



JANUSZ KORCZAK ASSOCIATION OF THE USA

NEWSLETTER Winter 2017/2018

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 USA, Dr. Korczak's legacy was promoted by Prof. Millicent Magaliff and Dr. Kurt Bomze, through their Janusz Korczak Society of America, founded in 1991. In 2013, Mariola Strahlberg officially joined International Korczak Association and formed Janusz Korczak Association of the USA. Prof. Efrat Efron, Joyce Reilly, Erin Schrim, Prof. Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady, Dr. Luciana Castrillon, and Mariola Strahlberg are current board members. You can reach us and learn about our activities via our website (korczakusa.com).

Thank you all who have already sent your donations. To help us continue our work, you can contribute via [the DONATE button on our website](#), or send us a check with the form at the end of this newsletter.

2018 Korczak-Inspired Conference



INTERNATIONAL
JANUSZ KORCZAK
ASSOCIATION

JANUSZ KORCZAK
ASSOCIATION OF THE USA

Click on the image for more information.

10 COMMANDMENTS FOR PARENTS FROM JANUSZ KORCZAK

Did you know that there was a Montessori Corner in the Children's Home in Warsaw? The 10 commandments for parents by Janusz Korczak were posted on the Montessori Nature blog in Australia:

1. Do not expect that your children will be just like you, or the way you want them to be. Help them to become not you, but themselves.
2. Do not expect your children to return everything you invested in them. You gave them their life, how can they repay you? They will give life to another, and this is an irreversible law of gratitude.
3. Do not vent your resentments on the children to avoid disappointment later on in life. For what you sow is what you reap.
4. Do not look down on your children's problems. Everything in life is given according to what one can handle. Remember, children's lives are just as challenging; they might be even more challenging than yours, since they lack life's experience.
5. Do not disgrace!
6. Don't forget that the most important encounters in life are the encounters with children. Pay more attention to them: we can never know whom we encounter in the face of a child.
7. Don't beat yourself up, if you cannot do something for your children. Simply remember: You haven't done enough until you've done all you can.
8. Children are not tyrants, who take possession of your whole life, and neither just the fruit of flesh and blood. A child is a precious cup that God gave you to keep and develop in a creative fire.
9. Learn to love the other person's children. Never do to them what you wouldn't have done to yours.
10. Love your children no matter what they are: not talented, unsuccessful, or not grown up. When spending time with them – rejoice – because children are celebration that is still with you.

Printed with permission from Anastasia, creator of the Montessori Nature blog, www.montessorinature.com. [Visit their site to read the article about Janusz Korczak](#). Please note that the 10 Commandments version of the blog has been slightly revised.

Upcoming Events

Education for Excellence, Diversity, and Respect: Transformative 21st Century Innovations is the theme of the 9th International Korczak Conference in Seattle, WA, this August 22–25. Submission deadline for papers is April 15; early registration with discounted rates ends on May 30. Visit korczakconference2018.com and please share the conference information with educators, parents, and supporters of children's rights.



On February 24, the Polish School in South Hackensack, NJ, will celebrate **Day of Janusz Korczak and His Children**. Over 100 children, Grades 4-11, will learn about the life and work of Janusz Korczak, participate in Korczak's play *10 Matchboxes*, and create their own butterflies with children's rights. Mariola Strahlberg and Cesare Ciaglio will lead this special day in Polish.

Past Events

Joyce Reilly, Marcia Talmage Schneider, Efrat Efron, Tatyana Tsyryulina, Luciana Castrillon, and Mariola Strahlberg attended **the 8th International Korczak Conference and the 3rd International Congress of Children's Rights** at the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, Poland, September 13-16, 2017. [Read more about their experience on our website.](#) We met the sons and daughters of the orphans from the Orphans' Home, including the son of Igor Newerly (see the article on Page 3), and people who lived in Our Home, run by Maryla Falska.



Participants of the Polin conference at the monument of "Korczak and His Children" in the center of Warsaw

AND WE REMEMBER THEM...

