

## 8. Raoul Wallenberg

### Suggested Web sites

- **Biographical timeline** — written by Paula Fraser's class  
[freewebs.com/wallenberg\\_fraser/home.htm](http://freewebs.com/wallenberg_fraser/home.htm)
- **International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation**  
[www.raoulwallenberg.net](http://www.raoulwallenberg.net)
- **The Raoul Wallenberg Institute**  
[www.rwi.lu.se/index.shtml](http://www.rwi.lu.se/index.shtml)
- **The Raoul Wallenberg Committee of the United States**  
[raoulwallenberg.org](http://raoulwallenberg.org)
- **Jewish Foundation for the Righteous** — Information and profiles of rescuers  
[www.jfr.org](http://www.jfr.org)
- **Yad Vashem** — Righteous Among the Nations  
[www1.yadvashem.org](http://www1.yadvashem.org)

### Activity: Lesson On Rescue

*(This activity can also be found online at [wsherc.org](http://wsherc.org). Click "Online Teaching and Learning Center" and then select "rescue.")*

### Objectives:

1. Make students aware that there was rescue during the Holocaust.
2. Have students learn about local and international rescuers.
3. Have students investigate and establish characteristics that the rescuers had in common.
4. Discuss and think critically about the difficulty of resistance and rescue under the Nazi regime.

### Materials:

- **Local Stories of Rescue** (a selection is provided here)
- **International Stories of Rescue** — please go to [jfr.org](http://jfr.org), click on "Stories of Moral Courage" and choose rescuers from various countries. Print out several stories/profiles.
- **Student Worksheet** (Provided here. Copy one per student.)
- **Characteristics of Rescue List** (Provided here. Copy one per student.)

# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

### Lesson:

1. Print out stories of local and international rescue.
2. Have students number off in groups. For this activity to work, you will need to have as many members in each group as group members. (For example: four groups, four members in each group). Have ones get together with all the other ones, etc.
3. Within each group, have the students become experts on their rescuer and tell them that they are going to present him/her to people in other groups. Have groups read and discuss important information they wish to tell the members of other groups about their rescuer.
4. When groups are finished sharing their information, tell the students to form new groups composed of at least one member of each of the groups. For example, there should be at least one member from Group 1, one from Group 2, one from Group 3, etc. per new group).
5. Have each member take a turn reporting to the group about about his/her assigned rescuer.
6. Once the rescuers are all discussed, have students answer the the questions on the **Student Worksheet** as a group, using the information they have read and heard about all the rescuers.
7. Have each group choose a representative to share its answers with the rest of the class.
8. As a class, go over the **Student Worksheet** and discuss each group's answers to them.
9. Go over the Characteristics of Rescue with the students. Discuss whether students agree or disagree with this assessment based on their own findings.

*\*\* Feel free to adapt this lesson to both your own teaching styles and needs and those of your students.*

### Student Worksheet — Rescue

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1. What were some forms of rescue mentioned in the articles?
2. What do you think are some of the characteristics of the rescuers you just read about?
3. Why do you think those who rescued others did what they did? (It may say so in the article, but if not, guess!)
4. From what you have learned throughout your Holocaust unit, what do you think the difficulty of rescue would be?
5. With so few known examples of rescue, why do you think it is so important to learn about these examples?

# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

### STUDENT HANDOUT

## Local Survivors' Stories of Rescue

### My Rescue Story

*I was 13 years old when Holland was occupied by the Germans. I lived in a small town called Zandvoort on the North Sea in Holland. I lived there with my parents, the Benedictics, Sarah Waas, and my brother Issac. In May 1942, all the Jews had to leave the town and go on a train to Amsterdam. We had to leave everything behind. We moved in with my father's sister who had room for us. I got a job working in a factory learning how to sew for the Germans. Shortly after, my parents and brother received a notice to report for a work camp. I didn't get a notice to report so my parents told me to stay behind. I never saw them again.*

*Shortly after my parents left, I was approached by my girlfriend, Rosa Cymbalist, who, to my surprise, worked for the Resistance. She found a place where I could go into hiding. I took my yellow star off and got a new identification with a new name, Helen Waasdorp. My girlfriend was my first rescuer. She was all of 15 years old. I will always remember her courage.*

*I was instructed to take the train to Haarlem. It was a ride I will always remember because someone called out my name and I was afraid I was discovered. I got quickly off the train at the next stop, waited for the next train, and re-boarded. When I got to Overveen, I was to meet a man at the church who would decide if he would take me in. This man was Mr. P.C. Van Westering, the local church organist. Because I did not "look" or "sound" Jewish, he accepted me. I do not remember how I got to my new home at Raamplan 54, but somehow I did. The Van Westering family had three children*

*and my duties involved taking care of them and cleaning the house. I was not allowed to leave the house. I ate alone and slept in a room in the attic. I was very lonely.*

