

# The Journal News

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## A SPECIAL MOTHER'S DAY | CHRONICLE OF A HOLOCAUST JOURNEY



Peter Carr/The Journal News

"How often does a daughter get to be her mother's biographer?" asked Ann Kirschner, with her mother, Sala Gamcarz Kirschner. "It's a special treasure for a daughter to get to know her mother, not only as she is now, but as a 16-year-old."

## Gift of letters comes full circle

Hema Easley  
The Journal News

**O**n the eve of a triple-bypass surgery, Sala Gamcarz Kirschner offered her daughter a box whose contents she had kept secret for 50 years.

In that box, which once contained her daughter's "Spill and Spell" game, lay Kirschner's journal, old photographs and more than 350 letters, postcards and scraps of paper. Written in Polish, Yiddish, German and Russian, they formed the bulk of correspondence Kirschner received from her

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family and friends while working as a slave laborer at Nazi labor camps during World War II.

Kirschner risked her life to save them during those years of terror and isolation, and brought them to the United States as a war bride in 1946. She did not want to go to the grave without giving them to her family with her blessings.

Those memoirs and correspondence are the basis of "Sala's Gift: My Mother's Holocaust Story," a book written by Ann Kirschner, her daughter, about the power of family, friendship and the written word. Ann Kirschner is dean of the CUNY Honors College at the City Uni-

versity of New York.

"How often does a daughter get to be her mother's biographer?" asked Ann Kirschner, sitting in her mother's home in Monsey a few days ago. "It's a special treasure for a daughter to get to know her mother, not only as she is now, but as a 16-year-old."

Tomorrow, in celebration of Mother's Day, Ann Kirschner and her mother will kick off a three-year nationwide book tour with a special author presentation at Finkelstein Memorial Library, their home library.

An exhibition reproducing the letters, journals, postcards and other documents will be on view at the library's

Fielding Room until June 30. The original letters have been donated to the New York Library System. Ann Kirschner will be at the library for a book signing that day.

"It's a very neat Mother's Day treat that we will be presenting to folks in this community," said Bob Devino, director of the library. "It's a story of intense personal courage. The fact that she kept it to herself for so many years, the trauma and the suffering, is what makes it unique. She made the information available to their daughter so that future generations could know."

Please see LETTERS, 4A