

April 2020

Dear friends,

we are all currently experiencing very difficult times. We cannot travel or visit each other. Therefore, it is particularly important to stay connected at least in this way.

At the turn of the year I was able to travel to the USA and meet some former Frankfurt residents and their children there. It was a special honor for me to celebrate the 99th birthday of Walter Sommers in Terre Haute together with his family and friends.



Walter was born in Frankfurt in 1920. His father Julius Sommer and his uncle Alfred Mayer owned the Wittwe Hassen chain, which some people may still remember. Despite his blessed age, Walter Sommers works tirelessly as a docent at the Holocaust Museum in Terre Haute two days a week, speaking about his personal experiences and the fates of family members. For this commitment, he was awarded the Cross of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2016. Walter is very sad that the regular discussions in the museum are not possible at the moment.

For the first time since 1980, the visit program of the city of Frankfurt had to be postponed this year due to the Corona crisis. The developments in the next few weeks will show whether it can take place this autumn or only next year.

We are trying to make the best of the situation and are busy writing further biographies for our website. At the moment I am working on a documentary about the Jewish cemetery in Oberursel, where some of the ancestors of former Frankfurt residents are buried. We are confident that the book will be ready in September for the European Heritage Days, where I offer a guided tour of the small cemetery.



We would also like to inform you about personnel changes in the board. We are pleased that Katja Demnig, now the 2nd chair of the association, is actively supporting the project since September.

About 5 years ago, thanks to the initiative of Renata Harris, the project group campaigned for a memorial to commemorate the Kindertransports. Thanks to the unique support of various organizations and individuals, around 20,000 children were brought to Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Sweden and Palestine after the Novemberpogrom in 1938 and thus saved.

In order to draw attention to the topic, a team of 7 authors published a book in 2018 with the title "Rettet wenigstens die Kinder" (Save at Least the Children) with 20 biographies of children or siblings and three life stories from organizers of these bailouts. Since then we have been able to inform the public about this topic in many readings in Frankfurt and the surrounding area to get them to support the memorial project.

Last year the city of Frankfurt launched a competition to design this memorial. The design by an Israeli artist was selected, which focusses the farewell of the children from their parents from different perspectives.

The memorial will be inaugurated next year. We hope that some of the rescued children and/or their descendants will be able take part in this initiation.

In parallel, the German National Library is preparing an exhibition on the rescue of children.



Now we would like to wish you happy Passover. And above all: stay healthy.

With kind regards

Angelika Rieber

Angelika Rieber

(Chair of the Association Projekt Jüdisches Leben in Frankfurt)