



JANUSZ KORCZAK ASSOCIATION OF THE USA

NEWSLETTER Winter 2016/2017

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, nine staff members, and approximately 196 children were taken to the Treblinka death camp on August 5-6, 1942. They 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.

Here in the United States, we officially formed Janusz Korczak Association of the USA in April 2013. As of 2016, we have a logo for our association, and you can reach us and learn about our activities via our website (www.korczakusa.com) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/korczakUSA).

A big thank you to all of you who have already sent your membership dues and donations for 2016. If you haven't done so yet, please renew your membership to help us continue our work.

Upcoming Events

The 8th **International Korczak Conference**, commemorating 75 years of the last way of Korczak, Stefa, the Staff and Children, will take place in Warsaw, Poland, at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, September 13-15, 2017.

If you would like to present at this conference, abstracts are due by January 20, 2017. For more information contact Mariola at shiningmtnny@aol.com.

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In Memoriam Dr. Paul Winkler (1937-2016)



It is with sadness that we report to you that Dr. Paul Winkler, the first and only director of the NJ Commission on Holocaust Education for the last 40 years, has died on in July 12, 2016, at the age of 79 after an illness. Here is what one of our members, Dr. Kurt Bomze wrote about his friend Paul.

Paul was in the mold of Janusz Korczak. He was what Korczak said an educator should be: intelligent, committed, empathetic, and passionate. Paul spent his whole life in education, starting as an elementary school teacher, working his whole way up to be the New Jersey Deputy Assistant of Education for Exceptional Children. He received his doctoral degree in Educational Leadership in 1974. In 1982, the former Governor Thomas Kean created the State Commission of Holocaust Education; the first such body in the U.S. Dr. Winkler was offered the position of Executive Director.

In 1994, the former Governor Christie Whitman signed into law the Mandate for Holocaust Education in the public schools. Through the years, the Commission developed curricula on 13 acts of horror throughout Modern History.

A number of years ago, I met Paul and discussed with him the value of bringing the life and teachings of Janusz Korczak into the whole day programs the Commission was putting on for Holocaust Education for teachers. He was very enthusiastic about the idea, and worked very hard to incorporate and present Korczak's ideas on education and child upbringing. Paul saw the value of Janusz Korczak's teachings not just benefiting Holocaust Education, but also benefiting teachers in all of their efforts. Dr. Winkler developed three such programs. I was part of all three, and Mariola joined me for the third at Ramapo College in 2015, the one-day conference on Korczak. With Dr. Winkler's passing, the legacy of Janusz Korczak lost a true champion. I am certain that the new director Larry Glaser will carry forward Dr. Winkler's efforts in bringing Janusz Korczak's life and teachings in the Commission's efforts in Holocaust Education.

Dr. Winkler received numerous awards and citations during his career, and numerous legislative acknowledgments from the New Jersey State Government. In honor of his 70th birthday and over 50 years in education, his family, friends, and colleagues established the Paul B. Winkler Endowment to be awarded to an elementary educator each year.

Upcoming Events

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Korczakowo Camp 2017, located in Western Poland, is in a forest on the unpolluted Lake Grzybno. The session for teens 14-19 years old will take place Jul 2-21, 2017. Younger children, 8-13, will enjoy the camp Jul 23 – Aug 4, 2017. To learn more about the camp, visit their website in English at www.korczakowo.org.

CATS 2017, Children as Actors for Transforming Society will take place in Caux, Switzerland, Jul 29 – Aug 4, 2017. The theme for the conference is “Reaching for an Inclusive World”. The guiding principle of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child is that every child has the right to participation. The conference will provide the forum for children from all over the world, children experiencing wars, children with disabilities, street children, as well as experts in the field and academics.

If any of you know teenagers and chaperons who would be interested in attending both Korczakowo Camp in Poland and the CATS Conference in Switzerland during the summer of 2017, please contact Mariola at shiningmtyny@aol.com.

And the News for 2018:

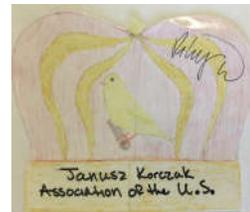
Professor Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady proposed the Seattle Pacific University as the sight of the August 2018 USA Conference. Both her University and IKA accepted her proposal and we are looking forward to the first ever Korczak inspired conference in the USA. The working title for the conference is: Education for Excellence, Diversity, and Respect: Transformative 21st Century Innovations.



