

**THE HUMANITIES ALLIANCE and the  
HOLOCAUST CENTER FOR HUMANITY**  
2045 2nd Avenue, Seattle, Washington 98121  
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PRESENT

**Wednesday**

**May 25, 2016**

**EvCC Campus, JKC 101, 12:20-1:20 p.m.**



**TEEN SURVIVOR**

## **HENRY F.**

Henry was born in 1928 in Brody, Poland (now the independent Ukraine). He recalls the discrimination he faced at the onset of the war when, at ten-years-old, a classmate told him, “Wait until Hitler comes, he’ll take care of you!” In 1939, with the Russian occupation of Brody, his family lost its business and many private possessions. After the Nazis invaded Brody in 1941, they swiftly deprived Jews of their basic rights. They forbade Jews to attend school or teach, formed a violent police force, and forced Jews to wear armbands bearing the Star of David. The police once caught Henry’s mother without her armband and beat her so badly she could not raise her arms for a month.

One day in February, 1942, a young Ukrainian woman, Julia Symchuck, ran to the Friedmans' house and warned Henry's father that the Gestapo was coming for him. His father was thus able to flee in time. Jews not forewarned were sent to camps to be put to work or were murdered. These round-ups, called “aktions”, sent 4,500 Jews to the Belzec death camp. The final order came in the fall of 1942: the remaining 6,500 Jews in the area were to move into a small ghetto in Brody. In October, 1942, the Friedmans themselves were ordered to move into the ghetto. However, Henry’s father had different plans.

The Friedmans hid in the village of Suchowola with the help of two different Ukrainian families. Henry, his mother, his younger brother, and their female teacher went to a barn owned by Julia's parents, in which they occupied a tiny space about the size of a queen-sized bed. Henry’s father went to a separate hiding place that belonged to an old acquaintance, half a mile from the Symchucks’ barn. They learned that from May to June of 1943, the Nazis were liquefying the ghetto in Brody, as part of the two-year long plan known as “Operation Reinhard.” Most of the Jews in the ghetto were sent directly to Majdanek death camp.

For eighteen months, the Friedmans remained in hiding, freezing cold and slowly starving as food became scarce. Finally, in March, 1944 the Russians liberated Suchowola and the Friedmans.

Decades later, Julia Symchuck was recognized as one of The Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem and was reunited with Henry in Seattle in 1989.

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