

HAYNT

PRESERVE EDUCATE PROMOTE



ASPJ
Australian Society of Polish Jews
and their Descendants

AUTUMN 2026 ISSUE 23

Chag Pesach Sameach!
May this festival of freedom inspire
hope and peace for all.



Preserve Educate Promote

“Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants (ASPJ) is dedicated to preserving and promoting the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland and to fostering understanding between current and future generations of the Polish and Jewish communities”

The ASPJ coordinates with the established Jewish and Polish communal bodies, religious leadership, governmental, parliamentary and diplomatic bodies, as well as historical, cultural and educational organisations in both Australia and Poland.

Polish–Jewish dialogue in Poland today is growing, particularly among the post-communist, educated young. There is a growing understanding and acceptance of the past, both the good and the bad. A new spirit of positive cooperation has emerged. Young Catholic Poles, more than ever before, are expressing an interest in the Jewish history of their country. This dialogue and interest needs to be nurtured and encouraged.

We organise educational and cultural events that cover the broad range of Polish–Jewish relations.

Our *Haynt* magazine is published twice a year, showcasing cultural, social and political articles of interest to Polish and Jewish communities.

ASPJ is a resource for educational material and offers a speaker service in a variety of topics relating to Polish–Jewish relations.

The Henryk Slawik Award is bestowed by the ASPJ to a person or institution that helps foster a deeper understanding of Polish–Jewish history and relations.

ASPJ Oration invites national or international speakers who can address complex and relevant issues regarding Polish–Jewish concerns.

Based in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia, we invite all people, Jewish and non-Jewish, whose roots lie in Poland, to join our organisation.

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of ASPJ or its members.

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From the President



Ezra May
President ASPJ

Shalom, dzień dobry, and welcome to our first edition of *Haynt* for 2026.

For more than two years since 7 October 2023, many of us had hoped that the rising trajectory of antisemitism in Australia and throughout the world might eventually dissipate, if not disappear. Sadly, this did not occur and instead manifested itself in the most tragic manner with the terror attack at Bondi Beach on 14 December 2025.

Footage of the deliberate targeting of Australian Jews celebrating Chanukah on Bondi Beach — which resulted in the murder of 15 people and the physical wounding of 40 others — sent shockwaves through Jewish communities and societies across the globe.

Lamentably, the ASPJ, along with other Jewish and non-Jewish organisations, had repeatedly raised concerns about the increasing social tension and division that had been emerging. We also expressed concern about what many perceived to be an underwhelming response from some politicians, media figures, communal leaders, and social influencers — and where such trends might lead if left unchecked.

At the same time, the ASPJ also received many messages of support from a wide range of individuals and organisations during this period. That support continued in the aftermath of the Bondi attack, when many friends — and even people previously unknown to us — reached out to offer

their condolences and express their outrage at this antisemitic act.

Although words alone can sometimes seem insufficient, the warmth and empathy expressed in these messages have been deeply comforting and encouraging. They remind us that there remains a strong foundation for a better and more compassionate world.

Despite the enormity of the Bondi Beach terror attack, the ASPJ has continued its program of events and activities. Among these was our 2025 Oration, delivered by the Acting Ambassador of Poland, Chargé d'Affaires Marcin Kawałowski, which also included a special presentation of the Gold Cross of Merit to ASPJ past presidents Bernard Korbman and Izi Marmur.

We are also pleased to share that details of our upcoming 2026 webinar series will soon be announced.

The ASPJ's Statement of Purpose is: to preserve and promote the historical and cultural heritage of Jewish life in Poland, and to foster understanding between current and future generations of the Polish and Jewish communities.

As we approach the Festival of Pesach (Passover), we are reminded of its central themes of liberation and freedom. One can only hope that both globally and individually we experience these ideals in the year ahead. This is particularly poignant at a time when Israel once again finds itself fighting major existential threats in an effort to live freely and securely.

The coming weeks are also a period of reflection and remembrance. Soon after Pesach we commemorate Yom HaShoah — Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day — followed the next week by Yom HaZikaron, Israel's Memorial Day for fallen soldiers and victims of terror. This is immediately followed by Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel's Independence Day. In Australia, we then mark ANZAC Day shortly thereafter.

