



The Survivor Mitzvah Project

We remain someone's child...

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Mother is the most sacred and beautiful word of all. It holds within it the essence of love, kindness, and gentle strength. A mother is the very embodiment of both our beginning and the love that sustains us throughout life. Everything good in life begins with a mother. And no matter how old we become we remain someone's child. My dearest mother endured more than most — war, evacuation, famine, and the devastating loss of her young husband. Yet, even amid the ruins of post-war hardship, she found the strength to raise us with unwavering love and resilience.

These beautiful words were written by **Manya Valdman from Ukraine**. We have thousands of letters from the

survivors we are helping. Many are detailed accounts of their Holocaust experiences and post war life. Almost always they have written about their mothers. How could they not? These brave young women found themselves alone in wartime, hunted by Nazis, running from killing squads, starving in ghettos and slave labor camps, all while caring for their children with love, bravery, ingenuity, and tenderness.



Pictured above: Zane Buzby and Ida Kit in Latvia

Ida Kit from Latvia wrote: *All mothers are dear. She was my light, and I tried to do everything to keep this light on, but alas, nobody and nothing is forever. When we lose our dearest mother, no matter her age, it is so incredibly sad and difficult to accept.*

Survivor **Celi Akura from Lithuania** wrote about fleeing to the Urals, her brave mother carrying her for miles — a journey filled with the weight of all they had lost, and the fear of what might still lie ahead: *My mother and I ran for our lives after my two sisters and father were killed in Taurig, Lithuania. I was only four years old at the time but remember my mother lifting me onto her shoulders as we escaped. She walked and walked without food or water for what felt like an eternity. On one scorching day, my mother sought refuge in a nearby village, where kind souls offered us milk and bread. In return, Mother gave them her only possession of value — a green shawl — because she had nothing else to offer. On the run again, we eventually arrived by cattle car in the town of Kushka. We settled in a small, cold room with another family. We all slept on the floor. There was no food for us. Our landlord gave even the potato peelings to the pigs. Mother worked hard in a factory to get ration cards for a few grams of bread. We ate nettles, weeds, and cabbage leaves that she pulled from the garbage. In 1946 we left to return home, but Mother was too ill to go further and was taken to a hospital. I was put in an orphanage in Kaunas until 1951. When mother finally found me, her health was still failing and she had no home, no money, and was unable to take me with her. She worked when she could and bought food for me with her wages which she delivered to the orphanage. Mother managed to rent a small room and only then was she able to take me to live with her.*

Marjasia Tuchinskiene from Lithuania wrote: *My dear mother passed away at the age of 75 — far too soon. Father was killed in the war in September 1941, and from that moment on, our mother faced life's trials alone, raising my sister and me with extraordinary strength and devotion. Despite all the hardships she endured, she gave us everything.*

Mira Imbrasas from Lithuania wrote: *We have to love the memory of our mothers — the way they loved us. Their lives were difficult, but they lived with dignity. Time will pass, the wounds will remain, yet our mothers' love will continue.*

Zoya Mayerava, from Belarus was born just after the war, but her mother lost her husband and first child in the Holocaust. She wrote: *Mother had a very hard life during the war. She lived in the Crimea and worked on a Jewish collective farm. Her husband died, and she evacuated on a train with her child, her mother and a niece. Her child died of hunger on the train. When the train stopped, she took the dead body out, put it under a bench at the station, and went back to the train. During the war, my mother worked on a milling lathe in a factory. Once she became dizzy from hunger and fell. Her hair got caught in the lathe. She was saved but lost a finger on one hand. She raised her brother's daughter as her own, and they ate rubber shoes (yes, cooked them and ate them) to survive.*

Arkadiy Gendler, from Ukraine wrote: *Despite the fact that I am now older than my mother was then, I look at my life, my work and my deeds with her in mind. And yes, I always ask myself the following question: What would she have said? Deep in my heart lives the memory of the day I said "good-bye" to her as I was leaving for the war. I picture her face as white as chalk that matched her gray hair and see her dry eyes. She held back her tears, perhaps so I wouldn't be weighed down by her sadness—or maybe she had already cried all her tears in silence. She turned to my crying sisters and sternly said, "Don't cry! He's alive! I pray I'll welcome him back in the same state." But that reunion never came. Tragically, she and my sisters were taken from me by the Germans, yet I remain. Through all of this, I've carried the strength of my mother with me. I often imagine the unimaginable pain she must have felt, saying goodbye to her son going off to war. Though her loss is a deep and constant ache, her memory lives on in my heart, cherished forever.*



Mira Imbrasas with photo of her parents.

**Honoring all the brave mothers of the Holocaust, please make a special donation in their memory.
Thank you for your kindness, compassion, and participation in this urgent humanitarian effort.**

Donate Online at www.survivormitzvah.org

Mail a check to: The Survivor Mitzvah Project
2658 Griffith Park Blvd., Ste. #299
Los Angeles, CA 90039

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane B. B. B." with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Donate stock, property, or vehicles. Contact us to learn more: survivormitzvah@gmail.com

**The Survivor Mitzvah Project is a 501c3 non-profit public charity.
Your donations for Holocaust Survivors go directly into the hands of a Holocaust survivor in need.**

**\$150 supports 1 survivor for 1 month, \$1800 supports 1 survivor for 1 year.
Donations large and small are welcomed, appreciated, and save lives.**