

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 are happy to inform you that Erin Schirm and Prof. Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady have joined our Board** (read their articles in our Fall 2015 newsletter). Thank you all for your support last year and **please renew your membership dues** to help us continue our work. For more information, please visit us at www.facebook.com/korczakUSA.

Past Events

Polish Consulate in NYC

In July, Mariola met with the Consul General Urszula Gacek and Vice Consul Alicja Tunk at the Polish Consulate in NYC and together they developed a plan for future collaborations.

Polish Saturday School Visit

Last April, Mariola presented in Polish, the story of Dr. Korczak and his Children to 25 students (ages 10 -16) in the Polish School in Mahwah, NJ.

Ongoing Events

Polish School Pilot

In the fall of 2015, we started a 6 month pilot program for the 3rd grade in the Saturday school in Mahwah, NJ. We have presented life in the orphanage, introduced the
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"30 little Korczaks"

Written in Polish by Pawel Jedrzejewski (April 2014)
from the <http://dzismis.com>. Translated by Mariola Strahlberg.

One of our members, Dasha Rittenberg, sent me a touching article about the lives of two brothers Glasbergs. Since the article is in Polish, I translated parts of it for the newsletter.

This story is about Aleksander Glasberg, born in 1902 in Ukraine to a Jewish shopkeeper. After his University studies, he immigrated to Vienna and in the early 30s settled in France. He spoke 8 languages, including Yiddish, Hebrew and Latin. In France, he became a priest and a vicar in a poor section of Lyon.

During the war, he saved many Jews and in 1942 he concentrated his efforts on saving Jewish children from the nearby camp. He was famous for making sure that not one of the saved children was forced to be baptized. When gestapo started to chase him, he changed his name and joined partisans. He received many awards for his humanitarian efforts. He was a courageous man who stopped at nothing to save a life. But what I want to tell you today is what happened in 1946, in Paris.

Priest Glasberg invited one of his Polish friends Jan Kott and his wife to visit a Polish camp near Paris that priest Glasberg was leading. They met there around 30 Jewish children. Glasberg, surrounded by the children, started to introduce them to Kotts: this is Piotrus Korczakand this one is Lidia Korczakand this one is Ania Korczak ...Janek Korczak....Iza...Zuza...Izio ...also Korczak. All the children had one last name: **Korczak**.

There was no one among the living who could identify those children and who knew what their last names were before the war. All these children came to France after post war pogroms that took place in Poland in 1946.

Korczak and the Polish Community in the US by Mariola Strahlberg

Since December 21, 2014, the Consulate General of Poland in New York has a new Consul General, Urszula Gacek, who among other things, was a senator in Poland and a special ambassador to the European Union in Strasbourg. The new Consul herself comes from the Polish community. She was born in Britain to a family of Polish immigrants. Ms. Gacek was interviewed on January 26, 2015 about her US plans by Martha Kustek and Danuta Swiatek, two reporters from Polish NY Portal (dobrapolskaszkola.com). Since the interview was in Polish, I chose to translate a part that will be interesting to our US Korczak community.

While in Strasbourg, Ms. Gacek started a Korczak project. Under her direction, a number of people worked with teachers and taught Korczak's ideas. She explained that Korczak taught children that they not only have rights but also obligations arising from them. Young people today do not fully understand their rights and one can easily misinterpret the idea of freedom of expression. My freedom does not imply that I am allowed to offend someone; that I can use hate slogans, because this person has different religious beliefs or belongs to a different ethnic group. We need to teach young people what freedom means and this is what attracts Ms. Gacek to Korczak. According to her, Korczak is timeless! Who during 1910s and 1920s was thinking about children's rights? Ms. Gacek would like to bring Korczak's ideas and his teachings to the Polish community on the East Coast of the US.

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Five Star Program™, and the children learned how to create their own Take-A-Break Area at home. The children look forward to these monthly sessions with joy and enthusiasm.

Read more about all these exciting activities on page 1 and 2.

Viola Elementary School Five Star Program™ - Suffern, NY

After a successful year, the program continues in the three classes. Read the story on page 3.