These commemorations invite us to pause and reflect on the tremendous debt we owe the generations before us — those whose sacrifices helped ensure that people today can live in freedom and security. At the same time, they remind us of the terrible suffering and devastation that can result when hatred, intolerance, and violence prevail.

It is our fervent hope that Australia will continue to remain a welcoming land of opportunity — a country of religious freedom and protection, where people

of different religions, races, and ethnicities can live together without hate or fear in a tolerant, vibrant and prosperous society that benefits us all. We also pray for peace and safety for all citizens of Israel and for all people throughout the Middle East.

We invite you to enjoy this latest edition of *Haynt*, and extend our sincere thanks to our editor, Izi Marmur, for his dedication and effort in producing another excellent edition.

From the New South Wales desk



Estelle Rozinski
Vice President ASPJ NSW

Dear Friends,

In the wake of 14 December, 2025, as a collective I believe that we have honoured our tragic history and our families. Our leaders, many and varied and our community have rallied within metaphorical minutes and responded appropriately to the heinous crime on Bondi Beach.

From Sydney I wish to make special mention of: the Chabad community and the establishment of the Mitzvah project for Bondi, <https://www.nsw.gov.au/community-services/one-mitzvah-for-bondi>, Rabbi Yossi, the drawing together of a disparate community of Jews and non-Jews with the Flower Project directed by artist/ curator Nina Sanadze under the auspices of the Sydney Jewish museum, Operation Golda, Our Big Kitchen and Anita Birges the bringing of the stones, all of whom swung into action within days, sometimes hours, of this attack.

As we look towards Pesach in the words of Israeli anchor Yonit Levy "Be kind, be patient" - many of us are sleepless as we deal with our not-so-ordinary lives coupled with the overlays of a multipronged war.

This Pesach I wish you all peace, and a new and special freedom!

Estelle

ASPJ Statement on Bondi – 14 December 2025

The Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants (ASPJ) is deeply saddened and distressed by the terror attack in Bondi, Sydney, on the eve of the first night of Chanukah, Sunday 14 December 2025.

The ASPJ extends its deepest condolences to the victims and their families following this targeted antisemitic attack.

For more than two years, the ASPJ has raised concerns about the growing intolerance and erosion of goodwill between communities. While these developments, culminating in yesterday's terror attack, are deeply troubling, we have been heartened by the strong expressions of solidarity and support received from many individuals, organisations, and communities across Australia and internationally—particularly over the past day.

As Chanukah begins, we hope the light of the candles will help dispel the darkness of hatred and allow all communities to once again live, gather, and celebrate freely and safely.

Poland condemns antisemitic attack in Australia after 16 killed

Source: IAR, PAP, Reuters
15 December 2025

Poland has condemned a deadly attack in Australia after at least 16 people, including one shooter, were killed during a Jewish holiday celebration at Sydney's Bondi Beach.

In a post on X, the Polish foreign ministry's spokesman, Maciej Wewiór, said Poland "always opposes violence against innocent people, regardless of its motivation", adding that the attack showed how "hatred leads to violence and terror."

Asked whether any Polish citizens had been harmed, Wewiór told the Polish Press Agency (PAP) that there was no information to suggest that Poles were among the victims.

In a social media post, Poland's President Karol Nawrocki said: "I express my full condemnation of the terrorist attack in Sydney. I extend my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of this unimaginable crime."

Prime Minister Donald Tusk also offered condolences, writing on X: "My deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible terrorist attack at Bondi Beach in Sydney. Antisemitism, wherever it appears, leads to acts of crime."

According to the latest information from Australian authorities, at least 16 people, including one of the shooters, were killed when gunmen opened fire during a Hanukkah event on Sunday evening.

Police said on Monday morning local time that the victims ranged in age from 10 to 87 and that 42 people remained in hospital.

One suspected attacker was shot dead at the scene, while another was critically injured.

Police are investigating whether a third gunman may have been involved and bomb-disposal units have been deployed to examine suspected improvised explosive devices.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the shooting took place during the lighting of the first Hanukkah candle and described it as "a devastating terrorist incident" and "a targeted attack on Jewish Australians".

The Bondi Beach shooting is "an act of evil antisemitism, terrorism that has struck the heart of our nation," he said.

The shooting has drawn condemnation from leaders abroad, including in Israel, where President Isaac Herzog described it as a "very cruel attack on Jews".

