



Impact Statement

Elizabeth Oh, Grade 10

***Our Names Will Never Fade*, 2026**

Acrylic, watercolor, colored pencil, marker on paper, 28 x 22 inches

Seckinger High School, Buford, GA

Unsung Hero: Irena Sendler

My Unsung Hero is Irena Sendler. During World War II, she was a social worker in Poland, and she was a member of the resistance organization Żegota. She is also known for rescuing approximately 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto. During World War II, the Warsaw Ghetto was a place rife with terror and the constant threat of death. In 1943, Irena Sendler was arrested by the Gestapo, and she was tortured and sentenced to death, but she refused to reveal the names of the children she had saved or any information. She knew that a single word could hurt people, so she chose to be silent. What makes her story special was not what she did but the fact that she accomplished it quietly.

She didn't view herself as a hero, she believed that she was simply doing what had to be done. Driven by the conviction that all children have a right to a safe space, identity and future, she sacrificed her own life to save many people's lives. One of the most meaningful parts of her work was how she protected their identity, she recorded the children's real names and their new names, then placed the records in glass jars and buried them under an apple tree. This act symbolized hope, and even in a world of loss, she made sure the truth of who these children were would not disappear and she was recognized with the title "Righteous Among The Nations" in 1965. Her most important legacy was not a title, but the lives that she saved and the families who could reconnect through her sacrifices.

In my artwork, I wanted to show Irena Sendler as a quiet protector of life and memory of children, so I illustrated her under an apple tree, holding and protecting children in a safe space. The apple tree represents sacrifice and hope like blossoms that are beautiful but temporary. Her action existed in the darkest moment in history but created the biggest lasting change. A cane is included to show the physical pain that she endured from torture, but she continued her mission to save people's lives. I focused on the facial expressions and body language to show the relief and trust between her and the children. To create my artwork, I used acrylic paint, watercolor, colored pencils, and markers, I mixed these materials to express both realism and emotion. I focused on storytelling through the expressions rather than appearance alone. I also felt a personal connection to the themes of separation and care, which helped me understand the emotional weight of her story more deeply. It also made me reflect on how important it is to protect others even when it is difficult.

Irena Sendler's legacy was not only about saving lives during the war. It was about the choice to protect humanity when everything around her encouraged silence and fear. She proved that one

person doesn't need powers to change history but only the courage to act when it matters the most and her story reminds us that even in the darkest times, one quiet decision could protect thousands of futures.