



JANUSZ KORCZAK ASSOCIATION OF THE USA

NEWSLETTER Winter 2018/2019

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.

DONATE

KORCZAK IN SEATTLE



The first American-based international Korczak conference, organized in cooperation with the Seattle Pacific University and the Honorary Polish Consul in Seattle Teresa Indelak Davis, and held on the SPU campus in August 2018, is over. It is time to analyze some of its results.

From the very start, we fully realized how much America was in need for the humanistic ideas and inspiration of Janusz Korczak, the author of the first Declaration of Children's Rights and the international champion for these rights. Initially, the plan was to introduce the Korczak's legacy to the broader educational community, to share innovative concepts and international practice-oriented projects, to exchange ways on their possible use, and to stimulate a caring and creative atmosphere among the participants.

This last objective was probably our best achievement! There were many beneficial factors, but I would especially emphasize the presence of a group of high school students who emphasized the perspective of a younger generation. Equally important was the quality of the keynote presentations and sessions, and the level of creativity of our evening gatherings, music and puppet show performances, and of course, wonderful people among the guests and the organizers.

On the whole, the conference participants represented a very diverse community with prominent academics (Darcia Narvaez, USA, and Alicia de Alba, Mexico), distinguished researchers (Sara Efrat Efron, USA, Ewa Jarosz, Poland, and Roza Valeeva, Russia), social pediatricians (Gilles Julien and Helene Trudel, Canada), children's rights advocates (Marek Michalak, Poland, Bernard Richard, Canada, and Patrick Dowd, USA), and numerous representatives of the Korczak associations from around the world. Overall, we had participants from twenty-two countries and every continent.

Among the highlights of the conference program were the panel discussions on protection of children's rights; engaging different faiths to make the world a better place for children and youth, led by Rabbi Weiner from Seattle, interactive workshops by Jonathan Levy (France), Colleen Bell and Susie Oppenheim (USA), Helma Brouwers, Alsu Nikonorova, Aliya Shakirova, and Alina Talmanova (Netherlands), and many more. The post conference workshop, designed specifically for practitioners, brought together twenty enthusiastic teachers and school administrators from Washington and British Columbia. All this gives us hope that Korczak's ideas have found a new home to flourish and grow throughout the United States.

What's next? We will continue to promote Korczak's legacy among school practitioners and SPU students, initiating new projects and seminars. The next opportunity is our Korczak Summer Institute 2019 at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC ([click here to visit their website for more information](#)).

Dr. Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady, Head of the Organizing Committee



WORTH KNOWING

Visit to the Polish School in South Hackensack, NJ – On November 10 (after the Columbia University Korczak Day, which was a day before), Marek Michalak (the Ombudsman of Children's Rights, Poland), Batia Gilad (the former Chair of the International Korczak Association), and Mariola Strahlberg, participated in the special celebration, commemorating the 100 years of independent Poland. Click here to see pictures and read more about Ombudsman Michalak's visit in Polish at www.dobrapolskaszkola.com.



All the presenters of the last year's conference **"The Rights of the Child Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow – the Korczak Perspective"** that took place at the **Polin Museum in Warsaw, Poland**, have received 3 volumes of selected papers.

Korczakowo – here we come. Plans are underway to send a group of middle and high school students from the U.S. to the Korczakowo Camp in Poland in July 2019. If you know students and parents who would be interested in learning more about the trip, please contact us at info@korczakusa.com.

Enrichment Program News: After the unsuccessful search for a place to continue our Korczak-inspired Enrichment Program for the East Ramapo children, we decided that it was time to let go of the wonderful books, puzzles, art supplies, games, used with the children and their parents over the past few years. The recipients of these materials are: Lakota Waldorf School at the Pine Ridge Reservation in Kyle, South Dakota, Boys and Girls Club in Paterson, New Jersey, and Margetts Elementary School in Chestnut Ridge, New York.