ASPJ Past Presidents Awarded Polish Honours



Pictured from Left to Right: Elizabeth Dziedzic, President of Polish Community Council of Victoria; Acting Ambassador Marcin Kawalowski, Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of Republic of Poland; Izi Marmur OAM; Ezra May, President of Australia Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants; Bernard Korbman OAM; Beata Pękala, First Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Poland and Piotr Rakowski, Consul General of Republic of Poland.



On Monday, 17th November 2025, following the 2025 Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants (ASPJ) Annual Oration presented by Acting Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, Mr Marcin Kawałowski, a ceremony took place

during which two of our ASPJ Past Presidents were honoured by the Republic of Poland.

By decree of the President of the Republic of Poland, Marcin Kawałowski, Chargé d'affaires a.i. at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Australia, awarded Bernard Brzegowski-Korbman OAM and Izydor Marmur OAM with the Złoty Krzyż Zasługi (Gold Cross of Merit) for their services in promoting Polish-Jewish relations.

At the presentation, Ezra May, the ASPJ President, commented that following his teaching career Bernard Korbman was Executive Director of the Jewish Holocaust Centre for 7 years, making a profound contribution to the Melbourne Jewish and wider community.

In the 1980s Bernard also became Chairman of the World Federation of Polish Jews – Australian

Chapter, a post-war organisation that aimed to support Jewish survivors from Poland and preserve the heritage of Polish Jewry. After the World Federation of Polish Jews lapsed in the early 2000s, Bernard then established a new successor organisation — the Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants (ASPJ) in 2009.

Bernard is very much the founding father, inspiration and icon for the ASPJ. In 2011 he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for “service to the community, particularly through the preservation of Jewish history”.

Ezra also advised that with his deep contacts and personal connections within the Polish community, Izi became the unofficial ASPJ Polish community liaison, representing the ASPJ at many Polish community events, including Polish Independence Day, Katyn Memorial, and others.

Izi's great passion and enthusiasm for co-operating and strengthening ties with the Polish community was instrumental in forming the wonderful relationships we have today. Izi also remains the editor and driving force behind our flagship publication *Haynt*.

Australian Ambassador to Poland meets with ASPJ

On Wednesday, 4 March 2026, the Australian Ambassador to Poland, Ambassador Benjamin Hayes, met with Ezra May, President of the Australian Society of Polish Jews and their Descendants (ASPJ).

Despite a very busy schedule during his return to Australia for mid-term consultations, Ambassador Hayes prioritised making time to meet with the ASPJ.

The ASPJ welcomed the opportunity to reconnect with the Ambassador and to receive updates on, among other matters, the burgeoning state of Polish–Australian bilateral relations, as Poland continues to cement its position as a significant industrial, political, financial, and economic power within the European Union.

The ASPJ also expressed its appreciation for Ambassador Hayes' ongoing interest, concern, and



ASPJ President Ezra May and the Australian Ambassador to Poland Benjamin Hayes

care regarding Polish–Jewish relations, as well as the current climate of rising antisemitism in both Poland and Australia. Sadly, this remains a very real issue across the world with serious and tragic consequences.

The ASPJ greatly values its relationship and friendship with Ambassador Hayes

and looks forward to continuing this engagement for the remainder of his term.

Acting Ambassador and Charge d'affaires Mr Marcin Kowalowski sent a letter of congratulations to Mr Berysz Aurbach who celebrated a milestone 105th birthday on 17 August 2025.