Honoring Jackie by Joyce Reilly

Jacqueline Berke, founder of the Holocaust and Genocide Study Center at Drew University, had a passion for words, good writing, and moving stories. Jackie, as she was known to all, introduced me to writings from the Holocaust, and about the Holocaust, that I had no idea about, even after thirty years of reading in this field. Her classes on the literature of the Holocaust, especially women's writing, brought me to a world of uncompromising clarity and literary excellence, facing some of the most horrific subject matter known to humanity. Jackie did not shy away from the terrible reality of the Holocaust, and yet she was ever mindful of the well-being of her students, of the importance of balance in her presentations. Once in a while, after an in depth exploration of some truly gut wrenching piece, she would say: "You all look a little green; let's talk about (or see or listen to) a story about rescue." And we would proceed to feel a little possibility of sun again.

There are people in our lives who impact us directly, individuals who bring us to a new level of understanding, even when we think that we know it all. Such a person for me was Jaqueline Berke, who died in June 2017 at the age of 94. I have been reflecting on her importance in my life ever since.

Jackie was born and raised in New York City, and came to New Jersey as a wife and mother. She got a Bachelor's degree from New York University, a Master's degree in Journalism from Columbia, and a Master's in English from Rutgers. She is the author of a popular rhetoric textbook, *Twenty Questions for the Writer*, and the editor of the book, *Moments in Time: a Collage of Holocaust Memories*, published by the Holocaust and Genocide Study Center.

Shortly after retiring as a full-time professor of English at Drew University in 1992, Jackie turned around at the age of 70 and returned to teaching as Professor Emerita. She then founded the Holocaust and Genocide Study Center at Drew University in 1993, serving at first as the Director, then as the Co-director with Professor Ann Saltzman for many years, and finally, near the age of 90, as the Director Emerita.

The Center's programming had a similar balance, if I can use that word, in its subject matter, and one of the most moving programs was about Janusz Korczak. I had already known the story of Korczak, and as many do, I had focused on his and his staff's and children's heartbreaking and heroic deaths. Through the program at the Drew University's Center, I began to realize that Korczak's life was the miracle, his astounding wisdom and sacrifice and joy in children the very important part of the story that for many is known only in small portions.

In honor of Jackie, I have made a contribution to the Drew University's Center for Holocaust and Genocide Study, but I am also making a contribution to The Janusz Korczak Association of the USA (JKA-USA). My contribution to the Korczak Association is in a particular form, that is, in memberships! Organizations (like Drew's Center) and individuals—for me, as many as fifteen—will receive a one-year gift membership to the JKA-USA. In this way, Jackie is honored in her own Center and in the name of Korczak, and organizations and individuals will be introduced to the work of someone whose respect for students and pursuit of excellence mirrored Jackie's own ideals.

I invite you all to consider honoring a friend and gifting a membership as a way of introduction to this most powerful story and individuality who is and was Janusz Korczak.

Joyce Reilly is a therapist, Holocaust/Genocide activist, and the current President of Janusz Korczak Association of the USA. She can be reached at: joycereilly@aol.com.



Jackie Berke
(Source: Drew University)



AND WE REMEMBER THEM...

In the Footsteps of Janusz Korczak by Ewa Lukowicz-Oniszcuk

October 19, 2017, was the 30th anniversary of Igor Newerly's death, and it was marked with an interesting article in the daily Polish paper, *Gazeta Wyborcza*.

Igor Newerly is one of those names worth remembering when talking about Janusz Korczak, Orphanage (Dom Sierot), and the *Little Review* (*Mały Przegląd*). Newerly, also known as Jerzy Abramow, was a secretary of Janusz Korczak, the editor of the *Little Review*, and a friend and associate of the Old Doctor until the very end of the latter in 1942.

What is amazing about the personalities like Korczak is that they (through their action and works) influence people so many years after their death in almost the same way they used to do when they lived and worked.