Why Puppet Performance and Workshop at the Conference in Seattle?

In the summer of 2018, the Seattle Pacific University was the setting for a long-prepared conference of followers of Janusz Korczak from all over the world. Fitting to its setting at a University, a large majority of more than one hundred presentations was of the highest academic standard, and we learned and shared a lot. Keeping in the spirit of Janusz Korczak, not all our learning came through our intellect, but fun and the arts prevailed as well!

Right in the middle of the conference days was an evening of wonder, artistry, and delight. BriAnimations, a puppetry group from Nashville, Tennessee, the only such troupe actually employed by a city's library system to work with children and puppets throughout the year, made the trip all the way to Seattle in a "Puppet Bus", and put on **"Kaytek the Wizard"**, an original adaptation in rod puppetry, animation, and beautiful antique photographs of Warsaw, projected onto a screen, with music written just for this production. We followed Kaytek through his fantastical adventures, and were warmed by the appearance of his family characters, as well as his amazing and imaginative adventures. This story, written by Korczak and discovered by Brian Hull at the Nashville library—he thought it might be a Harry Potter knock-off, until he began to read and to know the life of Dr. Korczak!—was beautifully told with sensitive rod puppets, created just for this production. The audience of over one hundred leapt to their feet for a very long ovation at the end, and then swarmed the four puppeteers to meet them, and the puppets themselves! What a wonderful way to celebrate the whole person and the whole child.

Several of the offerings during the workshops also spoke to the imaginative and artistic, including a wonderful example of using fairy tales to warm and accompany young women in their teens who find themselves alone in the world and living on the streets, and included creating a doll out of fabric that they could use as a talisman to keep them safe and confident. My own workshop explored the art of storytelling as well as story-creation, which we as grown-ups often feel we must leave to the professionals. We all have a capacity for telling stories! In particular, we looked at creating protective stories, and making a simple doll or table puppet out of wool roving to help to animate the story. We practiced the dyadic communication, and found a way to change our clothing or shoes to signal a new space of listening. As one of the participants commented, shades of Mister Rogers!

Joyce Reilly, President of the Janusz Korczak Association of the USA



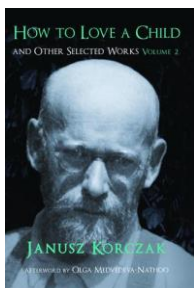
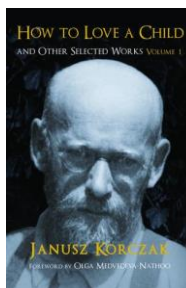
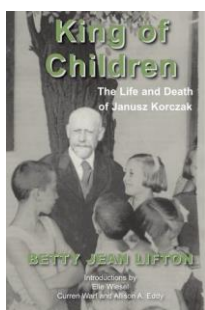
Click on the image above to see a short excerpt from the puppet show.

NEWS FROM CANADA

The Ontario Government has closed the **Ontario Child Advocate** (OCA) office in November 2018. The Ontario Child Advocate, Irwin Elman (whom we met at the Seattle Conference) and his team, lead numerous initiatives advocating and investigating on behalf of children and youth, guided by the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. The OCA gave voice to children and youth, including the First Nations children and those with special needs, by building understanding and communication between children and their families and service providers. The Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care called on the Ontario Government to reverse this decision. For more information, visit www.oacyc.org.



Thanks to the Janusz Korczak Association of Canada, two newly translated volumes of *Korczak's How to Love a Child and Other Selected Works, Volume 1* and *Volume 2*, and the newly republished *The King of Children* are available from the Valentine Mitchell's U.S. distributor IPG in Chicago. To order, click on the links above or on the images below.



