

Group to Document 1,000 Lives

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By Marilyn Silverstein - Jewish Exponent Staff

Glimmers of memory remain with Suzanne Sobe of Philadelphia the faces of her parents, her feelings of distress, the German passport in her pocket stamped with a swastika and the date: 1939. "Bits and pieces I remember. I was very young then," says the 72-year-old Sobe, a native of Vienna. "My parents put me on the train. I couldn't understand it, why I had to leave them." Sobe later learned that her parents had perished in Auschwitz. "This is one thing I do remember: I missed them," she says. "I still do, even at my age. I still remember them."

Kurt Herman of Philadelphia remembers, too waving farewell to his mother at the train station in Vienna in 1939, when he was 9. "My mother took me to the train and said goodbye," recalls the 71-year-old Herman, who was one of 50 children who left Nazi-occupied Vienna that day under the auspices of Brith Sholom. "Believe it or not, the Nazis wanted to make propaganda and didn't want any crying or carrying on at the train station," he says. "So we just waved and did the best we could. After the train pulled out, I did my little bit of crying and then went on." Later, Herman was reunited with his parents in Allentown. But he never forgets that day at the train station. "Do I think about it? All the time," he says. "The main thought I had was how lucky I was how lucky to get on the train to come to this country and make a life."

Sobe, a retired clerical worker, and Herman, who served as director of finance for the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia from 1974 to 1983, are two of the child survivors who, in the words of social scientist Iris Posner, "were part of one of the most triumphant and tragic stories of the 20th century the rescue and placement in foster homes and other facilities across America of approximately 1,000 unaccompanied Jewish children while a generation of 1.5 million children perished in the Holocaust."

Posner, who is based in Silver Spring, Md., began uncovering that story last year, after seeing the Oscar-winning documentary film "Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport" about the transport of some 10,000 Jewish children to Britain. The film moved her to ask a question: Had any such children found such

a haven in the United States? The answer, she discovered, was yes: Between 1934 and 1945, in an effort funded by private individuals and Jewish and other organizations, some 1,154 European Jewish children, ages 1 to 16, were rescued and brought to this country. Hoping to document the experiences of those children, Posner founded One Thousand Children Inc. with another researcher, Lenore Moskowitz. To date, the women have made contact with about 250 of the survivors, most of them in their 70s and 80s, about a dozen of them in the Greater Philadelphia area, according to Posner. "Our ultimate goal is to redress this hole in the American historical record," says Posner. "Every one of these children is proof that Hitler didn't succeed." Learn more at: [www.onethousandchildren.org](http://www.onethousandchildren.org). You may contact Marilyn Silverstein via Email: [msilverstein@jewishexponent.com](mailto:msilverstein@jewishexponent.com)

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