

# THANK YOU!

## YOU SAVED POLA'S LIFE!

### Her Life In A Box Was Dumped At Our Office To Be Thrown Away

You provided support for her legacy. She will not be forgotten now that her story is preserved in the Washington Jewish Museum, in a digital exhibit. You provided a curator to go through the boxes filled with her life's possessions, sort through the crumpled photos of her youth, and even her parents' passports that were haphazardly thrown into the disintegrating boxes.

Pola lived her last days homeless. Discarded at age 86. For whatever reason, she was evicted from her senior residence where she had lived for 20 years.

At her death, Pola's lifelong accumulation of possessions was reduced to a box of photos, correspondence and official documents. Pola lived simply and frugally, "like a poor woman," as Rabbi Simon Benzaquen of Seattle's Sephardic Bikur Holim put it.

But she could be seen at most Jewish cultural events around Seattle and left substantial gifts to many organizations and institutions in the local Jewish community. Because of YOUR kind heart and support, Pola's legacy has survived.

"Pola was a person who cared about the community," said Ruth Sassoon, long-time WSJHS Archives Committee member. Pola often spoke her mind in defense of causes and people.

There is a signed "Certificate of Recognition" dated June 18, 2010 acknowledging Pola's "7 years of service," but nothing that says for what organization she served. And there is a plaque proclaiming Pola, the Kline Galland's 2008 "Jessie Danz volunteer of the year." Rabbi Benzaquen tells of Pola quietly volunteering at SBH and repairing many books in its library.

Before you provided support, Pola's memory was set to be lost forever. You recognize the importance of one individual, no one deserves to be forgotten.. Rabbi Benzaquen indicated that Pola, herself, always spoke with the knowledge and understanding that every person is worthy of respect.

Because of your kindness and generosity, her immigration from Turkey to the USA through Cuba has been documented and preserved.

Correspondence with immigration authorities and Senator Henry Jackson documents Pola's and her sister Roza's efforts to bring their parents to America.



Pola Doenyas in the 1940s

During her lifetime, Pola touched many lives. But she lived through difficult times and had many challenges with immigration and the system, highly relevant to the struggles of today.

The digital exhibit can be viewed at: [wsjhs.org/museum/categories/people/pola-doenyas.html](http://wsjhs.org/museum/categories/people/pola-doenyas.html)

with special thanks to Pola's cousin, Irv Camhi, who helped identify individuals and gave descriptions to many of the photos.

This exhibit exists saving Pola's legacy, all because of YOU – thank you for providing the support through your generous donations to "save a life."

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Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry participants in Freedom Sunday Mobilization for Soviet Jewry rally in Washington, D.C., December 6, 1987  
*University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections/WSJHS, JEW0109*

## You Uncovered Stories of Persecution, Pogroms & Poverty!

You “Let our people go” strong in telling about the fight for freedom! Despite promises following the revolution of 1917, the birth of the Soviet Union did little to improve the lives of the Jews.

Religious practice was discouraged, if not banned outright, and organized outbursts of anti-Semitism flared up at regular intervals. There were many examples of official attempts to decimate Jewish identity, yet they were not allowed to emigrate either to Israel or the USA.

Stuck in a no-man’s land where

they were unwanted but not allowed to leave, these lonely people were dubbed Refuseniks. In Washington State, protests stretched from Seattle to Spokane, where the 1974 World’s Fair allowed protesters the opportunity to confront official Soviet emissaries who were on hand to celebrate their nation’s exhibit.

In Washington D.C., our state’s senior Senator, Henry “Scoop” Jackson, sponsored the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which punished the Soviet Union and other nations that restricted their citizens’ right to emigrate.

You saved some of our little-known Soviet stories in Washington state. You funded the Refuseniks Podcast where some former Soviet Jews were freely able to talk about their experiences, otherwise lost to history.

You brought the National Traveling exhibit here from the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia.

**Thank you for giving a voice to our Soviet Stories. Because of you, this important part of our collective history is preserved – the fight for freedom and immigration battles.**



Barbara Grashin descends the steps of Bikur Cholim in her wedding dress.  
Photo provided by Dorthy Lederman

## A Building that Carries a Lifetime of Memories and Continues to Make New Ones...

**YOUR Help in preserving these memories is priceless!**

Established more than 100 years ago, Bikur Cholim Machzikay Hadath Congregation is Seattle's oldest congregation. BCMH is the largest Ashkenazic Orthodox synagogue in the greater Seattle area.

After a lower floor took shape in 1910, the renowned theater Architect, B. Marcus Priteca designed the rest, and the structure was dedicated in 1915. The Seattle Times termed it "the largest and most magnificent temple of worship of the Jewish faith in the West."

Thankfully, you responded to the need to preserve this amazing history. You funded the digital exhibit and made the Seattle Times *Now & Then* article possible to be shared with the community on Erev Rosh Hashanah.

Your memories of Bikur Cholim suggested that it was truly a special

place that was full of life. A stop on the "Shabbat stroll," it was the venue of many simchas – B'nai Mitzvahs, Weddings and Funeral services.

"Everything stemmed from here," adds Mel Genauer, who recalls first walking to the synagogue as an 8-year-old in 1950. "It was great unity here. We always stuck by each other."

Although the Jewish Star of David no longer tops yesterday's Bikur Cholim Synagogue, which is today's Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute, your support made many stories come alive.

The building continues to convey its commanding, theatrical presence. More details can be found in the 2013 book "Family of Strangers: Building a Jewish Community in Washington State" and the digital Washington Jewish Museum at [wsjhs.org](http://wsjhs.org).

The current photo showcases 60 teenage stars (and staff) during a play rehearsal. They are joined on the

sidewalk by two-dozen Jewish family members, including several whose bar mitzvahs were held inside when the building was Bikur Cholim synagogue.

Thank you so much for preserving the stories of our community.



A photo you made possible!  
Outside the former Bikur Cholim synagogue, now Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute. Standing in the middle row are former and current members and their families of Bikur Cholim together with, front and back rows, representatives of the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute.

# HELP NOW!

Save a Life for just  
**\$3 per day**

The lives and memories  
of our people need to be  
preserved... and we're  
losing valuable memories  
each day!  
But you can help.

It costs an average of just \$3 per day to preserve our stories and heritage. Your gift will allow a community interview, oral history, or photograph to be saved.

It costs so little to help in historic preservation – will you please provide at least one month of support for a saved memory?



WSJHS Teen Historian Ally Lavin interviews Esther Quint



Attendees of the WSJHS 13 Counts! Celebration listen to the keynote speaker talk about the importance of history on October 24, 2019

**Yes! Use my gift to save a photo:**



Your gift ensures that photos and documents are saved, scanned, curated, and available to you and the community.

Cut and return with your gift to 3801 E Mercer Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040. Thank you!

## My Gift to Save a Life

**Yes! I want to preserve the stories of our Jewish Community!**

\$90  \$180\*  \$360  \$720  \$\_\_\_\_\_

*\*Most people donate at this amount and above.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed (payable to Washington State Jewish Historical Society)

Credit card (input your information below)

Name on card: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security#: \_\_\_\_\_

Memories  
being lost  
every day!

Just  
\$3 per  
Day

You can give securely and quickly online at [wsjhs.org/donate](http://wsjhs.org/donate)