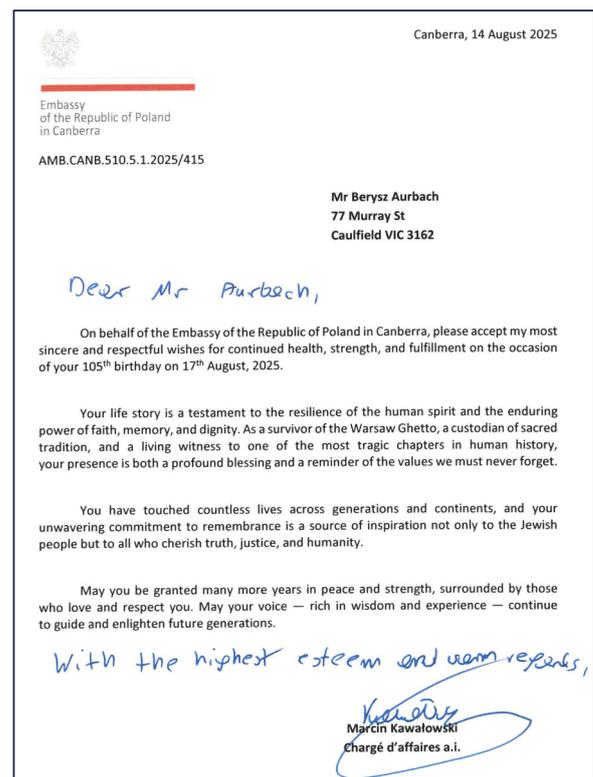
On Sunday 17 August 2025, Mr Berysz Aurbach celebrated his 105th birthday with family, friends, members of his local congregation Caulfield Beth Hamedrash and others dropping in to wish him Happy Birthday.

On this special occasion, Marcin Kowalowski, Charge d'affaires a.i., sent his warmest birthday wishes honouring Mr Aurbach and acknowledging the significance of this remarkable celebration.

Born 17 August 1920 in Biala Podlaska, Poland, Berysz Aurbach was raised in a Orthodox Jewish home with deep ties to the Rebbe of Gur (Rebbe z Gory Kalwarii). During the war, Berysz Aurbach escaped the Warsaw Ghetto at the outset of the Ghetto Uprising with the assistance of his brother Mordechai, a leader of the Uprising. Unfortunately, his father and brothers, including Mordechai and many of his extended family, were murdered by the German Nazis.

After surviving the war with assistance of the Polish Underground, Berysz Aurbach migrated to Australia

where he has lived now for seventy years. While building a family and contributing to the local community, Berysz Aurbach has never forgotten his Polish roots and heritage.



Celebrating Seder in Poland



those organized by the Friends of JCC Krakow and other organizations for both locals and refugees.

Symbolism & Location:

Seders in Poland often carry deep, symbolic weight, with events sometimes held at significant historical sites like the Warsaw Ghetto.

Language & Tradition:

Haggadot in Polish, Russian, and Hebrew are used to cater to diverse attendees.

Common Culinary Elements:

Charoset: Typically a mixture of apples, nuts, cinnamon, and red wine.

Vegetables: Potatoes are often used as the spring vegetable.

Fish: Pickled herring is a common, traditional staple.

Soup: Matzo ball soup is a key element.

Significance:

A Seder in Poland serves as a reconnection to pre-war Jewish life and a celebration of resilience, freedom, and community for both Polish Jews and, more recently, Ukrainian refugees.

A Polish Seder reflects Eastern European Ashkenazi traditions, often featuring staples like potato-based dishes, horseradish, and charoset made with apples, cinnamon, and red wine. In contemporary Poland, Seders often blend traditional, historical, and, recently, humanitarian elements, particularly with large community events held in Warsaw for refugees.

Key Aspects of a Polish Seder:

Cultural Nuances:

Traditional, older-style, or "heimish" (homestyle) dishes are common, often incorporating local ingredients.

Modern Context:

Recent years have seen large, community-driven Seders in cities like Warsaw and Krakow, including

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ASPJ at *In One Voice* Cultural Festival – 2026



On Sunday 15th March 2026, the Australian Society of Polish Jews and Their Descendants (ASPJ) participated in the In One Voice Festival.

In One Voice is a community cultural festival celebrating the vibrant diversity of the Melbourne Jewish community .

The ASPJ stall was visited by many people wanting to discuss their Polish heritage and issues of relevance to Polish-Jewish relations. Satisfyingly, one visitor came specifically to express her deep appreciation to the ASPJ for the advice provided at last year's festival that led to her discovering relatives she never previously knew existed.

State and Federal politicians, including State MP Natalie Suleyman, Federal MP Josh Burns and Senator James Patterson also stopped by to support the ASPJ.

Many thanks to ASPJ Board members Lena Fizman and Peter Schnall for their commitment to organise and attend the ASPJ stall and greet and answer visitors' questions.