*I will never fully understand why Mr. Van Westering rescued me. He, too, was in danger from the Germans, and needed to go into hiding from time to time himself. What I do know is that I do not have fond memories of my time in hiding. In fact, I could not wait to leave. Many social workers were involved because he claimed he was my foster father and wanted me to stay. He said I was a part of their family. I never felt a part of their family. I only worked there and was not included in conversation or meals. I still feel bad about remembering this time because even though I am grateful for being rescued, my feelings toward him are not good.*

*After much negotiation, arguments about money, and great difficulty in general, I left the Van Westering home. I ran away to the home of my aunt, uncle, and cousin in Amsterdam. The thought of being caught filled me with fear. I was afraid of Mr. Van Westering. Ultimately, I wanted to live with my grandfather TeKorte and the other family who escaped from Belgium and were now living in New York. There was nothing left for me in Holland. I wanted to start a new life.*

*I left for America in late June 1947. I came on an American cargo ship called the Madaket. There were only 13 passengers on the ship. I was sick the whole trip because the ship was so empty that it rolled around in the swells. Every night they brought a basket of oranges and apples and I couldn't eat a thing. I stayed upstairs because if I stayed in the cabin I would get sick. I arrived in*

# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

### STUDENT HANDOUT

*Hoboken, New Jersey in July 1947 after 10 seasick days on the Atlantic.*

*When I arrived, my uncle Sam TeKorte, aunt Judith, and cousin Hetty were there to greet me. We hugged and kissed and cried and were very happy to have found each other. A month after arriving, I met my husband Sam and we married the next May. I am still happily married and have three children, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.*

*Five years ago, I discovered the whereabouts of the Van Westering family. I learned that the Van Westerings divorced right after I left. Mr. Van Westering married two more times and died just a year before my son contacted the family. The first Mrs. Van Westering will not talk to us about that time.*

—Hester K.  
February 2002

*Hester K. is an active member of the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Speakers Bureau.*

### Klaas And Roefina Post

*From June of 1942 until March of 1945, Peter M., age 7, and his mother went into hiding with the help of the Dutch underground. The two lived in hiding for two years with Klaas and Roefina Post on their farm in Makkinga, Holland. After leaving the Posts, Peter and his mother lived with two women for six to eight months in an apartment in The Hague. Peter and his mother were the only survivors of his family. The following is Peter's account of living with the Posts, the two women, and his feelings regarding his rescuers. Peter now lives in Seattle, Washington and is a member of the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Speakers Bureau.*

*... The Posts treated us like family. My mother and I ate all of our meals with Klaas and Roefina and were also given chores to do around the farm. I remember helping him milk the cows and feed the chickens. Klaas was like a father to me, as I was without my father by then. He bounced me on his knee and I loved very much being his helper. I knew, even as a child, something was going on around me and it was not good. Besides doing some chores, we spent most of our days inside a barn, trying not to be seen. I could only play outside at night for a little bit, but only in an area where no one would be able to see me.*

*My mother and I slept together in a bed that was inside a closet. I remember lying in that bed trembling in fear at times. In the same room, Klaas had created a hiding place in the floor that we could hide in when Germans came to search the house. There was a handle on the inside of the floor boards so Mom could hold on to the handle making it difficult to be opened from the top.*

*After a while the searches became so frequent that we could no long stay in house. Klaas went out and dug a little cave in the side of a hill in the forest next to the farm for us to hide in. It was about 10 feet*

# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

### STUDENT HANDOUT

*deep and just wide enough for my mother and I lie in snugly. There was an overhang of branches that we could pull in front of us to keep us hidden.*

*When there was word of a search, my mother and I would run out into the forest and hide in the cave. Sometimes, It seemed like we were in there forever.*

*After a while, it was unsafe for us to be there because we were putting Klaas and Roefina at risk. I was very sad that I had to leave the farm as it had given me a sense of being a family again.*

*We were directed to an apartment in The Hague (by the Dutch Underground) where we lived with two women. By this time, it was 1944, and I was 9 years old. The women made my mother do chores. I remember thinking we were being treated like dogs. My mother had to clean and scrub the apartment, but at least we were given shelter. I never felt attached to these women and remember a lot less about my time living with them than with the Posts. It was a very cold experience for me. After living with them for about six to eight months, we found out that the women were going to turn us in so we left. We had come so far already ...*

*In 1992, I went back to Amsterdam. I wanted to try to find the Posts and the little farm we stayed on. I couldn't even remember the name of the little town where the farm was but I was determined. I went to the library, looked at a map of Holland and found the name of a town called Makkinga that sounded familiar. With only this name, we set out and found the farm, which no longer belonged to the Posts. We even found the cave that my mother and I hid in. I couldn't believe it was still intact. It was an*

