

Impact Statement

Jagoda Kozdra, Grade 11.

Nicholas Winton, 2023.

Acrylic on paper, 24 x 39 inches.

Jan Cybis Art Lyceum, Opole, Opolski, Poland

Unsung Hero: Nicholas Winton

I found the character on the Lowell Milken Center website, on the list of available heroes and heroines. Nicholas Winton as the character for my project inspired me because he helped a very large group of children and he did it selflessly, getting nothing in return. I myself am a person who grew up without a father and was captivated by the care of this character towards a group of children. We should also remember about the context of his rescuing activity. It happened during the war and the Holocaust when helping the Jewish people, including children, was a very heroic act.

I got some information and sources about the character during workshops devoted to the Lowell Milken Center projects. I read and watched myself on the Internet the sources suggested to me after the workshops. Among the sources were documentaries and articles. I especially remember the movie "All My Loved Ones", because it was very special in artistic sense - the colors that dominated there showed the characters who led ordinary lives and suddenly these lives turned upside down. For example, there was a couple who swore love for each other, but the war thwarted their plans. This situation somehow resembled me the context of Winton's deeds. In his character I discovered caring, warmth and commitment, but also hope and courage.

As for my creative interpretation of the character, when you look at the picture, first of all, there is a train in the foreground, because the hero was saving children by taking them away by this means of transport. An important feature of the train is the blue plate it has on the front. This is a plaque of an authentic train that traveled the same route and commemorated Nicholas Winton. When it comes to the background, the left side of the image is definitely brighter than the right side. This division of background colors symbolizes a journey to a better world, rescue, and hope. In the lower left corner there are green plants, which are supposed to be a symbol of new life. In the wagon we see children and our hero standing there. The children have no faces – this way I wanted to show that they had to get new identities and documents. The absence of their faces symbolizes a new "me": abandoning the old life and starting a new one. The character of Winton, who holds the child and hugs him, makes it clear that he is a very warm and devoted person. The very child he holds in his arms is an authentic figure taken from a photograph of Winton as a young man.

The process of creating the work gave me hope that there are good people in this world. I know from my life that many people would refuse such help as that provided by Winton. Creating the work made me believe that maybe not everyone is bad. It is important to me that I talked to my friends about the character, shared the story, and I will continue to do so. We will also organize a celebration at my school, during which I will show my work, talk about the creative process and the hero.