



Impact Statement

Sree Guari Modugual, Grade 9

Carried Beneath the Wings, 2026

Charcoal on paper, 8 x 11 inches

Prospect Ridge Academy, Broomfield, CO

Unsung Hero: Meva Mikusz

The person who really stands out to me is Meva, also known as Maria Micusz. Imagine a 15-year-old girl putting her own life in danger to save a little girl named Inka from the terrible things happening inside the Chortków Ghetto. That is what Meva did. Meva's family and Inka's family were very close before everything started to fall. When the Holocaust began Inka's family got stuck in the ghetto, where they had to deal with hard work, hardly any food, and fear all around them. Inka's parents were desperate, so they asked Meva to save their girl, hoping she could do what seemed impossible.

What really gets to me is how quietly Meva went about doing this. There was no fanfare, no attention. A teenager making a decision that most adults would be too scared to make. Meva put on a disguise, sneaked into the ghetto, and got Inka out. She did this all by herself because she knew it was the thing to do. Meva's story shows that being brave does not depend on how old you are or whether you want people to notice you. It is about doing what is right, even when you are scared. One small decision can change someone's life completely.

When I started creating artwork about Meva, I wanted to show both the history and the strong emotions that come with her story. I drew everything from the outside looking in through a window. Because often the bravest things happen when no one is watching. This way, the person looking at the artwork becomes a witness, and it is clear just how hidden Meva's bravery was. In the distance, the Chortków Ghetto looms large, ready to hurt anyone who gets in its way, while Meva and Inka look very small compared to it. This contrast really shows what they were up against and how much their escape meant.

I also added some symbols from Meva's story to the artwork. There is a pot of lupines on the windowsill, which reminds me of a photo of Meva and Inka, and it adds a personal touch to the scene. The armband that has been thrown aside represents the labels that Jews were forced to wear. It also represents resisting those labels and holding on to dignity. If you look up, you will see a seagull, which is what Meva's name means in Polish. The seagull represents hope and direction, flying free when everything else seems hopeless.

Meva's story shows that big changes in the world do not always come from people or big events. Often, it is the quiet decisions that have a lasting impact. Meva's story is an example of this. One selfless act of bravery can start a chain reaction affecting many people for generations to come.

There is another theme in this story: guidance and what it means to really help someone. Meva led Inka out of danger. If you think about your own life, you will probably remember someone who helped you when things were tough. Those moments can change you. They can make you want to help someone else someday.

Meva's story is really about the power of bravery and selfless actions. Meva's choice, which she made when she was very young, shows that ordinary people, including teenagers, can make a difference. I hope that her story will inspire others to be kind, brave, and strong, and to do what is right even if no one is watching. Meva's story is a reminder that Meva and people like her can make a difference in the world.