

Ayanna Watson

318-564-2367

Seventh Grade

Ms. Sargent – 318-364-1910

Turner Elementary/Middle School

Irena Sendler

You walk past a nurse, rosy cheeked and bright eyed. You pay her no mind, perhaps you wave. But, in that gunny sack she's carrying, or perhaps a toolbox, or maybe even a wheelbarrow full of potatoes, is a scared small child. A Jewish child.

Irena Sendler was born in Warsaw, Poland on February 15, 1910. However, Otwock, Poland soon became her home. Only 29 years old, Sendler was a social worker who helped give food, clothing, and medicine to those bound behind the walls of the Ghetto. Taking much inspiration from her father, Dr. Stanislaw Krzyzanowski who helped many ill and poor Jews dying of disease, Sendler helped many Jewish children escape death and torture (Horan 1).

Sendler saved more than 2,500 Jewish children in the small span of only eighteen months. Soon she was the head of the Children's Department in Zegota, a board to help Jews in occupied Poland. Using her position as a social worker to her advantage, Sendler would enter the Ghetto to look for contagious disease, but instead smuggle small children in gunny sacks, toolboxes, and sometimes even using an ambulance to hide them. Once finally free on the other side, Sendler would take the children to the Poitrowski family (her friends) to eat, dress and rest (Kroll 1).

It was in the Poitrowski's backyard that Irena Sendler hid all the names of those she saved to eventually reunite them with their families. Her heroism came with great sacrifice and tears. On October 20, 1943 an informer told of Sendler's secrets and her loyalty to Zegota. She was mercilessly beaten and tortured for many days with no end in sight. The day of her execution a Gestapo officer whipped her many times before finally leading her outside of her Powaik prison. After hearing of her capture Zegota members miraculously bribed a guard and they soon found and rescued her as she had done for many others (Rajcher 1).

“My parents taught me that if a man is drowning, it is irrelevant what is his religion or nationality. One must help him.”

~Irena Sendler~

Work Cited

Horan, Rabbi G. "Irena's Children," Aish.com, 18 February 2019.

Kroll, Chana. "Irena Sendler Rescuer of the Children of Warsaw." TheJewishWoman.org. 12 February 2019.

Rajcher, Andrew. "Irena Sendler" Sprawiedliwi.org.pl.