

PBS National Premiere of *IRENA SENDLER In the Name of Their Mothers* on May 1st, National Holocaust Remembrance Day

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A film by Mary Skinner

Presented in Association with KQED Public Television/San Francisco

Sunday, May 1st, at 10:00 p.m. (check local listings)

(San Francisco, CA) May 1, 2011. In honor of National Holocaust Remembrance Day held annually on May 1, PBS stations nationwide will broadcast the national premiere of *IRENA SENDLER In the Name of Their Mothers* (broadcast dates and times may vary from city to city – check local listings), a documentary film about Polish heroine Irena Sendler and her wartime conspiracy of women who outfoxed the Nazis and saved the lives of thousands of Jewish children. Sendler was a 29-year-old social worker when the Nazis invaded Poland. After Warsaw's Jews were imprisoned behind the ghetto walls without food or medicine, Sendler and those she most trusted smuggled aid in and began smuggling orphans out – hiding them in convents, orphanages and private homes in the city and the Polish countryside. Before the Nazis burned the ghetto to the ground, they managed to rescue over 2,500 children.

Irena Sendler was eventually captured by the Gestapo, imprisoned and tortured after refusing to divulge the identities of her co-workers. On the way to her execution, she escaped thanks to friends who managed to bribe a guard at the last moment. Irena and her co-conspirators were silenced by the Communists who came to power after the Nazis. And they were afraid to speak out for many decades afterwards.

Now at last, their story can be told. *IRENA SENDLER In the Name of Their Mothers* features the last in-depth interview with Sendler before her death at the age of 98. Rare archival footage, family photographs and evocative re-creations shot in Warsaw bring the lives of the hidden Jewish children, Sendler and her co-workers into dramatic focus. The film is testament to the power of moral courage in the darkest of times.

“This documentary is a stirring tribute to the courage and ingenuity of a group of women who saved lives at the risk of losing their own,” states John Boland, KQED President and CEO. “We thought there was no better time to premiere this heretofore unknown story than on National Holocaust Remembrance Day. KQED is honored to present *IRENA SENDLER In the Name of Their Mothers* to our national PBS audience.”

Lead underwriters of the PBS National Broadcast include Taube Philanthropies and the Koret Foundation, The Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union, The Williams Family Trust, the Foundation for Polish German Collaboration, the Polish American artist, Rafal Olbinski, the Legion of Young Polish Women, and many more organizations and individuals. A complete list of funders is available from PBS.

Additional information and downloadable press kit on *IRENA SENDLER In the Name of Their Mothers* is available at www.irenasendlerfilm.com

About 2B Productions

Producer/Director, Mary Skinner grew up with her mother's stories about the courage and compassion of Polish heroines. As a teenager in Poland, Klotylda Joswiak was sent to a concentration camp for smuggling food. "My mother never forgot the ordinary women like Irena Sendler, the 'angels of mercy,'" says Skinner. "Right before she died seven years ago, I felt I needed to find those women and tell their stories." Executive Producer Jamie Stobie has a thirty-year career in independent documentary film that includes *Freedom Machines*, a film about the intersection of disabilities and technology, Jon Else's acclaimed series *Cadillac Desert* and *Life Beyond Earth* a three-hour series about the history of space exploration and the search for extra-terrestrial life. Slawomir Grunberg, Co-Producer and Director of Photography, is an Emmy award-winning documentary producer, director, cameraman and editor born in Lublin, Poland . A graduate of the Polish Film School, Grunberg immigrated to the US in the early 80s where he has directed and produced over fifty documentaries. Marta Wohl has edited documentary films in the San Francisco Bay Area for two decades, including twenty-five companion shows for the *Adventures of Young Indiana Jones* series in the documentary unit of Lucas Films

About KQED

KQED (<http://www.kqed.org/>) has served Northern California for more than 50 years and is affiliated with NPR and PBS. KQED owns and operates public television stations KQED 9 (San Francisco/Bay Area), KTEH 54 (San Jose/Bay Area), and KQET 25 (Watsonville/Monterey); KQED Public Radio (88.5FM San Francisco and 89.3FM Sacramento); the interactive platforms [kqed.org](http://www.kqed.org), [kteh.org](http://www.kteh.org/) (<http://www.kteh.org/>), and [kqednews.org](http://www.kqednews.org/) (<http://www.kqednews.org/>); and KQED Education. KQED Public Television, one of the nation's most-watched public television stations, is the producer of local and national series such as *QUEST*; *Check, Please! Bay Area*; *This Week in Northern California*; *Truly CA*; and *Essential Pépin*. KQED's digital television channels include 9HD, Life, World, Kids, and V-me, and are available 24/7 on Comcast. KQED Public Radio, home of *Forum* with Michael Krasny and *The California Report*, is one of the most-listened-to public radio stations in the nation with an award-winning news and public affairs program service delivering more than eighteen local newscasts daily. KQED Interactive hosts KQED's cross-platform news service, KQED News, as well as offers video and audio podcasts and a live radio stream at [kqed.org](http://www.kqed.org). KQED Education brings the impact of KQED to thousands of teachers, students, parents, and the general public through workshops, community screenings, and multimedia resources.

About PBS

PBS, headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, is a private, nonprofit media enterprise owned and operated by the nation's 349 public television stations. Serving nearly 90 million people each week, PBS enriches the lives of all Americans through quality programs and education services on noncommercial television, the Internet and other media. More information about PBS is available at pbs.org, the leading dot-org Web site on the Internet.

About Taube Philanthropies and the Koret Foundation

Guided by a long-term commitment to both secular and Jewish life, the Taube Philanthropies provide direct and indirect support to projects and institutions that advance the philosophies and vision of its founder, Tad Taube. Central to these are 1) the concepts and principles of a free, democratic society, including open economic enterprise, self-reliance, academic freedom of inquiry and limited government; and 2) programs that support Jewish heritage, survival and cultural celebration.

An entrepreneurial spirit guides the Koret Foundation in addressing societal challenges and strengthening Bay Area life. Investing in strategic, local solutions to help inspire a multiplier effect – encouraging collaborative funding and developing model initiatives. With roots in the Jewish community, Koret embraces the community of Israel, especially through Koret Israel Economic Development Funds (KIEDF); and believe that economic stability and free market expansion offer the best hope for a prosperous future.

About the PSFCU

Founded in 1976 by a group of Polish immigrants to help other ethnic Poles obtain mortgages, the Polish & Slavic Federal Credit Union now has 6 branches in New York, 6 branches in New Jersey, 3 branches in Illinois, a Mobile Branch, and an operations center in Fairfield, NJ. The 35-year-old credit union, with almost \$1.4 billion in assets, serves more than 71,500 members of the Polish and Slavic communities throughout New York, New Jersey and Illinois. The credit union is the largest ethnic credit union in the United States.

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