

child survivors of the holocaust

CONNECTIONS

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Dear Child Survivors of the Holocaust,
We trust this latest edition of *Connections* finds you well and managing as best you can under such difficult circumstances.
Our thoughts and prayers go out to any child survivors or their family members who are

unwell at this time; not only because of the virus but all the other health issues one faces as we age. We wish you well and strength to get by in the months ahead. We are able to provide this latest copy of *Connections* because our wonderful colleague Lena Fizman is still by our side putting her creative talents to work to make our newsletter happen.

The Jewish Holocaust Centre is assisting the CSH in distributing our newsletter out to you all and we are grateful to JHC Museum Director, Jayne Josem and her team for their caring and support for our CSH members. Although this edition of *Connections* may be a little shorter than usual we have much pleasure in providing a letter written to the child survivors by our wonderful founding president Dr Paul Valent.

We trust you will find within his thoughtful and personal words, comfort and solace that most survivors need as they experience their own private flash backs and anxious thoughts. Who better than Paul to put our fears to rest? Wishing you all, the best possible Passover.

Be well.

Kind regards,

Viv Parry, Mary Slade and Lena Fizman.

Greetings to my fellow Child Survivors of the Holocaust



Who would have thought... again. Still, we child survivors of the Holocaust have always known that catastrophes can happen. Our skins were always thin.

But wait. This is quite different.

I vacillate. There is something familiar in seeing empty shelves in the supermarkets,

people struggling for toilet rolls. Will we be short of food? food? Ah, after much frustration I manage to get on the Woolworths web site for home deliveries to old people. They can deliver in four days. Luckily, we have sufficient food till then.

What about services, what if I run out of batteries, light bulbs, what if the phone or internet network seize up? What if I break a leg?

There is much talk in the media of the Apocalypse, or at least of a war footing, like in World War Two. Yes, we always believed that what happened could happen again, but we did not really believe that it would. Who would

have thought that in the dusk of our lives we would be thrust back into the world of our childhoods? That our worlds would change almost overnight from security to once again being the most threatened sections of the community - then as children, now as the elderly? That we would have to hide inside the four walls of our homes, afraid to go out, each outside person being a potential danger?

Police are starting to patrol the streets.

It's difficult to trust our leaders.

There is talk of selections; who would be allowed scarce respirators?

And even if not we, will our families, from whom we are separated, for whom we yearn, for whom I have a pain in my shoulders through the empty embrace, will they be alright? It's difficult to see them having to adjust to this abnormal world, the likes of which we hoped to spare them.

But then the pendulum returns. Of course, it's not true. I am oversensitive to the images that trigger childhood memories. It's not happening again.

And we child survivors of the Holocaust are at the forefront of those who can provide perspective. No, this

is not an Apocalypse, and no Second World War. Men are not sent to the front. They are sent home to be with their families. There will be no bombs destroying houses and facilities. If we are short of food, that is because of panic buying, not because supplies are scarce.

Yes, we have to keep physical distance from others, but not emotional distance. We don't have to wait months for a letter to know if a relative is alive. Modern media bring them to life within seconds.

In those days, the Nazis had unlimited power and their reign seemed to be endless. We were their ultimate victims and nine tenths of us died. Now we are not being persecuted. We are part of the general population fighting a common enemy. We are not being scapegoated. In fact, most of the population is sacrificing to keep all vulnerable

people safe, including us.

Lastly, there is an end in sight and we know that we will win. And then, in the euphoria of survival there will be pent up energy to renew, to enjoy. There will be a baby boom alongside an economic one, and who knows, people who have learned that the world can cooperate and hurl itself against common dangers will tackle old problems like climate change, nuclear build-ups, and national rivalries. So yes, features of this pandemic remind us of our early trials, but the differences are large. That's why, should the pandemic remind us of our early fears, we can reassure ourselves that no, it's not happening again.

After reassuring ourselves we can reassure the world.

**Paul Valent founded the
Child Survivors of the Holocaust Group in Melbourne**

In Memorium - Eva Marks



It is with great sadness we wish to let our CSH members know that our much loved original CSH member, Eva Marks passed away recently.

Her dedication and great love for the CSH group will be remembered in perpetuity for so

many reasons, none the least the wonderful patchwork CSH wall hanging (to be part of the new JHC Museum display) and her inspiration for the CSH Time capsule. We will miss Eva's famous jokes, her observations about life and stories of her much-loved family, especially her life partner Stan.

Our comforting thoughts go out to her family.

Viv Parry on behalf of the CSH members.