One of those people who met Korczak and got marked by him for life was Igor Newerly. As Newerly's biographer writes: "In a sense, Newerly was destined to follow in Korczak's footsteps. Their meeting at Krochmalna Street was a continuation of an attitude of response to harm and injustice towards defenseless, which was instilled in Igor by his mother. The spirit of Janusz Korczak that teaches how to perceive a human aspect, humanity, in others, accompanied Igor Newerly until the end." His life was rich and dramatic, as is true for many Europeans whose life was stretched between events that profoundly marked the 20th century: Russian-Japanese War, October Revolution 1917, World War I, World War II.

He was molded as a man and became a writer through his meeting of Korczak, cooperating with him as his secretary (from 1926), and being the editor of the *Little Review* (1932-1939). Newerly was one of Korczak's friends who tried to save the Old Doctor's life; in the end, he managed to save only the Korczak's diary, written in the Warsaw Ghetto. A tree has been planted in Yad Vashem for Newerly, the Righteous Among the Nations, for helping his Jewish colleagues from *Little Review*.

Arrested in 1943 by the German Gestapo and temporarily confined in the Pawiak prison in Warsaw, Newerly spent the rest of the war in four Nazi concentration camps: Majdanek, Auschwitz, Oranienburg, and Bergen Belsen, where he was finally liberated.

He is known for many great books, translated into other languages, two of them devoted directly to Janusz Korczak (only in Polish: *Zywe wiazania* and *Rozmowa w sadzie 5 Sierpnia*). Whatever caught his attention as an author – whether it was the life of a young rebel in exile in Siberia, or his memoir of an inmate at Majdanek – **Newerly's works were touched by Korczak's empathy and love for a human being.**

His life was rich and full of extreme experiences, not only because half of his amazing life took place during the wartime, but also because he was unable to live superficially or untruthfully, and unable to remain silent when injustice was taking place. Several times in his life Newerly acted against the governing power and supported the victims of blatant injustice.

Before he wrote his first book (at the age of forty), he was a carpenter, canoeist, hunter, teacher, glazier, director of a plant, sociologist, stenographer, editor. And such were heroes of his novels: strong and able to dream and even die for their dream. **In his life and in his writing, what mattered was: love, truth, and professionalism coming from knowledge and experience.**

Please note: Due to the space limitations, we are not able to provide many references mentioned by the author, but will be happy to share them with you via email upon request.

Ewa Lukowicz-Oniszcuk served as the Vice Consul at the Polish Consulate in NYC from 2011 to 2013. She was instrumental in organizing the Year of the Korczak celebration in New York in 2012. Over the years, she has provided many valuable insights about Korczak to the Korczak Association of the USA. Currently she lives in Warsaw, and works for the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She is also a member of the Polish Korczak Association. She can be reached at ewa.lukowicz9@gmail.com.



Igor Newerly
(Source: Wikimedia Commons)



Yad Vashem – The World Holocaust Remembrance Center has 4,850 entries in their archives related to Janusz Korczak. Recently they added the Middle School curriculum for teachers, including the unit on Janusz Korczak and his right hand, Stefania Wilczynska (Stefa). The material is comprised of four parts. The first two are short biographies of Korczak and Stefa; the third part presents the central values in Korczak's educational ideas, and the way he and Stefa implemented them in the orphanage; the fourth part are suggested lesson plans for teachers.

[Click here or on the logo above to learn more.](#)

Please pass this information to any teachers you know. They may be able to use it in their classrooms.



The Janusz Korczak Chanukia (Korczak and I) by Irving Roth

My acquaintance with Janusz Korczak started more than five decades ago. It was not his role during the Shoah, but as an educational innovator that I was exposed to. While education was neither my carrier nor background, it was my good fortune to be married to an expert and practitioner of Early Childhood Education, and so I absorbed ideas and philosophies on how to deal and speak with children and their parents. My wife Addie spent her whole life in dealing with issues relating to young children; first as a teacher, and then as the director of the nursery school at Temple Beth Sholom for over 30 years. As her husband, I was involved in many aspects of her carrier: from buying and installing nursery school equipment to attending lectures by Addie and other experts in the field. Educators like John Dewey, Chaim Ganat, John Kilpatrick, Piaget, Janusz Korczak, Montessori, and others became part of my vocabulary.