Found Poetry Project-Spokane, WA

Julie Scott, middle school language arts and social studies teacher in Spokane, Washington has been teaching about Korczak in her extensive Holocaust unit in 8th grade since 1998. Additionally, for the past 2 years, she does in depth unit on Korczak in her Found Poetry project where students write and illustrate poems about Korczak. More on that, in the Spring 2016 newsletter.

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Polish Saturday School Visit :

Last April, Mariola was invited to the Polish School in Mahwah, NJ. This was her first presentation in Polish, the beginning of collaborations with the Polish Schools on the east coast of the US. There are approximately 10,000 children attending Saturday Polish schools. They spend 3 hours each Saturday learning Polish language, Polish customs and culture. Here are the translated excerpts from the article written by Danusia Swiatek for the Polish NY Portal:

“Students were divided into small groups and followed Korczak’s life story using Tomek Bogacki’s book, “Champion of Children”. Each illustration brought students closer to Korczak and his orphaned children starting with the first one, on which Ms. Mariola found Korczak's house, and close by, the house in which she lived in Warsaw.

Mahwah students were fascinated with the methods used in the Korczak’s orphanage. They understood that Korczak showered his children with love and trust and wanted to know if it was possible to lie to Korczak while looking into his eyes. Any doubts were dispelled by the speaker. "Korczak was such a man before whom you could not tell a lie" - Ms. Mariola assured them. The students nodded their heads in admiration.

Ms. Mariola introduced students to some of the children’s rights promoted by Korczak and invited each student to write one of their own. We heard some serious ones such as being able to express your feelings or being educated in such a way that one is able to create ideals of his or her own. There were also less serious rights, for example driving at 13. A serious discussion followed where students talked about the responsibility for the lives of others, those that are in the car and those who are driving or walking on the roads. The consensus was reached that driving at 13 is not a good idea.

Child rearing methods used by Dr. Korczak should be a topic of conversation with the children, not just adults. Mariola Strahlberg’s presentation is an opportunity to begin these conversations on a larger scale in the Polish Community schools, and then to continue them at home.

The presentation made a big impression on the students and teachers who attended, and Mariola was invited to pilot a 6-session program for the 3rd grade starting in the fall of 2015. She will report her impressions in the Spring 2016 newsletter.

The Five Star Program™

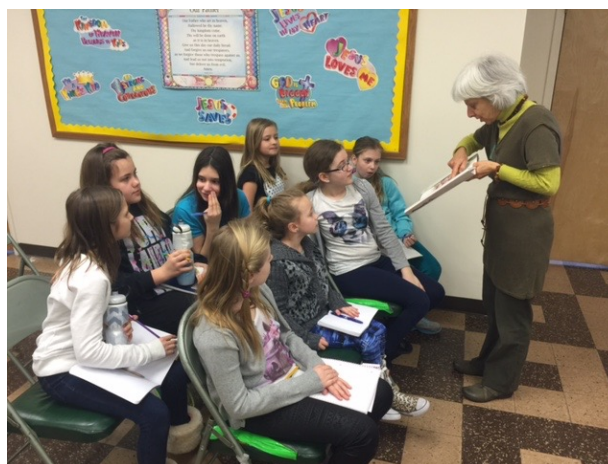
A Step-by-Step Teacher's Guide to Innovative Classroom Strategies that Awaken Students' Unique Potential



by Mariola Strahlberg, M.S., LAc

Mariola In the News:

“The Five Star Program™-A Step-by-Step Teacher's Guide to Innovative Classroom Strategies that Awaken Students' Unique Potential” - has been published and is available at createspace.com/5757088 and amazon.com/dp/0692540598



Mariola showing children the place where Dr.Korczak lived in Warsaw using Tomek Bogacki’s “Champion of Children.”

Marcia's latest adventures regarding Korczak

by Marcia Talmage-Schneider

On Saturday, December 5, 2015 a group of 4-6th graders who are enrolled in Jewish Journey Project Book Club met to discuss my book, "Janusz Korczak: Sculptor of Children's Souls."