Janusz Korczak: Legacy, Pedagogy, Children Rights Columbia University, NYC, November 9, 2018



From left to right: Dr. Christopher Caes (NYC), Prof. Sara Efrat Efron (Chicago), Anna Domanska (NYC), Honorable Dr. Marta Santos Pais (NYC), Honorable Marek Michalak (Poland), Batia Gilad (Israel), Prof. Ewa Jarosz (Poland), Rev. Kristin Poppo (NY), Mariola Strahlberg (NY), Marcia Talmage Schneider (NYC), Dr. Sergei Mikhelson (NYC), Dr. Mikhail Epstein (NYC)

A conference devoted to the life and work of Janusz Korczak took place on November 9, 2018, at Columbia University's Harriman Institute in New York City. The conference was organized by the Harriman Institute, Polish Cultural Institute, and Janusz Korczak Association of the USA. The purpose of the day-long presentations and conversations was to introduce Korczak's work as a living body of pedagogical theory and practice before researchers, educators, and university students from Columbia University and various sister organizations.

The packed day was structured around three panels, was opened with an introductory keynote address, and ended with a roundtable discussion. An exhibit "Janusz Korczak – Educational Moments", as well as a display of Korczak's books and children's work was open to the visitors during the conference.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Mara Santos Pais, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, presented a passionate call for the elimination of physical and emotional violence acts against children throughout the world.

The first panel included Batia Gilad, the former Chair of the International Korczak Association, who described the life of the orphans in the Korczak's institution. In her presentation, Ms. Gilad emphasized that it was Stefa Wilczynska who transformed Korczak's ideas and theoretical vision into actual day-to-day practices. Marcia Talmage Schneider touched the audience's heart with her vivid stories about meetings she had with the former students and teachers in Israel. In these meeting, those former students and teachers, now in their 60s, 70s, and 80s, shared their memories of Korczak and his orphanage. (More elaborated stories can be found in her book *Janusz Korczak: Sculpture of Children's Souls*.)

Dr. Mikhail Epstein discussed Korczak's distinct personality traits that, at times, may seem to an outsider as conflicting each other. In reality, though, the speaker asserted, the various facets of his character contributed to the richness of his tolerance, acceptance of diversity, and unique moral fiber. Dr. Epstein made a comparison between Korczak's life and the multicultural approach to education.

The second panel began with the presentation by Dr. Benjamin Paloff, a poet, a translator, and a director of a graduate program at the University of Michigan. The conference coincided with the publication of two volumes of the selection of Korczak's writings, translated by Dr. Paloff and few other translators. Dr. Paloff shared the challenges he had faced as he was translating Korczak's unique language, and his authentic and poetic style into contemporary English.

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Professor Sara Efrat Efron talked about the implications of Korczak's innovative methods and strategies for current classroom teachers. She emphasized that from her perspective, Korczak should not be solely studied as a historical figure, but the highlight should rather be on his far-sight ideas and practice. In her presentation, Kristin Poppo, the Provost of Alfred State College, shared how Korczak's moral framework continuously influences her dedication and her actions toward developing exceptional and pragmatic education for underserved populations.

The third and final panel of the day focused on Korczak's dedication to children rights. Marek Michalak, the Polish Ombudsman for Children Rights and the current Chair of the International Korczak Association, discussed the influence of Korczak's humanistic approach on the struggle for children rights at this particular international tense environment. Professor Eva Jarosz reflected on how Janusz Korczak's ideas and practice are echoed in the current methods that aim toward encouraging students' autonomy and democratic participation in constructing their educational settings. Mariola Strahlberg, the founder and executive director of the Janusz Korczak Association of the USA, shared with us how she implements Korczak's strategies in the classrooms and in her private practice at the Shining Mountain Center for Peaceful Childhood.

The conference ended with a thought provoking round table discussion among the conference presenters. They shared how Korczak influenced their own practice and reflected on ways to spread Korczak's views, pedagogy, and practice among researchers, theoreticians, and educational practitioners. During the rich and insightful conversation, creative ideas were raised on finding opportunities to present Korczak's efforts of improving the educational experience and social and emotional development of children today. It was a rich and productive conversation full of creative ideas that inspired all the participants to expand our efforts to make Korczak's strategies, approach, and legacy an integral part of teachers' training and professional development workshops, as well as a model for enhancing children rights and welfare throughout the world.

