

## Impact Statement

Anya Figert, Grade 7.

***To Forgive the Unforgivable***, 2020.

Mixed media, 8.5 x 11 Inches.

Batchelor Middle School, Bloomington, IN

Unsung Hero: Eva Mozes Kor

When I was choosing an unsung hero to celebrate through art, Mr. Rudkin, my teacher, gave me a list of options: George Taliaferro, Eva Mozes Kor, the list went on. Immediately, Eva Kor stood out to me because last spring I had been to the CANDLES (Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors) Holocaust Museum, for a field trip. I met Eva Kor and learned about how she had been a Mengele twin and survived Auschwitz concentration camp along with her twin, Miriam. She was taken prisoner along with her family of six, but only two survived: Eva and Miriam. This encounter with Eva Kor and her story sparked at least fifty ideas for a picture.

Out of everything I've researched and learned about Eva Kor, the thing that interests me the most is her ability to forgive others. I remembered her describing to us at the museum how she had forgiven a Nazi soldier, the soldier thanked her repeatedly, but he added that it's not him who she needed to forgive, it was Dr. Josef Mengele, the one who had done experiments on her and her twin. She had said she had not been able to sleep until she completely let go of what Dr. Mengele had done to her. She forgave him. This inspired the story of my drawing. I had never heard of somebody who would forgive someone for taking almost everyone in their life. First, this inspired my drawing by the hands reaching out, one offering forgiveness and the other taking it. Secondly, Eva Kor's eyes are reflecting the words forgive and forgiveness, which represents how that was all she could think about: forgiving Dr. Mengele. I used the color blue because that was Eva Kor's favorite color, and I thought her family would appreciate it. After her visit with the Nazi and her forgiving Dr. Mengele, Eva Kor continued sharing and encouraging forgiveness to her community by adding her story of forgiveness to the CANDLES museum.

When you look at Eva Kor's life you see how most everyone that she ever loved was stripped away from her during the Holocaust. Her mother, father, and sisters were yanked out of her grasp like a doll, leaving only her twin, Miriam, with her, who died in 1993. But when I heard Eva Kor talk, she could crack a joke and laugh without a trace of a tear. This fascinated me that someone who had seen so much death and sadness could be so lighthearted. I realized she most likely found joy when she forgave the people who needed forgiveness, the people that no one else was brave enough to forgive. I recognize that we can do the same thing: maybe not forgive the person who killed your family but forgive the person you hold a grudge against. You can't just say "I forgive you" you have to completely let go of it with every single finger.

Eva Kor forgave the unforgettable memories that Dr. Mengele had planted in her head. She is not recognized enough for it. To forgive something unforgivable was unimaginable until I heard Eva Kor's story. If only everybody in the world was like her, this world would be a far better place. Forgiving Dr. Mengele didn't make Eva Kor perfect, but forgiveness did make life complete and more put an end to the Holocaust that was in her head. This message will spread

through the CANDLES museum, which will put my picture on display with one of Eva Kor's videos. The video is about her for people to learn more about the impact she made on kids and people by teaching about the Holocaust and what we can learn from it, like the power of forgiveness and respecting others.

Eva Kor's story of forgiveness deserves more recognition than it has. She died last summer in 2019 and passed the torch to others to tell her story. She was a fighter and a hero who proved that if you can forgive one person for taking hundreds of lives, if you can forgive someone who has taken the lives of the people you love, then nothing should hold you back from forgiving the unforgivable. I hope my art is one way I can pass along the torch and her story.