The children were given the assignment to read my book in November and would discuss it on that Saturday. Sitting in a semi circle, the children sat in front and the parents who had been invited to join were behind their children. Marcia discussed some of Korczak's methods in the orphanage; how she became interested in Korczak and how she went about her researching the people who had lived in the orphanage and how Korczak had influenced their lives. She told of her favorite person (although one is not supposed to have a favorite) and his telling of the Afikomen search at the orphanage. Afikomen is the last piece of matza eaten and is needed to complete the festive ceremonial meal or Passover seder. Usually in a home seder, the children are challenged into finding the Afikomen somewhere in the house, but in the orphanage it would have been too chaotic with over 100 children searching. So, Korczak had a walnut put into one of the matza balls to denote this. One of the interviewees took out of his pocket a disheveled, brownish handkerchief in which was the walnut he had found some 60 years before. wow...

One young girl asked a very mature question: "I am mad at Korczak because he lied to the children. He told them that they were going to a better place."

Marcia responded that perhaps he did lie, but he was fully aware that this would soothe and calm the children and that was what was important at that moment. Perhaps that was why the children were orderly and calm as they marched through the streets of Warsaw to the Umslagplatz and the cattle cars that were going to take them to their final destination.

The next day, Marcia was invited to the home of Dasha Rittenberg for an "event" organized by Eva Fogelman. There she met the Consul General Ursula Gacek and a young woman from Poland who had written a book about Stefa in Polish. It was an amazing and rich exchange of literary ideas!!

Both Marcia and Magda wished for their respective books to be translated into the others' language'- hopefully that will happen. We will report back when it does..

Eva had asked for several copies of Marcia's book to be given to them AND a copy for President Barak Obama. Eva was going to the White House Hannukah party and wanted to gift the book to the President. Marcia wrote a dedication to him and his family stating that Korczak had wanted children to be shown love and respect so they would grow up to make the world a better place. 'Mr. President,' she wrote, "you are trying for a better world, however, it is up to Melia and Sasha to do so."

Dr. Eva Fogelman is a co-chair of International Study of Organized Persecution of Children/Child Development Research. She is a psychologist and is a pioneer on the effects of Holocaust on the Second Generation. Dr. Fogelman wrote the Afterwords in my book.

Viola Elementary School Five Star Program™

Report by Mariola

The year started as usual in the Ms. Bev's 5th grade class except that 7 students from Ms. Rozan's 4th grade class joined her other 5th grades. It was less than a week that they started asking for the Five Star Program™. The children instructed the new students for a few weeks and then Mariola came back for a session to add her special touches. She is planning to come back in February and April before the state tests to help students remain calm and focused for these long exams.

Learn About Links to Korczak:

One of our members Kurt Bomze recently shared this link with us. It will take you to numerous articles on Korczak.

[https://
duckduckgo.com/?
q=yad+vashem+janusz
+korczak&t=osx](https://duckduckgo.com/?q=yad+vashem+janusz+korczak&t=osx)

If you know of any other sites that pertain to Korczak and his legacy please let us know so we can share it in our next newsletter.

Daniel Berek reviews Marcia's book "A Sculptor of Children's Souls"

This wonderful book by former teacher and scholar Marcia Talmage Schneider, offers details of Janusz Korczak and his orphanage from the perspectives of several orphans and former teachers. Each spoke with passion and clarity on what it was like to be an orphan or a teacher at Dom Sierot, adding a personal vision and perspective to all that made Korczak so memorable – the newspaper, the court, Stefa, mealtimes, stories, and summer camp. The common theme, however, is how Korczak influenced and inspired each member of this diverse group, not only in their professional lives, but also in the way they chose to live and raise their children, their very moral and ethical codes. It was there, this book makes clear, that Janusz Korczak had the greatest effect. With "Janusz Korczak: Sculptor of Children's Souls", Korczak is more than a legend; he is a very real person.

