

Unsung Hero

Life in a Jar is a book, performance, and real life story about Irena Sendler. This “Holocaust hero” saved over two thousand Jewish children and adults from the Warsaw Ghetto. This historical performance was held at Pensacola State College on April 1st and 2nd.

In 1999, three Kansas high school students, Megan Felt, Liz Cambers and Sabrina Coons were assigned a history project. They found Sendler’s story and reached out to her. They were shocked to find her still alive, at age 89. She gave them more information about her journey, so they could shine a light on her story. Now they are performing in cities and countries all over the world.

The *Life in a Jar* cast: Addison Brown (Irena’s right hand—Marie), Megan Felt (Irena), Mary Fischer (Jewish child), Noah Fischer (Dr. Wos and the Nazi soldier), Erin Simons (Jewish mother—Mrs. Rosner) and Norm Conard, who does not have a role in the play but is the high school teacher of the girls and provides background information.



An event organizer, Rick Gordon calls the play, “A human story that we should all embrace.” In the play, Megan Felt plays Irene. Felt is one of the directors of the performance and an original cast member. The performance “Life in a Jar” is reference to the names of the



children she saved in a jar, in hopes that one day they would find their true identity and be reunited with their families.

In 1910, Irena was born in Poland. She was taught by her parents to respect and love all people. “If you see

someone drowning, you must try to rescue them, even if you cannot swim,” Sendler’s father told her.

The Warsaw Ghetto is an establishment that was created on October 12th, 1940. It was the Germans way of secluding Jews from the rest of society. The ghetto was confined by a 10 foot wall topped with barbed wire. 400,000 Jews were forced to live there and it held approximately 7.2 persons per room. The ghetto consisted of poor living conditions, small food rations, and high disease rates.



Sendler knew she had started a network and began estimated that she and her by using forging false



to help these people. She the rescue process. It is network saved 2,500 children identification documents.

In 1943, the Gestapo caught Sendler. Because she refuses to give up the names of the children, the Gestapo broke her legs and feet. She managed to escape and remained in hiding throughout the rest of the war. No one had heard of her story until these girls brought it to life. She received world-wide recognition once the “Life in a Jar” project was brought to Poland.

“Families that were not killed in Treblinka and were rescued were able to be reunited with their children,” says Megan Felt.

Felt, Cambers, Coon, Mr. Conrad and parents were all able to travel to Irena, who still resided in Warsaw, Poland. A Jewish businessman saw the performance and offered to raise money for them to meet her. At the time she was 91 and in poor health. In 2008 Irena passed away, but her legacy still lives on through the performance of “Life in a Jar,” the Hallmark movie *The Courageous Heart*, and the book Life in a Jar.



“We constantly get emails, calls, etcetera, saying could I possibly have been saved by Irena Sendler?” says Norm Conrad, teacher of Megan Felt. They have the lists of the children and some have been linked to the network led by this unsung hero.