ASPJ board members Peter Schnall and Lena Fizman



ASPJ board member Peter Schnall engaging with a visitor



Federal MP Josh Burns with ASPJ President Ezra May



State MP Natalie Sulleyman with ASPJ President Ezra May



ASPJ President Ezra May with Senator James Patterson

Jewish Migration from Poland to Australia After WW2

After World War II, Australia became a primary destination for Jewish survivors from Poland, eventually hosting one of the largest per-capita populations of Holocaust survivors in the world. While the pre-war Australian Jewish community was largely of British origin, this post-war wave, dominated by Polish Jews, fundamentally transformed the community's cultural and religious landscape.

Key Migration Statistics and Groups

Scale of Migration: Between 1946 and 1961, the Jewish population in Australia nearly trebled, growing from approximately 23,000 to over 60,000.

Polish Dominance: It is estimated that up to two-thirds of the roughly 17,000 Jewish immigrants who arrived between 1946 and 1954 were born in Poland.

Survival Paths: Many of these migrants were not only survivors of concentration camps but also included the "remnant" of Polish Jewry who had survived by fleeing into Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland early in the war.

Immigration Policies and Challenges

Despite the humanitarian need, the Australian government initially maintained restrictive and discriminatory policies:

The 25% Quota: In 1947, Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell imposed a quota limiting Jewish passengers to no more than 25% on any ship or aircraft. This was later reduced to 15% in 1949.

Exclusion from Official Schemes: Jewish refugees were largely excluded from the government-sponsored "Mass Resettlement" program (which preferred "blonde, blue-eyed" Baltic migrants). Instead, they relied on Landing Permits sponsored by local Jewish families or organisations like the Australian Jewish Welfare Society.

"Iron Curtain" Embargo: By late 1949, new restrictions effectively blocked many Jews originating from Soviet-controlled territories, including parts of Poland.

Impact on Australian Society

Cultural Transformation: The arrival of Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews shifted the community away from its Anglo-Celtic roots, leading to the establishment of Jewish day schools (like Mount Scopus College in Melbourne), more Orthodox synagogues, and a stronger Zionist movement.

Geographic Settlement

Most Polish Jewish migrants settled in Melbourne (particularly the south-eastern suburbs) and Sydney, where they established vibrant social hubs like the Hakoah Club.

Many Jewish refugees from Poland arrived with very little but became prominent figures in Australian business, arts and philanthropy.



From There to Here

By Izydor Marmur OAM

On Monday, 17 November 2025, I was honoured to receive the Gold Cross of Merit award of the Republic of Poland, presented by Mr Marcin Kawałowski, Acting Ambassador of the Republic of Poland. The other recipient was Mr Bernard Korbman OAM, who has been a good friend and the person responsible for my involvement in the work for which we were being awarded, namely services in promoting Polish–Jewish relations.

I felt somewhat like an imposter, as my interest in this subject started much later than Bernard's and seemingly almost by accident, through events I didn't plan. In my speech that evening I shared the chain of events that brought me to this day.

I lived in Poland for the first twelve (almost thirteen) years of my life, and although I was told by my father that I was Jewish, my awareness of Judaism was very limited. My life was that of a reasonably happy Polish boy growing up in a middle class, secular family.

Having arrived in Australia at a young-enough age, I adjusted quite easily, and apart from being bullied a few times at high school for being a wog, I thrived.



At college I had a large group of friends from a diverse multicultural background. My being Polish and Jewish was not an issue in my life.

Soon after college I went on a hippy trip around a few countries, and in Turkey I ran out of money. So I decided to make my way to Israel, where I had an uncle, and wait for some help from my parents or try to find some work.

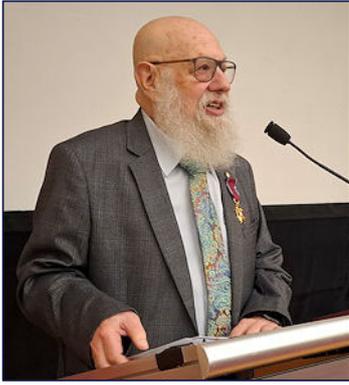
Shortly after my arrival, my cousin introduced me to her friend, and I fell in love. We married in Israel and then came together to Australia.

Through my wife, our life became involved with the Jewish community here, including friendships and work.

At a gathering of friends I met the late Phillip Masel OAM, who introduced me to the Jewish Holocaust Centre, where I met Bernard Korbman, who became my close friend and who was the moving force behind the idea of ASPJ.