What Dr. Korczak means to 8th grade teenagers in one public school?

One of our new members, Julie Scott, Advanced Grade-Eight Language Arts teacher in Spokane, Washington, has been teaching a Holocaust block for a number of years and is using Korczak’s biography. Children learn about Korczak from excerpts from books and videos; at the end are asked to create and illustrate a poem based on Korczak’s story. The poems are amazing (see Page 3 for 2 examples), and we are planning to publish them in a book. Julie’s program is being used by another teacher in her school.

This year, after finishing their spring semester courses, students were asked to create logos for Janusz Korczak Association of the USA. We received 25 entries and chose one for the logo—you can see it on our new website and on top of our newsletter—and another for the future plaque for our Korczak Spirit Award. You can see many wonderful poems and logos on our new website.



How I “Met” Janusz Korczak

Julie Scott, Eight Grade Teacher, Spokane, Washington

In the summer of 1998, I had the opportunity to go with the Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Teachers’ Program to Poland and Israel. It was on this first trip to Poland that I first learned about Janusz Korczak. While in Warsaw, we went to the Jewish Historical Institute, and I first heard of him there. When I visited Treblinka for the first time, I also learned more and saw the stone marker there for him (and the children). Later, when we were studying at the Ghetto Fighters’ House in Israel, they had a poster of him on the wall of one of the classrooms. And then later, in their book store, I bought a small book about him. The book is called *Homage to Korczak: Excerpts from his writings, poems in his honor, children’s drawings*. The book was published by Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, Ghetto Fighters’ House – Yad Leyeled, and The Korczak Society of Israel.

After returning home from my trip, I began to search about Korczak on the internet and was fascinated by this amazing man. I then purchased *The King of Children* and read it cover to cover in just a few days. I could not put it down. I vowed to myself that I would teach my students about this incredible human being who advocated for the rights of children and loved them unconditionally. I also bought his ghetto diary and a picture book about him. I used the picture book in class with my eight-grade students as well as pictures, poems etc. I introduce my students to him when I am teaching about the Warsaw ghetto, and then do a separate lesson on him when I teach about heroes of the Holocaust.

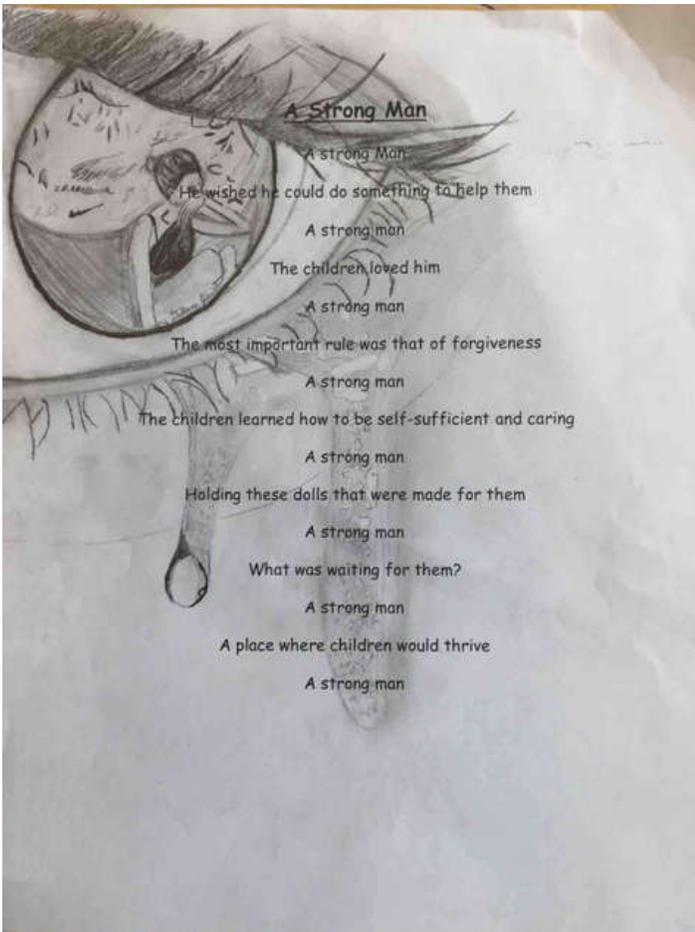
In 2005, I went on a second trip to study the Holocaust, and spent 12 days in Poland with the Seattle-based Holocaust center. Here too, I looked for more on him, took special notice of the numerous statues and monuments in his honor, and did get to see the outside of the orphanage.

