

Irving Bienstock: Holocaust Survivor and Educator

Irving Bienstock is well known in the Charlotte Jewish community as a helpful and dependable volunteer. But in recent years, he has added a new role – Holocaust educator. Several times a week, he addresses children of all ages as an integral part of the Butterfly Project. His story of survival, along with the testimony of Suly Chenkin, puts a human face to an unimaginable story in Jewish history.

Irving was born in Dortmund, Germany, a town near Dusseldorf. His childhood changed as soon as Hitler came to power. At age six, his friend told him he could no longer speak to him simply because he was Jewish. Thus began a series of laws, mistreatment, and indignities that would further alter his life. It was no longer safe for the family and his father escaped from Germany to Belgium on September 28, 1938 to avoid

being arrested by the Gestapo. After Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938, Irving's schooling came to an end. Members of his extended family were deported to Poland. The danger for Jews increased and his mother had to make some painful decisions.

Irving's 10 year old sister, Sylvia, had developed diabetes and was denied medical care because she was Jewish. She and their mother boarded a train bound for Holland, even though she did not have the necessary papers. This desperate mother searched the train for someone who might help her daughter and she eventually found one woman. The stranger luckily agreed to pose as Sylvia's mother. Leaving the train before reaching Holland's border, Irving's mother left her daughter and hoped for the best.

It was now time to do the same for Irving, who was only 12 years



old. He, too, did not have the required papers. On January 15, 1939, his mother searched the train for someone to help her child, but this time, found no one. She left the train and hoped Irving would arrive safely in Holland. He was all alone with only 10 German marks, one suitcase, and a plan to find a synagogue where someone might help him.

When Irving crossed the border, the Dutch police saw he had

no papers. He was asked, "Where are you going?" His answer, although false, sounded sincere: he was visiting an uncle in Amsterdam. Irving had to get off the train and was told to wait. He waited for hours on an outdoor bench at the train station and assumed a return to Germany was imminent. This was in the winter, and it was very cold. Later that day, the officer brought him to a small hotel where he ate, slept, and awaited instructions. After the second night, the same officer returned with a man from the Jewish community in Anheim. Irving spent a night with this man's family and then boarded another train to Wijk an Zee, a children's home leased by the Jewish community. Upon arrival, he saw other refugees who told him to get something to eat.

He entered the dining room and to his surprise – there was his sister. This was a miracle. They were there for three months. When spring arrived, the children were sent to a summer camp site and eventually to Burger Weeshuis, the municipal orphanage of Amsterdam. Part of the orphanage housed Jewish children who had arrived via the Kindertransport. Irving would be there for 13 months. Due to her diabetes, Sylvia was transferred to a hospital for medical care.

Part II of Irving's story will be in next month's Charlotte Jewish News.

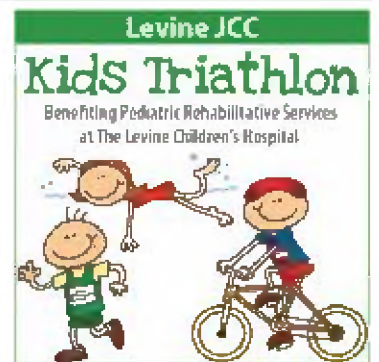
For more information about, to schedule participation in, or to volunteer at a Butterfly Project workshop, please contact Dana Kapustin, Butterfly Project Coordinator at butterflyproject@charlotte.or or 704-944-6833. ☆

It's Time to TRI Again

On Sunday, June 1, the Sandra and Leon Levine Jewish Community Center (LJCC) will host the 3rd Annual Kids Triathlon to benefit pediatric rehabilitative services at Levine Children's Hospital (LCH) and Adaptive Sports and Adventures Program (ASAP). This special event is about more than just good, fun athletic competition – it is about giving back. Children ages 5-14, of all athletic abilities and cultural backgrounds, including children from ASAP, participate in swimming, biking and running for a cause. Last year's event saw an increase in fundraising and participants over the inaugural event, raising \$39,000! This year's fundraising goal is \$50,000.

We are pleased to announce that this year's Honorary Co-Chairs for the event are Dr. Leonard Feld, Chief Medical Officer and Chairman of Pediatrics at Levine Children's Hospital, and his wife, Barbara.

Monies raised at the event by corporate sponsorships and participant fundraising are divided equally between LCH and ASAP. LCH provides inpatient rehabilitation after a child suffers a significant injury or illness to regain the strength and functional skills necessary to return home or to school. After release from the hospital, LCH patients can participate in ASAP, a part of Carolinas Rehabilitation. This program is designed to challenge youth (and



adults) with physical disabilities to develop skills that will lead to and enhance an active and productive lifestyle – one without barriers.

Registration is open at www.ljcckidstri.org. To sponsor this event, contact Julie Rizzo, Director of Development and Social Action, at julie.rizzo@charlotte-jcc.org or 704-944-6730. ☆

Jewish Family Services Family Reunion

(Continued from page 1)

career in communication and development. She decided to build a website where teens could answer questions and write to parents called RadicalParenting.com. "I couldn't believe how quickly it grew and how happy both teens were to get their voices out and parents were to have a new outlet for connecting with their kids. We now have over 120 teen writers who give advice through paid internships. I love being able to provide a different perspective when working with teens," she says.

As a youthologist, Vanessa studies, follows, and observes

youth activity and issues. Not only does she work with hundreds of youth every day, but also with parents to share insight into their kids.

"Teenagers, when given a neutral space love talking to parents and often offer some of the best insight because they are going through it themselves," says Vanessa.

Vanessa has also written a number of articles for Jewish parents, such as "What To Do When Your Son/Daughter is Dating a Non-Jew."

"I love speaking to Jewish audiences because I can refer back to my own childhood - I was a bat mitzvah, went to Hebrew school for 16 years, and was a madricha. I am a part of many different Jewish groups, speak at synagogues, bake challah, and go to Shabbat family dinners.

"I love personal stories, teenager confessions, and anecdotes. It will be fast pace and lively. Come with an open mind and remember we do not believe in perfect parents. We just like to bring interesting stories and research to help make the teen years smooth for everyone."

The Family Reunion takes place Sunday, April 6 beginning at 10 AM. The event is free. At 1

TEXT ME WHEN DINNER'S READY!
a Seminar on Communicating for parents & teens

Vanessa Van Petten is THE TEEN WHISPERER

As a young expert on teen behavior, Vanessa uses her research and client experience to help bridge differences between young people and parents so each understands what the other wishes they knew.

Family Reunion Keynote Speech DECODE YOUR TEEN

10:00AM - SAM LERNER CENTER
Learn how to communicate and build trust with your teen; deal with lying, drama and stalling. Sponsored by NCFI. No charge.

Lunch & Learn for Parents & Teens FIND YOUR PASSION!

11:00AM - JFS TEEN LOUNGE
Teens will discuss and apply Vanessa's lessons learned from launching her business at age 16 to map how to shape their own realities. Sponsored by Charlotte Parenting Solutions & the Shalom Park/Teen Coalition. \$5 including lunch.

Reservations: 704-364-6594 or www.jfscharlotte.org

Jewish Family Services
Family Reunion
Sunday, April 6, 2014

PM, Vanessa will facilitate the lunch and learn. \$5 including lunch. Reservations required: info@jfscharlotte.org or 704-364-6594. ☆

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EVENT DETAILS

Decode Your Teen with Vanessa Van Petten
10 AM
Sam Lerner Cultural Center
Free

Find Your Passion Lunch and Learn
1 PM
Teen Meeting Room
\$5 including lunch

Reservations required:
704-364-6594 or
info@jfscharlotte.org.