

# **The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous**

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## **GLEN ROCK TEEN REPRESENTS JEWISH FOUNDATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS AS YOUNG AMBASSADOR IN UNIQUE BAT MITZVAH PROJECT**

### **NATALIE PITTMAN'S CONNECTION TO HOLOCAUST RESCUERS: SHE WOULDN'T BE HERE TODAY WITHOUT THEM**

GLEN ROCK, New Jersey – When Glen Rock teen Natalie Pittman looked for an organization to partner with for her Dec. 4 Bat Mitzvah, it was her personal connection, in the rescue of her own grandmother and great grandmother, that drove her to partner with The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR).

The JFR is an organization dedicated to identifying, honoring and supporting non-Jews who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. Over the past 30 years, the foundation has distributed more than \$42 million to support Righteous Gentiles, non-Jews, who risked their lives, and often the lives of their families, to save Jews from death during the Holocaust. The group provides monthly awards for these Righteous Gentiles and sends special awards for the purchase of food for the Christmas holiday. The organization also runs a nationally acclaimed Holocaust teacher education program that shares the legacy of Righteous Gentiles with middle and high school teachers from around the country and parts of Europe.

As part of her Mitzvah project, Natalie will help promote the JFR's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Twinning Program, an initiative where the young participant learns about, honors and raises funds to help support a specific rescuer. Natalie will also take the time to learn about specific aspects of the Holocaust, and educate peers about history, choices, acts of courage and humanity, and taking action to help those in need. To date, she is scheduled to speak at Hebrew schools located within the Glen Rock Jewish Center in Glen Rock, NJ, Temple Shaaray Tefila in Manhattan, NY and Temple Emanu-EL in Closter, NJ. Natalie is working on further expanding her list of scheduled presentations.

Natalie's grandmother and great grandmother were hidden by a non-Jewish family in their barn attic in Poland, following their escape from a ghetto in World War II. The heroism of the rescuers ensured their survival during the Holocaust.

“Without these heroes, my grandmother, my mother, my brother, my sister and I wouldn't be here today,” said Natalie. “My hope is to help others truly understand the risks these rescuers took to save the lives of Jews during the Holocaust and the generational impact they've made. I hope to help teens my age better understand how the JFR helps these heroes and the ways we can help the JFR accomplish this mission.”

Natalie follows in her family's footsteps, as her older brother Samuel also partnered with the JFR for his own Bar Mitzvah project in 2018. In that project, Samuel twinned with Wincenty and Stefania Rajski, the individuals responsible for saving his own grandmother and great grandmother during the Holocaust.

“The JFR's Twinning Program not only creates a unique opportunity for a young person to learn about real bravery and heroism, but through funds raised will provide necessary financial assistance to individuals who once performed an extraordinary life-saving act of kindness on behalf of a Jewish person,” said JFR Executive Vice President Stanlee Stahl. “We are grateful that Natalie is using her milestone occasion to advance the JFR's important work.”

The JFR continues its work of providing monthly financial assistance to more than 150 aged and needy Righteous Gentiles, living in 14 countries. Since its founding, the JFR has provided more than \$42 million to aged and needy rescuers – helping to repay a debt of gratitude on behalf of the Jewish people to these noble men and women. Its Holocaust teacher education program has become a standard for teaching the history of the Holocaust and educating teachers and students about the significance of the Righteous as moral and ethical exemplars. For more information, visit <https://jfr.org/>.