Professor Sara Efrat Efron, National Louis University, Board member of the Janusz Korczak Association of the USA

[Click here to see the event's agenda at the Harriman Institute's website;](#)
the report from Danusia Swiatek is available in Polish on the Polish blog at www.dobrapolskaszkola.com.

Janusz Korczak Association of the USA is grateful to Dr. Christopher Caes from the Columbia University's Harriman Institute, Anna Domanska from Polish Cultural Institute, and all the presenters for making this event a reality.

Rev. Kristin Poppo visits Irving Roth at the Holocaust Center in Manhasset, Long Island, NY

Over the years, I've had many opportunities to visit Holocaust museums and memorials. In each case, I would leave devastated as I was reminded of the hatred and inhumanity that invades a culture allowing genocide. As I drove to Temple Judea with my mom to visit Irving Roth, I prepared myself once gain for the pain and sorrow that often overwhelms me when I'm confronted with history's darkest moments.



The visit surprised me. I knew that I would encounter an exhibit, which shared the incredible life of Janusz Korczak who dedicated himself to the lives of children. Yet, another entire wall of the exhibit was dedicated to the dozens of individuals who put themselves at great personal risk, including those who did not survive, in order to save Jews during the Holocaust. Next to the painting depicted in this newsletter, there was a binder sharing the incredible acts of bravery of those who were the best examples of humanity seeing the divine light in all of us regardless of our beliefs.

The highlight of my visit, however, was listening to Irving talk to students. He used his time, not to lament the past, but to encourage them to build a better future.

At a time when many of us question the future, he gave them agency to build the world of care and inclusion, which results in justice. He shared how each young person can profoundly impact the lives of others. The students listened attentively, and after he had finished, they gathered around him to learn more.

Later, as we ate hot pastrami sandwiches at a local deli, I, too, was able to be moved by Irving's stories. He told me of his late wife, who taught early childhood education, and how the teaching that "hands are not for hitting" is the foundation message to building a better world. He told me about the nurse who saved his father and then hid his parents in Budapest. He told me of the travelling he does around the world to prevent future holocausts. I was reminded of the power of one person to change the world. Irving is one of these people, and I'm thankful for the opportunity to know him.

Dr. Kristin Poppo is the Provost at the Alfred State College of Technology in Alfred, NY
Irving Roth is the director of the [Temple Judea Holocaust Center](#) in Manhasset, Long Island, NY



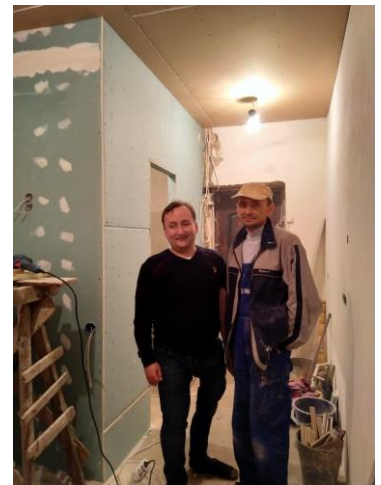
Report by Bogdan Bashtovy (Founder and Director of the Support Center in Kiev, Ukraine)

The Kiev Children and Youth Support Center is a non-profit organization that was created in 2004 by teachers and former residents of the Kiev Orphanage No. 12, an orphanage for mentally challenged children aged 7 through 16. The initial goal of the organization was to help former residents of the Orphanage No.12 transition to independent living: help them find a place to live, enroll into a trade school, find employment, get access to medical services, and so on. As years went by, the scope of the organization's activities and the geography of its projects have been growing rapidly.