I always found Korczak's ideas on children most interesting and warm. But I did not know about his greatness and heroism until I attended a lecture by Betty Jean Lifton, the author of *King of Children: A Biography of Janusz Korczak*. Through that lecture I acquired a new appreciation for who he was and his humanity. He was not just an extraordinary educational philosopher and innovator, but a hands-on practitioner, writer, pediatrician, and speaker on the life of a child. Korczak devoted his whole life to caring for orphans, and neglected and abused children. He established two Children's Homes in Warsaw where the children had an opportunity to determine the ethical and moral standards of behavior. He literally sacrificed his life so that 193 children in his care would not be frightened while in a cattle car on the way to the Treblinka death camp. He was gassed with them.

My most visceral feeling for Korczak came twice: once during a visit to "Yad Leyeled", the children's museum at the Ghetto Fighters Museum in Naharia, Israel, where half of the exhibits are devoted to Korczak, and subsequently, when I was standing in the Korczak orphanage in Warsaw. It was at these two moments that I promised myself that his life must become part of every Holocaust education, which was lacking on the North American continent. The opportunity came in the fall of 1998.

I had the good fortune to be offered the directorship of the Holocaust Resource Center of Temple Judea of Manhasset. Along came two issues that I needed to address: what educational exhibits should occupy the Holocaust Exhibit Space; and what should be done with the reflecting pool, which was invaded by hundreds, if not thousands, of geese from all over Long Island.

The answer to the first issue was easy. We will have a section on Korczak with posters, paintings, and a slide presentation on the life and death of Korczak and his children.

The solution to the second issue became clear soon: The reflecting pool should be converted to a sculpture garden. The idea came to me that the most appropriate and fitting way to honor the man, I so admired, and the last time he and his children marched from their home in the Warsaw Ghetto to the cattle car, would be the sculpture. The "Last March of Janusz Korczak and His Children" was born. The concept was enthusiastically accepted and fully supported by the clergy and all members of the Holocaust Committee. Then I had to get the finances and the design. I presented the idea to Mr. Fred Gould who was so taken by the story of Korczak that the finances became a non-issue.

The transformation of the sculpture garden's concept to the design was a collaboration between me and Steve Pagiavles, my friend and art teacher. The twenty feet by seven feet sculpture was fabricated by a steel cutting facility and painted by a new process, called "Powder Coating". The Sculpture Garden with the Janusz Korczak sculpture has graced the front of the Holocaust Resource Center for almost two decades. It has been seen and talked about by tens of thousands of people.

About one year ago, Risa Borsykowsky joined as a volunteer at the Holocaust Resource Center. Risa's husband, Michael, admired the Korczak sculpture and suggested that a scaled-down version of the sculpture could form the basis for an unusual Chanukia. I thought this would be an excellent way to propagate the Janusz Korczak legacy to the Jewish public. Risa created over 15 designs. We chose two, which were then made by the Gary Rosenthal's company. The response has been very positive. From September to the end of December 2017, 115 Korczak Chanukias were bought by people from all over the world.

[Click here or on the image above to read more about the sculpture and Chanukia.](#)

Irving Roth is a Holocaust survivor, the director of the Holocaust Resource Center at Temple Judea in Manhasset, Long Island, NY, and the member of the Advisory Board of the Janusz Korczak Association of the USA. He can be reached at irving.roth1@verizon.net.





Children's Rights Discovery Trail at the Harriman Outdoor Center in Haverstraw, NY, got approval from Appalachian Mountain Club for day visits from schools and camps. Students will be able to use the orienteering brochure and map to walk the 2.1 miles long trail, and learn about the human and children's rights while discovering beauty of nature around the Breakneck Pond.

If you have groups of children and would like to bring them to the Harriman Center, please call (617) 523-0636 ext. 6522, to arrange a visit. Children need to be supervised in order to walk the trail, and nobody is allowed to use the camp facilities, except the trail, unless staying overnight.

