's eyes after my interaction with them, whether on buses or subways or in the streets of New York City and other places I have visited around the world. You must know that smiles and giggles and sparkling eyes are quite international.

I also dole out stickers to children who attend Sabbath services (like the 'candy' man or woman who did so before it became no longer politically correct to hand out sugar treats). Is this not similar to Korczak's postcards or candy for winning a bet?

For many years I have worked in New York City public schools and private Jewish schools. I admire Korczak's ability to interact, to motivate, to learn and act morally; to love children and be loved back by them as well. He was so far ahead of his time in knowing the true deep 'spirit' of the child.

In 1972, I first discovered Janusz Korczak's compelling, tragic, as well as heroic life. It was during a program to commemorate Yom HaShoah V'Hagevura (Day for Holocaust and Heroism) held in the Beit Shraga Jewish Day School in Albany, New York. Each year thereafter, recalling his memory and his children, together with others whose lives were cut off, I emphasized Korczak's heroism. Also utilizing the sole book for children at that time, *The Holocaust: A History of Courage and Resistance* by Bea Stadler, I taught about and created a curriculum for the Holocaust for sixth and seventh graders. In the summer of 1981, while attending a three week seminar in Jerusalem's Yad

Vashem, I 'revisited' Korczak while viewing his larger-than-life sculpture where he huddles over some of his children, his enlarged hands clutching them lovingly close to his bosom. A visit (in the northern part of Israel) to the Museum of the Ghetto Fighters at Kibbutz Lochamei Haghetat further brought him to life. At the time, I bought five hard-bound volumes written by and about him. In those years my Hebrew language skills were not as proficient as they are today, so it was difficult for me to plow through them. A few years later, I also read *King Matt I*. I was metaphorically taken to the imaginary child utopia run by the boy ruler.

In 1988, Betty Jean Lifton's seminal volume, *The King of the Children*, was published in English. This brought Korczak to me on a deeper level. In 1978 the English translation of his *Ghetto Diary* was published as well. Korczak had begun writing it in January of 1940, but only completed it a few days prior to his death in 1942. I also heard a lecture by Edward Kulawiec in New Haven, Connecticut. As a result of my immersion in Korczak's work and ideas, I fell in love with this educator of children's souls. In 1998, I visited 92 Krochmalna Street, the orphanage building in Warsaw, Poland. I imagined the walls of the large dining hall resounding with children's voices and the hubbub of activities. I envisioned Korczak walking up the staircase to the attic room (his humble quarters) or checking on the sleeping children in the dormitory rooms. I noted the banister that he, himself, slid down-causing him to receive a punishment from the Children's Court of Justice. It tickled my mind and my heart.

A few days later, I visited Treblinka death camp. There were stark uniform stones, one after the other, each denoting the names of Jewish communities in Poland that flourished prior to the Holocaust. One stone, however, was set apart from the rest. On it was starkly written, “Janusz Korczak and HIS children.” I was struck by several memorial candles in front of that memorial stone. An attached note was touchingly written by Shira, a teenage girl who I known from Albany, New York where my love and respect for Korczak was kindled. Tears poured down my cheeks...

I knew then that I had to do more to kindle others' interest in Korczak and his magic.

What was it like to actually live in his orphanage? What was it like to be under the influence of this incredible man? How did those years living with Korczak either as a child or a peer counselor influence their lives? In 2002, while spending six months in Israel, I was granted access to the 'treasures' of the Korczak archives in the Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz (Lochamei HaGeta'ot). Unable to read Polish, however, I was still able to read quantitative amounts written in Hebrew. I was also given a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of people living in Israel, after their immigration from Poland to Palestine in the 1930s. I set out to visit them in their homes to record their fascinating stories of living with the legendary Korczak. Most were in the autumn of their lives, but their memories were still fresh. After visiting these interesting people and taping them, I transcribed what I had heard, then translated it into English. It was truly amazing to learn how vivid a picture was still engraved in their memories.

After a hiatus of almost ten years, I now complete this book. It was a promise I made to the memory of Korczak to do so.....'to love a child.' It is through the eyes, hearts, and souls of those persons I have interviewed that I wish to convey the essence of Janusz Korczak, for he left such a rich heritage for others to know him and appreciate his philosophies and pedagogies.

As Korczak wrote in 'How To Love and Respect a Child':

*.....hoping to build a better future.....For humans to learn about taking responsibility for their own actions, to become tolerant of others, to have compassion and not be idle bystanders, and most importantly, to get them to act on behalf of moral and ethical issues-like the pursuit of justice and truth-to build a better world.*

MARCIA TALMAGE SCHNEIDER can be reached via email - [mahryuma@verizon.net](mailto:mahryuma@verizon.net).

# BECOME A MEMBER OF THE JANUSZ KORCZAK ASSOCIATION OF THE USA

The mission of the Janusz Korczak Association of the USA is to disseminate information about his life and work, his humanism and his sacrifice. Through our practical work with children at the Shining Mountain, we strive to follow the Fundamental Rights of the Child. For example:

- 1. The Right to One's Own Life** – we help educators and parents to create a safe environment for children to discover things on their own while allowing them sufficient space and time.
- 2. The Right to Live in the Present** – We want to prepare children for the future but children yearn to live in the here and now – therefore we support their need for play and relaxation.
- 3. The Right to Be Himself or Herself** – We ask to accept children the way they are, with their talents and shortcomings.

With your help, we plan to translate Korczak's most important pedagogical writings, promote advanced courses for teachers on his educational philosophy, establish Korczak's camp in the US and strive for the US ratification of the 1989 United Nations "Convention on the Rights of the Child". Please let us know if you would like to receive information on how you can help with the following activities:

- Children's Project based on Korczak's books and his legacy
- Korczak's Exhibit and lecture
- Korczak's Summer Camp
- Workshops and lectures for parents and educators on Korczak's pedagogy
- Five Star Program© training for your school or organization

## MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT

Membership includes a semi-annual newsletter that focuses on putting Korczak's philosophy into action along with suggestions and strategies for creating a harmonious childhood for children in our lives. You will be kept abreast of latest US and international Korczak activities with a possibility to join in those activities with various groups and organizations.

**Please send your check to:**

**Janusz Korczak Association of the USA, 11 Beckett Ct, Monsey, NY 10952**

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Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
I am:      a student      an educator      a parent  
           other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

**I would like to support the Janusz Korczak Association of the USA. Enclosed is my contribution:**

### **Basic Membership (annual):**

- \$15 (student/senior)
- \$20 (individual)
- \$40 (Family)
- \$75 (organization/corporation)

### **Benefactor Membership:**

- \$100 - \$249 Friend
- \$250 - \$499 Associate
- \$500 - \$999 Patron
- \$1000+ Founder Circle

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