Bronwyn Simmers

Mr. DeJonge

English IV

28 September 2016

Irena Sendler: An Unsung Hero

When people think of heroes, they think of fictional characters like Superman or Captain America. However, when I think of heroes, I think of people who may not be widely recognized, but are still heroes in their own respect. One person that comes to my mind as a great hero is Irena Sendler. During World War II, she smuggled over 2,500 Jewish children out of the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland in order to help them escape the hands of the Nazi regime. Irena didn’t care about the recognition she got from this, she cared about the lives of the thousands of people she saved. She selflessly saved the lives of thousands of children and risked her own life for others. Irena Sendler is rightfully considered an unsung, epic hero for her courageousness, strength, and humility.

When the Nazi regime took over Europe, many people were forced into ghettos or concentration camps. Irena saw the way people were being treated in these places and decided she needed to do something to help. Even though she could get seriously or fatally hurt, Irena found a way to legally enter the Warsaw Ghetto: she received a pass from the Warsaw Epidemic Control Department. She went into the ghetto everyday to bring supplies such as food, medicine, and clothing to people who needed it and she would smuggle children out at the end of each visit. “Many children were smuggled out in items like potato sacks, body bags, coffins, and toolboxes” (Bulow). With every child she helped, she gave them a temporary fake name before finding them a family or orphanage to live in. Irena kept each child’s real identity in a system she created using jars. She would write the child’s real name and temporary fake name in the jars and bury them in her neighbor’s yard to recover after the war.

Sadly, Irena was caught by the Nazi regime and tortured for acting out against the laws at the time. The German soldiers beat her and broke both of her feet, crippling her for life. Despite this abuse, Irena did not give up any information about the children she helped or the families who housed them. This caused her to be sentenced to death, but before she was killed a group of people bribed the officers to let her go. After the war, Irena was able to dig up the jars and reach out to each of the children she saved to inform them of their past.

Irena knew that the repercussions from her actions were excessive, but she continued to help in anyway she could. She was courageous and only thought of the people she could help, not of herself. Even while she was imprisoned and tortured, she remained loyal to others and refused to give anything up. I believe Irena Sendler is a great representation of strength and bravery. Not everyone would be able to stand up for what they believe in if they were in her situation.

Work Cited

Bulow, Louis. "Irena Sendler." *Irena Sendler*. N.p., 2015. Web. 26 Sept. 2016. <<http://www.auschwitz.dk/sendler.htm>>.

*Irena Sendler: In the Name of Their Mothers*. Dir. Mary Skinner. *PBS.org*. Mary Skinner, 2016. Web. 26 Sept. 2016. <<http://www.pbs.org/program/irena-sendler/>>.

Stobie, Jaime. "Irena Sendler: In the Name of Their Mothers." *PBS.org*. N.p., 2016. Web. 26 Sept. 2016. <<http://www.pbs.org/program/irena-sendler/>>.