To read the full review from August 12th, 2015, please visit:

[dlberek.wordpress.com/
2015/08/12/a-sculptor-of-
childrens-souls/](http://dlberek.wordpress.com/2015/08/12/a-sculptor-of-childrens-souls/)

“How I met Korczak before I met Korczak”

by Anna Kozlenko



I was ten, riding a bus with another hundred kids and group leaders to my first “Nasz Dom” camp - a Summer Korczak camp in Russia, founded in 1993 by Irina Demakova and the local Korczak community. There was a green flag with a four-leaf clover in the back of the bus, just like the one in the Korczak’s orphanage. I knew nothing of the clover, or Korczak. All I knew was that I was scared and lonely - it was my first time away from my parents ever. However, I was scared and lonely only for the first minute or two. After that, one of the group leaders picked up a guitar, and instantly leaders and children started to sing. I was home.

Since then, I pretty much never missed another Summer camp. Gradually, the camp “Korczak education” started to show. By the time I turned 18 I already knew Korczak’s biography, could recite many of his quotes, read some of the books about him, knew what rights children have and what rules Korczak’s orphanages practiced. Nevertheless, I am glad I met Korczak even before I gained all this knowledge. I believe that experiencing how child-adult relationship work in the camp, especially

from a position of a child, helped me feel the spirit of Korczak before I knew him.

As a child in the Korczak camp, I felt that my opinion was valued. I felt like I had rights that were respected. I felt like I had my opportunity to shine, in my own way, my own situation of success, and I was the one who got to decide what it was. Like the real Korczak system, the camp placed emphasis on children self-governing themselves, equality for all Nasz Dom members, respect for one another, and allowing children to discover their potential. I truly believe every Nasz Dom camper falls in love with Korczak and his teachings. At least I know I did.

First, this love led me to become one of the volunteer group leaders in the camp. Now I got to be the one to help children in my group feel the spirit of Korczak. Eventually, my involvement with the Korczak movement in Moscow grew, and besides being a group leader in three Summer camps and two winter camps, I participated in organizing Nasz Dom, attended several conferences, acted as a board member for Youth Korczak Center, and did many other things. Korczak became an essential part of my life. Because of that, when in 2012 I followed my husband to the USA for education, I did not want to leave my Korczak fever behind.

Somehow I heard about Janusz Korczak Association of the USA. Without hesitation, I contacted Mariola and offered my help. Soon, I ended up managing the association’s Facebook page, which I still do today. Being a full-time student and working at the same time is hard, so I do wish I had more time and energy to invest in our little Facebook page. However, I do appreciate Mariola letting me make this little contribution and stay closer to Janusz Korczak’s movement through it. I am convinced, that the USA, like any other country, is in need of Korczak’s ideas and vision. I admire the members of our association and their passion for spreading these ideas and putting them to life through practical, real-world projects that benefit children in this country and abroad. I believe that together we can do great things and let other people meet Korczak through us, even before they formally meet him.

Anna is a senior studying computer science at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT. Her favorite book about Korczak is the famous “The King of Children: The Life and Death of Janusz Korczak” by Betty Jean Lifton. Anna can be reached via email at: anna.a.kozlenko@gmail.com.

Anna’s favorite Korczak Quote:

I exist not to be loved and admired, but to love and act. It is not the duty of those around me to love me. Rather, it is my duty to be concerned about the world, about man.

*— Janusz Korczak,
Warsaw Ghetto
Memoirs of Janusz
Korczak*

Stefa Wilczynska In the News

Finally there is a new book in Polish about Stefa (co-director of the orphanage) written by Magdalena Kicinska. The book, *Pani Stefa*, sheds light on the depth of Stefa’s commitment, love and dedication to the orphaned children as well as Korczak. Last October, we were invited to participate in a meeting with the author in the Polish Consulate in NYC. Alex Chludzinski presented her impressions from Korczakowo Camp in 2013, Mariola spoke about Korczak Association. Two of our members who speak Polish, Dasha Rittenberg and Cesare Ciaglo were in attendance.

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 Institute in New York for Exhibits, workshops and lectures
- ___ Korczak's Summer Camp in US and Poland
- ___ Workshops and lectures for parents and educators on Korczak's pedagogy
- ___ Five Star Program™ training for your school or organization

MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT

Membership includes quarterly newsletters 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.

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. Please write your check to: Shining Mountain CPC (Korczak Association) and send it to:
11 Beckett Ct, Monsey, NY 10952**

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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