*unbelievably emotional experience for me to see the farm and cave, and relive those times.*

*Since that visit, I could not put the Posts out of my mind. I finally managed to trace down the Posts' two daughters. They remembered my mother and I and sent photos of their parents as I requested. Both Klaas and Roefina had died at least 10 years ago. I have a very difficult time dealing with not having gone back sooner to hug and thank them for saving our lives. I will always have to live with this regret.*

*I am still in contact with one of the Posts' daughters and, after a two-year plight, Klaas and Roefina Post are recognized by Yad Vashem (the Holocaust Museum in Israel) as Righteous Among the Nations\*. The Posts' daughters and their family members attended a special ceremony in Rotterdam and received their parents/grandparents award and medal. Klaas and Roefina Post are also listed as rescuers on a plaque in Israel.*

*I once asked the Posts' daughter why she thinks her parents did what they did for us. She responded saying that her dad never gave it a second thought, and that he felt like it was the right thing to do.*

*I truly believed that my mother and I belonged to the fortunate ones who survived World War II because of the goodness of the Klaas and Roefina Post. I will forever be in debt to them for what they did for my mother and me.*

*They saved our lives.*

# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

### STUDENT HANDOUT

*\* Since 1963, a commission, headed by an Israeli Supreme Court justice, has been charged with the duty of awarding the title "Righteous Among the Nations." When the data on hand clearly demonstrates that a non-Jewish person risked his (or her) life, freedom and safety in order to rescue one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation to death camps without exacting in advance monetary compensation, this qualifies the rescuer for serious consideration to be awarded the "Righteous Among the Nations" title. The recognized person is awarded a specially minted medal bearing his/her name, a certificate of honor, and the privilege of his/her name being added to those on the Wall of Honor in the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. To date, more than 20,000 men and women have been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.*

### A tearful 'thanks' that waited 47 years

Julia Symchuk tried to keep a stern expression when she saw Henry Friedman, the Seattle man her family had once sheltered from the Nazis.

But when the Ukrainian woman who had flown here saw him, his wife, children and grandchildren, she burst into tears, fell into Friedman's embrace, and buried her head in his shoulder.

The two were reunited at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport last night. Friedman had seen Symchuk last year for just a few hours in her village in the Ukraine and had arranged for her to visit the United States. "I am so excited that she is coming here to see my family; I'm just flying," Friedman said before she arrived.

Forty-seven years ago, the 17-year-old Symchuk worked as a maid for the conquering Germans in the Ukraine. One day, as she was sweeping the police station, she overheard Gestapo plans to arrest Friedman's father.

"She ran from the station and to our farm and warned my father," Friedman, 60, said. "She would have been killed if anyone found out."

Symchuk, who spoke Russian to an interpreter, said her mother and Friedman's mother decided the Symchuk family would hide the Friedmans. And they did.

For 17 long and frightening months, the Friedman family hid in the Symchuk's small house. Symchuk's mother slipped what little food she could to the Friedmans.

Even when the Germans carted Julia and her brother off to a work camp — the camp where Julia's brother was to die — the Symchuks stayed silent.

"It was very hard for us, and it was very scary," Symchuk recalled.

Of the 15,000 Jews who lived in the area in 1940, only 100 were left alive after 1944.

"It was the most horrible kind of slaughter," Friedman said.

The Friedmans and the Symchuks had been acquainted for some time. They lived near each other in the small village of Suchowola. Hiding Jews, however, was never a popular cause.

"There was a lot of anti-Semitism there," Friedman recalled. "It didn't affect them, and it saved our lives."

The anti-Semitism was so strong that the Friedman family waited 47 years to thank Symchuk. Friedman's father, afraid that the Symchuks might be harmed by lingering anti-Semitic resentment, died without revealing the name of the family.

When Henry Friedman returned to his village last year, he remembered only the first names of the people who hid his family and followed a mental map drawn when he was a boy almost 50 years ago to the small village where he remembered being hidden. There he found Julia Symchuk.



# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

### STUDENT HANDOUT

"I knew who she was right away, and there was just an incredible feeling in my heart," Friedman said.

Sitting at the airport last night, with his grandson on his left knee and his right arm around the diminutive Symchuk, Friedman smiled broadly and praised the Symchuk clan.

"A heart of gold," he said. "They just had a heart of gold."

— Taken from "The Seattle Times,"  
July 14, 1989

\* Since this article was written, Julia Symchuk has been recognized at Yad Vashem as a Righteous Gentile. Since 1963, a commission, headed by an Israeli Supreme Court justice, has been charged with the duty of awarding the title "Righteous Among the Nations." When the data on hand clearly demonstrates that a non-Jewish person risked his (or her) life, freedom and safety in order to rescue one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation to death camps without exacting in advance monetary compensation, this qualifies the rescuer for serious consideration to be awarded the "Righteous Among the Nations" title. The recognized person is awarded a specially minted medal bearing his/her name, a certificate of honor, and the privilege of his/her name being added to those on the Wall of Honor in the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. To date, more than 20,000 men and women have been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.

