

Jewish Journal

Palm Beach South

THE LARGEST JEWISH NEWSPAPER IN THE NATION

Wednesday, August 23, 2023

CENTENARIANS SHARE

Helen Wamstok Diker reflects on her Holocaust survival

By Linda Chase
Contributing Editor

Holocaust survivor Helen Wamstok Diker recently attended a birthday party hosted by Goodman Jewish Family Services in Broward County. The celebration, honoring Helen and five fellow centenarian survivors, was a testament to their resilience and strength. When I visited her Pembroke Pines home, Helen reflected on her survival and expressed the importance of family.

"I was born May 6, 1922 in Lodz, Poland. My father's name was Liv and my mother was Gitla. I had one brother and three sisters. My father was a shoemaker in Lodz, which was the center of the textile industry in prewar Poland. He struggled to make a living, however we were a close-knit, happy family. I attended a public school for Jewish girls and never expe-



Holocaust survivor Helen Diker. PHOTO BY LINDA CHASE

rienced antisemitism as a child. Lodz was the second largest Jewish community in prewar Poland (Warsaw was the largest). When I was 17, life in Lodz took a horrific turn: German troops occupied the city on September 8, 1939. This was one week after Germany invaded

Poland on September 1. In February 1940, the Germans established a ghetto in Lodz, forcing my family along with 160,000 Jews into a small area. The Germans established factories in the ghetto and used Jewish residents for

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Holocaust survivor Chaim Greenberg encourages everyone to 'Enjoy Life'

By Linda Chase
Contributing Editor

Holocaust survivor Chaim Greenberg recently attended a centennial birthday bash hosted by Goodman Jewish Family Services. "I love to celebrate the gift of life" Chaim proclaimed when I visited him in his Hallandale Beach home.

"I was born December 20, 1922 in Warsaw, Poland. My father's name was Eli and my mother was Aliza, which literally means 'joy or happiness' in Hebrew. My father owned a home improvement/building supplies business. I was 16 when Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. I was able to flee Warsaw before the German army seized control of the city. Thousands of civilians perished during the siege. The city would remain occupied by the Nazis until January 17, 1945. After leav-



Holocaust survivor Chaim Greenberg. PHOTO BY LINDA CHASE

ing Warsaw, I served as a soldier and language interpreter in the British army. I speak multiple languages including German, Polish, Russian, Hebrew, Arabic and English, which greatly benefitted the allied forces. During my military service I traveled all over the world, eventually moving to Israel before the nation gained its independence. I worked as a taxi cab driver in Israel and

would later own a fleet of 12 cabs in New York. My wife and I raised our two sons in Queens before settling in South Florida."

Chaim shared his philosophy for life.

"I encourage people to enjoy life and not take anything too seriously. I'm passionate about sports and tango dancing. When I start dancing, it motivates everyone in the room to join in."

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