Today, the Support Center is helping former residents of orphanages for mentally and physically handicapped children from all over Ukraine. Orphans are not mere recipients of the Support Center's help but are also those who provide help to others. For example, a young person who got a job thanks to the Support Center's assistance helps other orphans get jobs at his or her company. Those who were helped with housing give temporary shelter to those who need it in crisis situations. Former orphanage residents who have small children act as mentors to young people who are getting ready to become parents. Teaching orphans to give and not only to receive is an important part of the Support Center's work.

The biggest issues for most orphanage graduates in Ukraine, just like for most Ukrainians in general, is finding affordable housing and getting quality medical services. The Support Center actively cooperates with local authorities in Ukraine to renovate old housing so that former residents of special needs orphanages could live there. The August donation from the Janusz Korczak Association of the USA was used to help with such project. Victor Bulka grew up in an orphanage for severely physically handicapped children in Kherson Oblast. For many years, he lived with his friends because he couldn't afford renting a place of his own. In 2018, the city government of Kherson offered Victor a small room in a dormitory-type residence building. However, the place needed major renovations before Victor could move in. Thanks to donation from Korczak USA donation, Victor will be able to move into his newly renovated room before Christmas 2018!

Note: The generous donation was sent to Kiev thanks to the anonymous Korczak USA donor who earmarked the donation specifically for Ukraine.



**Your contributions matter:
We can't do it without your support.**

Please donate your ideas, volunteer, and send your donations.

We started the year 2019 with two special donations:

- From Ronnie Eisen in honor of Harvey Daniels, Rabbi and educator, who loved children and volunteered in our Korczak-inspired Enrichment Program. Harvey crossed the threshold in December 2018 and will be greatly missed.
- From Debra DeEntremont in honor of Dayna and Olivia, my two granddaughters, and all the children in the world.



Picture of the robot that Harvey built
and brought to the kids at the Enrichment Program



Children during Final Celebration
at the Korczak-inspired Enrichment Center



**How I met Janusz Korczak:
My Trip to Yad Vashem by Deb Smith**

“Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are people of today. They have the right to be taken seriously, and to be treated with tenderness and respect. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be. 'The unknown person' inside of them is our hope for the future.” — Janusz Korczak

During my graduate work in Holocaust and Genocide Studies, I was introduced to Janusz Korczak. I had never heard of him before that. Instantly, I wanted to know everything about his life and his teachings. He became my own personal hero of the Holocaust, the example of the best kind of teacher and human being.

In 2016, I was fortunate to travel with the HAJRTP (Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Teacher Program) to Poland and see the Korczak Memorial in Warsaw. This memorial features Korczak holding a small child in his arms while several children follow behind him. The faces of the children are sad and Korczak has a serious, yet strong expression. The memorial shows Korczak as the leader of the children. My next stop was Treblinka. The site of jagged rocks jutting out of the ground with a huge tombstone in the middle seemed fitting. I was standing in a cemetery, a place that murdered 800,000 Jews during the Holocaust. The stones contain the names of a villages effected by the Holocaust. One stone stands out because it has a name on it: Janusz Korczak. Korczak is the only name that appears at the Treblinka Memorial.

Recently, I attended the 10th Annual International Holocaust Conference at Yad Vashem. The first thing I needed to see was the Korczak memorial.

As I stood and looked at it, tears immediately came to my eyes. The children looked sad, as if they knew the fate that awaited them. Korczak had the look of strength, but there was sadness in his face. His hand was around the children, trying to protect them, but he couldn't. They were all murdered. An entire generation gone... forever.

Deb Smith teaches in public schools in Hanover, NJ, both middle and high school students. Her middle school students performed 2 plays: Korczak by Kentof and Korczak's Children by Hatcher. Her high school students study Korczak's biography and his philosophy on children.





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 conferences

___ 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, and therefore your contributions allow us to bring our work to them for free or at greatly reduced rates.

Suggested Donations:

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 _____

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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