Janusz Korczak has become a role model to me as far as how to treat and teach my eight-grade students. That children have rights and should first and foremost be loved. He is a hero to me, personally.

There are a few people I really admire in history that—if I could meet them, and talk to them—it would be awesome. On the top of my list is Janusz Korczak.

How Do We Bring Dr. Korczak to Young and Old?

After learning about Janusz Korczak, many people ask: “How can I bring his ideas to people around me”? In this newsletter, we would like to share with you how some of our members do it. Read it, ponder it, and do something in your neighborhood, your home, local school, temple, church, or camp. It is worth the effort and you will be able to spread the light of compassion, care, and peace so very much needed in our world today.



Mariola Strahlberg spreads Korczak’s ideas in public and private schools’ classrooms, East Ramapo Enrichment Program, and Polish Schools under the auspice of the Five Star Program™, by bringing tools for focus, calm, and motivation, and showing students how to be more responsible for their own learning so that they are able to reach their unique potential.

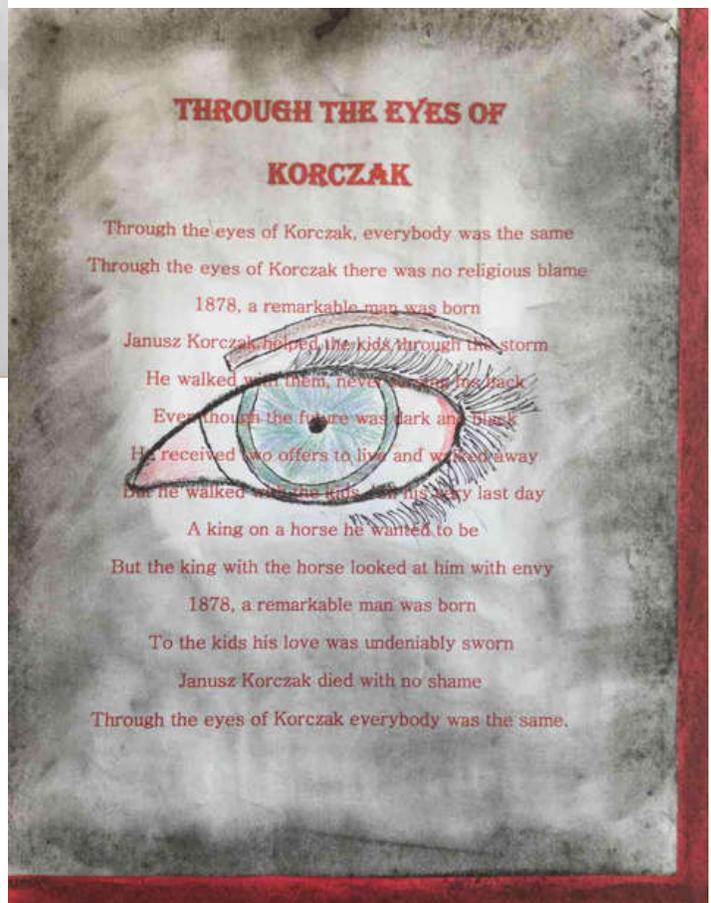
Mariola Strahlberg and Erin Schirm approached New York State Harriman State Park to create the 3-mile Children’s Discovery Trail around a beautiful Breakneck Pond. The trail was created this summer by small groups of New York City teenagers during their first ever camping experience. Starting in Spring 2017, young people and their parents will be able to learn about Children’s Rights while walking the trail.

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Doctor Kurt Bomze has been actively spreading the knowledge about the Good Doctor for over 20 years. As you all well know, August 5th is the death date of Janusz Korczak and his children’. Every year, Kurt and his wife Nadine go to Shabbat services that week. They had purchased a memorial plaque that is prominently placed, and the name of Janusz Korczak and the Children is mentioned during the Kaddish (Memorial) part of the service. This Yahrzeit will be noted at their local Temple Emanuel in Cherry Hill, NJ, for as long as the Temple exists. Also in their Temple, they sponsor Korczak Spirit Award for a graduating senior. This year’s winner was Rebecca Chasen. Here is an excerpt from her essay:

“It isn’t what you play that is important: It is how you play and what you think and feel when you are playing that matters.”