This is the chain of accidental events that brought me to meet Bernard and to get involved in what I felt was a worthy cause, of developing dialog between the Polish and Jewish communities.





That comes to show that, had I not ran out of money when I was travelling in my twenties, I wouldn't be here today, receiving a medal of honour from the country of my birth.

As it happened, my involvement with both the Jewish and the Polish communities has broadened my interests, has taught me many things I didn't know before, and enabled me to meet and form some great friendships.

ASPJ started from humble beginnings, but Bernard's enthusiasm, leadership and power of persuasion soon attracted a dedicated group of board members who volunteered and worked tirelessly on achieving the goals we set ourselves.

In 2021 I was presented with OAM for my contribution to the Jewish community and for my contribution to the dialogue between communities.

Over the years, ASPJ faced challenges, but also some happy developments. The opening of a branch in NSW, led by Vice-president Estelle Rozinski, now has three brilliant women board members who make a valuable contribution and are absolute pleasure to work with.

As for the board members in Melbourne, who are too many to mention by name now, I just want to acknowledge and thank them for their friendship over the years and their good work.

I would like to mention just a few of the many Polish friends who were key players from the outset, and without whose efforts the success of ASPJ would have been impossible.

Christopher Lancucki OAM, Marian Pawlik OAM, and Andrew Korab, who are no longer with us and are missed and remembered with gratitude.

Of those who are still with us, George Luk-Kozika OAM; Fr Wiesław Słowik SJ; Lucyna Artimiuk; Adam Warzel, past president of Australian Institute of Polish Affairs — an organisation that has been an inspiration and a great help to ASPJ; the board of Polish Community Council of Victoria and many others from the Polish Community Council of Victoria, who embraced us and our vision.

Polish diplomats from the Polish Embassy and Consulate have been very supportive of our efforts over the years, for which we are very grateful.

Among a number of members of the Victorian Parliament who helped us is Natalie Sulleyman, who has been of great help in bringing our communities together. She is not Polish or Jewish, but Muslim.

I am humbled and honoured to have received this award and thank everybody who thought me worthy of it.

The Irena Sendler Award for Teachers “For Repairing the World”



Photos courtesy of the Centre for Citizenship Education.

By Justyna Tarnowska
Community Engagement Officer
at Polish Community Care Services Inc.
Consultations: Agnieszka Redzisz

The Irena Sendler Award for Teachers “For Repairing the World” is a nationwide educational initiative aimed at teachers and educators who promote values such as openness, empathy, intercultural dialogue, and social responsibility in their educational work. The competition has been organized since 2006 by the Center for Citizenship Education (Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej) and is considered one of the most important distinctions for educators who engage young people in activities related to human rights, tolerance, and civic engagement. In 2026, the Award will be presented for the twentieth time.

The purpose of the Award is to recognize teachers who, in addition to imparting knowledge, develop students’ social awareness, foster a sense of responsibility for others, and encourage conscious participation in public life. The Award honours educators who inspire young people to undertake social initiatives, understand diversity, and respond to manifestations of discrimination and exclusion.

The organizers emphasize that educational and character-building work is just as important as the implementation of the academic curriculum and constitutes an essential element of modern education.

The patron of the Award is Irena Sendler, a social activist and member of the Polish underground during World War II, recognized as Righteous Among the Nations, who helped rescue several hundred Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto. Her attitude, based on courage, empathy, and a strong sense of responsibility for others, serves as a moral reference point for the distinguished educators and their educational work.

Organizers and the Award Committee

The organizer of the competition is the Center for Citizenship Education Foundation, one of the largest Polish non-governmental organizations operating in the field of civic education and the promotion of modern teaching methods. For many years, the organization has implemented programs supporting teachers in developing students’ social and civic competences and promoting education based on democratic and humanistic values. The Irena Sendler Award for Teachers constitutes one of the key elements of these activities.



Elżbieta Ficowska – the initiator of the Award and one of the children rescued by Irena Sendler

The selection process is supervised by an Award Committee composed of distinguished representatives of education, culture, and social activism. The Chair of the Committee is Krzysztof Czyżewski, an essayist and promoter of intercultural dialogue, as well as the founder of the Borderland Foundation (Fundacja Pogranicze). Members of the committee also include Elżbieta Ficowska – the initiator of the Award and one of the children rescued by Irena Sendler, educator Krystyna Starczewska, psychologist and social activist Paula Sawicka, and historian Robert Szuchta, the first laureate of the Award in 2006.