If you are interested in reading more about Holocaust survivor Henry Friedman's story, his biography, "I'm No Hero: Journeys of a Holocaust Survivor," is available at the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center, at your local bookstore or library and online.

### Mrs. Pauline Joris-Brouwers

Bob H. is a child survivor from Antwerp, Belgium and currently serves as president of the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center. Bob has a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering and a master's degree in Naval History and International Relations, and he is a retired aerospace engineer and Naval Reserve Officer. Bob has spoken in schools all over the state on behalf of the Holocaust Center, telling his story and discussing the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe and the Nazi's use of propaganda.

*In July 1997, I submitted the name of the late Mrs. Pauline Joris-Brouwers as a candidate for "Righteous Among the Nations" at Yad Vashem in Israel\*. For two and a half years, Mrs. Joris-Brouwers hid my aunt in her little house in Wommelgem, a tiny village outside Antwerpen, Belgium. She did this while raising four children and with a constant awareness of the danger involved in hiding Jews.*

*Mrs. Pauline Joris-Brouwers lived in Wommelgem with her husband, Marcel Joris, and her four children—Josef, Felix, Maria and Paula. To support her family, she worked as a cleaning lady at my aunt's house. My aunt, Mrs. Rosa Schnabel, lived in Antwerpen and had two daughters, Gretel Coster-Schnabel and Liselotte Kleerkoper-Schnabel (now Rabinovitch-Schnabel). On December 31, 1941, when the Germans started to deport the Jews, the Schnabels went underground and hid in Pauline's house. Gretel and Liselotte left after a short time and went into hiding in the Charleroi area of Southern Belgium. Their husbands were deported and never came back. Rosa stayed with Pauline for two and a half years until the liberation of Antwerpen by the Allies in September 1944.*

*During the German occupation, Pauline's husband Marcel was trying to add to his income by repairing bicycles. After the*



# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

### STUDENT HANDOUT

*liberation, Antwerpen became the target of the German rocket offensive; 2248 V1s and 1712 V2s fell between October 1944, and March 1945. Marcel was one of the victims. He was killed by a flying bomb while travelling with a load of repaired bicycle tires. Pauline was left alone with four little children and no income.*

*It was then that she went to work again for Aunt Rosa, Liselotte, and my own family, and became part of our family lives; and we, in turn, became part of her family. As a child, I spent numerous summer days at her place in Wommelgem or at our place in Antwerpen, playing with her children. I remember Pauline at my Bar Mitzvah when I told her how beautiful she looked with a new dress and a new hairdo. For my younger brother Danny, who was born in 1943 in a French camp, "Popeline" was like a nanny.*

*Pauline, like many other Christian Belgians, behaved in a manner above and beyond mere charity; she willingly jeopardized her life and that of her family to save her Jewish friends. She deserves a place in the ranks of the "Righteous Among the Nations."*

*Yad Vashem finally agreed with me: A few months ago, I received a letter that she had been accepted and her four children will receive a certificate and a medal at a special ceremony at the Israeli Embassy in Brussels, Belgium. I'll be there.*

— By Bob H.

*\* Since 1963, a commission, headed by an Israeli Supreme Court justice, has been charged with the duty of awarding the title "Righteous Among the Nations." When the data on hand clearly demonstrates that a non-Jewish person risked his (or her) life, freedom, and safety in order to rescue one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation to death camps without exacting in advance monetary compensation, this qualifies the rescuer for serious consideration to be awarded the "Righteous Among the Nations" title. The recognized person is awarded a specially minted medal bearing his/her name, a certificate of honor, and the privilege of his/her name being added to those on the Wall of Honor in the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. To date, over 20,000 men and women have been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.*

## Characteristics of Rescuers

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According to Nechama Tec, professor of Sociology at the University of Connecticut and expert on the rescue of Jews during World War II, there is **"a set of interdependent characteristics and conditions that Holocaust rescuers share":\*\***

1. **They don't blend into their communities.**  
This makes them less controlled by their environments and more inclined to act on their own principles.
2. **They are independent people and know it.**  
They do what they feel they must do, what is right, and the right thing is to help others.
3. **They have a long history of doing good deeds.**
4. **Because they have done the right thing for a long time, it doesn't seem extraordinary to them.**  
If you consider something your duty, you do it automatically.
5. **They choose to help without rational consideration.**
6. **They have universalistic perceptions that transcend race and ethnicity.**  
They can respond to the needy and helpless because they identify with victims and injustice.

**\*\* Taken from "Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust," by Gay Block and Malka Drucker, Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1992.**