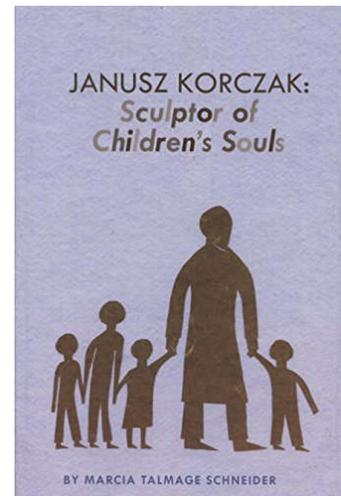
This quote by Janusz Korczak speaks to me and personally explains why teaching kids is so important. Children are amazing; they’re gifts, miracles, the future, and so much more. They are intelligent, caring, and creative creatures that we are tasked to teach. But the reason this quote resonates so much isn’t because of children themselves, but how our teachings will influence them. Teachers are the most important influence in a child’s life; from an early age, they teach morality, responsibility, compassion, and respect. I am honored to be a teacher and have an impact in many children’s lives.



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Every year, **Marcia Talmage Schneider** celebrates Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) and Korczak's Death Anniversary in few New York City synagogues by bringing life of Korczak and his orphans in the age-appropriate way to the attendees, and sharing passages from her book *Janusz Korczak – Sculptor of Children's Souls*. Click on the image for more information about the book.

While teaching her summer course in Foundations of American Education at the Seattle Pacific University, **Professor Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady** devoted part of the first class to Korczak, his ideas and activities. Some of the students wrote in their journals later: "Korczak blew them away". Out of all educators and great minds, she introduced during this course, Korczak remained #1 for most students. As a result of the course, one teacher, Joan Nelson, decided to choose *King Matt the First* by Korczak as the book for her 7th Grade's English class. Tatyana also participated in the preparation of the online Korczak course of lectures, initiated and organized by the JK Association of Brazil. Click on the image to watch it:



What ways do you find to share Korczak with others?
Let us know and we will share it via our newsletter and website.

**Congratulations to Batia Gilad,
the President of International Korczak Association!**

Marek Michalak, Polish Ombudsman for Children, awarded Batia Gilad, the President of the International Korczak Association, with the medal *Infantis Dignitatis Defensori* (Defender of Child's Dignity). The ceremony took place at the international seminar in Geneva in May 2016, at the Permanent Mission of Poland to the UN. The medal was granted in honor of her work promoting Janusz Korczak. A very well deserved award.

When you have a chance, visit International Korczak Association (IKA) at www.facebook.com/IKAssociation. You will find many interesting entries there, among them:

- Tunisian Association is a new member of IKA
- Child's Right to Respect has been translated into Lithuanian
- How to Love a Child has been translated into Chinese
- IKA's tour of Taiwan included a visit to a holistic democratic school



Changes to the distribution of our newsletters: Our Board decided that starting in 2017, we will be publishing two newsletters per year. We will also be sharing news with you via monthly News Briefs. Any time you have news that you would like to share with our members, please send email to info@korczakusa.com.



JANUSZ KORCZAK ASSOCIATION OF THE USA

welcomes you as a member of our association

Janusz Korczak (1879-1942), a Polish-Jewish pediatrician, children's writer, educator, father of progressive orphanages and children's rights, is well known all over the world and yet most Americans have never heard of him. The purpose 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 sufficient space, literally and spiritually.
- 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 FORM

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.

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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): | Benefactor Membership: |
| _____ \$15 (student/senior) | _____ \$100 - \$249 Friend |
| _____ \$20 (individual) | _____ \$250 - \$499 Associate |
| _____ \$40 (Family) | _____ \$500 - \$999 Patron |
| _____ \$75 (organization/corporation) | _____ \$1000+ Founder Circle |

Please make your check payable to Janusz Korczak Association of the USA and mail it to:

Shining Mountain Center for Peaceful Childhood, Inc

11 Beckett Court, Monsey, NY 10952

Thank you for your commitment. There is power in numbers and your participation gives us strength to continue creating a more peaceful and happy childhood for all children.

You can contact us by calling 845-425-7243 or on the web: www.korczakusa.com and www.facebook.com/korczakusa.