The Committee evaluates candidates primarily on the basis of their tangible educational and social activities, including community projects, human rights initiatives, intercultural education, and engagement with local communities. Innovation in teaching methods, cooperation with social organizations, and the impact of the educator's work on both the school and the wider community are also important evaluation criteria.

Rules for Granting the Award

Teachers from kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, as well as educational and care institutions, are eligible for nomination. Candidates may be nominated by individuals, institutions, or organizations, and self-nominations are also permitted. Applications must include a description of the candidate's educational activities, documentation



Krzysztof Czyżewski, Chair of the Award Committee, Alicja Pacewicz and Katarzyna Grubek – members of the Award Committee (photo by Agata Wasilewska)

of their work, and letters of recommendation, one of which may be prepared by students.

Each year, the Committee selects a group of finalists – usually up to ten individuals – from whom one main laureate is chosen. The main laureate receives a financial prize of 20,000 PLN, while the remaining finalists receive distinctions. The Award may only be granted to the same person once, although the Committee may also confer a special Honorary Award for lifetime achievement in education.

Areas of Activity Recognized by the Award

The Award recognizes teachers engaged in a wide range of educational and social initiatives. These may include:

- education on human rights and anti-discrimination,
- activities supporting the integration of migrants and refugees,
- projects related to multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue,
- education about the Holocaust and the history of Jewish communities,
- initiatives fostering empathy, responsibility, and students' social engagement.

An important criterion is not only the scope of the activities undertaken but also their tangible impact on students and the local community. Particular recognition is given to teachers who are able to



inspire young people to act independently, think critically, and participate responsibly in social life.

Laureates and the “Sendlerowcy” Community

Over the years, the competition has fostered a network of teachers known as the “Sendlerowcy” (Sendler Award Community), comprising finalists and laureates who collaborate, share experiences, conduct workshops, participate in conferences, and support the development of values-based education.

Among the laureates are educators implementing innovative social and educational projects, including

Marta Florkiewicz-Borkowska, known for her work in art therapy and social education, Agnieszka Jankowiak-Maik, a history teacher and promoter of civic education, Dr. Marzanna Pogorzelska, engaged in anti-discrimination education, and Grażyna Ferenc, who has led projects related to Holocaust education and multicultural awareness.

Participation in the competition does not end with receiving the Award or distinction. Finalists are

invited to take part in workshops, conferences, and so-called “Laboratories of Knowledge and Good Practice,” which support further professional development and the implementation of new educational initiatives. In this way, the Award creates a lasting network of educators committed to civic and social education.

Read more: <https://nagrodasendlerowej.ceo.org.pl/>

New AI Tools for Jewish Genealogy

Jan Gronski is the Technology Advisor for the DoJR at the ŁDor V’Dor Foundation. ŁDor V’Dor Foundation is building first-of-kind AI models to read historic Yiddish handwriting and other languages common in Jewish records.

In part one of his joint ASPJ & Australian Jewish Historical Society talk, delivered in Sydney on 16 November, Jan demystified the process of training Handwritten Text Recognition models in Transkribus.

In part two, he demonstrated PastPort, an interactive map built on the largest online database of Jewish surnames and Jewish towns - taken from Avotaynu publications - that shows our ancestral surnames in the context of town, villages and shtetls that may no longer exist. (Note: at the time of recording PastPort was still in development in the LDVDF AI Lab. It is due for release at the end of the 2025).

Jan Gronski is DoJR Technology Advisor, building out the platform that allows the organisation to manage interactions with other organizations and individuals. He earned his undergraduate degree in mathematics at the University of Warsaw and PhD in mathematics at University of Illinois. He is a career technologist who most recently led the regional research and development engineering center of global networking giant Cisco systems in Shanghai, China. Gronski has considerable hands-on experience creating AI models for automatic handwriting recognition.

Gronski is fluent in English, Polish, and Chinese; possesses good reading, writing and spoken comprehension of Russian, German, and Spanish; and has basic comprehension of French and Turkish. He is a key volunteer for Jewish Records Indexing – Poland (JRI-Poland).



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