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**<< CLASS ACT (Continued):** The article described a half dozen people who'd also saved Jews, but never been recognized. One name jumped out: *"Irena Sendlerowa. Social Worker. Smuggled more than 2,500 children to safety from the Warsaw Ghetto. To preserve their names, she wrote them on sheets of paper and buried them in jars out in her garden."*

We looked at each other. Twenty-five hundred? That was a thousand more than Oskar Schindler had saved. I tried to picture this woman, the children she'd rescued. How had she gotten them out of the ghetto? Why had she risked her life? "I doubt anyone's ever heard of her," Elizabeth said. "She probably died in obscurity. This is going to be a great project."

But our excitement quickly dimmed. Irena was unknown for a reason. There was no information about her. We combed through books, newspapers, the internet, even went to the Midwest Center for Holocaust Education in Kansas City. Nothing. There was a brief mention on the website of an organization called *The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous*. But when we wrote to them, their reply was vague.

One afternoon we were working on computers in Mr. Conard's room when Elizabeth suddenly sat back. "You guys!" she cried. "It's an e-mail from *The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous*." We rushed over.

"Dear Ms. Cambers," the e-mail read, and went on to apologize for taking so long to respond. The next sentence leapt out at us. "If you wish more information about Irena Sendlerowa, we recommend you contact her directly. She is currently 90 years old, living in a small apartment in Warsaw." Irena was alive! We immediately wrote a letter, explaining who we were and enclosing our play, pictures of us and three dollars for return postage. Would she get it? Could she read English? Would she respond?

I needed her to respond. Irena had become one of the few happy things I had to talk about at home, where Mom was sick and Dad worked late getting all the farm chores done. Irena was becoming a beacon for me that needed to stay lit.

A few weeks later a note came to my English class instructing me to report to Mr. Conard's room. I got there and saw him with Elizabeth, Sabrina and Jessica - holding a letter with a Polish postmark. "Is it...?" I asked. "It is," said Elizabeth. We gazed at the envelope, festooned with heart-shaped stickers and addressed in old-fashioned, looping handwriting. We tore it open and ... it was written in Polish. We looked despairingly at Mr. Conard. "We'll find a translator at the University of Kansas," he said. We faxed the translator the letter and, page by page, it came back to us. We tore the first sheet out of the fax machine.

**SEE CLASS ACT ##**