

A Special Fate: Chiune Sugihara: Hero of the Holocaust

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A biography of Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese consul in Lithuania, explains how he saved the lives of thousands of Jews during World War II by issuing visas against the orders of his superiors. By the author of *Memories of Anne Frank*.

Alison Leslie Gold was born and grew up in New York City. She was educated at the University of North Carolina, Mexico City College and the New School for Social Research in New York City. She has published fiction, non-fiction and journalism, and has also written for radio and television. She has often lived abroad, and presently divides her time between New York City and Greece.

Grade 5-10-A moving account of an unlikely hero. Sugihara single-handedly saved thousands of Jewish lives during the Holocaust. With the support of his wife, he issued exit visas while stationed as a Japanese diplomat in Lithuania. Risking his own life and those of his family members, he responded to the call to help fellow human beings. Ignoring the orders of the Japanese foreign ministry, he handwrote thousands of documents so that Jews could flee Lithuania to travel through Russia to get to Japan and freedom. Sugihara was eventually transferred out of Eastern Europe but not before he and his own family experienced the internment camps of Russia. Eventually, he was fired from the foreign service for his bravery and had to find work elsewhere. At the end of his life, he wondered if his act of compassion had any impact. He was rewarded by learning that many of the survivors had been searching for him to thank him for his gift of freedom. Although Sugihara passed away in 1986, Gold was able to interview his widow as well as two people who were saved by his act. Thus, the many details of the book are authentic. The narrative alternates between Sugihara's story and those of the two survivors, rendering the sacrifices and suffering of each person all the more poignant. This thought-provoking title joins the growing number of fine Holocaust titles for young people.

Carol Fazioli, formerly at The Brearley School, New York City

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