[Click here or on the image to view a larger map.](#)

Marcia Talmage Schneider, the author of the book *Janusz Korczak: A Sculptor of Children's Souls*, finds people who are eager to learn about Korczak wherever she goes. Last December, she invited her whole exercise class from the Manhattan Jewish Community Center. There were 25 women present, all of them retired, some were teachers, social workers, and an economist who worked for the UN. This woman was especially interested when Marcia mentioned the UN Convention on Children's Rights. Marcia now includes a PowerPoint presentation, and they huddled around the computer to view the pictures. There was an intense sense of listening and a hush in the room: all eyes watching and ears keenly listening. Almost everyone purchased a copy of the book to read further about Korczak's innovative methods. One of the teachers bought several copies for her family: one sister is an educator and her brother is a filmmaker. Who knows perhaps he will find inspiration and will decide to make a film... Not a bad idea.

The feedback from her talk was superb. One woman told her that she couldn't wait to get home to tell her husband, and afterwards, he was most eager to read the book. Could Marcia ask for more? Her message to all of us: "Let's be strong and carry on!"



Fundraising for the 2018 Korczak-Inspired Conference in Seattle, WA

Giving Tuesday is a global initiative in response to the excessive consumerism of Black Friday and Cyber Monday. **Giving Tuesday** encourages each of us to dedicate some of the funds we might have spent on acquisitions, and instead donate to a nonprofit organization. At the end of 2017, Mariola sent an appeal to members and supporters of the Korczak USA Association asking them to support our efforts. We wish to see many educators and parents at the Seattle conference, and we want to be able to bring Korczak's ideas and projects from around the world to them. Money is needed to cover expenses for presenters coming from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and other countries. Master Puppeteer Brian Hull and three of his assistants are planning to bring his puppet show for a 60-minute performance of *Kaytek the Wizard*. There is also a possibility to bring the Korczak's play *10 Matchboxes*, both in Polish and English. All these possibilities need financial support.

From Giving Tuesday, November 28, 2017, through the end of 2017, generous donors contributed \$2350 to our conference fund. In the next four months, we need to raise at least \$9700 to cover just the travel expenses for a few people we mentioned above.

A heartfelt thank you to all of you who have already sent your donations. If you haven't done so yet, please do it today to help us continue our work. You can either use the DONATE button on our website at korczakusa.com, or send us a check with the form at the end of this newsletter.

We invite you to join us in spreading the Korczak's light throughout the country, and creating the world, where all children have a childhood similar to the one provided in our own families, and where love, kindness, compassion, and peace prevail.





JANUSZ KORCZAK ASSOCIATION OF THE USA

invites you to support our Association

Janusz Korczak (1878/9-1942), 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, 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 strive to bring Korczak's most important pedagogical writings to educators and parents, provide advanced courses for teachers based on his educational philosophy, establish Korczak's camp in the US, and support the US ratification of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – United States is the sole country in the world that did not ratify it.

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 Exhibit and lectures for parents and children
- ___ Korczak-inspired educational conference at the Seattle Pacific University in August 2018
- ___ Workshops and lectures for parents and educators on Korczak's pedagogy
- ___ Five Star Program® training for your school or organization

To stay in touch and to learn more about you, please fill out the form below:

Once we hear from you, we will send you 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. You will be kept abreast of latest US and international Korczak activities with a possibility to join in these activities with various groups and organizations.

.....

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, _____ Zip Code _____
Phone _____ Cell phone _____
email address _____

I am: () a student () an educator () a parent
() other (please describe) _____

You financial support is always greatly appreciated. Many schools, teachers and parents are not able to afford our services (including 2018 International Educational Conference in Seattle, WA), and therefore your contributions allow us to bring our work to them for free or at greatly reduced rates.

Suggested Donation:

Friend	_____ (\$15 - \$49)	Patron	_____ (\$100 - \$999)
Associate	_____ (\$50 - \$99)	Founder Circle	_____ (\$1000+)

Do we have your permission to list your name as a donor in our informational materials:

Yes ____ No ____

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

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